

# Kent Academic Repository

## Full text document (pdf)

### Citation for published version

Passfield, Sarah (2019) Affective Dramaturgies in Contemporary Dance Leaky Encounters and Turbulent Spectating. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) thesis, University of Kent,.

### DOI

### Link to record in KAR

<https://kar.kent.ac.uk/75767/>

### Document Version

UNSPECIFIED

#### Copyright & reuse

Content in the Kent Academic Repository is made available for research purposes. Unless otherwise stated all content is protected by copyright and in the absence of an open licence (eg Creative Commons), permissions for further reuse of content should be sought from the publisher, author or other copyright holder.

#### Versions of research

The version in the Kent Academic Repository may differ from the final published version.

Users are advised to check <http://kar.kent.ac.uk> for the status of the paper. **Users should always cite the published version of record.**

#### Enquiries

For any further enquiries regarding the licence status of this document, please contact:

[researchsupport@kent.ac.uk](mailto:researchsupport@kent.ac.uk)

If you believe this document infringes copyright then please contact the KAR admin team with the take-down information provided at <http://kar.kent.ac.uk/contact.html>

**Affective Dramaturgies in Contemporary Dance**

**Leaky Encounters and Turbulent Spectating**

**Sarah Ginetta Passfield**

**Submitted in fulfilment of the degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy by research in**

**Drama**

**School of Arts**

**University of Kent**

**May 2019**

**Word count: 68,974**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express my gratitude to all the staff and research students of the Drama Department, School of Arts for creating such a stimulating and exciting research environment in which to study. I am extremely privileged to have met and worked among such inspiring and generous scholars. I would also like to thank Professor Nicola Shaughnessy and Dr. Melissa Trimmingham for the opportunity they gave me to work on the Beacon Research Project as part of the University of Kent's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

My sincerest thanks and heartfelt gratitude are due to my inspirational supervisory team of Professor Robert Shaughnessy, Professor Peter Boenisch, Dr. Melissa Trimmingham and Dr. Freya Vass-Rhee. I thank each of you for your enthusiasm, guidance, support and critical rigour in helping me complete this doctoral study. It has been an uplifting and enriching experience. I feel extremely fortunate to have benefitted from your knowledge, so generously shared. A special thanks is owed to Angela Whiffen for her expert guidance and patience throughout my doctoral studies.

I dedicate this thesis to my daughters, Anna, Ellie and Maddy, to encourage them to pursue their own ambitions and in loving memory of my mother Margaret Harris. I thank each of them for their unfaltering encouragement, love and kindness in sharing my academic journey with such patience. I thank my father for all his loving support over the years to help me achieve my ambitions.

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Bridging the gap between performance dramaturgies and critical discourse**

This thesis proposes that contemporary dance choreographic practices that emerged in the UK during the 1980s onwards challenge the established approaches of critical appreciation and resist conventions of interpretation and genre classification.

Choreographers discussed in this thesis are part of a lineage of new creative practices in contemporary dance that demand a different discourse about spectating dance. They require awareness of how the actions of spectating affect the audience and resist traditional discourses of critical appreciation. Their works contribute to a re-theatricalisation of dance choreography that is influenced by European Tanztheater, and in particular, by the choreographer Pina Bausch. Choreographers discussed include Liz Aggiss, Lea Anderson, Matthew Bourne, Jonathan Burrows, Michael Clark, Yolande Snaith and Ian Spink. They are independent dance makers whose works share dramaturgic processes that foreground affective spectating. These choreographic dramaturgies afford increased agency to spectators and highlight processes of how the dances create affective encounters within the performances.

I bring first-hand experience and dance knowledge of movement training and choreographic approaches that inform this research and I reflect on the ways in which these artists resisted existing frameworks of critical discourse. As a dance student, performer and scholar during this era, I studied or worked with several of these choreographers, as well as attending performances of many of their pieces in addition to those analysed in this thesis.



Their choreography made significant new demands on spectators by resisting interpretations and shifting attention to how the dance exposes spectators to their own processes of engaging with a performance, to focus on what the dance *does* instead of what it is about. The affective impact of contemporary dance became the central feature of their creative practices, yet the existing critical discourse lacked appropriate terms and concepts to address the significance of these works.

Established approaches to dance analysis and critical, academic discourses have had limited success in articulating the complex demands of such dance works and it is those aspects of affective engagement that are the focus of this study in relation to dramaturgic and choreographic forms. This thesis proposes a reframing of critical analysis based on concepts of dramaturgy as a bridge between conventional frameworks of dance discourse and the creative practices. This thesis introduces a notion of 'leaky' dramaturgies, where encountering also operates outside the frame of the performance itself. How spectators encounter contemporary dance works is the central question of this thesis and this study proposes that discourses of dramaturgy and affect are effective in articulating how these works create spectating encounters. I define these encounters as having a two-part dramaturgy that is characterised as 'turbulent' during the performance event, evoking effects of disorientation, excitement and intensity, and also as 'leaky' in encounters outside the performance itself. In combination, leaky and turbulent systems within the choreographic and performance practices, contribute to the disruptive, affective impact of the work. I place this research in the field of phenomenological dance studies to contribute to the discourse of spectating dramaturgies in contemporary dance. The thesis finds that a discourse of affective dramaturgies is effective to articulate leaky processes and turbulent spectating of contemporary dance.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Title	1
Acknowledgements	2
Abstract	3
Table of contents	5
List of images	6
Introduction: <b>New dramaturgies in contemporary dance</b>	9
Chapter One: <b>Affective dramaturgies - sensed, shared and social leaky and turbulent encounters</b>	21
Chapter Two: <b>Breaking out of dance analysis frameworks 'Out of Sync' with creative practices in contemporary choreography</b>	41
Chapter Three: <b>Dramaturgies of visual turbulences: Disruptions, perspectives and visibility</b>	74
Chapter Four: <b>Dramaturgies of kinetic turbulences: Movements and metaphor, empathy and entrainment</b>	123
Chapter Five: <b>Leaky encounters outside the performance: Shared, social and virtual</b>	182
Conclusion: <b>Bridging critical discourse and creative practices</b>	214
Appendix One: Affective spectating experience of <i>Viktor</i>	219
Appendix Two: Princess Aurora - a choreographic comparison	224
Appendix Three: Bourne's <i>Highland Fling</i> - a turbulent romantic ballet	229
Appendix Four: <i>Body Not Fit for Purpose</i> full script and staging notes	234
<b>References</b>	239

## LIST OF IMAGES

Image	Choreographer	Page
1 <i>Body Not Fit for Purpose</i>	Burrows	48
2 <i>Body Not Fit for Purpose</i>	Burrows	49
3 <i>Cheap Lecture</i>	Burrows	54
4 <i>Edits</i>	Anderson	83
5 <i>Edits</i>	Anderson	85
6 <i>The Featherstoneshaughs Draw on the Sketchbooks of Egon Schiele</i>		102
7 <i>The Featherstoneshaughs Draw on the Sketchbooks of Egon Schiele</i>		105
8 <i>The English Channel</i>	Aggiss	114
9 <i>New Work/ Animal, Vegetable, Mineral</i>	Clark	117
10 <i>New Work/ Animal, Vegetable, Mineral</i>	Clark	118
11 Rudolf Laban's icosahedron		120
12 <i>Mmm</i>	Clark	121
13 <i>Mmm</i>	Clark	121
14 <i>Mmm</i>	Clark	122
15 <i>Carabosse in Sleeping Beauty</i>	Bourne	143
16 <i>Baby Aurora in Sleeping Beauty</i>	Bourne	144
17 <i>Blindfolded Aurora in Sleeping Beauty</i>	Bourne	147
18 <i>Crawling puppet Aurora Sleeping Beauty</i>	Bourne	149
19 <i>Love Duet Sleeping Beauty</i>	Bourne	151
20 <i>Aurora</i>	Bourne	151
21 <i>Caradoc and Chorus</i>	Bourne	155
22 <i>Lovers- Act Four</i>	Bourne	158

23 <i>The Cow Piece</i>	Burrows	162
24 <i>The Cow Piece</i>	Burrows	162
25 <i>to a simple, rock 'n' roll ... song</i>	Clark	167
26 <i>to a simple, rock 'n' roll ... song</i>	Clark	168
27 <i>Diction</i>	Snaith	179
28 <i>Hand in Glove</i>	Anderson	185
29 <i>Hand in Glove</i>	Anderson	186
30 <i>Hand in Glove</i>	Anderson	186
31 <i>Hand in Glove</i>	Anderson	186
32 <i>Hand in Glove</i>	Anderson	186
33 <i>Hand in Glove</i>	Anderson	186
34 Facebook post New Adventures	Bourne	188
35 Facebook post general public	Bourne	189
36 Facebook <i>Swan Lake</i>	Bourne	191
37 Facebook <i>Swan Lake</i>	Bourne	191
38 Facebook <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Bourne	191
39 Facebook New Adventures at Latitude Festival		192
40 <i>Swan Lake</i> at Latitude Festival		192
41 Participation opportunity <i>Swan Lake</i> Facebook post		194
42 <i>Swan Lake</i> workshop Facebook post		194
43 <i>Swan Lake</i> leakages familiarisation		195
44 <i>Swan Lake</i> leakages familiarisation		195
45 <i>Swan Lake</i> leakages familiarisation		195
46 <i>The Red Shoes</i> foyer display Sadler's Wells Theatre		195
47 Michael Clark London Fashion Week Pringle		204

48 Michael Clark Gucci documentary		204
49 WOW Facebook post	Aggiss	208
50 Facebook comment <i>Slap &amp; Tickle</i>	Aggiss	208
51 Facebook <i>Crone Alone</i>	Aggiss	208
52 Facebook post <i>Slap &amp; Tickle</i>	Aggiss	209
53 Facebook post <i>Slap &amp; Tickle</i>	Aggiss	209
54 Facebook post advocacy Older Artists	Aggiss	209
55 Classical Aurora [Ashton]	Royal Ballet	226
56 Aurora & Leo	Bourne	227

## INTRODUCTION

### New dramaturgies in contemporary dance

An encounter with Pina Bausch's Tanztheater Wuppertal during this research gave an opportunity to reflect on British contemporary dance practices and the influences from European Tanztheater. Nine years since Pina Bausch's death, her company Tanztheater Wuppertal, returned to Sadler's Wells Theatre, London to perform *Viktor*, originally choreographed in 1986. I introduce this thesis as a contribution to critical discourse on spectating contemporary dance pieces, by focusing on the nature of the dramaturgic demands of the works. I contend that contemporary dance has shifted its dramaturgic emphasis to the sensed, shared and social activities of individual and collective spectators. This shift manifests in a dramaturgy of *being at* as opposed to *looking at* the dance. Dramaturgies of spectating contemporary dance move attention away from interpreting what the dance means and towards what it does; how it makes us feel, behave, react and become aware of ourselves. Spectator activity is the significant component of the work's affective impact. I use my experience<sup>1</sup> of spectating *Viktor* to contextualise this study by locating characteristic dramaturgies in Bausch's Tanztheater, from which I develop an exploration of these dramaturgic features in detailed analyses of selected contemporary dance pieces in this thesis.

Bausch's dance theatre challenges spectators to encounter the work instead of trying to explain it in terms of narratives or thematic meanings. Tanztheater Wuppertal was invited to Rome to create a new work. *Viktor* is the resulting

---

<sup>1</sup> I attended a performance of *Viktor* on 11 February 2018 at Sadler's Wells Theatre, London. See a detailed account of my own affective spectating experience is found in the Appendix One [pp.219-223]

production and is a multi-layered, episodic, complex and poignant exploration of imagined moments and ensemble dancing based on impressions and experiences from the city. Contemporary dance performance is about bodies, movements, time and space and the spectators' affective encounters are what make the work function. In Bausch's work spectators may experience confusion in how we are looking at events happening on stage, because of our learnt tendencies to look for sequential narratives. Bausch and the choreographers in this study provoke spectators and scholars to re-calibrate our thinking and our experiencing<sup>2</sup>. This turbulent dramaturgy operates by disrupting spectator expectations.

The dramaturgy of turbulence in spectating refers to the specific demands a work makes on the audience to shift us out of quotidian ways of looking or sensing. This is exemplified in *Viktor* by its three-hour duration of fragmented, non-linear, episodic narratives and crowded movement images, where there is too much happening on stage to watch and listen to simultaneously. Bausch's work challenges spectators by its complex shifts in rhythms, sounds and spatial patterns of movements.

### **Sensed, shared and social encounters**

In this thesis I propose that new discourses are needed to articulate how affective dance dramaturgies operate to shape our spectating experiences in sensed, shared and social encounters with contemporary dance. Contemporary dance

---

<sup>2</sup> In the opening moments of the performance of *Viktor* dirt tumbles down the rough, reddish walls, and scatters at the foot of the slope. I adjust my attention to accept what I am seeing. I am aware of thinking 'why is that happening?' and 'how is this enormous set created?' or 'what is it about?' I remind myself that I know Bausch's work is not mimetic and her characters do not function in dramatic roles. It is what we see. It is what we notice and it is how it feels watching it being done for real; knowing it is not pretending or 'acting'. I am intrigued that it takes time to remember to accept this. I hear spectators around me taking some time to make their adjustments in attention, asking each other about what they see on stage. Then they are quiet as they allow themselves to *see*, to *hear*, to *sense*, to *share* and to encounter the work.

practices have evolved dramaturgic processes that make complex demands on spectators to re-shape our systems of engagement, so that new discourses are needed to articulate how these dramaturgies function. Contemporary dance defies simple definition, because, as illustrated by the examples in this study, it includes a wide variety of movement vocabularies, types of performers, thematic content and is programmed in a range of venues, but it is arguably part of an evolving genre that shares dramaturgic features with Bausch's Tanztheater Wuppertal.

I employ the term dramaturgy to refer to the network of structures within the piece, across elements of movement choreography and mise-en-scène with detailed examples of dramaturgic practices in contemporary dance. These examples are integrated in each chapter using analyses of works by Liz Aggiss, Lea Anderson, Matthew Bourne, Jonathan Burrows, and Michael Clark, and references to choreography by Yolande Snaithe and Ian Spink. I introduce each of the choreographers to summarise the style and context of their work that contributes to a lineage in British contemporary dance in a distinctive era of affective theatricalisation.

Aggiss has been performing and making work professionally in the UK since the early 1980s. She was trained by Hilda Holger, a pupil of Gertrude Bodenweiser, and danced in Germany before fleeing from the Nazi regime. Aggiss formed the DIVAS dance theatre company with musician and composer Billy Cowie, which existed for over two decades. DIVAS' work was an eclectic mix of dance, drama, opera, cabaret, mime and multi-media. This led Aggiss's work to be labelled as independent. This pragmatically reflected the status of DIVAS' subsidies, and has earned Aggiss a place of note in British dance; a place that she takes now as a solo performer in her sixties, still hovering provocatively and precariously on its fringes.



The leaky dramaturgies in Aggiss's work are distinctive in this study, as the particular contexts and traditions of her work, from German Expressionism, are presented as dramaturgic leakages. This study analyses her production, *The English Channel* (2012).

Anderson trained in visual art at St Martin's School of Art before her professional dance training at The Laban Centre. She formed an all-female company, The Cholmondeleys, in 1984 and an all-male company, The Featherstonehaughs, in 1988. Her work characteristically adopts choreographic devices of groupings, repetition, facing the audience and stylised use of the dancers' faces. Production elements including strident lighting, detailed costume and stylised staging draw attention to the affective, visual qualities of the choreography, enhancing experiences of emotionally resonant images in non-narrative, collages of movement and metaphor. Dramaturgic effects combine making her work visually complex in the re-imagining of its stimuli and thematic material to create spatial and temporal disorientation for spectators. The subject material for both pieces used in this study explicitly draws upon visual forms. *Edits* (2010), from the French and Italian film genres of the 1960s and 1970s, is inspired by directors like Federico Fellini who dealt with memory, fantasy and desire. *The Featherstonehaughs Draw on the Sketchbooks of Egon Schiele* (1997, 2010), is inspired by the works and life of the early Expressionist painter, Egon Schiele. These pieces are the last two works performed by The Featherstonehaughs before the company was disbanded in 2011.

Bourne trained at The Laban Centre and on graduating formed his first company, Adventure in Motion Pictures. He created small-scale, innovative pieces often using satirical choreography to comic effect. His current company, New Adventures, enjoys huge popular appeal with narrative, large-scale productions

adapting popular stories or ballets, such as *Swan Lake*, *Nutcracker*, *The Car Man*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Red Shoes*. Bourne's work, *Sleeping Beauty: A Gothic Fairytale* (2012), analysed in this research, shows how his choreographic and dramaturgic devices direct spectator attention to a sensed collectivity of audiences and shared affective experiences of engagement, as leaky dramaturgic encounters.

Burrows and Matteo Fargion work as a duo of dancer and musician, blurring the boundaries between these disciplines; each performer taking on both roles at different times. Burrows comments on his process and approaches to making work using playful, enigmatic headings and comments that are similar to the spoken text in some of his performances, such as, 'Inspiration: Inspiration is useful if you can get it, but working is more useful'. (2010, p.31) This research focuses on Burrows and Fargion's duets, *Cheap Lecture* and *The Cow Piece* (2009) and *Body Not Fit for Purpose* (2014). Both programmes include voice, movement and music, and their work continues to be enigmatic for audiences, critics and scholars. Burrows is unusual among this selection of choreographers because he contributes as a writer to the dialogues on dramaturgy in his processes and performances. He offers a notion of dramaturgy that preferences coherence and connections, despite the disruptive devices employed in his choreography:

Dramaturgy describes the thread of meaning, philosophic intent or logic, which allows the audience to accept and unite the disparate clues you give them into a coherent whole, connecting to other reference points and content in the larger world. (2010, p.46)

Clark trained in classical ballet at The Royal Ballet School and, notably with expert Cecchetti ballet teacher, Richard Glasstone, who continues to work with Clark's dancers, teaching company class. He shocked the dance establishment in his own choreography by using popular culture, such as punk rock influences from the

band, The Fall, who performed live on stage with him. Costumes designed by BodyMap and reflected Clark's own flamboyance. His public and private lives were closely connected, as he brought to his productions portrayals of London's gay nightclub culture that was particularly provocative in the socio-political context of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Clark's work is complex and turbulent in movement vocabulary, rhythms and use of space. Clark has continued this collaborative dialogue of dramaturgies with other artists and art forms. Film projections and vibrant stage lighting are integral to the visual production of the works analysed and contribute to the affective impact of disorientation experienced by the spectators. All three productions in this study, *New Work* (2012), *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral* (2013), and *to a simple, rock 'n' roll...song* (2016), were premiered at The Barbican Theatre, London. There are similarities across the three programmes in choreographic material, dancers' performance style and Clark's use of affective dramaturgies in production elements of lighting, costume and sound. Clark's dense movement vocabulary and affective use of colour, rhythm and spatial patterns, require spectators to attend closely to the precision and complexities of the choreography.

Spink trained in classical ballet in Australia before working in the UK with the contemporary dance company Second Stride. Spink choreographed highly gestural dance vocabulary that included everyday movements as part of the dance and obviously borrowed from popular culture and film, as clearly seen in *Further and Further into the Night* (1985) inspired by Alfred Hitchcock's film. This work is one of several of Spink's choreographic pieces that influenced both Anderson and Bourne in the early years of their choreography. Spink uses character and location in episodic

segments that draw upon Bausch's Tanztheater style of non-linear narrative and evocative images.

Snaith was trained at Dartington College after training in Visual Art at Wimbledon Art School. Her movement style is based on release technique and her choreography is multi-disciplinary using dance, voice, stage set, props, sound design and projections. Her company, Yolande Snaith Theatredance, was established in 1990 with funding from Arts Council England. I worked as a dramaturg to the company during the making of *Diction* (1992) and produced a series of workshops and a resource pack for the University of Surrey and National Resource Centre for Dance (NRCD). Snaith now works in the USA and produced two full-length solo works in 2013 and 2016. Her work demonstrates some parallels with Aggiss's work in its multi-disciplinary forms and solo productions. There is potential for further research beyond this thesis, exploring, in particular, affective turbulences and leaky encounters with older female dance artists, whose deviance continues to challenge critical frameworks and is under-represented in current scholarly discourse.

### **The dramaturgies of spectating and encountering**

The dramaturgy of encounter is defined in this research as the overarching context for the activities we do as spectators. I do not use the term dramaturgy to refer to the work of a dramaturg, as fulfilled by a particular person, or even to the choreographer. I draw upon the growing field of dramaturgic discourse in Europe, and the notion of 'new dramaturgies', as initiated primarily by Marianne Van Kerkhoven (1994) and subsequently through work at SARMA<sup>3</sup>, to explore how the

---

<sup>3</sup> SARMA is a Belgian research laboratory in Brussels for criticism, dramaturgy, research and creation in contemporary theatre and dance practices. The European system does not operate a rigid division between theatre and dance practices. The dialogue and critical discourses emerging are better suited to the nature of UK dance work that is influenced by European creative practices and dramaturgies of choreography than existing philosophical systems of analysis conventionally applied to dance studies.

systems operating in contemporary dance can be explained dramaturgically. This research builds upon the work of Cathy Turner and Synne Behrndt (2008 and 2010) on dramaturgic practices in British theatre and dance performance. I am influenced by their concept of 'porous' dramaturgies in relation to architectural spaces and performance events<sup>4</sup> and I include activities or encounters that occur outside the performance itself, but which are, I contend, still part of the spectators' dramaturgic encounter. I use the term 'leaky' to articulate how these affective systems operate outside the performance event and discuss these in detail in Chapter Five. I propose that similarities in affective dramaturgic impact can be tracked across contemporary dance pieces despite differences in choreographic material. I contend that the overall shared characteristic of these works is rooted in the dramaturgies of spectator attention. I propose that the most significant shared feature is the turbulent affective experiences evoked for spectators, referring to the experiences of spectating during the performance itself.

My perspective on turbulence differs somewhat to the notions of trauma, aggression or violence as described as dramaturgic turbulence by theatre director Eugenio Barba (2000) or playwright and dramaturg Bruce Barton (2005). I propose a more collaborative turbulence is found in contemporary dance dramaturgies, as discussed in Chapters Three and Four. I use 'turbulence' as a descriptor of the dramaturgies that cause a change or shift in spectating attentions in order to make

---

Marianne Van Kerkhoven exploded notions of European dramaturgy with her research and applied practices that re-articulated the notions of dramaturgy as being about an objective eye on the work to clarify its meaning. She coined the term 'new dramaturgy' in 1994 to explain changing processes in making contemporary theatre performance.

<sup>4</sup> Porous dramaturgies, as coined by Turner and Behrndt (2008), applies a model of spatial form to the experience of a work insofar as the space in which the performance occurs is integral to its affective impact and thus is a key feature of its dramaturgy. I find this focus on the actual space does not allow for the range of activities of engagement that occur through social media or pre- and post-show events associated with a performance.

activities of spectating the focus of the work. The nature of the change depends on the particular content of the work and can result in disorientation, excitement, and comedy or even, to some extent, participation from the spectators. This is spectating that is sensed, shared and social, which is about being at the dance, not just watching it. This study focuses on how the works create these opportunities, rather than documenting behaviour of audiences.

In contemporary dance choreography frequently exploits the turbulent effects of movements being off-centred or off-balance, so shapes and dynamics create images of falling, defying gravity and suspended motion and flow. This often creates unexpected rhythmic and spatial patterns that feel disorienting for spectators. I analyse the choreography to observe effects created in conjunction with production elements of lighting, sound and visual design. Highly trained dancers can articulate their bodies in such a way that they create this affective impact of turbulence for the spectators. Critics describe choreography in these works as ‘thrilling’ or ‘exhilarating’<sup>5</sup> and this discourse is used in publicity for venues to attract audiences. I use the notion of turbulence in the analyses of choreographic terms when dancers perform movements off the centre line of the body. It creates potential for turbulence that is characteristic of much movement material in contemporary dance. I employ terms and concepts from Rudolf Laban’s *Choreutics* or *Space Harmony* model (1966), using, especially, the spatial planes: the door (vertical), wheel (sagittal) or table (horizontal) planes. I note that movements in the

---

<sup>5</sup> A variety of turbulence in spectating experiences is found in the subtexts of enjoyment, excitement and playfulness in the critics’ responses to works such as Ali Smith on Michael Clark, who writes of ‘...an end that makes you want things never to end, a sheer anarchic momentary rite of joy’. (The Barbican website, 4 October 2017), and Ismene Brown comments that Burrows & Fargion ‘...have been making game-playing duos for a decade, some of which have done me physical damage, I’ve laughed so hard’. (*The Spectator*, 14 February 2015).

wheel or saggital plane are frequent motifs and contribute to images of turbulence in choreography. Additionally, I apply Laban's Effort terms of energy, weight, space and flow to convey the dynamics that contribute to the affective and emotional impact of the movements through space and time. I use the notion of turbulence to encompass spectators' responses to the overall combined affective impact of the movement, the production design and any thematic or narrative content. In this way, I show that each of the pieces challenges spectators in moments when something happens contrary to our expectations, making us consciously aware of our attention in spectating and engaging with the work.

In exploring socio-cultural and political contexts of affective engagement I consider how, according to post-structuralist dance scholar, Susan Leigh Foster (2011) processes of empathic connections and kinaesthesia can be framed as mediated by context. Kinaesthetic empathy is a controversial notion and Foster's socially mediated explanation of such engagement contrasts starkly with the perspective articulated by phenomenologist and dance scholar, Maxine Sheets-Johnstone (2009). This study offers a combined analysis using aspects of such approaches in order to acknowledge the visceral physical impact of the movement, but also to recognise that empathic engagement relies on how we connect with images, metaphors and movements. Foster maintains that we rely on socio-cultural and politically mediated contexts that inscribe movements with emotions, associations and affective qualities.

I propose that other dramaturgies extend our empathic engagement and affective connections outside the performance event. I include activities on virtual media, in online social networks and also digital publicity used by companies and venues that set up familiarity with the performance piece beforehand, or develop

our knowledge of it afterwards. These 'leaky' connections sit in the social and cultural parts of our lives. It seems we have a closer connection with the work when we 'like' it, 'comment' on it or 'share' it on our own personal social media pages. We are inscribing the affective encounters with our own leakages that add to the overall dramaturgic impact of the work. These virtual connections can give us agency in the affective impact of the work and can influence our expectations. I propose these can also influence the processes of empathic and kinaesthetic empathy that occur during the performance. It seems from my research that there is a connection between the frequency of leaky encounters and the perception of turbulence in spectating the performance. I observe that as spectating encounters become more turbulent and disorienting, the fewer opportunities are available for leaky encounters<sup>6</sup>. Equally, the more access that is given to the work through 'leaky' encounters, the less turbulent it seems to be for spectators. As they become more familiar with the work, its genre and dramaturgies, so its contradictions and challenges in performance are less disruptive. Moreover, these elements of the work become its features, such as the all-male cast of swans in Matthew Bourne's re-imagined *Swan Lake* (1995) as opposed to the traditional use of an all-female corps de ballet.

In this thesis I evaluate established approaches to critical discourse in dance and propose that since the 1980s contemporary dance practices have resisted existing frameworks of interpretation and analysis. The catalyst for this research is the mismatch that became apparent between experiences of spectating contemporary dance and the ways in which scholarly and critical discourse articulated those works and their impact. The discourses were unable to find

---

<sup>6</sup> In works of Michael Clark and Jonathan Burrows are examples of disorienting dramaturgies made more turbulent due to limited opportunities of leaky encounters, which would offer us ways to anticipate what may happen during the performances.



effective language to appropriately express affective experiences and new choreographic practices. Chapter One examines notions of affect in relation to dramaturgic experiences of turbulent spectating and leaky encounters to propose ways of articulating choreographic dramaturgies. The following discussion, in Chapter Two, begins with an analysis of Jonathan Burrows' piece *Body Not Fit for Purpose* to illustrate this mismatch between discourse and creative practices in contemporary dance and shows that this work, as other examples in this thesis, challenges the frames of discourse in established dance analysis. Chapters Three and Four identify the turbulent dramaturgies characteristic of those challenges and the nature of spectating labours demanded by those works through visual and kinaesthetic disturbances, respectively. A number of contemporary dance pieces are examined and compared in terms of their turbulent and leaky dramaturgies. Chapter Five explores the leaky encounters offered by these contemporary dance productions and how such fluid dramaturgies of engagement can be included in critical discourses about the works. Chapter Six concludes with a summary of key notions from discourses of affect and dramaturgy to propose a fundamental shift in critical discourse towards languaging such experiences.

# Chapter One

## Affective dramaturgies - sensed, shared and social

### Leaky and Turbulent Encounters

This thesis questions the existing range of concepts, within established critical dance analysis, being used to articulate spectator engagements that are integral to understanding and interpreting the work. Our affective encounters with these contemporary dance works have become the dramaturgic focus and choreographic devices make the spectating activity a visible and sensed part of the work. The focus on *being* at the encounter is integral to engaging with contemporary dance. Ways of articulating how we spectate at contemporary dance performances have changed from watching in order to interpret the meaning of a work, to articulating the experience of our encounter with the dance work, with its performers and with other spectators. These works create encounters with spectators, in which our own experiences are the essence of the work and spectators are given opportunities to become aware of our own activities of engaging and to sense disorientation, or turbulence in our affective engagement with kinetic, visual, aural, temporal and spatial components of the work. The works shape how we attend and prioritise our sensitivity to our own embodied encountering.

#### **A perspective on affective spectating**

I contend that these contemporary dance choreographers challenge our expectations of interpreting a work by opening up new discourses on the experience of *being* at, not just seeing the dance. Our activities of spectating are as directed as are the movements, dynamics, and interactions of the performers. Much of our

attention is being directed to ourselves, so we are becoming the focus and subject of the choreography. Dramaturgic devices deliberately shift attention onto our affective spectating activities that influence our experience of the event. The dramaturgy is the catalyst to our becoming engaged with and affected by the performance. The nature of this experience is frequently how audiences and critics discuss dance pieces by referring to sensations of affective engagement.

Additionally, choreographers discussed in this study use a range of production elements, such as visual designs, set, costume and projection, sound and often text, so that the dance movement is only one aspect of spectator engagement. Discourses of analysis and appreciation need to include the relationships between each element and also acknowledge that activities of watching and listening are not cumulative processes, but are intentionally fractured.

The performance analysis examines relationships across all production aspects and how these are experienced in time and space, the body, dynamics and energy flow through directions, impulses and trajectories. I use detailed analysis of key moments in the performance case studies to draw attention to ways in which dramaturgic impact is created for and with spectators. There are accounts of responses shared among the collective audience that can be seen or heard during the performances. The affective impact may create tension, anticipation or evoke empathic connections. I select particular moments I have analysed and recorded in my notes during live performances to explain how spectators can feel included in the ensemble choreography, for example when the group shaping on stage curves to mirror the audience's seating to evoke a feeling of social dance. This device is used repeatedly by Bourne in *Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake* when he stages large groups of dancers in semi-circular formations on stage at points in the narrative when a

crowd scene or group is dancing together, showing cohesion, and the audience is encouraged to feel part of the action by the use of circular floor patterns and gestures that indicate they extend into the auditorium to complete the circle, and so the spectators feel as if they are invited to the dance. I use a DVD recording of the piece to analyse specific movement patterns after seeing the live performance, but my analysis of audience reactions and affective impact are drawn entirely from performance events. A similar device is used by Aggiss in *The English Channel*, taken further when she invites the audience onto the stage for a 'knees up' at the end of her performance. She frequently breaks the illusion of a fourth wall and, by using direct address to her audience, establishes a close interaction between herself and the spectators.

It is inevitable that spectators draw on their own experiences and background, and for clarity in study, I declare here the perspectives that influence my understanding of the works. I trained at The Laban Centre for Movement and Dance (1984-1987) during an era when its practical dance curriculum was firmly rooted in Laban Studies and included repertory lessons on choreography by Mary Wigman and Kurt Jooss. All dance students learnt the Expressionist movement vocabulary of these choreographers as well as performance aesthetics, structure, form and dramaturgy of the choreography. Anderson and Bourne were also students at The Laban Centre during this era, when there was a flourishing choreographic output.

Part of my method of analysis adopts Laban's concepts from *Space Harmony* or *Choreutics* (1966) in which movements are described according to levels and planes, as well as points in space around the body's area, the 'kinesphere'. Laban's theories of effort flow are also applied in my accounts to articulate the energy and

dynamic quality of the movement over time. These relations between time and space, between the individual and the group, construct sensations that are emotionally affective even when not quantifiably measurable. I have selected works by choreographers about whom I have some direct, existing knowledge in terms of their movement vocabulary, or a shared experience of approaches to choreography and performance aesthetic. In this study, I do not claim to present a neutral account or objective analysis of the movement material in these dance pieces. Instead, I acknowledge these influences and use my movement knowledge to bring insight to the complexities of how the works create these encounters. During this research, I resumed weekly ballet classes in the Italian classical style developed by Enrico Cecchetti, whose teaching influenced ballet training and choreographic principles through the Royal Ballet School and particularly in Frederick Ashton's work. This was useful to reconnect with certain elements of style and movement principles in Clark's and Bourne's work. Their choreography displays influences from Cecchetti ballet style in physical and biomechanical patterns of movement, especially in the agile use of head, shoulders, and torque around the spine by initiating movement from the lower back. This also allowed me to reflect on my prior knowledge of movement in the Cecchetti style and to note how this influences my own spectating.

### **Performance materials**

Analysis was conducted during live performances that took place during the course of this research study. Anderson's *Edits* and *The Featherstonehaughs Draw on the Sketchbooks of Egon Schiele* were performed before the start of this research, therefore, although I saw these performances in 2010, I have used the video archive stored in the Trinity Laban Archive Library to access recordings of the works and to make close analyses of the pieces. I found it was possible to recall much of my own

experience of watching the work live when viewing it on the video recording. I drew upon my recalled experiences of the spectating audience when possible. I have used DVD recordings or material on company websites to revisit works and recall details of the performance that were notable in live performances. Anderson's work for *The Cholmondeleys* and *The Featherstonehaughs* has only limited excerpts available on her website, so my research process used archive recordings from the Trinity Laban Archive Library for those works also. Until 2010, Anderson's work was available as part of the GCSE and A Level Dance examinations, so resource guides about her choreography and recordings of her works were accessible, but are no longer available. These were limited in their scope, and dominated by semiotic methodologies of interpretation. This further supports my contention that there is insufficient understanding in mainstream dance analysis and dance education of affective dramaturgies in these works. The prevailing tendency of these resources for schools' dance studies is to find a meaning and to find evidence of the choreographer's intentions. This is in opposition to the approach I use in this research, as those GCSE and A Level resources exemplify the mis-match between the dance work and its surrounding critical discourse. This mirrors a wider trend in dance appreciation of an imbalance between written discourse and spectating experience that is the catalyst for this study. In this thesis, I develop more appropriate ways to articulate the affective dramaturgies and embodied spectating created by these works. I draw on my experience of working with Snaith on her production of *Diction* (1992), commissioned by the University of Surrey. I produced an education resource pack, designed and delivered participation workshops that explored Snaith's choreographic material, the use of vocals and work with props in *Diction*. I refer to my own copy of this publication and video clips of *Diction* that are available on

Snaith's website.<sup>7</sup> Other pieces by Snaith are also discussed in Chapter Four on dramaturgies of kinetic turbulence.

As part of this research methodology, I took part in workshops, symposia and attended pre and post-show talks with the selected choreographers. These practical research activities have been a valuable way to analyse the wider dramaturgic systems more closely. I attended two practical workshops as a dancer/choreographer; one was hosted by C-DaRE Coventry in 2013 as part of Aggiss's residency at the University of Coventry to accompany her performance of *The English Channel*. The second event, a practice of dramaturgy workshop, 'Working on Actions', was hosted by Sadler's Wells Theatre and directed by Konstantina Georgelou, Efrosini Protopapa and Danae Theodoridou in 2015. In the following chapter, I compare how creative practices have shifted concepts and re-framed our understanding of dramaturgies in dance to break away from the framework of existing dance analysis<sup>8</sup>.

### **Dramaturgies as catalysts of affect**

I contend that dramaturgic devices in dance theatre function as catalysts to disrupt and mobilise spectating activities as alternatives to conveying meaning. These processes create spaces for audiences to engage together with the performance and become aware of how we share in the response. The dramaturgies of processing the work draw attention to our spectating labours. In a similar way, by using the term 'experiencing commonality' Georgelou et al. (2017, p.56) indicate

---

<sup>7</sup> Yolande Snaith website featuring clips of *Diction*: [www.yolandesnaith.com/1990-1995](http://www.yolandesnaith.com/1990-1995) and [www.yolandesnaith.com/video](http://www.yolandesnaith.com/video)

<sup>8</sup> Heidi Gilpin (1997) and Synne Behrndt (2010) explore how dramaturgic practices have become part of dance discourse.

that there is a connection between spectators, while acknowledging this is not the same as creating or seeking homogeneity<sup>9</sup>.

In the UK, terminologies of dramaturgy did not feature in discourse until the late 1990s. Van Kerkhoven's (1994) proposal that dramaturgy includes all activities marks the beginning of significant increase in scholarly discourse around dramaturgic practices. In the field of dance studies, the term dramaturgy was not part of the discourse until Heidi Gilpin (1997) identified the ways in which contemporary theatre and contemporary dance practices share similar creative processes. Gilpin focuses mostly on the work during rehearsal that involves individuals in the role of a dramaturg. Conversely, in this thesis, I take up the notion of dramaturgies in the performance itself and how these are integral to spectators' activities as part of interpreting the work.

Adrian Heathfield (2010), writer and curator in *Performance and Visual Culture*, writes about dramaturgy from the perspective that contemporary dramaturgy practices now operate without an individual working as a dramaturg<sup>10</sup>. I consider dramaturgies as the processes and systems of the work, not only shaped by its format, but also found in moments or events that provoke spectator reactions and that affective encounters are primarily phenomena of social connections and individual emotional impact. Complexities inherent in terms such as affect and emotion used as umbrella concepts are flagged by aestheticians Paul Griffiths (1997), Richard Wollheim (1999) and, in particular, by literary scholar, Charles Altieri (2003). These complexities exist in parallel discourses in this thesis as I draw connections

---

<sup>9</sup> I contend that dramaturgies of contemporary dance create shared, sensed and social experiences that are about communication between spectators.

<sup>10</sup> Heathfield sets out the challenge of how to explain in writing the processes that operate in the moment of live theatre making. His approach shares concerns raised by Charles Altieri, literary aesthetician. In this thesis I build on the work of both scholars as my study tackles the same question within the context of contemporary dance.



across philosophy, affect theory and cognitive science towards mapping out ways to articulate perception and experience in an interdisciplinary approach. I draw on Sheet-Johnstone's phenomenological framework throughout this thesis in what she refers to as 'the challenge of languaging experience'.

### **Affective multiplicity**

Briginshaw uses Deleuze's concept of 'irrational cut' in her discussion of contemporary dance to explore affect and immanence in dance. Her choice of philosophical model is a response to creative practices in contemporary dance in which narratives and meaning are non-linear. I draw a connection between Briginshaw's Deleuzian framework and Jordan's post-structuralist analysis of stylistic practices in works by Spink and his influence on other choreographers in the 1980s. This is explored further in Chapter Five. Jordan comments that the collaborators on Second Stride's *Bösendorfer Waltzes*; 'Spink, Albery and McDonald all emphasised their liberation from channelled, logical, storytelling into irrational experience, the evocation of an emotional response that cannot be explained.' (1992, p.200) Then she conjectures;

...it could also be suggested that highly ambiguous, contradictory works like *Bösendorfer* hardly offer anything as firm as 'story'. Perhaps these subscribe more readily to Roland Barthes' poststructuralist notion of a 'writerly', plural text that defies interpretation; writerly because it insists on the active role of the reader as the co-author, at the same time answering, not to an interpretation, even a liberal one, but to an explosion, a dissemination. (1992, p.200)

Briginshaw's framework of analysis is based on Deleuze's concept of irrational cuts, as applied to his studies of cinema and film in which images of movement are re-thought as time images. Using this approach, she explains, pluralities in Deleuze's notions of time and space are integral to engaging with complex choreography such as *Shiver Rococo* by Emilyn Claid<sup>11</sup>:

---

<sup>11</sup> Emilyn Claid is a choreographer whose work during the 1970s and 1980s was significant in shaping contemporary dance. Her movement style draws on New Dance practices of release techniques

Analysing *Shiver Rococo* in terms of irrational cuts demonstrates the complexity of the choreographic and performance plays at work and reveals some of the ways in which they prompt pluralistically open thought and, in the process, reconfigure notions of time. (2009, p.50)

Claid choreographed the piece as part of a research project with Briginshaw on rethinking temporality. Briginshaw outlines the challenges of languaging dance, as explored during that research:

A danced image can never be translated into words and described. The relations between the formation of the danced images and our visual and written images of *Shiver Rococo*, and between some danced images in the piece, can be seen to work in a manner similar to the 'irrational cut', in that many of the danced images in their shifting ambiguities and incommensurabilities seem to emerge at the border of thought or at the edge of reason. (2009, p.52)

One of the performers working with Claid on *Shiver Rococo* was Matthew Hawkins, who trained at The Royal Ballet School with Clark and performed with him from the early 1980s onwards. There was a shared dramaturgic exploration of how movement can challenge expectations of logical development and representation. I worked with Hawkins in 1987 on a choreographic project for dancers and untrained performers. I can recall him emphasising instructions during improvisational tasks to create multiple impressions in a movement about which way the body might move next; to be able to switch direction and redirect the body's momentum to create an effect of multiple directional limbs and torsos moving through the space at all levels [low, middle and high]. Briginshaw summarises Claid's choreography in their project as codes:

The danced codes of *Shiver Rococo* are thus concerned with re-linking new asymmetric experiences of time and space. They are fluid, fluctuating and multiple,

---

combined with influences from Cunningham's vocabulary. She directed Extemporary Dance Theatre and commissioned new works from Michael Clark, Karole Armitage, Fergus Early, Laurie Booth and Steve Paxton. The latter two choreographers introduced a new generation of audiences to New Dance and performers recruited for these pieces were Dartington trained dancers, Yolande Snaith, Michelle Richecoeur and Nigel Charnock. Influences can be seen in Snaith's own choreography, such as *Diction* (1992). In Snaith's pieces affective sense of time and duration is explored through complex rhythms of movement, percussion and voice that create part of the turbulence impact.

in state of continuous variations, exhibiting properties that are 'objectile', a notion that Deleuze introduces in his book, *The Fold* (1993). (2009, p.54)

She explains the choreography and its affective impact in terms of Bergson's notion of affective openness drawing upon *Matter and Memory*; 'My body is, then in the aggregate of the material world, an image which acts like other images, receiving and giving back movement.' (1988, p.19) Briginshaw gives detailed, extended descriptions of phrase in Claid's choreography to illustrate how the philosophical concepts of affect are manifest in the performance. I adopt a similar technique in this thesis when taking sections of choreography as examples and follow Briginshaw's model of detailed accounts using movement terms to convey how the affective impact of the experience is created. Such examples are provided throughout the thesis, always rooting the discussion in the applied context of the dance. In Chapters Three and Four there are extensive accounts of sections of choreography to examine affective dramaturgies of visual turbulence and kinaesthetic turbulence in contemporary dance from the 1980s through to recent, new works.

Ramsey Burt (2009) contributes an analysis of Anderson's *Elvis Legs* (2003: a revival for The Cholmondeleys) that offers a useful parallel to my accounts of *The Featherstonehaughs Draw on the Sketchbook of Egon Schiele* in Chapter Three, and *Edits*, in Chapter Two, breaking out of the frame of dance analysis. The complexity of the choreography echoes the multiplicity of Claid's affective openness and support Briginshaw's modelling of Deleuze's irrational cut. Burt describes the actions and the performance style of *Elvis Legs* to convey its affective impact and its turbulent dramaturgy:

...the movement is all performed at the same pitch or energy, then for the final third stepped up to another higher energy level. There is thus no sense of development or climax. The dancers were spaced out along a deep diagonal line and remained dancing on the same spot throughout the piece. First, one after the other, each danced their own solos. Then these were repeated in sequence by the other two

dancers while the initial soloist jumped from one rock star pose from their solo to another. All then turned to face backstage and the sequence with freezes was repeated again. Turning forwards once more towards the audience, they performed the freezes material one last time and then finally, as the music changed to a much faster tempo, danced all three solos right through in unison. This, and the movement at the start where each dancer introduces their moves are the only times when the beholder gets to see the movement clearly. For most of the rest of the piece, it is only seen in fragments and in frozen moment. This abstracted fragmentation robs the movement of their narcissistic potential by encouraging the beholder to appreciate the dancers' attention to detail rather than focus on any overall characterisation. (2009, p.78)

There are several key elements of turbulent dramaturgy that are explored in further detail in this study to show how Anderson's choreographic and dramaturgic practices portray these characteristics across the range of her works. These also resonate with Briginshaw's analysis of Claid's choreography, that although it has a different movement vocabulary, it operates with similar affective dramaturgies of multiplicity, non-representation and openness to '*assymetric experiences of time and space*'. (2009, p.54)

### **Affective experiencing: collective and individual**

This research focuses on shared and social experiences of affect in relation to spectating dramaturgies. Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth characterise affect as; '...visceral forces beneath, alongside or generally other than conscious knowing that can serve to drive us toward movement, thought and ever-changing forms of relation.' (2010, p.ix) Changing forms of visual images, kinaesthetic and empathic features of affective impact are most applicable to spectating contemporary dance. Affect theories began to redress the reliance on semiotic theories in dance aesthetics in the era of post-structuralism and inter-textuality. Patricia Ticineto Clough summarises:

When in the early to mid-1990s, critical theorists and cultural critics invited a turn to affect, they often did so in response to what they argued were limitations of post-structuralism and deconstruction [...which] were truly glacial in the pronouncement of the death of the subject and therefore has little to do with affect and emotion [...] it returned critical theory and cultural criticism to bodily matter [...] a dynamism immanent to bodily matter. (Gregg and Seigworth [eds.] 2010, p.206)

Dance scholar and practitioner, Erin Manning, comments on how affective impact causes changes:

Affect is the feeling-vector of individuation's process as it tunes to its dephasing. It is transformative. And it is collective. It is collective because it is always coincident with the forces that bring it into being and which it articulates [...] Affect is collective because it tunes to a multiplicity of forces already phasing, because it is itself a force of attunement. (2013, p.27)

Here Manning expresses the notion that affective engagement is about *being* there and that in being at the event spectators are engaging in an encounter, not as a finished product, but as becoming part of a creative process. Manning draws attention to the corporeal in a notion of 'self' as characterised by affect philosophies:

There is no body that isn't always already collective, always already active in the relational interweaving of more than one tending, more than one phase, more than one ecology in the making [...] Affect's transductive potential cuts across individuality, moving the bodying toward the collective agitation of its preindividual potential. In its cutting across, affect does not dismantle the body: it multiplies it. (2013, p.27)

Augmenting Manning's notion, Brian Massumi, a political theorist and philosopher, proposes an understanding of the 'emerging' body as it keeps re-forming and so it is a body in a social and shared experience. In some ways this seems to describe the challenge of expressing verbally the physicality of the spectating experiences and encounters. He comments further:

...when I say that it all comes back to the body, I don't mean the body as a thing part from the self or subject. I mean the body **is** that region of in-mixing from which subjectivity emerges. It is the coming together of the world, for experience, in a here and now prior to any possibility of assigning categories like subject and object. The affective region we are taking about is not in-between in the inter-subjective sense. And its not intentional in the sense of already carrying a subject-object polarity, it's a brewing, the world stirring [...]it's a coming event. (2015, p. 52, emphasis in original)

The affective impact of dance theatre can be noted through its impact upon the individual members of a collective audience. Turbulent dramaturgies, as explained in this study, resonate strongly with Massumi's notion of 'stirring'. In critical discourse

and reviews, terminology such as 'disorienting' is often used to describe the spectating experience. Analyses of performances indicate where the affective impact is generated and how disorientation or turbulence is part of the affective experience. There seems to be a cumulative and sustainable affective impact upon the audience. The body is central to affective impact and Massumi contends that affective impact is cumulative. He explains that affect and emotion are interconnected:

The experience of a change, an affecting-being affected, is redoubled by an experience of that experience. This gives the body's movements a kind of depth that stays with it across all its transitions – accumulating in memory, in habit, in reflex, in desire, in tendency. Emotion is the way the depth of that ongoing experience registers personally at a given moment. (2015, p.4)

Similarly, theatre scholar John Lutterbie adopts notions of flow in dynamic systems theories to show how human existence and our experience of daily life is shaped by flux. He applies this model of shifting to affective and imaginative encounters in theatre spectating.

A dynamic system can be reduced to four structural elements: control parameters, attractor states, perturbations and phase shifts [...] A dynamic system is open to being de-stabilised, but engages these disruptions by the evocation of previously established patterns developed over a lifetime that allow us to contain and resolve the perturbations to the system [...] and potential of creative discovery is immanent. (Shaughnessy [ed.] 2013, pp.104 & 115)

Performances create affective sensations for the spectator and can appear to magnify differences in perceptions of time and space. Choreographers shape how we see the dancers' actions through the dramaturgic structures and the visual and aural elements of the whole production to create the affective content of the works, but it is essentially movement of bodies that connects us to the performance. We follow the space-time shifts across the stage and see, hear and sense how the performers move and are still. This attention to their physicality brings a heightened attention to our own enacted perceptions and empathic physicalities such as

changes in breathing rates, facial expressions or muscular tension as we sit and watch.

### **Affective spectacles of contemporary dance: visual and kinetic disruptions**

The seduction of spectacle as a vehicle to transport the spectator into an illusory world of sensory experiences is one phase of the engagement, but 'meta-affective' dance works interrupt the seduction of the spectacle in a self-reflexive way by focusing on the components of affect. This shifts the attention directly back upon the individual spectators and group as the audience. The effect is to 'break the spell' and makes apparent the dramaturgic components, drawing our attention to them and to their affect on us. Our attention is split, maybe in more than two directions, and this heightened state of plural attention is sustained simultaneously between the performance, our individual selves and our membership of the audience group. From this perspective we are distanced from the content of the piece and find attention is shifted onto the meta-aesthetic appreciation of the elements of its construction and in particular onto the affective aspects of the work, which are in that moment being both experienced *and* observed by spectators. It is this shifted attention and recognition of the affect at work, which is characterised as 'meta-affective' and I propose is a shared feature of the contemporary dance pieces explored in this study.

Aoife McGrath (2014) introduced her concept of the 'space of affective adjacency',<sup>12</sup> to describe the sensation of becoming aware of the distance between performer and spectator and the apparent bursting of the affective 'bubble'.

McGrath analysed this experience as one in which the affective spell was broken and

---

<sup>12</sup> McGrath presented an unpublished paper at the Choreography Working Group of the IFTR World Congress 2014 at the University of Warwick.

the spectator was left apparently outside the experience as an observer. The attention moved from entirely focused on the performed activities, to include those activities of the spectator and fellow audience members. From this perspective, McGrath was prompted to consider the affective dramaturgy of the event and what may have led to this perceived separation from the affective moment. Similarly<sup>13</sup>, Adam Alston (2014) presented his concept of 'post-immersive' theatre in which the spectator-participant feels like an observer of the activities without the seductive affect and emotional engagement through the illusion of immersion. I consider these proposals as part of a discourse on meta-affective dramaturgy, in which the affective experience can be felt and observed in spectator behaviour. The plurality of the positioning of the spectator, or the splitting of the spectator's attention to the sense of affect and simultaneously to the observance of the affective devices or dramaturgic structures, is the essence of the work, and is indeed what makes it so exciting and disorienting for the spectator. The work of Burrows included in this study is problematic in terms of its theatricality and sense of spectacle. Earlier pieces for the Jonathan Burrows Company and current works for Burrows and Fargion refute the trend of visual design, set, costume and lighting. Their visual aesthetic is minimal and simplistic but I contend that nevertheless, there is a self-reflexive attention to spectacle. The detailed, repeated, small movement vocabulary of gestural or pedestrian actions appear to be anti-spectacle, however I propose that the demands of the work place such emphasis on the labour of spectating as a central concern of the choreography that these works present a radically pared-down spectacle, due to the intensity of the attention they demand. There are

---

<sup>13</sup> Adam Alston gave his unpublished paper on immersive theatre and affective spectatorship, using case study examples from Punchdrunk's *Drowned Man* and other productions. He presented at the IFTR 2014 World Congress at the University of Warwick.



similarities to be identified in the choreographic attention to spectating and the affective labours demanded by the choreographies from Burrows and other choreographers included in this study. Even in obviously narrative pieces, such as the work of Bourne, it is apparent that Bourne's manipulation of the audience, its affective impact, is much more of a concern than following the details of narrative or characters. In the successfully re-imagined production of *Lord of The Flies*, Bourne and Scott Ambler, as director and choreographer respectively, created a piece that explored visceral and emotional experiences in their adaptation of Golding's novel.

The production dramaturgy gripped the audience in the spectacle, but most importantly demanded the audience to focus on its own behaviour during the performance. It shifted attention to a self-reflexive awareness of the components of spectating. This feature of the work can be considered as most important, because the affective bubble is not burst; audiences feel adjacent to the performance and its affect, but not removed from the affective experience. This multiple affective attention seems to heighten the experience and offers opportunity for resonance around the auditorium and allows for awareness of subtle entrainment of the group. It is through the dramaturgy of meta-affective choreography, such as fragmentation, disorientation in time-space patterns and shifting of visual and aural attention, to an embodied sensitivity, perhaps a kinetic empathy, that spectators feel the affective impact. They sense the dramaturgic structures that allow spectators simultaneously to experience and to observe the affective devices at work.

I use the notion of dramaturgic turbulence to encompass spectators' responses to the overall combined affective impact of the movement, the production design and any thematic or narrative content. In this way, I show that each of the pieces challenges spectators in moments when something happens

contrary to our expectations, making us consciously aware of our attention in spectating and engaging with the work. The affective impact of the turbulence in these productions can be correlated to the opportunities for encounters with the works outside the performance event, in leaky dramaturgies offered by social media, interaction, participation and other spectator communications. The more familiar spectators are with images of the choreography or the style of the production in advance, the less turbulent or disorienting the spectating experience becomes.

In the work of literary aesthete, Charles Altieri (2003), the notion of affect includes the role of imagination in affective processes. Affective encounters in this research are sensed, shared and social experiences. Altieri considers how the complexities of the discourses around the term 'affect' should be re-articulated and permitted to embrace the ways in which art shapes distinct affective states. He champions the importance of imagination in his model of affective engagement and declares it is undervalued in the contemporary discourses of appreciation in literature and poetry that favour socio-cultural contextualisation or cognitive science of perception to explain meanings and emotion in literary texts. There is a challenge proffered in Altieri's work that echoes Sheets-Johnstone's challenge of languaging experience. Altieri calls for caution in the use of the term 'affect' simplistically, which he claims insufficiently conveys breadth and subtleties of affective reactions and emotions, expressing concern about the challenge of bridging the gap between affect in performance and its discourse in academic scholarship. Altieri identifies the potential for much broader application of understanding beyond the aesthetic appreciation itself, noting that he became:

fascinated by the degree to which using theoretical concerns about the affects to respond to the arts brought about an aesthetic dimension to our concerns with the affects in all areas of our lives [...] being moved takes many forms. Some of which do

not involve conceptual formulations of any kind, and there are many modes of expressive activity that call for various attunements not available when we think in terms of belief. (2003, p.3)

He echoes Sheets-Johnstone's call for an interdisciplinary methodology to emerge from scholarly research that is mutually supportive of the social constructivist and cognitive approaches. According to Altieri, there is 'no other respectable way of approaching the topic', he continues, 'emotions are not theoretical states; they involve a practical concern associated with a readiness to act'. (2003 p.255) Additionally he validates phenomenological methodology and advocates it for approaching complexities of affect:

I see phenomenology as central to my project because it offers means of seeking generalization without relying on either induction or deduction. Descriptions become representative because they engage intuition and hence elicit agreement not only on how phenomena appear but also on what kind of significance might be attributed to the specific characterisation. (2003, p.34)

The approach of this study, as outlined previously, draws on Sheets-Johnstone's phenomenological concepts and my Laban training for dance analysis. It shows movement as affective, but not as oppositional to emotional, imaginative and cognitive interpretations. I contend that the dramaturgic affective impacts of contemporary dance creative practice are socio-culturally mediated and linked to meaning. According to Ruth Leys, philosopher and affect theorist, this shifts my analytical framework into a sphere of cognition that is denied by some philosophers, or new affect theorists<sup>14</sup>, as she terms them.

Leys (2011) maps out how recent affect theories separate emotions from affect and that these must exist prior to cognition, distinct from any thinking or beliefs. Leys is critical of philosophers, such as Massumi, for whom affect is intensity

---

<sup>14</sup> Leys criticises Massumi (2002) and Clough (2007) et al. whose approach to affect is based only on non-intentional, precognitive affects and with intensity as per Deleuzian theories but not as part of cognitive systems. Emotions then are situated as cognitive by being linked to belief and intentionality.

of experience and non-intentional. Leys criticises this view that affect must be non-cognitive, corporeal processes as 'irreducibly bodily and autonomic'. (2002, p.28) Leys contrasts this approach to philosophers, whom she calls appraisal theorists, who 'found emotions to be embodied intentional states governed by our beliefs' (2011, p.437). Leys finds a *shared anti-intentionalism* [italics in original] between so-called new affect theorists and neuroscientists,

who recognise the same belief that affect is independent of signification and meaning [...and] a matter of autonomic responses that occur below the threshold of consciousness and cognition and to be rooted in the body. What the new affect theorists and the neuroscientists share is that there is a gap between the subject's affects and its cognition or appraisal of the affective situation or object. (2011, 443)

It would be difficult to identify affective moments in Bourne's *Sleeping Beauty*, Aggiss' *The English Channel*, or Burrows' *Cheap Lecture* that do not rely on recognition of socio-culturally shaped beliefs. Burrows draws on performance-audience relationships as conventions to subvert; Aggiss confronts our socially constructed expectations of women and girls; and Bourne uses a popularist, gothic aesthetic, seen in Carabosse's late-Victorian style black and red dress, lit as a silhouette against a projected full moon to a crescendo of Tchaikovsky's music. In this example, as in many others, affective impact is not separated from meaning.

Leys summarises that if, according to Massumi, affect is 'virtual' it follows that affect is then removed from the body. Adopting Massumi's proposal would remove scope for placing the body, whether that of the dancer or spectator, as central in this study and makes further separation between body and mind. Leys comments further (2011, p.470) that such anti-intentionalist approaches, that she classifies as 'post-psychoanalytic', are limited due to the residual notions of cognitivism linked to linguistic models of intentionality.

I share Leys' criticisms of anti-intentionalism in affect theory, as the central proposal of this thesis is that as affective encounters are socio-culturally mediated, these encounters are intentionally orchestrated by the dramaturgies in the work to create affective impacts and meaning.

## Chapter Two

### Breaking out of dance analysis frameworks

#### **'Out of sync' with creative practices in contemporary choreography**

Susan Leigh Foster (2011) holds that our affective experiences, empathies and interpretations of meanings are all learnt constructs, rather than instinctive, visceral and pre-cognitive reactions. I maintain that Burrows crafts dramaturgic challenges for the spectators and confronts us with socially familiar tropes that are contradicted and juxtaposed with gestures and movements that feel non-sequitur. Spectators experience disorientation as Burrows' choreographic material subverts conventional expectations of dance by using detailed, small gestures that do not use any codified or traditional dance vocabulary. Lepecki (2006) characterises such subversion in other choreographers like Jerome Bêl and Boris Charmatz, both European contemporaries of Burrows. Lepecki explores how their work, like Burrows' choreography, has exhausted all possibilities of choreographed dance movement, so that it can be argued these performance pieces do not actually contain any 'dancing'. This analysis of Burrows' work and its discourse is largely shaped by Foster's concepts of socio-culturally constructed experiences, as well as Lepecki's analysis of dramaturgic encounters with turbulent dance. I make reference to Heathfield's dramaturgic processes of dialogue between the spectator and the work, in order to unpick how Burrows' choreographed collisions between text and movement create affective and emotional encounters.

## **Affective dialogues**

Spectating performances by Burrows and Fargion is an affective encounter, but the encounter defies description or explanation according to established critical discourse. The work is innovative, personal and poignant, making extreme demands on the spectators through sabotaging our expectations. The encounter or spectating experience is at moments exhilarating, often de-stabilising, mesmerising and, above all, it feels 'live' and immediate which is captivating. Burrows commented on such phenomenological experiences in interview about his recent work *Any Table, Any Room* (2017) before its premiere in Brighton on 17 October 2017:

Choreography is different from theatre in that the meanings are often less stable, more a combination of intuitive empathetic response, and a constant and quite virtuosic reading of fleeting references and emotional states. Human beings are brilliant at reading these kinds of pieces and everyone knows when it makes sense to them. (Burrows in interview ACCA, Brighton)

The dramaturgic demands of spectating focus on attention to detail, precision and intensity. Burrows and Fargion's pared-down, yet virtuosic performances disorientate the spectators, they amuse us and amuse themselves. We share those exchanges of live immediacy that bring an acute sense of 'liveness' to our encounters with these works. In small studio theatre venues, spectators are physically close to the stage area, maybe only a few feet away. As a result, there is a sense of connection, familiarity and even empathy with the performers before they begin. This creates a sense of shared experience between spectators and performers, as well as amongst spectators. In Burrows' work, it appears there is very little dividing the performers from the spectators. They are often seated, as are the spectators; they are casually dressed; their dance vocabulary is movements and actions from every day, normal activities, instead of any recognisable dance

movement. These are disruptive dramaturgic devices, but the impact is to bring spectators closer to the performers, rather than distance them.

In *Body Not Fit for Purpose* (2014), as in many of their previous pieces, Burrows and Fargion are dressed in similar casual, plain, coloured T-shirts and blue jeans. They are of a similar age and roughly similar physique. At first glance, without prior knowledge, it would be difficult to tell who is dancer and who is musician before they take their respective places behind or beside the table centre stage. Their roles are made clear as Burrows introduces the first piece and Fargion plays the mandolin. Each pause and nod to each other, apparently to cue the start of the next action, but then on realising that all rules and conventions are presented and also subverted, on reflection even this nod could actually be an action itself, not a precursor to the performed action. Several critics and dance writers comment on the appearance of Burrows and Fargion, which also subverts our expectations of performers in costume. Our work in viewing and their action of subversion has begun even before they begin the piece.

Dance scholar, Ramsay Burt considers the relationship between the two men, between the two men and the audience, and between the spectators in the audience. Burt's interest focuses on notions of gender and masculinity in the performance style of Burrows and Fargion. The working on actions, performed in the piece, is shared between the two men, not in unison movements, but seemingly equally (2006). A dramaturgic feature of all Burrows' pieces, since his own early works in the 1980s, is overtly subverting meanings, often using comedy. Burt contends that these effects are generated by the *interactions* between the two men and not by their actions per se. The spectators engage with the apparent meanings of gestures, words and actions, only to find out that our connecting of actions does



not apply to the piece after all. As spectators we have to re-work our processes while encountering the next section, having abandoned our earlier interpretations of meanings. Burt makes references to dance critic Deborah Jowitt's analysis of their work in relation to gender identity and the sabotaging of meaning.

A lot of the irony and wit in the piece came from an appreciation of the open relationship across different layers of meaning that the piece generated. It is in this way that the dancers' gender, almost by accident, became significant within the piece. Many reviewers commented on their age and gender. Thus like Deborah Jowitt began by asking; 'two middle-aged men sitting on chairs for 98 percent of 45 minutes of silent minutes, moving their arms, heads and torsos – how fascinating can that be? Only to answer herself, "Very, very' (Jowitt 2004 in Burt 2006, np. on Jonathan Burrows' website).

Affective spectating attention is shifted by the intricate choreographic details, as analysed by Briginshaw below. Burt notes how this dramaturgic system of repetition opens spectating to see differences between similar repetitions:

Valerie Briginshaw has written at length about the use of repetition in *Both Sitting Duet*. Repetition, she argues, makes one aware not only of the sameness of the thing repeated but also the inescapable difference between each individual repetition and the thing it repeats. In *Both Sitting Duet*, she argues, repetition actually makes the spectator aware of both sameness and differences, not only between repeated events but also between the two male performers. They are like one another as men, but the more they seem to be performing the same material in the same way, the more the differences between them become apparent. As Briginshaw points out, 'problematic, iconic images of white, middle-aged, straight males, traditionally associated with the dominant subject position, are repeated differently and transformed through the minutiae of differences that matter in the performance'. (Briginshaw in Burt, 2006)

Burt concludes that such dramaturgic and choreographic devices create opportunity for personal and collective affective impact in the audience:

From the audience's point of view, I suggest, *Both Sitting Duet* can gently remind them individually of the sometimes unsettling difference between self and other. One's gender is central to this difference in so far as it determines one's status in relationship to the dominant (masculine) subject position, and yet this, in itself, can never adequately account for one's sense of one's singularity. What, I suggest, is so satisfying and valuable about *Both Sitting Duet* is the gentle way it allows one to find in the relationship between Burrows and Fargion the possibility that one's own connection with others can depend as much on one's singularity as it does on one's gender. (Burt 2006 np)

The choreography in Burrows' pieces consists mostly of hand and arm gestures with torso movement involved to extend or facilitate the actions. These gestures, hand shapes and arm movements are complex in their detail and virtuosic in the way Burrows performs them at speed with precision and clarity. The gestures are non-mimetic and, contrary to possible expectations of spectators, do not, in themselves, contain or convey meanings. As a result, our spectating attention is on the actions not on what they intend or what they may represent. These actions are presented, they are non-representational and although we may feel we recognise the movement, or infer a coded meaning when we look for a system of communication in Burrows' work, there is none. The function of the movement is the action itself. There is an intensity in the affective impact for spectators from the demands of the work we have to do, when attending to the detailed hand shaping and arm movements tracing lines in the air or being placed precisely in a location on the table or on other parts of the body. In the absence of searching for representation or meanings, we can sense the spatial and rhythmic patterns in these highly complex phrases, built following devised scores and designed to be almost impossible to achieve in live performance. The intensity of their concentration is apparent and it seems that, in a way similar to a distributed cognition or contagion of synchronisation, we as spectators are attending to the pattern of movements almost as closely as the performers do. Even when the actions are described, this is insufficient to convey fully the experience of the complexity and dynamics or energy quality. The performance attention is also manifest in the facial expressions and breathing patterns of the performers. It seems that there is simply too much to describe even though the works at first appear to be minimal and the actions seem small-scale; indeed, arguably, they are not in fact 'dance' at all.

Mary Brennan, dance critic, illustrates the nature of the spectating experience by focusing on describing actions and movements in *Cheap Lecture* and *The Cow Piece* (2009). The actions create an affective impact without any translation or de-coding. Brennan summarises the use of humour and enjoyment of this affective encounter. She articulates her sensory experiences of spectating:

How magic is it, when two men – standing still at mic-stands – make words dance in your ears, your thoughts and occasionally before your eyes like mischievous pop-ups in a rogue power-point presentation? Jonathan Burrows and Matteo Fargion do that, and more, in *Cheap Lecture* before adding to the merriment, sly provocations and rhythmic exuberance with more games-play in *The Cow Piece*. (2015, 27 April, np)

The musicality and rhythm of their pieces is highly engaging and affective. In *Body Not Fit for Purpose*, Fargion plays the mandolin and Burrows performs his sequences of gestures, which mirror the musical structure and rhythms. Often the movements are more intricate and complex than the musical form, but they are very closely synchronised at the beginnings and endings of phrases and at key moments of emphasis. These draw our attention and seem to punctuate the work, showing the significant relationship between the music and the movement. This dramaturgic device creates spaces and patterns for spectators to see and hear the connections, thus for us to feel or sense those connections ourselves.<sup>15</sup> At a moment of musical emphasis, the movement is strong and weighted with a direct spatial form. The musical phrasing that allows for a caesura is echoed in sustained, light movement energy, as if hovering before concluding the phrase. The phrasing of the piece extends beyond the music itself into the phrasing and timing used by both performers in the gaps between the short sections. *Body Not Fit for Purpose* starts with Burrows announcing into his microphone; “Number One; the Arab-Israeli

---

<sup>15</sup> For full version of *Body Not Fit for Purpose* (2014) in performance recorded by Motionbank please see: <https://vimeo.com/101114598>

conflict', and he begins and ends exactly with Fargion's accompaniment. In this way, the spectators are trained to pay equal attention to both senses of hearing and sight and we understand that this piece functions, dramaturgically and affectively, on connections<sup>16</sup>.

Both performers turn over one page of their separate score and pause. They keep their gaze down as if counting beats of a rest, before sharing a nod to each other to continue. Burrows points to a place on his score sheet, as if the title, and announces; 'This dance is called George W. Bush'. The spectators laugh at this moment; on every occasion I have seen this piece, laughter happens at this point. It is interesting that it is a shared laughter of gentle amusement across almost all the audience. The mood is easily shared because the audience is small and close to the performing area. The stage lights give enough light so that we can see each other and this close proximity adds to a sense of intimacy, trust and shared connections. During my own spectating encounters with Burrows' works, I engage with the movements and gestures primarily as patterns of dynamics and energy according to speed, weight and directions. It is useful for the analysis to cluster the movements and gestures into groupings that allow spectators to follow Burrows' choreography in a more fluent way than otherwise. Given that the gestures can be very rapid and Burrows performs them in quick succession, it is very difficult to 'keep-up' with this pace if we are watching in singular units of gesture, trying to describe what we are seeing in the moment of watching; we cannot 'translate' as quickly as Burrows moves and soon we are left behind until a welcome pause. This applies especially to *Both Sitting Duet* and *Body Not Fit for Purpose*, because there are no props or

---

<sup>16</sup> See Appendix Four for a full transcript of *Body Not Fit for Purpose* and notes on production in performance 17 November 2014 [pp.239-243]

objects to be moved. In *Cheap Lecture*, both performers have sheets of paper to turn and drop on the floor. In *The Cow Piece*, model cows in the play farm are picked up and moved or replaced in a spatial pattern on the tables. When there are no props or objects, our spectating work is entirely on the actions and gestures. For example, in *Body Not Fit for Purpose*, Burrows is seated behind the table for most of the piece as seen in this image taken from one of the earlier sections. Burrows has both arms held forwards, bent at the elbow, and his hands are almost parallel with his shoulders; both hands have made a thumbs up fist shape and the action of rotating the wrists is direct, sudden and bound, as seen below:



Image 1: *Body Not Fit for Purpose* 2014 [Photo credit: Herman Sorgeloos]

At this moment, the rhythm is punctuated and the action looks fast and staccato. The agility of movement achieved by Burrows is almost entirely due to the rapid articulation of joints, in whichever part of his body he is using. By moving through the joints Burrows keeps the actions connected closely to his torso. The actions move outwards from his torso and back in again, not on the edge of his kinesphere. This means we can almost see the energy impulse passing through limbs, joints and torso. The initiating impulse for the movements appears often to be from the torso

even when the gesture is a shaping of the hand before placing it on the table or on the other arm, the torso seems to initiate the action.



Image 2: Jonathan Burrows in *Body Not Fit for Purpose*. [Photo credit: Herman Sorgeloos]

There are striking similarities to movement patterns and relationships between the dancers seen in *Cheap Lecture*, (21 September, 2012 at Frankfurt LAB, in Motionbank archive), where the movement vocabulary is limited to holding papers and dropping them<sup>17</sup>. Movements used in delivering the lecture including glances and responses, such as Burrows looking at Fargion, Fargion shrugging his shoulders, each nodding as if punctuating the delivery with such movements, we quickly see as part of the phrasing and as part of the lecture. The minimal, everyday movement vocabulary is performed with complex rhythms and virtuosic, detailed accuracy. In a comparable way Clark's choreography challenges spectators in *Animal Vegetable Mineral* (2012) and *to a simple, rock 'n' roll ... song* (2016). Spectators shift from a functional day-to-day pattern of engagement into an aesthetic and kinaesthetic attention zone. In this phase of embodied spectating, the spectators can be sensitised to each other through attending to the breath, not to thoughts or 'self' as constructed in socio-cultural frameworks, but to the physical in relation to the performers. Visual and

---

<sup>17</sup> For full performance of *Cheap Lecture* recorded by Motionbank see: <https://vimeo.com/68313484>

audio elements of the work create encounters as an audience, to make us aware that we are part of a group, sharing perceptions and breathing together; and experiencing, in the key terms of this thesis, a shared, sensed and social encounter.

Through Burrows' and Clark's 'sabotaging' of our expectations, in how we experience time and space, by having too much or too little happening on stage, they move the emphasis from a visual activity of watching the dance to an embodied sensation where the choreography, film and music combine to disorientate the spectators. There seems to be an emphasis on the sense of 'being in the moment', a focus on the existential quality of Burrows' and Clark's work in which the interpretation of meaning is not relevant at the time. In this approach there is an improvisatory character to the spectators' engagement. John Lutterbie, an American theatre scholar interested in embodied cognition and affect, discusses how a phenomenological perspective shows us that:

It is only in processing experience that we begin to devise a conceptual structure for understanding through categories of differentiation. When we navigate through a crowded street we do not distinguish between thought and movement; we think **in** movement. (2011, p.169)

As an example of the complexity of the work and its relation to the phenomenon of turbulence, I reflect on the pleasure of the audience at musician, Jarvis Cocker's unexpected and deviant behaviour in the 2012 performances of Clark's *New Work* at The Barbican. The audience perhaps would have been wise to expect the unexpected from Cocker, but within the meticulously tight dramaturgic framework of Clark's complex, virtuosic choreography up to this point in the production, nothing had challenged conventions to quite this extent. As Cocker leapt down from the stage and prowled among the first rows of the stalls, throwing sweets and insults at the audience, everyone craned forward to see the action. The

lighting states were adapted to Cocker being in the auditorium and so the house lights were partially up as he called for everyone to make loud farmyard noises. In pantomime style he called for the audience participation to be louder, and louder still. He was then back on stage, but instructed the lighting operator to go to blackout until everyone was making as much noise as they could, and only then would Cocker give the instruction to switch the lights back on and to continue with the show. It was clear that the audience was enjoying the improvisatory playfulness of the episode, provoked into vocal and visible activity, joining in with Cocker. In the 2013 version of the piece, when Cocker and his musicians appear it is not clear immediately whether they are performing live and there are sounds of disappointment around the auditorium when it becomes apparent that the presence of Cocker will be limited to a projection.

In *New Work* (2013), the ending of Piece 2 is a very fast section of travelling and quick turns of the head and eyes across the stage, left to right very fast, thus adding to the effect of high energy. But the actions are not large; there are no leaps or lifts, just allegro footwork and arm patterns through sequences of shifting positions. The spectators, while looking intently at the busy activity on stage, are also aware that the dancers are not looking into the audience or presenting the choreography to us in a conventional performance manner. Instead of connecting their gaze with the audience, the dancers look in the direction of the movement, so the spectator's attention is framed partly by this device to notice the side spaces and relationships in space between the body on stage and the spaces to either side and off stage.

Stephanie Jordan, dance scholar and musician (in Cotter 2011), presents a detailed musical and choreographic analysis of Clark's impressive Stravinsky project,



which continues this idea and applies Deleuzian concepts surrounding fragmentation and the whole. Jordan explains how Clark works with the complex Stravinsky scores in radically bold ways to set his choreography with or against the musical structure, dividing phrases and splicing movements with acclaimed critical success:

[...]Clark is led by his ear. Noting that Stravinsky's **Noces** rhythms read differently on paper from how they sound – even different metres suggested – Clark has no hesitation in choosing a closer relationship with the aural experience. When Clark's tactic is smooth adagio, we comprehend the broad span of a musical passage. But whether we hear the detail of music less keenly or more so when there are so few points of contact with the dance is moot [...] what is certain however is we hear the music differently when we see it choreographed differently and our musical perceptions are refreshed. (2011, p.251)

Clark uses a divided visuality through the disjointed film projections, blackouts and juxtaposed images in several sections to open possibilities and playfulness, which shifts attention around the movement, between the dancers and into the gaps. In these gaps, spectators do the work of engaging and connecting. Dance critic, Sutherland comments on the disorientating and affective experience of spectating: 'As words rush across the screen behind the dancers – notable "I'm thinking of starting a zoo" – I get a sense of horizontal vertigo, as if I was falling sideways'. (*Daily Express*, 23 November 2013). In the third piece, Clark offers his most complex, multi-disciplinary section. The backdrop flashes messages and partial words; sometimes backwards, sometimes appearing to chase the dancers across the stage and out of the space. Dancers wear colourful costumes, pulsating their torsos and parading with shiny, silver reflective stools. They cross the space, as it changes with lighting effects, from a linear stage to a curving, shifting, disappearing space and a game of word associations in large projected writing is flashed up on the cyclorama. It is up to the spectators to make our own connections:

The joy comes from the aesthetic collision of music and movement...whether swinging three legged stools between their thighs or twitching pelvises back and forth while sitting on them, Clark's dancers hint at a sexual deviancy while holding fast to the formal froideur. Take note, Crazy Horse cabaret: this is the real sexy deal. (*The Independent* 21 October 2012).

It seems most appropriate to focus on the spectating attention we give to the rhythm and dynamics and to the performance energy that shape this piece. These qualities are also characteristic of Burrows' works and we understand the demands placed on the spectators by these works that share more dramaturgic and affective features than may be apparent in established dance analysis approaches. In following the dynamic phrasing of the performers we allow ourselves to feel connected and to become, to an extent, entrained in the performance energy. It is in this way, through the energy and dynamics of effort that these works are particularly affective and spectators feel an embodied connection. Our kinaesthetic engagement or empathy is directed by the changes of pace, the emphasis of breathing, in or out, by both performers and by the contrasts between sustained and sudden timing in the movement patterns.

Burrows explains the full script of *Cheap Lecture* in 'A Choreographer's Handbook' noting how the disruption to the text uses fragmentation to create particular embodied affective impacts:

The unusual layout of the text is the product of a pleasurable negotiation with the given form, which causes us to speak fast or slow in the wrong places and place emphasis on the wrong syllables. When it works, this wrongness makes you prick up your ears just when your ears had felt like giving up. (2010, p. 23)

At twenty-six minutes into *Cheap Lecture*,<sup>18</sup> Fargion moves to the side of the stage and plays an upright piano to leave Burrows to complete the lecture, while Fargion sings. In the final two minutes, Burrows announces the talk is nearly finished and

---

<sup>18</sup> Using the Motionbank recorded film of the piece: <https://vimeo.com/68313484>

builds some anticipation for the spectators and listeners. Burrows calls; 'Boom, boom, boom, boom, yeah! Boom, boom, yeah!' taking short pauses between the seven repetitions. On each 'yeah' Burrows raises two arms in an extended V shape above his head, like a celebration. Brennan comments on how the climax of the piece is created in this play on rhythms:

Demonstrating the nature of rhythm – its ubiquity in life, in music, in movement, in speech – spins them, and us, into reflections on time and space, theatricality (which can subvert both) and the 'boom! boom! boom! -yeah, yeah!' exhilaration when something extraordinarily brilliant is conjured out of nothing. (2015, 27 April np.)



Image 3 *Cheap Lecture* in performance at Frankfurt LAB  
21/09/2012 in Motionbank archive [Photo credit: Herman Sorgeloos]  
'Boom, boom, boom, boom, yeah! Boom, boom, yeah!'

Spectators are in an affective bubble of attention to each word, action and musical sound, and being shown how the time is passing by paper on the floor. It moves us into a parallel state of awareness of ourselves, where Burrows relies on repetition to allow us a space to observe the dramaturgies at work. By repeating the spoken phrase, we as spectators are allowed space and flexibility to attend to ourselves more than to Burrows because we recognise the repeated phrase. We can sense the dynamics of the fast, free, direct movement; we hear Burrows' emphasis in his vocals on '*boom, boom, yeah!*' and we feel the celebration of the ending with him. The flow and rhythm of the performance continue to the end of the talk, as we are given a view of how we are connected to the piece in our spectating action. This

dramaturgic dialogue, which occurs through the performance attitude and choreographic structures, allows us space to sense the connection between ourselves across the audience and with both performers.

Dance critics, Ismene Brown and Jann Parry, judge the work to be a 'complex, interlocking of gesture, sound, word, props and movement, allying logic and absurdum with subconscious association games.' Similarly, Jowitt, (2011) comments on the difficulty in categorising the pieces as 'dance'. She articulates how spectators need to redefine expectations and understanding of 'dance' actions through the turbulent experience of Burrows' works:

Burrows and Fargion do not, you know....dance, wait I take that back. To begin with Burrows really does dance - casually delivering some smart little steps in one spot in *The Cow Piece*. But, more importantly the two create a bewitchingly witty dance of words and music and props. (2011, np.)

The spectator is drawn into a way of perceiving that magnifies the small-scale nature of the movement as if it sets up an experiment investigating what happens in large-scale dance theatre performances, such as Pina Bausch's work. Interestingly, Burrows refers directly to Bausch in the opening lines of the lecture; 'We'd make work like Pina Bausch if we could. But this is what we're good at.' *Cheap Lecture* and *The Cow Piece* are operating dramaturgically in a very similar way to Bausch's Tanztheater. The use of props, layering of music, text and movement in non-linear episodes could all be compared to the dramaturgy of a Bausch piece. As Parry points out: '*The Cow Piece* ends with the performance area almost as strewn with paper, a dozen tortured model cows, miniature nooses and an array of musical instruments.' (2010)

Critics turn to the affective impact of the encounter and focus their writings on the spectators' responses. Pieter 'T' Jonck, dance critic, writes: 'It's all about the

power of the moment, about the breath and the rhythm of the performance, of which you as the spectator become a part, whether you like it or not'. (2010 Burrows' website)

The works are playful in their treatment of the material and toying with the spectators' expectations. It seems possible to imagine carrying out the same movements and tasks as the performers, given that these are not virtuosic dance steps. This engagement provides us with a vicarious experience and enjoyment. Burrows and Fargion present themselves facing the audience, as if facing a mirror, encouraging the gaze of the spectator and commenting directly on it. This mirror effect of dramaturgic staging and presenting their bodies helps to foster empathy among the spectators. As the performers do less movement, it appears that the spectators do work more by attending to details and sensing connections between bodies and space. McFee writes; 'the claims for this dance, then, include a sharpening of our attitude to the flux of life, a new way of looking at our experiences'. (1992) McFee explores how we engage with a dance performance and form interpretations to make sense of our experience. In Burrows' choreography the pared-down movement content shifts the focus to a heightened awareness of the bodies in space. Burrows and Fargion work side by side, so that we become more aware of the physical differences between them when they perform speech or movement in unison. The spectator is responding on two levels; firstly to the actions or speech being performed, and secondly, but simultaneously, to the individual physicality of the body doing the performing.

In *Cheap Lecture* Burrows and Fargion stand facing the audience each behind a microphone, holding papers containing their scripts while Burrows also operates a laptop to project words onto a large screen behind and above the two performers. Fargion cues the sound technician for sections of recorded sounds and towards the

end of the piece goes to a piano to play, he also sings for the final three minutes of the piece. The piece consists of the men reading the lecture from their notes. The lecture's topic is based upon John Cage's *Lecture on Nothing*, and uses musical phrases by Schubert as counterpoint to the rhythm and pace of the voices. Lieve Dierckx, from the Flemish Theatre Institute, identifies the virtuosity in this piece in an article, entitled '*The Music is Virtuositic*', and characterises the piece thus;

*Cheap Lecture* proves to be a manifesto on the duo's work and their relationship with the public, framed in a format of an incongruous, impossible, absurdly comical waterfall of rhythmicalised thoughts. (2009, np available on Burrows' website).

In terms of traditional dance, the movement content of this piece seems limited. However, from a dramaturgic approach it can be seen how spectator attention is drawn to the physicality of the performers in delivering their speeches. As a result, their use of body, breath and gesture become the predominant focus of spectating attention rather than the content of the script. The spectators are made aware of the performing of actions, by those bodies, through devices of pausing, repetition, speeding up and slowing down while talking. Dierckx focuses on the rhythm sensed by the spectators and the humorous effect this turbulence causes.

The torrent of voiced phrases of *Cheap Lecture* does not involve any movement phrase. 'Real' music is reduced to some lost notes and 'real' dance never exceeds the one step forward. It is the words that dance, the mutual exchange of looks and glances between the two performers, between them and the public, it is the leaves from the bunch of papers in their hands as they throw them with a small sway to the floor after each spoken word or sentence, it is the humour that dances through the score. Likewise all of those elements are turned into music. The performers do not play with pitch or volume: everything is centred around the force of rhythm and timing. (Dierckx, 2009, np)

As Parry indicates, the pace is fast and so the responses are only part-formed verbally or conceptually; however, there are responses, as can be heard and seen when part of the audience, and as commented upon by reviewers;

It amounts to a kind of collective brainwashing patterning our expectations and alerting us to repetitions without giving us time to think. We're so busy laughing and

trying to keep up that we can't think. (*Ballet Magazine* October 2010)

Visceral reactions and kinaesthetic empathy experienced by the spectator play a critical role in forming responses, even when there is not time to articulate these reactions verbally. The process of observing the talking itself provides a great deal of opportunity for a visceral response from the spectators, an empathy with the performers' experiences, which can be separated from the content and meaning of the text spoken. A discursive dramaturgy is at work between spectators and performers, in which the gestures and movement associated with the talking, are listening to each other. The performers invite the gaze of the spectator and also comment upon it in a self-reflexive way, acknowledging that some spectators may wish to close their eyes and listen to the lecture and music, and when they open their eyes again discover that, as the script tells the spectator several times, 'nothing has happened'. This suggests the piece is commenting on its own affective form, as a dance piece with no dancing and very little movement through space.

### **Breaking out; beyond the frame of textual dance analysis**

From the 1970s, dance analysis and academic discourse on meaning in dance performance was based on semiotic and linguistic theories setting forth the dance as a bodily 'text'. Significant developments in bringing academic credibility to dance research were led by Janet Adshead-Lansdale and David Best whose work developed objective approaches to analysing dance according to intrinsic structural features. By the 1980s the dominant method for understanding dance performance was through analysis of choreographic composition using theories of textuality and semiotics. Post-structuralist systems expanded the frames of reference to include socio-cultural inter-textuality to explain how the dancing body is culturally and politically constructed. These methods are based on tendencies to consider

spectating performance as 'reading' the work. Research from partner fields of cognitive psychology, neuro-aesthetics and also affect studies has influenced scholarship in theatre and dance performance. Enquiries into embodied knowledge, sociological and psychological behaviour studies have contributed to re-thinking the significance and role of the body in our consciousness and how we understand our world.

The analysis methodology in this thesis applies categories of action, dynamics, space, timing, genre, theme and mood using Adshead-Lansdale's system of dance analysis (1988) to identify the content of the piece across its performance duration. This framework is based on objectively dissecting the choreographic and performance components of the piece and does not include engagement with the work outside the performance that I bring into the dramaturgy of the work as leaky encounters. Adshead- Lansdale's system of analysis by recording action, dynamic, spatial and temporal elements of the choreography is based on the assertion that the dance work is distinct, repeatable and not reliant on a subjective interpretation. I adopt a similar assertion, but I analyse the dance works to identify how and where key dramaturgic, structural and choreographic features are created to evoke an affective impact and how those devices make particular demands upon the spectator. Adshead-Lansdale<sup>19</sup> (1988, 1993, 1999) led the field with an analytical approach that is similar to Best's approach to the aesthetics of dance. Best maintains that conceptual processing in appreciating dance precedes an emotional response and considers that:

---

<sup>19</sup> To clarify, the citations of works by Janet Adshead/Adshead-Lansdale or Lansdale follows the use of surname as appropriate to the date of publication, but please note that to cross reference between publications by the same author one may use a combinations of names.



Appreciat[ing] a work of art requires conceptual ability and the more complex the interpretation required, the greater the intellectual demand. Moreover, it is only at this level of conceptual competence that emotional responses of a corresponding degree of complexity and particularity can be felt. (1974, p.175)

I contend that Best's approach is contrary to an understanding of affective engagement experienced as an embodied perception. Furthermore I propose this is inseparable from a cognitive response. Best promotes an approach to dance appreciation that focuses on the content of the work first rather than applying other frameworks of interpretation by 'looking for what is present in a dance, rather than approaching the dance with pre-determined terminology and intention of finding examples to support them.' (1974, p. 59) This system focuses predominantly on the work and in the context of this research it does not give sufficient importance to the experience of watching the dance, its physicality or phenomenological connection with spectators. Best contests the validity of a phenomenological- or kinaesthetically-based approach and he proposes that:

one cannot adequately account for aesthetic understanding in terms of a kinesthetic sense. Indeed if there were a kinesthetic sense it would have nothing to do with an understanding of art, any more than we aestheticians can learn much of interest about understanding painting by studying visual perception. (1974, p.147)

I challenge Best's perspective on aesthetic understanding and propose that explaining dance work through affective engagement and embodied experiences is more appropriate than focusing on the structure of the work. Scholars in science and philosophy contend that our sensed perceptions are integral to this cognitive process, as articulated by Alva Noë (2004) and Shaun Gallagher (2005).

In agreement with Best, dance scholar and philosopher Graham McFee adopts an analytical approach to dance interpretation that focuses on contextualising the work by codified form and genre. McFee (1992) uses semiotic

theories to consider how meaning is conveyed. He focuses on identifying the role of content and context in our understanding:

In this way we can find elements in a new dance intelligible to us if they are related to familiar elements from previous dances. And this point applies whether the elements in question are formal or whether they employ content.... seeing the traditions and conventions of art as operating in broadly this way, we now ask how the concepts of art implicit in such traditions and conventions operate; how they are employed in our making sense of the particular art works before us. (1992, p.71)

McFee is interested in meaning and he explains how, in his view, intention, interpretation and understanding are dependent on contexts and he sets out a range of concepts for understanding, including notions of individual style, characteristics of style and the place of technique. McFee expands his analysis of meaning in dance by explaining options for dance being meaningful as distinct from how meaning is understood. I propose that my research shows how we can understand contemporary dance pieces by a fuller appreciation of their dramaturgic process and how these engage spectators in affective experiences. This understanding of affective impact replaces McFee's notion of understanding in relation to meaning. In a similar way to McFee, Pauline Hodgens makes the connections between defining components, interpretation and making meaning:

The process of interpreting includes the discerning of the features and forms and the recognition of character and qualities. Interpreting is the process for discovering or revealing the meaning of certain objects or events. (in Adshead[ed.] 1988, p.61)

Hodgens explains that spectators, or as she terms them 'the percipients', have particular tasks to fulfil in order to engage with the dance work and lists those tasks as including understanding. It is apparent that notions of understanding vary across dance scholarship and need to be explicitly stated within the research framework. I find that Hodgens, Adshead, Best and McFee all tend to place more emphasis on deciphering meaning as a key to understanding dance, particularly in the context of its genre and form rather than on explaining how spectating activities and affective

impact are part of the experience of watching dance. Adshead recognises the central importance of the spectators' perspective as is explored in her subsequent research.

(2008). In Hodgens' approach she maintains that:

the percipient may be involved with both; discerning and understanding the features of the dance as they are perceived (literally and imaginatively) through the appropriate concepts or the relevant conventions and traditions; and recognising the appearances, effects, moods or atmospheres and her or his own impressions or experiences of the dance. (1988, p.81)

Foster adopts similar post-structuralist, semiotic approaches to dance analysis and interpretation, though there are some differences insofar as Foster analyses the works through particular socio-cultural and political contexts. Foster and Adshead contend that there are discernible elements of the dance work that can be agreed upon and discussed in terms of their impact and significance. I extend these approaches by combining them with a phenomenological perspective on the affective impact on spectators through dramaturgical processes operating within and around the dance work. This approach, I contend, can most appropriately articulate the creative practices and affective impact on spectators of contemporary dance.

More detailed explanation of dance analysis methodologies applied in this thesis is found in Adshead (1988) and Foster (1986). More recent works, such as Lansdale (1999) and Foster (1995) are useful to show the complexities of socio-cultural and political contexts within and around contemporary art and its meanings. I incorporate research by Sheets-Johnstone, yet this research contrasts through its focus on the experience of dance. She maintains the experience of the body is not necessarily wholly mediated by socio-cultural and political contexts, but that the biological, evolutionary and psychological aspects of the human body have a significant impact on how we experience the world and how we use our bodies to interpret meaning in art and performance. I draw on Sheets-Johnstone's publications

(1999 and 2009) to expand on these ideas in relation to the post-structuralist approaches of Lansdale and Foster. The question extends beyond what the work consists of, but explores how the work makes spectators engage. In this way, I identify that a combination of approaches is required to explore the choreography, as well as how the spectator, or 'reader' to use Adshead's term, experiences the work. I contend that the dual investigation in this study is an extension of those systems of dance analysis and this study bridges the gap in the discourse between a dramaturgic view of performances as encounters and intertextual ways of interpreting dance performance.

Adshead (1988) uses the term 'plausibility' to indicate that there is a range of reasonable interpretations regardless of subjective differences. From that perspective the dance work can be viewed as one piece that can engender different and even contrasting interpretations or responses. Naomi Jackson, dance scholar, offers an evaluation of methodologies in dance analysis through her comparison of the publications of Adshead (1988) and Foster (1985). I use her critical review (1994) to bring the work into dialogue with the approach I employ in this study.

Jackson opens her comparison on the agreed point that dance performance and choreography 'can be the object of scholarly scrutiny' (1994, p.3) thus rejecting previous objections that it was not possible to translate into language bodily expression from the subjective, creative or even spontaneous effects of dance. This signals a similarity to some aspects of affect theory philosophy that holds bodily processes of affect as pre-linguistic, thus setting a challenge for discourse to try to explore ways of articulating experience, not only as interpretative of the work, but in its own right. Potential limitations of affect discourses have been examined from the perspective of literary philosophers Altieri and Leys who navigate notions of affect,

imagination and experience alongside appreciation of art works that evoke these experiences. Adshead and Foster can be seen as taking positions alongside Altieri and Leys to analyse affective experiences through intertextuality rather than by neuropsychological or physiological systems. Jackson emphasises the shared use of 'conventions and traditions' (Adshead 1988) and 'codes and conventions' (Foster 1985). In brief, Jackson's account of the work finds Adshead's focus to be mostly on the components of the dance work and its conventions, whereas Foster's codes and conventions reach more widely into socio-cultural spheres. Both Adshead and Foster focus on the component parts of the dance work as the evidence for close analysis. Jackson finds similar terms are used to describe movement vocabulary, but I note Adshead makes a distinction between analysing movement and analysing dance. She emphasises how the creative and artistic aspects of dance open realms of interpretation that are not a relevant part of movement analysis. I am aware of this distinction as I explain my use of Laban's systems for movement and dance analysis and I apply these terms to creative choreographic practices.

In Jackson's assessment, Foster states that it is important to examine the context of the choreographers and their methodologies, philosophies and approaches in making dance. These are not directly involved in Adshead's systems but are reflected in close appreciation of the specifics of the dance genre, context and style. I incorporate some aspect of Aggiss's performance and choreographic strategies as part of her workshop activities, examined as leaky encounters in Chapter Five. These are not particular to one specific production, nor is discussion focused on asking about intended meaning, but instead it is a way of illustrating and explaining the relationship to the spectator and how this influences dramaturgies of choreography. Adshead defends this stance on intertextuality and indicates clearly

how the reader (or spectator) is central to making this shift in perspective by citing

Worton (1986, p.21):

Intertextual analysis is possible only if the reader accepts that such an analysis must be founded on the speculative creativity of ambiguity. There is no *knowing*, but there are different modes of understanding, of responding, of reading. (1994, p.18) [italics in original]

I endorse this scope of 'speculative creativity of ambiguity' as achieved through combined methods from post-structural analysis and concepts from dramaturgic processes. Jackson criticises Adshead's assumptions that a dance work can be treated as a literary text but Adshead refutes this point, indicating that she emphasises 'the direct experience of the dance itself' (1988, p.116) and continues that 'interpretation in this sense cannot be handled as an authoritative position, the dance has to be experienced...Interpretation logically entails experience.' (1994, p.18)

I concur with Adshead and take the argument further to contend that experiences generated by the dance performance can be understood as the significance of the work. In Chapter Four I consider how discourse in cognitive neuroscience on empathic engagements and synchronicity in social groups is relevant to the phenomenon of social connections in affective dramaturgies of turbulent kinaesthetics in contemporary dance. Foster's work sets out conceptual frameworks to re-examine questions about the social relationships of performance between 'body', 'experience' and 'writing' (1995). She claims, 'now we know the body cannot be taken for granted, cannot be taken seriously, cannot be taken.' (1995 p.3) I explore Foster's ideas of 'writing choreography' in my analyses of Aggiss's and Burrows' challengingly disruptive word and movement play, in *The English Channel* and *Body Not Fit for Purpose* respectively.

Foster confronts the activities of thinking and writing as actions of the body, not restricted to brain or mind, drawing on work by Roland Barthes, whose work influenced several dance scholars to explore thinking through dance or choreographic thinking. Bunker, Pakes and Rowell (2013) adopt this focus, as do several contemporary theatre makers and dramaturgs<sup>20</sup> who expand notions of thinking into bodies doing creative practice that builds on interrogations of bodily experiences, meaning and interpretations, and cognitive creativity in processual and performance practices. These approaches echo Foster's own writing practices in creative voices with, about and by her own body. She questions an understanding of 'body' as a fixed being and draws attention to complexities of identity to show that meanings ascribed by socio-political systems are taken up by a body to fulfil roles or to deliver actions accordingly. Context is the essential and defining feature of how bodies are constructed and understood, according to Foster. These are always coded and defined by social contexts of class, gender and power hierarchies, so that the body is altered by each context as much as our understanding of its actions is altered. She gives examples of an action being performed by different bodies, in different contexts and status, and understood differently. Foster explains that:

each body's movements evidence a certain force, tension, weight, shape, tempo and phrasing....All a body's characteristic ways of moving resonated with aesthetic and political values...each body's distinctive pronouncements at a given moment must be read against the inscription, along with others it continually produces. (1995, p.5)

Aggiss and Burrows manipulate expectations of contexts and inscriptions of their own bodies. Their bodies are sites of rebellion and they construct meanings in and about their bodies: Aggiss displays, performs and comments on her female, sixty-three year old dancing body and Burrows restricts his ballet-trained body to mostly

---

<sup>20</sup> I refer here to the range of case studies and scholarly articles on Dance Dramaturgy in Hansen and Callison [ed.] (2015) and also on New Dramaturgies in Trencsenyi and Cochrane [ed.] (2014).

gestural actions. Both include significant amounts of text and vocals in works that are as much about the content of the language as they are about the affective physicalisation of these highly complex, choreographed movement phrases, song and script. In their work, both choreographers challenge spectators to re-evaluate how we interpret their bodies.

Foster and Sheets-Johnstone have each been instrumental in the evolution of paradigms such as 'thinking in movement', and phenomenological semiotics. Sheets-Johnstone (2013) identifies the problems of understanding the complexities of body and mind and articulating these processes through shared terms and concepts across science, arts and philosophy. I am using Sheets-Johnstone's notion of 'linguaging experience' that she poses as a challenge to current research in dance and in the wider field of affect studies. Bunker, Pakes and Rowell share this understanding of thinking and moving, which frames their concept of 'thinking through dance' as arising from a renewed preoccupation with the philosophical significance of dance. (2013, p.2-3) In their summary of analytic aesthetics in dance studies, they also recognise the contribution of Best (1974), Cohen (1986) and Redfern (1982) who were all contemporaries of Adshead and influential in the specific analytical methodologies developed by Adshead (1988). As they reflect on more recent developments in dance studies, Bunker et al. raise a note of caution about the emerging interdisciplinary approaches of cognitive science and warn in particular about the over-zealous reliance on mirror neurons in claims about kinaesthetic empathy in dance. I agree with this assessment of the difficulties in attempting to answer philosophical questions with cognitive science and I propose that empathic engagements include a wealth of kinaesthetic, emotional and imaginative processes. Dance philosophy and embodied thinking encompasses questions of consciousness



and agency, expression and representation, interpretation and identity. Bunker, Pakes and Rowell (2013, p.5) characterise the field of dance studies and theory as being broadly divided between two major fields. This research aims to bridge these two areas in dance studies by applying concepts of dramaturgy as informed by recent scholarship and creative practices in contemporary theatre making. I contend that a dramaturgic analysis of contemporary dance allows for a detailed analysis of the work *and* of the experience it generates by its affective impact on spectators. Dramaturgic practice in contemporary dance choreography in Britain and Europe<sup>21</sup> operates as a philosophical practice, questioning its own meaning and the nature of its relationship to its context and its spectators. Efrosini Protopapa presents dramaturgies of choreography as a 'practice of thinking' by using the example of Jérôme Bel's lecture performance (2008) on *The Last Performance* (1998) (in Bunker et al. [eds.] 2013, pp 273- 289). Protopapa exposes the complexities of phenomenological and cognitive engagements that challenge current discourse and terminologies. Jonathan Clark further augments the discourse by summarising the fundamental debate between intrinsic and extrinsic understanding of dance appreciation and asserts that a phenomenological approach is most appropriate to an enquiry about dance performance:

Other approaches which derive from post structuralism, critical theory, semiotics or historicist hermeneutics, for example, tend to assimilate meaning in dance to the specific socio-cultural and historical contexts in which the dance works were produced, and hence to methodologies aligned with the linguistic or literary turns...neglect the foundational nature of dance as movement, the distinctive way on which it reveals and epitomizes our animate nature...above all the phenomenological approach aims to explicate the intrinsic, intuitive and aesthetic significance of dance...the basic factors at work in our movement perception and spatial positioning are exemplified and transformed through dance, seen as both a visual and kinaesthetic medium.(Clark in Bunker et al. [eds.] 2013, p.202)

---

<sup>21</sup> Consider examples of works by Boris Charmatz, Jérôme BÈL and Jonathan Burrows whose work challenges our understanding of dance [see Lepecki (2006)].

Clark supports the premise of this thesis by tracing the previously established methodologies in dance studies and shows that those discourses are no longer suitable for current enquiries into contemporary performance practices. Scholarly and critical discourse is moving away from a focus on the body as a tool for expressing extrinsic ideas, communicating meaning and functioning in a semiotic system, and towards the body as a body process in which the doing is the thinking and where meaning is dynamic and immanent.

In 2008 Lansdale opened notions of textuality and semiotics in debates of interpretation to an inter-textual level in which socio-cultural contexts inform our understanding. Since then a focus on notions of the social and of corporeality has engaged scholars to enquire further about the embodied role of the spectators in social and shared contexts. Briginshaw and Burt thus show their transition from earlier writings in socio-cultural perspectives to the notion of an embodied, active spectator:

Embodiment and subjectivity are key ideas for both of us. Our investigations of these in and through various dance works are informed by our readings of post-structuralist theory and Deleuzian and post-Heideggerian philosophy [...]to focus more on performance and performer-spectator relationships [...] bound up with expression and affects, and ethics. (2009, p.xi)

Lansdale (2008)[ed.] considers challenges of interpreting dance, constructing narratives of social and cultural experiences across time and geography. She introduces application of intertextuality as a new concept to dance studies based on Landow's concept of a hypertext. Lansdale's post-structuralist approach explains a shift in understanding how a spectator sees and interprets dance given the plurality of movement vocabulary and use of space in contemporary dance practices.

Lansdale uses examples from Merce Cunningham's work to illustrate the de-centring of space, spectating, the notion of focus in dancing and thus, to conveying meaning. I

find similarities in examining Anderson's *Edits* that parallel the demands on spectators to watch a turbulent work deliberately de-centred by fragmenting space, limiting viewing opportunities and setting up individual perspectives on the work. Lansdale discusses how contemporary performance and choreographic practices are demanding changes in discourses about dance appreciation. I take this notion and contend that the choreography and its dramaturgies create affective spectator experiences and that the discourse of dance appreciation must extend into the fields of dramaturgy and affect. Lansdale analyses how Cunningham's choreography makes specific demands on spectators and critical discourse, and I propose this also includes the dramaturgy of affective spectating:

Cunningham's multiple spatial perspectives invite a constantly shifting perception of line, direction and shape on the part of the audience, which, by analogy, also offer the potential for a *response* based on diverse (and multiple) critical perspectives. Indeed, such work, one might argue *demands* a set of diverse critical positions to match its own process. Dance theory throughout the twentieth century largely ignored political and cultural change, clinging to a modernist inheritance. (2008, p.4)

So I propose that the significance and value of contemporary dance works is that while they certainly draw upon socio-cultural contexts and may be considered intertextual, they do so in a way that engenders social and shared encounter between spectators. The challenge arising is in articulating *how* we sense the performance and experience its affective impact as personal, but not separately as individuals. The impact of these contemporary dance pieces is in the collective and shared experiences of spectators.

### **Languaging experiences of affective impact: a turn to the corporeal in dance analysis.**

Sheets-Johnstone takes a phenomenological approach to dance appreciation in her body of work spanning several decades. The overarching enquiry in her retrospective

collection of writings (2009) is the nature of experience and its evolving scholarly discourse in the field of dance studies, as well as in social, cultural and political spheres. Sheets-Johnstone considers the importance of context in our current understanding of phenomenology and points to possibilities for new knowledge, as the limitations of any one field in isolation are now apparent. There is increasingly a trend for interdisciplinary research as she directs her work as being part of an 'open-ended spiral of enquiry'. (2009, p.2) I indicate in Chapter Five how scholarship in theatre practice is developing interdisciplinary research specifically across affect studies, philosophy and cognitive science.<sup>22</sup> Sheets-Johnstone takes issue with the term 'embodiment' that is ubiquitous in current affective theatre and cognition studies<sup>23</sup> and warns of adopting use of the term by assuming a shared understanding across arts and sciences. She emphasises the need to pursue, more determinedly, new methodologies in order to clarify these concepts. She expresses concern that the use of the term 'embodiment' too simplistically does not acknowledge the complexities of understanding mind and body, and conversely may continue the legacy of the Cartesian duality of mind and body. Sheets-Johnstone proposes that 'dedicated examination of experience furthermore requires an openness to interdisciplinary investigations'. (2009, p.2) I explore how the experiences of turbulent effects in spectating, as thrilling, visceral or disorienting can be articulated as a 'mind-body activity'. I adopt concepts of embodiment and perception as action articulated by Noë and Gallagher.

---

<sup>22</sup> Notable examples include Nicola Shaughnessy [ed.] (2013) *Affective Performance and Cognitive Science: Body Brain and Being*, and dance scholar and dramaturg Pil Hansen (2015) and neurobiologist and neuroaesthetician Semir Zeki (2012).

<sup>23</sup> Embodiment is a key concept for many interdisciplinary researchers as exemplified in the Cognitive Futures Conference 2018 and also in Shaughnessy [ed.](2013).

Sheets-Johnstone frames the corporeal turn as having three distinct disciplines across phenomenology, phylogeny and ontogeny. It is interesting to consider how far research in dance studies and corporeality can make a valuable contribution to wider fields. A broad interdisciplinary methodology, as advocated by Sheets-Johnstone, has potential value beyond the arts or socio-cultural theories. In this study I focus exclusively on the first category identified by Sheets-Johnstone; phenomenology to approach the study of consciousness and objects of direct experiences. That notion can offer ways of articulating our experience of consciousness and experience as individuals and also in connecting as a group in shared, social, collective experiences during the event of performance. Sheets-Johnstone concludes her exploration of the corporeal turn by focusing on the challenges of 'linguaging' experience. She uses a case study to show that:

in a language that is precisely not everyday language, one rises to the challenge of languaging experience [...and that it] lies in the intrinsically dynamic nature of emotions and movement, and that being true to the truths of experience hinges on a methodology proper to the task. Whether a matter of phenomenology, or phenomenologically-informed descriptions, or of a literary imagination, the methodology requires stepping back from habitual and conventional languagings that objectify and name and focusing attention instead and from the beginning on the dynamic non-linguistic nature of experience itself. (2009, p.15-16)

As this thesis shows, spectator experience at contemporary dance is a visceral, physically sensed encounter and simultaneously it is an affective, emotional, imaginative interpretation of the movement, images, sounds and visual elements. It includes a heightened awareness of individual senses and shared behaviours among the audience. Sheets-Johnstone states that:

analysis of the paradigmatic experience shows that thinking and moving are not separate happenings but aspects of a kinetic bodily logos attuned to an evolving dynamic situation. It shows further that thinking in movement involves no symbolic counters but is tied to an on-going qualitatively experienced dynamic in which movement possibilities arise and dissolve. (2009, p.5)

Sheets-Johnstone develops this further in relation to the works of Daniel Stern, psychoanalytical theorist, and child psychologist Lois Bloom. Their research evidences how movement, emotion and meaning are understood by 'identifying non-verbal behaviours that never become linguistically encoded but that have variable affective tones and that articulate inter-corporeal intentions.' (2009 p.5) Sheets-Johnstone comments that 'analysis of the qualitative structure of movement shows in turn how motion and emotion are dynamically congruent', (2009, p.10) and describes how kinetic semantics function to help us communicate and can be captured.

I contend that contemporary dance choreographers use dramaturgic and choreographic devices to communicate and manipulate non-verbal, inter-corporeal behaviours. I suggest that works by Bausch, Bourne and Aggiss, and others in the scope of this research, can all be analysed according to this premise. Other choreographers, such as Clark and Burrows, working in non-narrative forms are able to use behaviour traits and sensitivity to movement to create evocative, affective impact from apparently abstract or ordinary actions and gestures. In the following chapter I analyse how these operate dramaturgically to create affective impacts on spectators, to understand the dance work better by its demands on and expectations of its audience.

## Chapter Three

### Dramaturgies of Visual Turbulences:

#### Disruptions, perspectives and visibility

Dramaturgic devices in contemporary dance function as catalysts to disrupt and mobilise spectating activities. The dramaturgies of the work draw attention to our spectating labours.

Van Kerkhoven's (1994) proposal that dramaturgy includes all activities marks the beginning of significant increase in scholarly discourse around dramaturgic practices. In the field of dance studies, the term dramaturgy was not part of the discourse until Gilpin (1997) identified the ways in which contemporary theatre and contemporary dance practices share similar creative processes. Gilpin focuses mostly on the work during rehearsal that involves individuals in the role of a dramaturg. Conversely, in this thesis, I take up the notion of dramaturgies in the performance itself and how these are integral to spectators' activities as part of interpreting the work. As introduced in Chapter One [p27] Heathfield (2010) proposes that contemporary dramaturgy practices now operate without an individual working as a dramaturg<sup>24</sup>. I consider dramaturgies as the processes and systems of the work, not only shaped by its format, but also found in moments or events that provoke spectator reactions. I contend that affective encounters are primarily phenomena of shared social connections and individual emotional impact. In a similar way, by using the term 'experiencing commonality' Georgelou et al. (2017, p.56) indicate that

---

<sup>24</sup> Heathfield sets out the challenge of how to explain in writing the processes that operate in the moment of live theatre making. His approach shares concerns raised by Altieri, literary aesthetician and in this thesis I build on the work of both scholars as my study explores similar questions within the context of contemporary dance.

there is a connection between spectators, while acknowledging this is not the same as creating or seeking homogeneity. Eugenio Barba proposes the meaning of dramaturgy as ‘working on actions’ (2009). This concept informs investigations into current approaches to the practice of dramaturgy by many theatre scholars and practitioners, as evidenced by Cochrane and Trencsényi [eds.] (2014), and Georgelou, Protopapa and Theodoridou [eds.] (2017). Contemporary creative practices in making and performing theatre have been increasingly influenced by actions more than text. As such, prevailing issues in new performance work revolve around how such complexities give rise to pluralities of meaning and experiences, being no longer limited to convey message or meaning directly to its spectators<sup>25</sup>.

I employ the term ‘dramaturgy’ in this research to refer to the ways in which the dance pieces construct opportunities for engagement with the spectators. This study deliberately does not include any of the process of creating the work in the rehearsal studio. As such, I am aware that this takes a limited perspective on a varied field and wide range of dramaturgic activities, such as labours by choreographers, performers, designers and outside advisers. My use of the term dramaturgy does not include any part of the traditional role of a dramaturg<sup>26</sup> as an individual, other than a performer or choreographer who contributes to the forming of the piece during its making phase. I am interrogating how the contemporary dance piece is shaped by dramaturgic systems as built-in by the choreographer and performers that demand particular attention from the spectators. I do not include choreographers’ intentions

---

<sup>25</sup> For a historical perspective and details on the changing form of contemporary theatre and its dramaturgies see Marianne Van Kerkhoven (1994) and Eugenio Barba (2000 and 2009). For an overview of new dramaturgic practices in relation to traditional methods, see Behrndt & Turner (2010) and Cochrane & Trencsényi [eds.](2014)

<sup>26</sup> See Adrian Heathfield (2011) for a vision of dramaturgy without a dramaturg. He argues the single role of one person as dramaturg becomes redundant.



in detailed dance analyses, but I examine the notion of intention and meaning with reference to Foster's post-structuralist approach of dance analysis.

I discuss notions of dramaturgy, with and without a dramaturg, to contextualise more widely that the rapidly evolving field of dramaturgy is responding to innovations in contemporary theatre and dance practices. Van Kerkhoven embraces interconnectedness in her approach to 'new dramaturgy' by suggesting that it is about 'learning to handle the complexity'. (2009, p.7) Theatre and dance scholarship has since explored ways of clarifying and defining the practices of dramaturgy. Bojana Kunst analyses the expanding presence of dramaturgy in contemporary dance and spectatorship. Kunst identifies changes in creative performance practices that have been driven by choreographers adopting processes of dramaturgies in their approach to making work as

a principal shift: from understanding the dramaturg as objective observer towards dramaturgical collaboration as the embodied and affective work of proximity.... the open, process-oriented work of dramaturgy in contemporary dance is a result of changing manners of practice and modes of production and, again, of changing cultural and economic contexts. (2009, p.82)

Barba's innovations in text-based performance dramaturgies move towards this shift of attention. His work increases awareness of the social, shared and questioning activities of dramaturgy in which diversity of opportunities replaces coherence and singular meaning. Barba describes the layers of engagement involved in directing, producing and performing a theatre work, but emphasises the importance of 'the dramaturgy of the spectator' (2010, p.13) and connects this firmly to the performing bodies. As Barba explains of his own methodology as a director and dramaturg, '...it was a way of observing the different layers or levels of the work, independently from the performance's meaning'. (2010, p.9) The engagement of the

spectator through the senses is central to Barba's approach to organising his work to achieve its affective impact.

Jacqueline Bolton, a theatre scholar working in the context of British contemporary theatre and dance dramaturgies, is in agreement with Barba and also places the active work of the spectator as central to the affective dramaturgy of a production. But Bolton focuses on cognitive notions of 'meaning' as central to her concept of dramaturgy. Construction of meaning allows for pluralities and variations in interpretation in new processes of layering text and movement. As a result, discourse around dramaturgical practices includes a variety of terms such as 'new' or 'open' and 'porous'. These indicate that there is scope for spectators to engage with different aspects of the performance that do not operate in linear, coherent structures. Bolton comments on the proposal by Turner and Behrndt (2008) that spaces exist among the elements of the work and this notion of architectural dramaturgy is a valuable way of analysing the operational dramaturgy of contemporary dance performances:

Turner and Behrndt quote Adam Versenyi's proposition that dramaturgy (as noun) be defined 'as the architecture of the theatrical event, involved in the confluence of components in a work and how they are constructed to generate meaning for the audience'. Processes of dramaturgy (as verb) are 'processes of analysis' which look at 'the ways in which levels of meaning are orchestrated' in performance; that is to say, processes of analysis which are sensitive to how compositional strategies structure and inform spectators' responses. (2011, p.4)

In this processual approach to dramaturgy, spectators are required to work in deliberate ways, and often are made aware of their own work as part of the experience of engaging with the performance. Similarly, the focus on doing of work is central to how Georgelou, Protopapa and Theodoridou present dramaturgy as a system of 'working on actions' and in particular by creating a catalyst for action and questioning. The notion of mobilisation is a key element in dramaturgic systems and

involves openness to pluralities and moves away from directed thinking or authorship. In the series of practical research workshops on 'Dramaturgy at Work' (2013-2015) the participants found ways of questioning and doing tasks, which opened options for process instead of 'finding' answers or defining meanings. In this methodology the dramaturgic feature is the *doing*; asking a question or performing a given task, and noticing the ways in which knowledge is shared and expanded among the group or from person to person. In reflecting on the process, Georgelou et al. consider that:

this kind of dramaturgical interference produced through the process of mobilising questions does not resemble a mode of thinking that is one of pinning down an argument – or owning the resolution [...] is constantly disowning through further questioning. De-personalising dramaturgy in this way suggests that questions are found in the work that is done, while at the same time it is the mobilisation of such questions that produces further work [...] and the spectator is invited to further mobilise the questions themselves and is mobilised by them- in other words, to allow the work to do its work and to take them to that place of disowning, letting go of the ah-ha moment. (2017, p.46)

This is notable in the works of Burrows in terms of the ontology of dance and its relation to meaning that has perplexed critics with his pieces since early works such as *Stoics*<sup>27</sup>. The catalyst for revised terminology and discourse of spectator engagement comes from the works themselves; driven by the creative innovations occurring through the making of new work. These are the actions that mobilise spectators and scholars alike to question what is happening in these encounters with new dramaturgies in performance. Anderson's *Edits* operates in such a way, as illustrated by the following analysis of the work. Spectators are mobilised in this work in several ways; they are standing, or may walk, between the staging areas. They can see the dancers clearly visible off stage and this is also part of what

---

<sup>27</sup> See Arts Council England Film Collection archive 'The Far End of the Garden' from The Royal Ballet 1991 on Burrows' choreographic style and interviews with Kate Flatt, Sir Kenneth Macmillan and Anthony Dowell. <http://artsonfilm.wmin.ac.uk/filmsuk.php?a=view&recid=227>

spectators watch as well as the performed pieces on the raised stage blocks. *Edits* is a series of fragmented interactions, entrances and exits, as examined in the next section. I propose this structural device functions as 'a dramaturgical interference', to apply Georgelou's term, and opens up questions about ways in which spectating happens in this piece.

Anderson's choreographic structures are highly visual, focusing choreographic shapes of dancers' bodies in space. The affective, dynamic qualities of movement explore weight and rhythm. She makes it difficult to see the work at times and this obstacle is a turbulent dramaturgic feature that functions to draw our attention to the efforts of spectating. Looking and the labours of watching are key dramaturgic interests in Anderson's work. In this exploration of *Edits* my analysis draws upon Rachel Fensham's definition of spectating watchfulness in readiness, 'open to sudden or unexpected change and transformation' (2009, p.11). Dramaturgies in Anderson's pieces are explored as visual turbulences through Maaïke Bleeker's investigation of the locus of looking, as 'an embodied experience involving more than the optical senses'. (2011, p.4) Visual turbulences are examined later in this chapter, with particular reference to works by Clark, Aggiss and Anderson, who all use dramaturgic architecture to encompass moments of looking, seeing and not seeing to frame interactions between spectator and dancer, set and music, and between individual spectator and collected audience.

Anderson's focus on the visual elements of her choreography could be understood as presenting her dance works as a 'spectacle', but not as spectacular, in the sense of virtuosic dance steps from codified, established vocabularies. There is no seduction of spectators through performed excesses, lavish content or bravura athleticism. Clark's dance vocabulary of classical ballet and Cunningham-based

modern dance is highly virtuosic, by contrast to Anderson's movement, yet both choreographers create turbulence for spectators through kinaesthetic disorientation. This leads to a sensation of bodily connections to virtuosic agilities and athleticism, bringing the physical body to the foreground of our attention. Anderson does not use a conventional or recognised dance technique for virtuosic effect, yet her works are complex in movement vocabulary in relation to time and space. Her choreography is partially obscured by elaborate costumes or dim lighting, making it difficult for the spectators to see details of the movement. Nevertheless, due to the difficulty in seeing in this way, spectators notice their conscious activities of looking and become aware of their labours. Whether sitting or walking, as in the case of performances of *Edits*, spectators become aware of themselves and of being amongst other spectators, together actively engaging in the effort of looking at dance. As a result of this shifted attention, our dramaturgic labours of looking are made highly visible. Anderson's work characteristically adopts choreographic devices of groupings, repetition, facing the audience and stylised use of the dancers' faces. Production elements, including strident lighting, detailed costume and stylised staging, draw attention to the affective, visual qualities of the choreography, enhancing experiences of emotionally resonant images in non-narrative collages of movement and metaphor. Dramaturgic effects combine making her work visually complex in the re-imagining of its stimuli and thematic material to create spatial and temporal disorientation for spectators. There is no narrative arc to the work but it appears that there are a series of encounters between the dancers and between the spectators and dancers, which comprise the work itself. *Edits* is staged on a series of one metre high blocks, with a large, empty, wooden portrait frame hanging centred above it, at a height to allow dancers' heads and shoulders to be visible through it.

The piece comprises duets and trios of six male dancers dressed in three different dresses and wigs, and shows them interact in embraces and gestures. They exit and enter the block area to be 'off stage' in unlit areas at the side of the performing space. Judith Mackrell, dance critic, notes how the source material from films, such as *The Bitter Tears of Petra van Kant*, is fragmented as a score for the movements, and identifies the spectators' frustration at the limited visibility in the work:

[...] for *Edits*, their latest production, the six men all come dressed as women: vamps, coquettes, hostesses with marcel-waved hair. Dressed by Sandy Powell in tea frocks, Lurex and sweeping velvet gowns, they look both elegant and very scary. In many ways, *Edits* is like an abstract dance of a silent film. Organised around three free-standing wooden frames, Anderson's choreography is divided into dance equivalents of the close-up or the cinematic take – intense little solos or duets that are contained within a spotlight or one of the frames. Sudden shifts of light, or a convulsive, jerky move then create the equivalent of a cinematic edit, as the dancers switch to another configuration. The vocabulary, too, is a distillation of film. Anderson bases an entire solo on the quivering play of emotion across a dancer's face – on a gestural flourish or a swooning embrace. And with the atmospheric additions of dry ice and Steve Blake's otherworldly score, the piece starts to feel like a gallery of the cinematic living dead: stiff, anguished characters emoting within the prison of their ancient celluloid roles. And for a piece that's all about composition and perspective, it feels perverse to be given only restricted, random views. (The Guardian, 5 November 2010)

Anderson makes a connection through the way in which she approaches choreographic material and her task of presenting the visual in new forms. She discusses her starting point, explaining how she works with the visual materials before choreographing the work:

[W]hat would happen if I imagined a lost dance of Egon Schiele. Now 12 years later, working on *Edits*, it's a similar kind of idea that I'm reconstructing a lost dance from one form to another. I'm very interested in the visual and finding new ways in looking at amusement and performance. (LeCool London interview with Anderson 16 November 2010)

The promenade performance version of *Edits* requires spectators to move around the staging blocks to choose a perspective or viewpoint. This physical movement of spectators makes visible the moments of dramaturgic disruption or turbulence and the choreography might be obscured or hindered. The lighting and use of set

operates so that the spectators move to follow a dancer's action. Anderson employs compositional devices of editing and splicing, close-ups and long shots as used in Fellini's films, to frame and cut between sections of the choreography. This is translated into choreography through use of space and repetition of motifs. The relationships of the characters are displayed as dysfunctional in the way characters fail to connect with each other, despite acting out social conventions of greeting and departures.

Anderson's choreographic focus is on the structure or dramaturgies of film editing rather than on evoking characters or narratives. In *Edits* there are several characters identified by their costume, but the dancers have many quick changes and there may be up to five copies of the character performing at any one time. This means the character is not performed by one dancer, but by several and so would seem to reside in the costume (dress, shoes and wig) rather than the dancer's body. Anderson manipulates our understanding of identity, gender and its representation in her work. This is an example of Foster's notions of socio-cultural coding that she contends are central to spectators' engagement with the choreographic images. Emotional and affective responses, Foster maintains, are results of learned socially constructed tropes of behaviours and identities.

Anderson's work exposes the limitations of how we see. The audience can see several versions of one 'character' at a time, namely, the red dress or the green dress. The movement material and any sense of character are derived in part from the movement restrictions and qualities of the actual fabric of the dress. This is a significant characteristic of Anderson's choreography. It is not only about dealing with the costume in the performance of the choreography, but is how the movement and choreography is devised and developed. For example, dancers need

to accommodate the weight and length of a velvet dress with a long train, so extra time is taken for turns and spins. The movements then require more energy and impulse in dynamics when jumping in order to carry the extra weight. Another dress has a cut-out back detail and the dancer moves to draw attention to the gap showing the skin of his back, suggesting vulnerability and bringing a sensual quality to the character in the dress. These are not men dressed as women, pretending to be women, but are men in dresses performing the movements of the dress and following the tasks of the choreography, from one frame to another.

In *Edits*, the dynamic of the whole body movement is affected by wearing heels. This demands the dancers attend to their use of feet to give a light, sustained, flexible dynamic pattern, thereby bringing fluidity to the choreography. There are many entrances and exits to and from the close-up and long shot stages. Anderson is interested in ‘...how characters move in and out of frames – the way films are put together [...] cut from scene to scene, but the dancers have to leap on and off the stage.’ (Anderson with Khan 2010)

The higher levels of the stages from the floor area mark the entrances and exits even more noticeably for the spectators, as the change in height, or spatial level, is registered as an ‘edit’. The movements used for these changes are usually swift and fluid to make the edit as quick as possible. Thus the dancers have to be agile and light-footed, in their high-heeled shoes, avoiding excess noise in their landing to make the effect

apparently seamless.

Image 4: *Edits* (2010) [Photo credit: Pau Ros]





In the first duet comprising of the green velvet, drapey-sleeved dress, red curly wig and red velvet flower choker with the dotted black and white blouse, black skirt and 1930s wave “bob” hairstyle, the dancers are standing close, almost cheek to cheek, nodding heads slowly and fluidly in a social dance hold or possibly an embrace. They continue the slow nodding; undulating through their whole torsos and touch fingertips, then reach their hands vertically upwards until in full stretch above their heads. As this happens we see on the upstage/long-shot stage, an identically costumed couple. The first couple each step backwards, extending arms as if in a “goodbye” gesture, but this touch can also be a welcoming gesture to the new partner, both extending and connecting the space between dancers and stages. Heads incline and dancers gently touch temples in an apparently intimate moment, but this is repeated with each new partner and thus loses any sense of meaning or particular connection between characters and is seen as abstracted movement.

A third dancer enters from stage right, but remains lower on the floor, in a long red dress, pearl beads and a black, sleek bob hairstyle with a fringe. [S]he takes the hand of the green dress dancer and pulls her backwards. The green dress dancer resists, steps lightly down backwards and does not fully leave the performing stage but ripples through the torso and steps upwards onto the stage in a fluid, undulating movement. The green dress dancer then leaps off the stage block anyway to stage right, as a second green dress dancer spins on from upstage right in a spiral spin, alongside a second red dress dancer.<sup>28</sup> The dresses accentuate the fluid, circular

---

<sup>28</sup> See the archive recording of *Edits* (2010) in the Trinity Laban Library, Greenwich. The trailer to a film made by Marisa Zanotti about creating *Edits* is available on YouTube and contains excerpts examined here: <https://youtu.be/m6UsEshJSSw>

actions of the spinning and the fabric swishes and flies outwards continuing the pattern of the movement, even once the dancers are still. The dress fabrics, velvet, silk and glitter, all suggest elegance and femininity and add to the impression of film-star glamour from another era. Dancers hold and touch the fabric with careful attention to their hand shaping and using light, flexible dynamics. The added dimension of touch further engages the spectators' experience with the sensual elements of the dance. Circular motions are used repeatedly in the movement phrases and it is as if the movement is passed through the space, or edited across from one performer to another. Two dancers turn in a social dance hold, maybe a waltz turn, and then an individual, in a full-length gold dress, bends to touch their knees and makes a circular pattern with the knees bent. Here is an added dimension of a duet and a soloist on stage, as if we see simultaneously a close up and a long shot, and their actions reflecting each other's. The circular action then becomes larger as it transfers through the three whole bodies into a ripple movement that prompts an exit from one of the duet dancers. Throughout this section the dancers hold their gaze on each other. The spectator is drawn to focus his own gaze on the group, following the eyes of the dancers.



Image 5 *Edits* (2010) [Photo credit: Pau Ros]

In *Edits* dancers are often looking past the partner into the middle distance, suggesting some other action, as in films. The gaze is as precisely choreographed as the movements, and the angle of the head, the hold of the look and the implied awareness of other activity all contribute to the emphasis on the act of looking and the heightened intensity of the activity. The spectator's gaze is invited to a large extent via actions, as described above, suggesting inclusion and invitation, being fluid, circular and often embracing. In this way the spectator could feel empathy with those movements and engaged in the partnering swapping of the dancers. Anderson is *not* presenting men as women in *Edits*, but explores our understanding and expectations of gender types and associated movements. In particular, these are developed choreographically in the movements borrowed from social, partner dances and though tender touches between performers.

In summary, it can be seen that Anderson's turbulent dramaturgies operate to create deliberate collisions and obstacles to our spectating. Nevertheless, as spectators' labours are made more visible and intensified to overcome the obstacle, the engagement fosters empathy for the characters being performed. I propose that Anderson achieves an affective dramaturgic impact of socially conditioned kinaesthetic empathy and a collective, shared connection among spectators because our labours are made apparent. This allows for experiences of evocative, kinaesthetic response to dancing bodies and to the fabrics in motion. Anderson's dramaturgic devices employ sabotage to open opportunities to re-imagining relationships and connections between separate parts. The close attention to looking, despite the obstacles and dramaturgic disruptions, creates empathies between spectators, characters and costumes.

Andre Lepecki, dance philosopher and dramaturg, exposes and critically analyses his diagnoses of an apparent crisis of dance ontology and appreciation that asserts dance must be a 'being-in-the-flow' performance. This apparent crisis has consequences for the discourse and expectations of dance's structures, forms, contents and meanings, as our contemporary performance practices challenge this expectation. I contend that Lepecki's diagnosis points to the 'gap between'<sup>29</sup> that needs bridging, between affective experience and its articulation. Lepecki offers a way to bridge the gap. Part of the crisis lies in stillness or not moving as a cause for concern in Lepecki's analysis and he tracks the dominant traditions of dance discourse, in particular from John Martin on modern dance, whose work set certain criteria for dance performance. By evolving appropriate terms of discourse, the radical challenges from performance practices can be articulated. I propose that concepts of processual systems from dramaturgy can be applied as a framework for understanding how we view dance and spectators' labours in watching performance. Maaïke Bleeker explores the term 'visuality' and in particular a notion of 'the vanishing point' through its corporeality or absence. It is a term that also appears in the work of Lepecki and dance critic, Marcia Siegel. I bring these scholars into dialogue with each other around notions of visibility, looking and spectator presence. Bleeker focuses on the term as a technique from perspectival drawing that offers a particular viewpoint and she considers spectating in terms of what or who is visible, as well as what or who is absent. Lepecki uses the vanishing point as a way of articulating dance's ephemerality and transience, by drawing on Siegel's phenomenological study of dance; 'dance exists at a perceptual vanishing point.' (2006,

---

<sup>29</sup> This is similar to a challenge posed by affect theory & literary aesthetician, Charles Altieri; namely to articulate the experience of imagination.

p.125) She considers this to be a limitation for dance to be valued as a serious art form. Lepecki turns to Peggy Phelan's dissection of dance performance whose 'only life is in the present' (2006, p.116) and I draw a direct connection to the central premise of this thesis that spectating contemporary dance is about *being* at, not looking at, the dance and thus the experience of being present in the performance encounter is essentially and dramaturgically what the work is about.

I agree to a large extent with Lepecki's arguments, but as I explain in detail in the following section, I resist his notions of negativity in relation to turbulence.

Barba, Barton, Lepecki and other scholars and dramaturgs tend to set their notions of crisis and anxieties<sup>30</sup> as obstacles that need to be re-framed in the creative process to find opportunities for new ways of working. In the context of spectating contemporary dance, I articulate the turbulence of dramaturgic devices as catalysts to evoke a variety of spectating experiences such as excitement, thrill, and disorientation in playful, liberating ways. Contemporary dance appears to be essentially playful in its turbulence and I propose this could be a result of how we perceive movement images, often creating metaphors. In particular, I refer to choreographic motifs in Anderson's, Aggiss', Bourne's and Clark's pieces where labile, off -balance movement phrases can evoke affective responses of falling or risk, or spatial patterns and groupings can suggest social relationships. To develop this notion further, I explore how Lepecki and Heathfield approach the challenge of 'linguaging experiences' that are created by disorientation. Lepecki articulates disorientation in terms of errors and suggests how this mode can reveal possibilities

---

<sup>30</sup> This also connects to concerns expressed by dramaturg and scholar, Myriam Imschoot (2003), who sets out challenges facing the role of the dramaturg in new creative practices. I address the dramaturgic processes involved in spectating the performed piece.

outside the norm. Lepecki proposes the potential for creativity through

disorientation as:

developing broken compasses that will misguide or misdirect, without revealing a proper or expected destination allowing one to be lost but still getting them somewhere [...] we find ourselves in a state of not knowing where to go but nevertheless going. (in Georgelou et al.[eds.] 2017, p.50)

This notion of disorientation is a recurrent motif in the spectating experience of contemporary dance and features in critics' reviews as well as in academic discourse. For example, in a social media post promoting the Michael Clark Company tour to Italy, Clark's *to a simple, rock 'n' roll ... song* is described 'as an adrenaline shot that sends you away buzzing.' This operates on several levels of communication; at the simplest it expressed how it feels to watch the work and also indicates that the affective impact lasts beyond the duration of the performance<sup>31</sup> and secondly, in its use of a drug reference, it harks back to the close relationship between Clark's own publicly flaunted lifestyle of drug abuse and clubbing which made up part of his attraction and iconic status in the 1980s. In this second reference, we are drawn to leaky dramaturgies of previous excesses from Clark's private life and his rule-breaking in the field of dance, which function to enhance the work further to those who know of or remember that era.

Dynamic Systems Theory<sup>32</sup> proposes that the human survival instinct tries to maintain the homeostasis of control and equilibrium, but in the context of theatre

---

<sup>31</sup> This post on Facebook social media is part of the leaky dramaturgy of the work, which allows access to information about the work more widely than direct communication with venues or the company. There is also opportunity for interaction with the post via comments so these engagement processes extend in networks of communication in which general public have agency to share opinions and reactions to the work.

<sup>32</sup> Dynamic systems theory, which originally stems from physics, chemistry, and mathematics, was taken over by biology researchers studying the complex dynamics that occur in the natural world, and has found its application in developmental psychology toward the end of the 20th century (Thelen & Smith, 1996). Theatre scholars such as John Lutterbie have adopted Dynamic Systems Theory with others interested in modelling changes in cognitive and psychological behaviours that relate to contemporary performance practices.

spectatorship disruptive dramaturgies create opportunities for turbulent affective impacts. We usually instinctively resist disruption and turbulence in our normal lives, so it can be exciting when choreographers and designers deliberately create disruptions to challenge our perceptions. The more familiar we become with the nature of the work, or the greater exposure we accumulate to the aesthetic challenges of the works, the more we enjoy and even seek out the turbulence of this dramaturgy. In this way the shape of the work is not just its order, the movement sequences and patterns, but is about tracking the encounter from the spectators' experiences and as such, the choreographer frames our encounters with the performance.

Heathfield makes links to Van Kerkhoven's concept of invisibility in the role of the dramaturg, whose work is apparent in the outcome of the piece but is not named as a creative partner in the published credits. I connect this notion to Bleeker's comments on vanishing points, placing the performing body at a viewpoint in a work, but the spectating body being invisible. I illustrate how the spectator *doing* the dramaturgy (as verb) during the performance is made visible by the attention required in fragmented narrative or disorientation in space-time. Heathfield offers a dramaturgic understanding of 'a mode of critical writing that has emerged in response to contemporary performance.' I propose this style of writing as a potential 'bridge', as is called for by literary aesthetician Altieri, to develop a functional and dramaturgic way of making a relation between performance and its discourse. Heathfield characterises such writing as 'not simply upon a subject or about it, but rather is 'of' it in the sense that it issues from it, is subject to its forces and conditions.' (2011, p.108)

---

Heathfield writes two letters to theatre makers, director Tim Etchells and choreographer Jonathan Burrows. He notes in the title of his letter to Etchells that a 'narrative force' drives the work. This is characterised in Eugenio Barba's 'three levels of dramaturgy' and Heathfield analyses the audience's desire for narrative as a driving element of the affective impact of Forced Entertainment's piece *And on the thousandth night* (2000). He claims that in this six-hour piece, multiple and fragmented narrations challenge the audiences. The combined effect of its duration, as well as its structure, creates disorienting, disturbing and turbulent experiences. I relate this description to experiences of watching Bausch's *Viktor* regarding the three-hour duration of the performance with its complex, dense, episodic narratives including over twenty-five dancers and several animals. I contend that as a consequence of experiencing turbulence, spectators are prompted to integrate their experiences into an understanding of the work. Heathfield comments on Etchell's six-hour piece noting that:

duration adds significant freight to the cross-temporal references, repetition and adaptations. Every articulated gesture towards a narrative that has already been placed in the space is felt as an inter-textual transformation, and marked through the accumulative embodied affects of the travail. (2011, p.111)

Heathfield makes particular mention of the spectators' attempts to remain in the auditorium to watch the whole piece, *And on the thousandth night*. He concludes that our desire for a coherent narrative whole is made more apparent to the spectators by its absence and thus the meaning of the work is understood through its dramaturgic disruption and resulting turbulent affective impact.



Heathfield writes to Burrows<sup>33</sup> discussing two aspects of Boris Charmatz's work *Improvisation*, a duet between Charmatz and a child seated on a chair in an empty, white gallery. I find two key ideas raised by Heathfield relevant to this thesis. The first idea is about the 'blind spot' of the work and I link this to the discussion of dramaturgies of visual turbulence, vanishing points and places of visibility and invisibility as articulated by Bleeker. This is brought directly to our attention in our spectating labours. Charmatz's piece is dedicated to a particular audience member who will not see the work and this paradoxical arrangement confuses expectations of performance work. Charmatz introduces this notion of invisibility into his work so that our presence feels more significant. Additionally, the movement vocabulary of the performance is similar in appearance to some of Burrows' movements, although Burrows' movements are definitely not improvised. There is a particular attention to detail demanded by these movements and Heathfield describes how he is fascinated by:

...the micro-movements of the kid's body, his facial expressions, shifts of mood and attention become part of the choreography...and challenges the supposed ease of communication and sharing of participatory art works. What is not shared also communicates. This work carefully reminds us of differences and gulfs in relation, here specifically between the adult and the child, alongside the invisible but connective forces of performance. (2011, p.116)

I note in Heathfield's account of the turbulence his capacity to communicate his own frustration in his writing about the piece. I point to how this dramaturgy of turbulence is the system by which we are made aware of its meaning. I agree with Heathfield's notion of performative writing as helpful in bridging the gap between experience and articulation. Heathfield develop the idea thus:

---

<sup>33</sup> In Burrows' work with Matteo Fargion; *Cheap Lecture*, *The Cow Piece* (2010) and *Body Not Fit for Purpose* (2014), I identify some dramaturgic features similar to Boris Charmatz's work, including how the 'dance', or movement content, is movement material that challenges expectations of codified dance tradition.

Here the tactics of performative writing may provide some possibilities for a further generative relation to the event of performance. Performance writing does not see cultural events and artworks as objects, but rather as situations, manifestations and articulations of ideas. As such they are rarely static and final but highly dynamic and provisional. (2011, p.113)

He explains that the nature of the style of writing allows; 'a form of discourse that is within and partly about the present context of the encounter; an intensely social and provisional affair that is not subject to closure.' (2011, p.113)

In this way he offers an adapted role for the dramaturg as a 'conversationalist' that I find correlates closely to my findings of leaky dramaturgies in social media, post-show and pre-show talks, and other shared discussion activities around and outside the performance event.

The range of experiences included in these turbulent encounters can be thrilling, exhilarating and exciting, confusing, shocking, disturbing, frustrating or perplexing. I find that critics' comments articulate the excitement of turbulences and evoke positive visceral and imaginative engagements. Turbulence in the existing discourse is framed in aggressive or violent terms. I consider the approach of Barba (2000 and 2006) and Barton (2005, 2013, 2014), who navigate turbulence as if through obstacles and subsequent 'collisions', are directly connected to Barba's violations of order (2000, p.61). Barba's three dramaturgies: organic; narrative and changing states, set out how interconnected dramaturgic systems work simultaneously in the theatre piece and connect with spectators. I echo Barba's focus on spectators in his model, but consider the explanation of his 'third dramaturgy of changing states' as problematic. It is presented as 'a sudden vortex that shatters the security of comprehension and is experienced as turbulence'. (2000, p.60-61) I conjecture that the non-violent turbulence in dance dramaturgies is due to the kinetic and visual aspect of dance. Movement is mobile, malleable, and carries

potential of making an affective connection with spectators as kinaesthetic empathy.<sup>34</sup> It is through our kinetic connection with the performers that we are able to empathise with the movements and can still sense turbulence in space-time complexities that are disorienting, for examples in Clark's and Burrows' works especially, as examples of increasing deviance, complexity and turbulence, but those paradoxes in these works provoke highly enjoyable encounters. In Chapter Four I analyse several productions in terms of kinetic turbulence, but first I examine dramaturgies of visual turbulence and affective impact.

I propose that the social and shared sensing of a contemporary dance encounter is significant in allowing the spectator to embrace the turbulence, rather than to experience it as a collision (Barton, 2013). Sociologist Erving Goffman (1959) identifies a social and shared feature of communication between individual and group in which he compares society with theatre as systems of communication. In agreement with Goffman's broader contexts, I propose that contemporary dance's social context and embodied connections allow spectators to shift from individual experience to a group encounter.

There is much in Barton's model of dramaturgies that I support and explore further, however I disagree with his notion of collision in dramaturgies of turbulence. Barton explains that his creative practices have shifted from text-based to movement dominated theatre-making and offers this as a reason for the collision, but nevertheless I refute this as a useful model on the ground that movement and dance is not in conflict with text, spoken or written. This can be seen from the analysis of Bausch's *Viktor*, in how Burrows plays movement and text together in

---

<sup>34</sup> Sheets-Johnstone in *Primacy of Movement* (1999) expounds phenomenological, embodied connections across all creatures and nature including human beings as subject to the same instinctive movement forces.

*Body Not fit for Purpose* and also in Aggiss's *The English Channel* where complex dramaturgies evocatively merge text, dance, song and visual designs. Barton cites Barba's third dramaturgy of changing states as offering a potential bridge between concepts of composition and realisation, but it relies on a state of 'instinctual interpretative capabilities' (2005, p.107). Conversely, this thesis proposes that affective, emotional and interpretative engagements operate simultaneously. Bourne's gothic fairy tale of *Sleeping Beauty* (2012) introduces a male fairy godfather who is a vampire. This would not resonate as fully visceral or emotional for spectators, without the combined socio-culturally mediated contexts of the Victorian gothic genre, traditional fairy tale and twenty-first century gender politics. Bourne's piece requires spectators to know these contexts in order to sense fully the impact of affective moments. I support Barton's notion that the productive disruption of dramaturgic interruptions can open opportunities for communication. I focus on spectators' experiences, while his concern remains with the difficulty a dramaturg finds in merging text and movement. Barton pursues the disruption even further to promote his notion of collision between 'physical and textual channels'. (2005, p.108)

Barton develops his line of argument in subsequent articles (2013 and 2014) so that his concluding questions about new dramaturgic processes have been explored further. There are certainly shared areas of enquiry between this study and Barton's on-going research in which he is exploring 'how the doing is done' in movement dramaturgies in Canadian Theatre. I make similar enquiries about how contemporary dance constructs dramaturgies that evoke affective spectating and I show these to occur through turbulence and leaky encounters. Barton frames his strategy as *inter/actual*, but I note that this points to a dichotomy and duality of

interests within the work not seen as an issue in contemporary dance. I am in agreement with Barton's research objectives that are similarly articulated in UK and European research discourse calling for interdisciplinary approaches. In Barton's approach he identifies:

an intersection of phenomenology, semiotics, discourse theory and cognitive science; one that manifests in dramaturgical strategies that treat all modes of expression (including textual expression) and interwoven acts of composition. Movement that (echoing Austin's 'speechact') does work, that has affect. It is potentially, a dramaturgical perspective that can allow creator performers to recognize and work with what a performance is doing rather than what it is trying to be [...] to a conception of performance as a process.. (2013, p.45)

I expand further on Barton's dualities of text and movement in Burrows' *Body Not Fit for Purpose* and movement, metaphor and narrative text in Bourne's *Sleeping Beauty*. In Barton's studies he takes the role of dramaturg as his framework, whereas in this study, I propose that the dramaturgies of the works operate with and around the spectators causing turbulence and also leaking into encounters beyond the works.

### **Turbulent dramaturgies of visual disruptions**

This analysis begins by reflecting on the experience of spectating Anderson's works and is contextualised by dramaturgies that deliberately<sup>35</sup> make it difficult to achieve a 'good view' of the performance. There are other senses employed during the encounter with the works which are prioritised in Anderson's work, especially when the 'what is being seen' may vary considerably between spectators. A kinaesthetic sensory engagement may depend upon a variety of factors including familiarization with the choreographic genre and thus the ability to recognise characteristic movement and body styles of Anderson's work. For convenience, I

---

<sup>35</sup> Anderson's deliberate obstacles to spectating as a coherent experience operate in a similar way to Stanger's notions of sabotage in dramaturgy (2017) that makes alternative options apparent when the conventional systems do not function. I propose that in accordance with Stanger's notions, Anderson's obstacles are offering creative dramaturgic opportunities to spectators.

adopt the abbreviation used by the company for *The Featherstonehaughs Draw on the Sketchbooks of Egon Schiele* and I will refer to that work as *Egon Schiele*. I am including analysis of footage from the 1998 version of the piece in addition to the re-worked 2010 piece, and viewed archive film of the production at the archives of Trinity Laban Centre Library, Greenwich. By differentiating the particular movement choices made for *this* piece from her typical movement vocabulary as seen in other pieces, the specificity of this piece carries more impact and can be emphasised for an informed spectator. In Anderson's works the dancers do not become characters, but perform partly as themselves, partly as the choreographic bodies; layered onto those movements are references to visible bodies from Egon Schiele's sketchbooks or in *Edits*, characters based on Fassbinder's film *The Bitter Tears of Petra van Kant*. The complexity and corporeal layering of dancer, costume, references/sources and person are all allowed to exist simultaneously in Anderson's dramaturgies.

Anderson's creative process of devising choreographic material on her dancers' bodies works with differences in body types, heights and sizes, weight, and length of limbs to explore ranges of movement. This means that the palettes from which Anderson's choreographic pictures are created are inherently personal and idiosyncratic. It was very noticeable when a new dancer took on a role previously made on another and indeed how that particular body re-makes that role. In this way, the dance, or as in Bleeker's terms, 'what is being seen' (2011, p. 2) changes with a new body and so what is looked at refreshes this experience of porous and layered complexity between dancer body, movement, and the ideas of the piece.

Vulnerability is a feature of the experience of spectating Anderson's works due to the physical difficulties of seeing when bodies are in darkness or lights are shone brightly into the eyes of the audience, or a dancer only partially appears so we

cannot see the whole body or other dancers obscure our views. In this way we become aware of the work we are doing to see what is happening in the performing space and how difficult, and sometimes how frustrating, this can seem. As this is not something at the control of the spectators, we are vulnerable to the dramaturgic conditions of the piece, demanding that we shift and alter our looking to compensate as necessary. Anderson demonstrates that her interest in exhibiting her works is in how her works are watched, expressions of agency in looking and how this experience of watching is integral to the work itself. This combines with the dancers' choreographed looking, observing us being 'looked at', and shifts our perspectives, at least for the duration of the piece.

Anderson reflects on the roles and labours of the spectator at the 'Hand In Glove' exhibition of her costumes at the Victoria and Albert Museum (2016). The live performances have different dramaturgies from the exhibition and the active spectating and embodying of looking is about the choices and experiences in the shared spaces of performance. In the live moment of performing and spectating the audience member makes choices about looking at and sees the dancers' bodies. Each piece uses turbulent dramaturgies of costume, qualities of spliced narratives and characterisations that disorient the spectator. It is not clear and easy to see what is happening and the challenges involved include where to look, when to watch and how to see the moving bodies. Anderson discusses the added value of costumes as material aspects of the choreography and dramaturgy. The important function and aesthetic contribution of the costumes are in the materiality, and their potential for sensitising spectators to the space, weight and time the costume takes to move with or around the dancers. She refers to *Flesh and Blood* (1989) originally choreographed for the all-female company The Cholmondeleys, and later re-worked

on the all-male company, The Featherstonehaughs. The differences in body shapes, sizes and weights created new ways for perceiving the same movements through the close attention to the precisely counted, rhythmically accurate and fully choreographed manipulation of full-length dresses in complex choreography, including intricate and rapid floor work sequences. In this way, the perception of body, space and time is shown through the integrated work of body and costume to create the affective dramaturgy of those moments:

I had a major realization about the potential for costume and movement working together in my work back in 1989. [...] for *Flesh and Blood*. There was a lot of floor work in this piece and Sandy told me she wanted to put the dancers in floor length silver dresses. I thought to myself - has she not seen what we are doing? How can they manage those dresses as they roll around on the floor [...] decided that it might be really interesting to re-choreograph the whole thing, adding in an over-choreography which introduced very precise, counted dress manipulation as a whole new layer of the performance. It would bring a sense of the human relationship to clothing. This new costume-management added a richness that was very sculptural and beautiful. (*Hand in Glove* exhibition interview, October 2016)

Anderson presented her costumes on dancers' bodies but without them actually performing the dance choreography; instead the key movement motifs of the piece and specific costume manipulations were shown. However, there were differences in what could be seen in the museum compared to in performance and notable differences in how spectators might have perceived the dancers through the options to engage with the group of dancers exhibited in the gallery of the Victoria and Albert Museum as opposed to dancers being on stage and moving in the choreography. Anderson refers to *Yippee!!* (2006) taking visual images, cultural references, filmic devices and movement material from Busby Berkeley musical theatre numbers:

There were lots of things. Did you see the wavy arms section? I enjoyed the way they cut through the crowd and everyone moved away. It was such a simple and repetitive thing. In that space things just had a different significance. There was a pregnant man with a cigarette that in the original show was a dark little figure in the wings but the fact that he interacted with the museum audience made it really



different. The other thing was the Torch Song Singer Without a Song, from a production called *Smithereens*. That was the woman on a box on wheels being pushed around the room in this amazing dress. I was very pleased with that. A man in black behind her was replacing her gesturing arms in satin evening gloves with his own [arms]. Another man was pushing them both the length of the gallery to the accompaniment of a recording of breathing and backwards singing.

In the theatrical presentation of this section it was in darkness so you couldn't really see how she was gliding around but in the exhibition version, the mechanics of the illusion were revealed and it was very simple, but I thought very effective. It was still this great vision of a person floating.

(Anderson in interview with curator of *Hand in Glove* exhibition, V&A, 2016)

These comments illustrate visuality as a key dramaturgical interest in Anderson's work, so that we are shown differently and find ways to see differently. The choreographic focus on shaping and dynamic precision moves our attention into visual complexity of movement in space-time. We can *feel* the turbulence of the visuality by not seeing what we predict or expect to see, but by being provoked to watch closely and even to sense motion, only then subsequently to see a movement, or trace of it, through the continued motion of costume. This way we see details or perspectives that are not conventional or predictable. The activity of seeing becomes heightened and the challenge of looking and trying to see (or seeing oddly) becomes the aesthetic function and meaning of these works, as the stimuli and focus points are not revealed in programme notes and the requirements of Anderson's commission for the new scores is not shared with the audience. Her formalist structuring of space and time is motion being *visualised*.

Affective spectating occurs as the experience of looking encompasses the individual in a heightened awareness of sensing the particular moment and environment, and observing activities occurring among other spectators. The dramaturgies of Anderson's visual choreographies create opportunities for entrainment among the spectators. It may be through the change of direction of your eyes, a movement of your head, or noticing your difficulty in seeing and

adjusting your eyes through reflex response to allow more or less light into the eye as light levels are changed suddenly, jolting you from light to dark.

In *Egon Schiele*, lighting comprises mainly vertical sidelights, which is fairly conventional for contemporary dance. The distinct feature of the piece is a square of bright white strip lights on the floor which frame the stage space in which *most* of the action takes place. Some of the sections are very brightly lit and some are very dim. Spectators have to adjust to different light levels, our eyes will do this automatically for us, but Anderson contrasts lighting states so there is a sudden change in lighting from very dim to very bright and the effect is to make us blink as we quickly adjust our eyes to the lights. The strip lights in front of the audience can also be shone directly out to the audience as well and upwards or back on the stage area. When the strip lights are on full beam towards the audience it is as if there is a wall of white light between the stage and us so that it is almost impossible to see through it. This is an example of the obstacles she places in the way of our seeing the dance. The same effect is used with the music; there are very quiet sections and then the sound suddenly blares out at us, usually in conjunction with bright lights, making us jolt and shift our weight and even lean back slightly, giving an almost immersive sensory experience of spectating. Here is an example of turbulent dramaturgy in Anderson's work that does operate in accordance with Barba and Barton's notions of violence in turbulence through collision or conflict. Lighting effects and choreography appear to work against each other, interrupting any coherent experience of the work. This, as explained earlier, is a crafted form of sabotage in Anderson's dramaturgy and I propose similarities can be seen with Stanger's explanation of dramaturgy as sabotage (2017).

The source material of sketches and self-portraits for *Egon Schiele* lends itself to psychoanalytical responses drawing upon theories of Jacques Lacan. Bleeker (2002) explores a strong link between an embodied visuality and Lacanian psychoanalysis through his theory of the mirror stage. This is pertinent to Anderson's exploration of how Schiele's portraits might be interpreted as revealing the 'inner self'. In Anderson's piece it appears that this notion is manipulated as the dancers turn to observe each other and are being observed by the audience. In turn, they face directly downstage and observe the spectators. The impact of the observation is magnified by the accentuated painted faces of the male dancers and especially the enlarged and darkened eyes, with heavily defined and exaggerated shaping around their eyebrows and cheekbones.

Image 6: *The Featherstonehaughs Draw on the Sketchbooks of Egon Schiele* (2010)  
[Photo credit: Pau Ros]



Instances of entrainment and synchronised timings occur at several key moments of the piece where the use of lighting, music and space confronts the audience, causing synchronised reactions. Individuals in the audience respond in unison, experiencing synchrony and entrained behaviour<sup>36</sup> through the collective body of spectators. At

---

<sup>36</sup> Entrainment is a term coined by Condon 1966. Entrainment studies in the field of cognitive psychology investigate the processes and value of synchronous connections between people. I refer directly to the research of Bernieri 1988, Cappella 1997 and Vacharkulksemsuk 2012. Notably the latter two offer robust validation of observed judgment as an experimental methodology that is a

performances of *Egon Schiele*, at The Place, Euston, London, (venue for the 1998 performances), I observed people suddenly leaning back in their seats in the first row as the bar neon lights flashed and shone upwards, and this combined with loud and rhythmic percussive music, all pulsing, so that the jolting action of spectators was echoed or copied in the music. This continued on stage as if transferred from the audience to the dancers. Their jolting movements advanced forwards, almost too close to us, then they stared impassively at the audience, creating tension and a visceral engagement with the shock and intrusion beyond our control. In accordance with Sheets-Johnstone's explanation of instinctive kinaesthetic empathy (1999), this moment in *Egon Schiele* is an example of shared response to visual dramaturgies of movement. It seems the audience's reaction is involuntary and synchronised.

Furthermore, Foster suggests that engaging with a dance performance is a collaborative process in which she gives equal importance to the spectator, endorsing my claim that the turbulent dramaturgies of visibility in Anderson's work make significant demands on the spectators, thus making the work '... equally a product of the choreographer's and dancer's creative vision and the viewer's equally creative response.' (1986, p.56)

Anderson is the architect of this affective relationship and sets up the opportunities for experiencing creative encounter as discussed in Foster's work; 'towards the imaginative provocations at work in the materiality of the live event.' (1986, p.39) In *Egon Schiele*, the angular, twisted body movements and confrontational stares from off-centre heads have the effect of making the spectator feel

---

surrogate for behavioural coding involving lengthy laboratory-based work. These findings support studies such as this one that conduct observations in the field, i.e. in the theatre during live performances. It marks a potential way forward in interdisciplinary methodology that would be more applicable to investigating experience and behaviour in live situations.

uncomfortable and spatially disorientated. The delineated square of neon lights at floor level acts as a barrier to keep us out; perhaps the hard edges remind us of a picture frame and what we see within it is for our consumption, not participation. Six dancers in painted tailored suits in colours borrowed from Schiele's palette, wear smart, polished, brown shoes, making crisp sounds on the dance floor. The 'nude' dancers are, by contrast, barefoot in painted unitards, of similar colours to Schiele's portraits, green, blue, purple and brown. There is a sense of vulnerability when a fully dressed dancer in shoes approaches a 'nude' barefooted dancer and pulls him by the arm to bring him to his feet. Limbs and joints of the dancers are emphasised through much use of raised, bent elbows and the dancers twisting and bending their torsos to look under or around their arms. Often the head is held to one side, either tilted or turned at an off-centre angle. This adds to the effect of disjointedness, creating a disturbing or disturbed effect, suggesting the contorted bodies are representing a contorted emotional or psychological state. The angular blocks of colour across the suits, unitards and faces all contribute to the cubist-like angularity of the shaping of movement and costume.



Image 7: *The Featherstonehaughs Draw on the Sketchbooks of Egon Schiele* (2010)  
[Photo credit: Chris Nash]

Throughout *Egon Schiele* attention is drawn to what is being seen, who is looking and where they are looking. Dancers wear full-face abstract make-up, contouring the face with colours of the suits/unitards. This make-up greatly emphasises the eyes with brighter colours around them in angular shapes extending across the cheekbones and forehead. The predominant horizontal side lighting enhances angularity, with upward light from the four long neon strip lights marking out the square performing stage area. The lights are harsh and create many shadows and leave several areas darker, actually making it difficult for the spectators to see all the movements all the time. Obscurity and heightened attention to the effort of looking contribute to the themes of the piece.

Movements are performed to live music that is loud, rhythmically complex with an unrelenting electronic base. It gives a harsh effect, reinforcing the angularity of the movements, costume and design. Sudden, abrupt changes in direction, pauses in twisted shapes all emphasis the fragmentation of body and this is echoed in the music. Heads may be the only body parts moving while dancers remain on the spot

and the eyes alone lead the spectators to follow the dancers' gaze. Unison in these sections gives the effect of a group acting as a unit that creates tension and suggests confrontation. Entrances and exits can be at any point around the square of neon lights, as dancers step over the bar of neon light. Dancers can still be seen in the 'off-stage' area, as can the musicians. Once again this is a subversive or turbulent example of manipulating visibility and what is usually invisible. This makes the spectator aware of the dancers watching other performers from their off-stage area, conflating expectations of performance areas and where to look.

A trio of dancers emerge from upstage and stand downstage in a line making small, intricate hand gestures while looking directly towards the spectators in front of them. Spectators are placed on one side only giving a 'flat' view, as if looking at a painting. The trio poses and distorts faces, as well as their shoulders and upper torsos. Neatly, they form another line from down to upstage, one behind the other. The dancer behind in turn covers the eyes of the one in front, and then slowly opens his fingers to allow the one in front to see through the gaps. Then with a slight pressure on the face he moves the dancer by the head to lean and turn away. During a trio of 'nude' dancers rolling smoothly and fluidly on their thin, white mattresses, a further three dancers are watching from the very edge of the neon square, leaning slightly into the space as if to see better. One dancer holds out his arm as if blocking the others, but makes a sideways "V" shape with his fingers and another dancer presses his eye to the gap between the fingers to look. The movements are based on shapes taken directly from the paintings and can be found as recurrent poses in Schiele's work.

Touch occurs between dancers, but is not performed with affection or tenderness, in contrast to *Edits*. Often the touch is manipulative, with slow,

sustained dynamics emphasising the long fingers extending through the space between the bodies. Dancers touch their own hair and bodies in a protective, anxious way, as if attempting to shield themselves from the gaze of others' eyes. Touch is used in both performances in at least three ways; to communicate between the performers, as if in fragments of narrative between characters, and also for practical purposes to indicate a cue for movement and timekeeping between dancers, as well as to the spectator. This is a very interesting aspect of this piece, as touch has such an effect on the spectator, encouraging kinetic empathy towards the dancers and imaginative engagement with the characters. Perhaps at these moments the spectator can feel corporeal/kinetic responses most acutely, since we can all easily identify with the touch actions, and we are thus engaged through our visual responses. An understanding of the embodied visuality of experience in watching *Egon Schiele* enhances the spectator's kinetic experience of the difficulty in seeing through the darkness. There is an ambiguity of who is seeing whom, and whether or not we have been given or are giving permissions, and the potential embarrassment of seeing the apparent physical discomfort and "nudity" as performed by dancers wearing flesh coloured full-body unitards, painted with body hair and shading to look completely nude, as the roles of the performers/models in Schiele's portraits. This question runs through Anderson's piece as a subtext and is most apparent in 'nude' sections when some dancers are dressed in painted nude unitards and are apparently unaware of our presence, nor that of the suited dancers watching them. It makes our spectating seem voyeuristic and in this way seems to set up a different quality in the active relationship between spectators and performers. We see the dancers as people, but not as characters in a story. They interact with each other, sometimes in moments of apparent tenderness, offering



physical support. The choreography emphasises activities of looking; peering, watching and peeping through fingers, and at times the dancers look out directly at the audience, sometimes as if seeing us and at other times as if looking in a mirror.

At moments the choreography allows for unison and perfect synchrony of the six Featherstonehaughs and this seems very welcome. It feels like a relief, perhaps because it is a moment of unison, where spectators enjoy visual, aural and kinetic coherence. These moments seem refreshing for the spectators, the visual work requires less effort than watching detailed solo phrases, duets and trios that are choreographically more complex. When the dancers are briefly all in unison, we feel connected as an audience, just for a moment.

Overall the structure of the piece manages the nature of the spectators' attention by changing the focus as if 'zooming in' and 'zooming out'. This could be detailed, watching a single 'nude' figure, lying in a spotlight surrounded by darkness and hardly moving. Spectators may be leaning forward in their seats to see better and looking for small movement. Alternatively they have to pull back to widen their focus to watch all six dancers on stage together, each moving through individual movement phrases. Anderson's choreographic floor patterns and structures of the movement allow us to see the connections between all six dancers as they share rhythms, phrasing, dynamics and even movement shapes. This shifting of focus and attention from close up to wide-angled has distinct filmic characteristics and affective impact. Time spent in held poses and by us looking at them may feel longer than expected, or 'usual' in conventional social contexts, so that it can feel uncomfortable. The changing sensation of time is a very interesting feature of Anderson's turbulent dramaturgy of spectating in which experiences or perceptions of time passing vary during the performance.

## ***The English Channel - Aggiss (2012)***

Aggiss' work operates as a visual expression of intertextuality in her own body. She overtly displays how her body has been shaped and influenced by her training, experiences, its aging process and its gender. Aggiss's body is the subject of spectators' scrutiny and is the theme of her work. She presents her own body as a living link to her heritage in *Ausdruckstanz* and also as an example of an over sixty-year-old dancer/singer/choreographer. As such, Aggiss conflates the dramaturgies of spectating and interpreting meaning for the spectator, who is confronted by Aggiss's question: 'Do I please you or do I please myself?'

I connect the visual dramaturgies in Aggiss's work to Foster's (1995) and Lansdale's (2008) notions of inscribed bodies in terms of socio-cultural influences on behaviour and creative practices. Spectators watch her perform the role of herself and it is the watching that becomes the focal point of attention. The works are about the experience of spectating and in this case that dramaturgic perspective is extended further to question the expectations and responsibility of the spectator. In accordance with Foster's feminist analysis of choreographed gender (1998), the deviant visual dramaturgy of Aggiss's body causes turbulence in the spectator-performer relationship by exposing the implicit contract of delivering pleasure:

Congratulations! You have witnessed Liz Aggiss channelling herself and other wilful artistes, debating her age and the march of time, whilst unpicking that ongoing female conundrum 'do I please you or do I please myself?' (Programme notes, *The English Channel*, 2013)<sup>37</sup>

Using direct address to the audience, Aggiss demands that spectators are part of her question and makes us self-reflexively aware of our own spectating action. In

---

<sup>37</sup> See clips of the performance in this edited excerpt: <https://youtu.be/byY3Qajm0xl>

Bleeker's analysis of looking (2011), she considers at length the relationship between the looker and the object of that attention. Aggiss is denying her spectators the comfort of convention that allows the audience to be apparently invisible. 'I'm a one woman variety show,' says Aggiss, taking her seat for a post-show discussion/Q & A session, 'Never stop trying to please; never stop giving them what they want. That's what performing is all about isn't it? That's what being a woman is all about isn't it?' (Aggiss at The Ellen Terry Theatre, Coventry, 7 November 2013)

Aggiss makes our spectating visible and this is a dramaturgic device of her work. It is reinforced by lighting design choices that keep the house lights partially illuminated for major parts of the show. In this way, spectators are seen by Aggiss and she comments on what she sees, adopting a cabaret performance style. This creates a vulnerability and disruption or turbulence in the spectators' experience and conversely fosters a sense of community and shared engagement. This complex dramaturgic effect is highly engaging in Aggiss's work. I propose that by applying Bleeker's notions of invisibility, it is revealed how the dramaturgies of agency in spectating are shifted in Aggiss's approach to performing. By disrupting the protection granted by invisibility Aggiss has made the spectators complicit in her dilemma or question: Does she please you or please herself?

Conversely, Aggiss also creates a highly empathic relationship with her spectators, extending from individuals to collective, shared empathy across the audience. Empathic engagement arises from shared recognition of socio-cultural references and also from kinetic events. In an early scene, Aggiss moves her body frenetically to an intense pulsing rhythm, shaking her arms and torso. Her short green, sparkly dress is covered in fringed tassels that all jiggle with her flesh and this embodied, frantic movement evokes spontaneous laughter in the audience.

Spectators engage closely with the affective qualities of Aggiss's movements indicating kinaesthetic empathy in accordance with Sheets-Johnstone's proposition (2009) that humans connect with each other's movements in a primal, instinctive way. The corporeality of Aggiss's fleshiness creates a turbulent dramaturgy and also evokes affective and kinaesthetic experiences for the spectators.

*The English Channel* is a series of autobiographical recollections from Aggiss's own life and comments on shared social memories. The piece encompasses her childhood, adolescence and performer training; and selected events are presented in a collage of short semi-narrative episodes. Aggiss performs solo by using speech, dance, music and film footage of other female performers to whom Aggiss is connected. This work is a hybrid performance of dance, song, voice, comedy and film, incorporating homages to German Ausdruckstanz and British music hall style theatre in a collage of autobiographical and social-biographical narratives woven through the life and times of an Essex girl.

She shares autobiographical experiences and comments on social codes and attitudes that she grew up with from the 1950s onwards in post-war Britain. She addresses the audience directly and part way through the show she offers us traditional sweets, rhubarb and custards and pineapple cubes, in pink and white stripy paper bags that we may recognise from childhood. Spectating at *The English Channel* is a shared, social experience that brings our attention to life's episodes, connections and even the displacement of memories. Narratives and characterisations rely on Aggiss's choreographic technique of hybridization, so that personal memories and spoken reflections mix with film or soundtracks as shared social images that combine within the autobiography of her story.

Dramaturgically, this piece builds as a series of visual images that are highly affective, thus becoming the core content and meaning of the work. The work is constructed to allow designated points of self-reflective connection to Aggiss's experiences, as a person outside the stage — in the real world — and as a performer in front of us on the stage. She embodies the link, the conduit and the channel, between European Ausdruckstanz and British contemporary dance and her programme biography is a list of those dancers and teachers who trained her:

It is these mature artists and gifted pedagogues who are a constant presence and who laid down the foundations for her thirst for knowledge, hunger to perform and quest for individuality. Liz is proud to report that not one of her inspirational teachers were spring chicken. (Programme notes, *The English Channel*, 2012).

Aggiss explains her approach to performance intention as the dramaturgy of space and time. It refers to how a performer shows the construction and shape of each movement moment. Aggiss imagines, in each movement, the spatial lines across the location points identified in Laban's icosahedron. She makes spatial patterns of energies visible in the emphasis and phrasing of dynamics or changes of weight in the movement quality. Spectators respond to these visual sculpting devices with attention that evokes emotional affective impact.

Aggiss uses film, music and lighting to combine with layers of her movement, text and song. Her use of the stage space and lighting design is particularly notable in the way she segments and designates certain areas for particular durations of time. This functions to frame the spectators' attention and also to make us aware of the changes to the illuminated space, in how much we can see and how much we see according to the levels of lighting used, as well as the colours and patterns we see. Her choice of position on stage and range of movement relates to the spatial and lighting context, and she is helping the spectators to frame their attention. The short

sections and frequent changes of spatial states during the sections make us particularly alert to the changes and altered states. Lighting changes are sudden and Aggiss makes quick exits and fast costume changes so the spectators register change all the more vividly. Dance critic Zoe Parker writes:

It demands our attention from start to finish. Yet the kinds of attention and the way it relates with us is constantly changing: spoken word, movement, illusion, film, soundscape, song...the audience is always taken along for the ride. I like that...Does this account describe anything about this performance – not in the slightest but experiencing is the necessary ‘screw’ here. (*CultureVulture.com* 2013 online).

In Aggiss’s choreography she imagines the spectator could freeze-frame the movement at any point and insists on absolute visual clarity of shape and spatial patterns of body and limbs. This means that her movement vocabulary is shape oriented, in a similar way to Clark, Bourne, Burrows and Anderson, but is unlike the release-technique movement style of Snaith in which motion and momentum is more important than shape. Aggiss always asks for at least 15 per cent intensity in house lights in the auditorium during the show, as she ‘keeps an eye on the audience’ so she can see the reactions and audience behaviour. (Stated in Q&A in post-show discussion in Coventry, 7 November 2013). This choice of spectators being visible is similar to Burrows and Fargion, who also keep an amount of light on the audience. This opens up a process of shared seeing and looking that is key to the visual dramaturgy of their work.

At the beginning of the show Aggiss emerges from the wings moving in swimming movements across the stage, mimicking swimming the English Channel. The lights on the audience allow her to see us and we sense this shared visibility, so shift our viewing attentions to include awareness of other spectators as well as of Aggiss on stage. The backdrop projection is of the White Cliffs of Dover, then switches to Brighton beach. Sound recording adds commentary about the first

woman to swim the channel. The audience laughs at the visual contrast between the projected images of long distance swimmers and Aggiss's ludicrously sparkly, green swimsuit costume. She exaggerates her mimed actions of swimming across the stage, making eye contact with the audience. It is a light-hearted start to the show and the spectators quickly learn to absorb several elements of performance and information simultaneously: visually, kinaesthetically and aurally. We may recognise this image from Aggiss' publicity for the show, as a leaky encounter, in which she is photographed on Brighton beach in the same costume. The familiar visual image seems to make us feel Aggiss is delivering our expectations to subvert and sabotage meanings. The leaky encounter with this image of Aggiss (overleaf) has prepared us for the visual turbulence and we recognise its ironic commentary.



Image 8 Aggiss in publicity image for *The English Channel* (2013)  
[Photo credit: Joe Murray]

Aggiss reveals a skimpy, green dress with sequins, tassels tucked inside her swimming costume, and starts this section by pulling the fabric out of her swimsuit then smoothing it down over her body. The dress has a low back revealing Aggiss' back, arms and legs. It is a short dress and displays more of her body than usual for a woman over sixty years old. She wears golden tap shoes with large ribbon bows. Her

dialogue is a commentary to the audience and her word play language contains innuendos and games in her story. She fragments meanings by switching between idiom and metaphor so what we hear and what we see does not match up. It allows us to recognise multiple visual images and spoken ideas. Aggiss lifts up her dress as part of the story she is telling and reveals large pants, and reaches in her pants to remove a wrapped sweet. As the audience laughs, Aggiss presents the sweet to a spectator, clearly visible to us all, near the front of the audience — we are all involved in the joke. There is a sensation of exposure or vulnerability and that, despite the humour used to release tension, there is a risk of being part of this performance. Spectators can see each other in the audience and there is some reassurance in being part of the collective spectating experience in the face of the exposure that is Aggiss in her self-confessed, autobiographical embodiment as her own 'English Channel'.

After a swift exit and change, Aggiss enters under a black cloak-like dress with her body and face completely hidden. Just visible are legs and black ankle boots as she steps to centre stage. One arm thrusts out and there are long, metallic talons as nails which she moves in a freaky and non-human, robotic way, transforming her body into 'other'. Both hands appear, metallic spikes on fingers as blades for nails and Aggiss uses her body to focus on those as she makes shapes and gradually reveals more of her body. When the hood is pushed back and we see her face, she removes her metallic nails and asks lightly, 'Did you enjoy that?' This conversational direct address is a contrast to the intensity and rigour of the black cloak dance and provides welcome humour to release the tension.

A full-length golden gown and sparkly head cap is hidden inside the pants of her black cape costume, so there is no exit to make a costume change, it happens



before our eyes on stage. Upstage on the projection we see black and white images of a fishing ship and we hear a commentator calling instructions to sailing crew: 'Splice the main brace' and 'All Aboard!' Affirming the collective behaviour of the audience, Aggiss sets up a sing-a-long for us to participate in the nonsense chorus words: 'Ooaadee adiddlyum'. The words are projected onto the cyclorama so we can follow along easily and take part in the joyful, Music Hall style climax to the first half. Aggiss performs a repeated sequence of actions and gestures, but like Burrows' movements in *Body Not Fit for Purpose*, these actions and projected words do not fit together, thus creating a dramaturgic visual complexity.

***New Work/ Animal, Vegetable, Mineral - Clark (2012/14)***<sup>38</sup>

In Clark's *New Work*, 2012 (Double Bill), the two halves of the show contrast to each other. The first piece displays performers in a minimalistic open stage presenting abstract dance steps in a linear, rigorous structure. The solos, duets and small groups move on and off the stage in a pattern of physical virtuosity. The dancers' gaze projected outwards shows the spectators the extent of the space, making no contact with us, but conveying a sense of expanse to the stage space. Dance critic, Mark Monahan, encapsulates the thrill and complexity of the work thus:

Michael Clark's latest creation has no title, beyond the gnomic **New Work 2012**. There are no programme notes at all, nothing about exploring notions of this or raising questions of that...It also turns out to be the most exhilarating new piece of contemporary dance to appear in Britain this year, by turns ravishing, outrageous, borderline certifiable, and sometimes all three at once. (*The Daily Telegraph*, 19 October 2012)

---

<sup>38</sup> See the Michael Clark Company's website link for full list of choreo-chronicle and list of films of Clark's work available for the reader: <https://www.michaelclarkcompany.com/productions.php>

Spectators' attentions are drawn to the changes of movements through detailing body parts, shapes and spatial patterns. These visual changes are noticed in relation to rhythm, often complex in structure, and have varying sensations of time passing as well as being able to register measurable time. Spectators can see in the patterns of individual dancers' phrases the changes in the timing and movements in relation to music, and also in relation to other patterns of movements from other dancers performing similar phrases with shared visual motifs, such as diagonal arms or sideways lunge positions. The image below illustrates the small changes and variations in the deceptively simple movement shapes and patterns in the dancers' leg positions and extended, linear arm shapes.



Image 9 Clark's *New Work* (2012)/*Animal, Vegetable, Mineral* (2014)  
[Photo credit: Hugo Glendinning]

Attention is drawn to the linear shapes, movement dynamics and rhythm because there is no overt emotional or narrative meaning to 'read' in the movement. Clark's choreographic premise is about movement and rhythm in space and time. Dancers perform with attention to the minutely detailed, specific placings of the body and complex, counterpointed use of rhythmic patterns. Dancers travel easily

through the space across clearly defined pathways and movements are all very clearly 'placed' on their arrival in a group shape. They combine rhythmic movement phrases with crisp, swift transitions, as quickly and directly as possible to the next position by articulating through the joints, giving the impression of dexterity and virtuosity. As each piece progresses, the layers and patterns of movements demand taut extensions in body shapes that are technically demanding and become excessive as the duration of each is continued beyond the spectators' expectations.

[See image below]



*New Work (2012)*

Image 10: Duet with lighting pattern [Photo credit: Hugo Glendinning]

Clark disrupts the visual experience in Piece Two, by leaving the stage lit but unoccupied for spectators to wait until dancers enter, and our attention is drawn to the lighting on the cyclorama and stage. Film images and lighting, designed by Atlas, appear on screen upstage, around the curtains of the wings and on the floor. This creates effects all around the stage space as if the whole semi-circle of space is shifting and fluid, as if the space has a quality that could be seen as an environment through which the dancers enter and exit. The second piece starts with a large circle

of white light just to the stage left of centre. There is no movement but one solo dancer holds an extended 'Y' shape, facing upstage, away from the audience.

Lighting cues precede movements throughout this piece and so seem to initiate the movements and create connections and associations between the colour and shapes of the lighting and the particular movement patterns. In contrast to the linearity of Piece 1, these movements are travelling phrases of extended sweeping curves and scoops, shaping the space through travelling floor patterns and the dancers' limbs curving around the edges of the stage space. The lights create varying blocked patterns which shrink back until the spectators can see outlined the grid lines of the blocks on the floor. Then these gradually extend out again and cover the whole stage space. Dancers are confined to this lit area and, through this visual device the spectators can see the architecture of the space and patterns, through which the dancers are moving. They run in curving pathways, which it seems could extend into larger circles if there were enough room on the stage but they run out of stage area. Dancers lean their torsos and shoulders into the centre of the circle like an axis around which they orbit and their trajectory becomes visible through arm and leg gestures that move through the space. This is similar to Aggiss' choreographic style, which focuses on moving through the space on imagined curved lines, as if tracing the arcs in space between points on Laban's icosahedron as shown overleaf. The dancer is demonstrating a labile stretch on a tilted saggital plane inside a model of Laban's icosahedron: arm and leg gestures indicate points in space at low, middle and high levels with a torque through the spine from the left leg and opening the hips towards right back high.



Image 11 [photo credit: Trinity Laban Conservatoire]

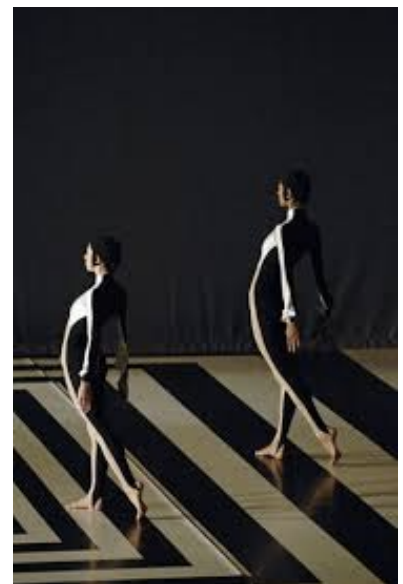
Clark leaves the stage lit without any movement, or in blackout, for longer than spectators seem to find comfortable, and creates a disconcerting effect of making spectators aware of themselves in either blackness or semi-lit states illuminated by the Atlas designs playing out across the empty stage space. The splitting of attention between other spectators in the audience and the performers may also be significant in contributing to the disorientation experienced by spectators. Clark's use of space can be considered as fragmentary, allowing to place movement, or even film and lighting, in any position on the stage area. Several commentators have discussed Clark's dramaturgic approach to space and movement vocabulary: Portanova (2009), Glasstone, Hawkins and Jordan (in Cotter 2011), and Crompton (2013). Clark's visual dramaturgies in the use of space include extreme edges on stage so that movements occur partly in the wings or close to the curtained backdrop or screen. The floor can be used as the focus of the dancers' gaze instead of them looking out into the audience because the space is entirely de-centred. Cotter's intriguingly titled *Originality. Repeated.* (2011), emphasises the radical visual aesthetics of Clark's work:

[...]his instinctual understanding of dance as a profoundly visual art...[ranging] from “insistent punk aesthetic ...to post-punk minimalism...to modernism...classicism...and charged melancholy of **Come, Been Gone**. In each situation the form of address and the impact of the performance assume different perceptual conditions. (2011, p.22)

Musician Susan Stenger has remarked on the experience of working on *current/SEE* as Clark ‘making the sound visible’ (in Cotter 2011). Clark’s exploration of space and visual dramaturgies includes hosting his work in non-conventional performance sites, such as the Turbine Hall in the Tate Gallery, *Tate Project Part 1*, where dancers and spectators mingle, or in the Kings Cross depot for Clark’s London performance of his re-worked, *Rite of Spring* as *Modern Masterpieces*, then specially re-titled as *Mmm* (1992). The affective impact of this visually striking choreography is apparent in the commentary by Sophie Fiennes, Clark’s project manager for *Mmm*, who writes:

Out of the wings Michael appeared, his exceptionally arched foot followed by classically sculpted legs, his torso leaning impossibly far back obediently following his thrust pelvis, and his beautiful face held strangely expressionless. In this mesmerising dressage, he crossed to the diagonal corners of the stage collecting a dancer from each wing. The quartet proceeded to make formations in unison and then in simultaneous solos...All work is ephemeral, and live work is always hinged in its moment. The particular nature and staging of *Mmm*... has allowed it to live on in the imaginations of those who saw it, and become myth for those who didn’t. (Fiennes, 1992)

Images 12 & 13 *Mmm* at Kings Cross depot 1992  
[photo credit: Stuart Freedman]





[Image 14 *Mmm* photo credit: Hugh Glendinning]

These visual dramaturgies sabotage our expectations by having too much or too little happening on stage and Clark moves the emphasis from watching the dance to an embodied engagement in which choreography, film and music combine to disorientate the spectators. In the third piece of *Animal Vegetable Mineral* (2014) Clark offers his most complex, multi-disciplinary section. The backdrop flashes messages and partial words; sometimes backwards, sometimes appearing to chase the dancers across the stage and out of the space. Dancers wear colourful costumes, pulsating their torsos and parading with shiny, silver reflective stools. They cross the space, as it changes with lighting effects, from a linear stage to a curving, shifting, disappearing space and a game of word associations in large projected letters are flashed up on the cyclorama. It is up to spectators to make our own connections. Visual dramaturgies of the work create encounters as an audience, to make us aware that we are part of a joined group, sharing perceptions and breathing together; and experiencing a shared, sensed and social encounter.

## Chapter Four

### Dramaturgies of Kinetic Turbulences:

#### Movements and metaphor, empathy and entrainment

This chapter examines turbulent dramaturgies of movements and affective impacts of kinetic metaphors. Entrainment, synchrony and kinaesthetic empathy explored through movement vocabulary are notable for their turbulent dramaturgies. The examples are from works by Aggiss, Bourne, Burrows and Clark, with reference to other choreographers of this era. Research approaches from cognitive neuroscience and phenomenology are examined as methodologies for movement analyses. Foster's notions (2009) of evoking empathy through socio-cultural mediation are also applicable here. The analyses that follow examine ways in which each choreographer created dramaturgies of kinetic turbulence. Visual and kinetic dramaturgies are closely interwoven in much of the work, so this chapter takes particular examples where the kinaesthetic impact of the choreography is most resonant. It is difficult to separate kinaesthetic impact from visuality in Anderson's *Edits or The Featherstonehaughs Draw on the Sketchbooks of Egon Schiele*, and consequently, analysis of those pieces is located in Chapter Three.

The notion of kinaesthetic empathy and how the phenomenon of audience entrainment<sup>39</sup> is connected to empathy are further discussed. I contend that opportunities for audience entrainment are designed by dramaturgic structures, so that unison and synchronous movements on stage operate as catalysts for

---

<sup>39</sup> I draw on research by Robert Shaughnessy at The Globe Theatre, London (2014-16) that examines the phenomenon of audience entrainment and synchronous behaviours during performances.



spectators to become synchronous with other spectators. Shaughnessy presents an explanation of entrainment in behaviour:

Understood as the process whereby apparently autonomous rhythmic systems interact, and eventually synchronise, with each other, entrainment has been applied to the study of dance and music as a means of understanding the complex, dynamic and reciprocal processes through which the various rhythms at work within performance (gestural, kinesic, auditory, visual, etc) keep time with audience rhythms (physiological and otherwise) to generate mutualities of effect and affect. (2012 unpublished project proposal)

Bourne's dramaturgies shift spectators towards becoming part of the collective group through entrained behaviours on stage that provoke similar reactions among the audience. This concept is introduced earlier [p.107] in relation to work by Anderson and applies research from the field of cognitive psychology.

Bourne uses moments of dramaturgic, empathic connections to show how the spectator is actively interpreting visual metaphors or recognising social references. These references are shared and social, and through behaviour of other audience members, such as laughter, we are aware that we are making similar connections. In this way, we invest our emotional allegiance more strongly and empathise more deeply with the characters. They are not distanced by elitist, formal ballet vocabulary because Bourne has brought them closer to the audience through the kinetic dramaturgies. His adaptations of classical ballet or film narrative use a contemporary visual and movement aesthetic. Bourne's versions borrow and adapt from our cultural and social experiences. This is also apparent in his movement vocabulary, as will be discussed with reference to specific moments later in this chapter. This is a significant feature in creating kinaesthetic empathy in moments that evoke empathy with the characters of his story. Bourne's dance vocabulary is highly virtuosic and to some extent uses codified ballet movement, but he has adapted the formality of ballet steps to create a more accessible vocabulary to suit

each production's narrative. This comprises movements and gestures borrowed from usual, everyday activities. His choreography shifts these into a performance format that is physically more precise and demanding than ordinary movements, but in the delivery of the movements, dancers' performances suggest more casual dynamics that are apparent in everyday actions. This occurs in *Sleeping Beauty* when we quickly recognise the children's game of pretending to be a plane with arms stretched out sideways. A Latin American ballroom dance style is chosen for Caradoc's evil vampire tango that is easily recognised from BBC television's 'Strictly Come Dancing'. We know that there were neither aeroplanes, nor tangos in Petipa's original choreography for *Sleeping Beauty*. Bourne has skilfully offered ways for the audience to 'step into' the work and accept his invitation to imagine dancing alongside the cast. In these places of deliberate borrowing from popular culture there are leakages from natural, everyday movements and easily identifiable borrowed items. Other devices, such as lighting in the auditorium, allow spectators to see other members of the audience, and sense the collective reactions to the emotional rise and fall of the storytelling. It is a skilful re-distribution of dramaturgic work that is not about interpreting the meaning of what we are being shown, but instead leads into experiencing with heightened kinaesthetic empathy.

Bourne's use of choreographic pace is designed to encompass an audience's audible vocal responses, as the action is skilfully crafted to allow time for the performers to 'clock' the audience and for the response to be incorporated into the rhythm of the dramaturgy. Performers are aware of the audience and effectively break the fourth wall at key moments to reinforce empathic connections.

Our reactions and responses are integral to the success of the affective impact of a moment, and these can be contagious across an audience, thus

magnifying the effect for spectators. I contend that spectators connect with other audience members in Bourne's use of humour or sudden surprise to create moments of impulsive reaction that may often include some audible use of breath of vocalisation from the audience. Cognitive psychologist Frank Bernieri notes: 'one of the earliest articulations of a concept of synchrony was provided by McDougall (1926) who noted the tendency of spectators to assume the postural strains of dancers and athletes they were watching.' (1988, p.244) In this study I explore how entrainment and interpersonal synchrony are created through dramaturgic and choreographic dramaturgies in the work of Bourne, Clark and Burrows. Approaches used by cognitive psychologists can offer ways to language such experiences.

Bernieri et al. (1988) explore interpersonal synchrony, developing the field of enquiry from previously widely established notions of intrapersonal, individual synchronisation. Bernieri defines entrainment as, 'the adjustment or moderation on behaviour to coordinate or synchronise with another, similar to the synchronisation occurring between members of an orchestra.' (1988, p.243) Interpersonal synchrony, according to Bernieri, can occur during social interactions when an individual synchronises to the rhythms and movements of another person with whom he or she is interacting. Bernieri divides synchronicity into three categories, of which the second category is explored in this thesis: biological rhythms; simultaneous behaviour; and perceived synchrony [as reported by participant reflection]. In agreement with Bernieri<sup>40</sup>, Joseph Capella (1997) comments on the positive association of synchronicity in human interactions and social relations. Capella defines synchrony as, 'coordinated patterns of interaction...that are similar in tempo, matched in position and movement, in sync with one another, and meshed.' (1997, p.119)

---

<sup>40</sup> Bernieri is closely linked to Cappella's research and provided data for two of the studies.

Bourne demonstrates this as Caradoc and his vampire chorus seduce the audience in Act Four. Significantly, Cappella's study concludes that methodologies to measure synchronous behaviour and entrainment do not necessarily require coding procedures [laboratory based, slow and lengthy]. Judged coordination, Cappella claims, can be a surrogate for behavioural coordination. This means it is valid to observe live situations in the field, as per theatre audiences, rather than assuming scientific rigour is achieved in laboratory experiments. The impact of behavioural synchrony is the focus of Tanya Vacharkulksemsuk's study. Her work explores the notion of embodied rapport as a quality interaction resulting from behavioural synchrony. I propose that spectator experiences of synchrony and entrainment in Bourne's work are positive interactions that can be considered as embodied rapport.

Vacharkulksemsuk surmises that:

Our result may be a case of embodied cognition such that one's behavioural movements are implicated in the affective and psychological experience of a situation - That is, beyond the psychological 'us' mindset of inter-subjective thoughts and feelings that emerge during interpersonal interactions, there is a coordinated behavioural 'oneness' that also drives how the interaction is experienced. (2012, p.401)

Her findings support this study in terms of understanding how affective dramaturgies and spectator engagement create dynamic shifts in behaviour across an audience. In accordance with Cappella's conclusions, Vacharkulksemsuk finds methodologies of observation robust and indicates the potential value in further research into behavioural synchrony and affect, proposing:

For embodied cognition researchers, behavioural synchrony is a novel starting point to investigate how behaviours of multiple people during a shared experience can shape peoples' judgement of each other and the situation itself. (2012, p.401)

I contend spectators at Bourne's and Anderson's productions engage kinaesthetically with the movements of the characters as well as the narrative situation. Both borrow movements from the everyday range of movement, and use these to make the

action more recognisable, and thus more familiar to the audience. This has the effect of allowing the audience to feel part of the action, as if we know what may happen next. There is evidence for links between affect and perceptual fluency:

Our affective response to an encounter with an item can be influenced by the quality of our own cognitive and perceptual processing of the event; fluent processing evokes positive effect. (Hayes & Tipper in Reason & Reynolds, 2012, p.71)

I connect this notion of perceptual fluency with the dramaturgy of leaky encountering introduced by this thesis. The leaky encounter with aspects of the work, such as images, video clips of movement excerpts or other engagement with the choreographer in interview or workshop, will contribute to spectators' perceptual processing. Thus this study supports Hayes and Tipper's conclusion that increased access or fluency in such processing will evoke positive affect. Even in the performance context where the spectator's physical response is limited, cognitive embodied activity is stimulated as a complex process involving heightened visual attention, aesthetic engagement and kinaesthetic empathy. Hayes and Tipper argue 'that motor processes can evoke emotions rather than emotions simply evoking motor responses.' (in Reason & Reynolds 2012, p.70).

In conversation with dance critic and writer Alastair Macaulay, Bourne explains his choreographic approach to conveying emotion through movements:

I appreciate that you continually ask, "What do these steps mean?" when preparing and coaching your own work and that it's a question you apply to dance drama...? I want to see choreography that's suspenseful, emotive, characterful and engaging. (Bourne in Macaulay 2011, p.636)

There appear to be a range of different ways in which the audience is kinaesthetically engaged by Bourne's choreographic and dramaturgic devices. These include; through affordances with the baby puppets, by kinetic and empathic connections with Aurora's character, and by Caradoc and his chorus, whose unison, rhythmic patterns seduce us in a synchronous entrainment. We shift our

perspectives as observers. Bourne's choreography amuses spectators as the mischievous puppet baby outwits her royal parents and the palace staff. We empathise with the love duet between Aurora and Leo the gardener's boy, enjoying the freedom of agile, flowing movements. Then, despite our better judgement, we are seduced by the virtuosity and virility of the machine-like, rhythmic, pulsating bodies of Caradoc and his vampires. Bourne does not use the codified mime 'language' of classical ballet, except for one iconic moment in Act One, when Carabosse curses the baby Aurora to prick her finger and die. Carabosse shows the mime for 'you will die' by pointing directly at Aurora, raising both arms high above her head and then bringing the arms down in front of her torso with wrists crossed together; sharply pressing them down in a 'V' shape. Caradoc, her son, has his own invented gestures and mime sequences, but the audience cannot de-code them. This is similar to the effect of gestures used by Burrows and Fargion in *Cheap Lecture*, *The Cow Piece* and *Body Not Fit for Purpose*. The expectation from the audience is that we will be able to 'understand' the meaning of gestures, as we would in daily life in our experience of understanding codes of socio-cultural behaviour around us. Sheets-Johnstone coined the phrase 'the turn to the corporeal' in 1990 to reflect shifts in discourses of dance analysis. I think that current interdisciplinary discourse can be considered as a *re*-turn to corporeal with recent discourses that include neuroscientific knowledge<sup>41</sup> about embodiment and affect studies to explore complexities of emotional and imaginative processes in our understanding of human social experiences.

---

<sup>41</sup> Cognitive neuroscience offers technological advances in non-invasive observations and measurements of brain activity such as the limbic systems in emotional and affective encounters that have changed the concepts and discourse between science and the arts. Gallese (1994) and Rizzalotti and Keysers (1996) et al. identified mirror neuron systems in macaque monkeys that *may* indicate similar processes occur in humans.

## Empathic engagement and kinaesthesia

Empathic engagement is part of the turbulence caused by the dramaturgic systems in the dance work, in that spectators are made aware of their own sensations triggered by kinetic, visual and aural stimuli. In this section I discuss the concept of empathy and consider Foster's notion that kinaesthetic empathy is culturally mediated and not a purely instinctive response. Empathy is an outcome of these processes of sensed awareness and can contribute to a shared experience of empathy with other spectators and the empathic connection may be experienced as entrainment of attention across the audience. In such moments evidence of synchronous behaviours may be heard, as occurs at key moments of suspense or release, particularly in Bourne's narrative works. In these works, the lighting level in the auditorium is brought up to allow spectators to see each other's reactions and behaviour, thus magnifying the empathic connections. Alternatively, spectators may sense empathy with or for the performers. This is particularly effective in Aggiss' performance of *The English Channel*, where Aggiss is both the subject matter and the solo performer, so the audience engages directly with her. Aggiss evokes a shared sense of communal experience in empathic connection with the audience. This culminates in audience members joining her on stage at the end of the show. Conversely, the dancers can explore how empathic connections with the audience are part of the active dramaturgies in the work; for example Burrows explains that he and Fargion begin their performance of *Body Not fit for Purpose* by noting the energy levels and minor movements among the audience, and then deliberately mimic these as they settle into the beginning of their performance.

Foster makes a connection between the activity of perception and kinaesthetic empathy. She draws on the work of psychologist Vernon Lee (1913) in both these aspects and the questions he raised are still pertinent. Vernon Lee notes:

Etymologically, and literally, perception means the act of grasping or taking in and also the result of that action. But when we thus perceive a shape, what is it precisely that we grasp or take in? And it is this making up of shapes, this grasping or taking in of their constituent relations, which is an active process on our part, and one which we can either perform or not perform. (Lee 1913, in Foster 2011, p.252)

Foster makes a link to theories of perception that were shaped by James Gibson, who maintains that, 'kinaesthesia played a central role in integrating all the senses.' (Gibson 1966). Foster asks:

..what is shared or communal within an experience....Are there ways in which a shared physical semiosis might enable bodies in all their historical and cultural specificity to commune with one another? (2011, p.14)

Foster points to a more complex system of engagement involving an imaginative and affective response from the spectator that refutes Martin's simplistic model of an inherent, direct physical kinaesthetic connection.

The universal message that Martin presumed dance could deliver has been replaced, not by a new singular experience of dancing, but by a vast range of engagements with dance producing distinctive visions of and knowledge about the body. (2011:71)

Her notion of kinaesthesia is based on the way the observed body is perceived and how it resonates with a spectator. Choreographers manipulate time patterns, rhythms and pulse as the core creative material of the dancing bodies. Dramaturgies of time appear in the ways dancing bodies show movement impulses and rhythms, making patterns visible to the spectator. Spectators can connect empathically with the moving bodies in rhythmic patterns. These strategies can be used as catalysts for



affective impact, for sabotage<sup>42</sup> and de-stabilising the spectators, as the choreography shifts our attention to how we experience time and rhythm. It is a fundamental way in which choreographers and performers can direct, shape and manipulate spectators' empathic responses. Foster summarises the role of empathy in the process of spectatorship thus; 'empathy, replacing sympathy, became the process through which one experienced muscularly as well as psychically the dynamics of what was being witnessed.' (2011 p.177)

Foster gives an analysis of Anderson's choreography that identifies the importance of socio-cultural contexts in empathic engagement and finds similarities in affective impact, as shown in this study for *Edits* and *The Featherstonehaughs Draw on the Sketchbooks of Egon Schiele* (2010). Foster's analysis of Anderson's *Yippee!!!* (2006) indicates how spectators understand comic irony in the choreography, because we recognise the genre of Busby Berkeley's musical films. This is subverted by Anderson's work to create a comedic, disruptive and also empathic impact.

Anderson's choreographic process of copying and then splicing together movement sequences from other sources also produces an uncanny discontinuity between dancers and their movements. Because of the process of copying the action [and not the dynamics of the "original" performance] the dancers appear to 'wear' the movement. Motions do not originate in the body's interiority, but instead get placed on the body's surface. The bodies execute the next action, as non-sequitur as it might be, without any organic flow, any sense of movement's purpose. (2011 p.210)

In contrast to Foster's socio-culturally mediated notions of empathic engagement, other research investigates brain processes to identify cognitive and neural activities to explain kinaesthetic empathy. Interdisciplinary research exploring cognitive processes to tackle such challenges is wide ranging and in the field of

---

<sup>42</sup> Sabotage as a form of dramaturgic practice is explored by Arabella Stanger to offer a model for liberating creative practices from previous habits or restrictions. (in Georgelou, Protopapa & Theodoridou [eds.] 2017, pp.210-223)

dance studies this includes notable work by researchers Matthew Reason and Dee Reynolds (2010 and 2012) and also Pil Hansen (2009 and 2015), Scott Delahunta, Gill Clark and Philip Barnard (2012). Some research methodology has aimed to share concepts and produce terms that are meaningful across both fields of cognitive neuroscience and creative performance arts. There are areas of considerable overlap and interconnectivity across this field that are part of the challenge posed by Sheets-Johnstone (2009) of finding terms and concepts to articulate experiences of watching dance. Increasing knowledge about the brain's cognitive functions in this process, as per the work of Vittorio Gallese (2008) and Christian Keyers (2011) has informed understanding of dynamic and empathic relationships in spectating. Gallese discussed the difference between neuro-scientifically based research and psychoanalytic theory to review the notion of empathy, or *Einfühlung*: 'One of the topics of debate in psychoanalysis concerns how to relate the notion of Empathy with the concepts of transference and counter transference.' (2008, p.769) Gallese is concerned primarily with the architecture of the brain. He asserts that as a result of his research that observed the mirror neurons system in macaque monkeys, human brains can be presumed to operate using a similar structure. This is still highly contentious and cannot be assumed to be exactly the same process by which humans understand empathic responses in an affective, kinetic engagement. Support for the validity of kinaesthetic empathy in scientific explanations is found in the work of Keyers, who explains that simulation is a fundamental principle of human brain function:

Once the brain can master the transformation of sight and sound into motor programmes, and if it can also learn to prevent motor output during simulation, simulation becomes a remarkably elegant way of making sense of the behaviour of others. (2011, p.66)

Furthermore, Gallese asserts:

On the basis of what we are learning from neuroscience, today we can explain why others' behaviour is intrinsically meaningful to us; because we share the neural resources on which the same behaviour is mapped...A common underlying functional mechanism – embodied simulation – mediates our capacity to experientially share the meaning of action, intentions, feelings and emotions with others, thus grounding our identification with and connectedness with others. This occurs in a non-conscious, predeclarative fashion, though modulated by our own personal history. (Gallese 2008, p.775)

Movements in performance can function as visual metaphors and create imaginative engagement beyond direct movement sensations. It is unlikely that spectators feel what the dancers feel, either physically or emotionally. When Barba subscribes to the cognitive science theory of kinaesthetic empathy, he calls this process 'organic', suggesting it happens without conscious effort. This contradicts Foster's assertion that our empathic engagements are socio-culturally mediated. Barba's notion of 'organic' supports an idea of kinaesthetic empathy as instinctive, such as Gallese and Keysers propose in their experiments and observations. Sheets-Johnstone (1999) also takes up this position of inherent communication in movement as she considers human movement as part of a wider investigation of movement in other animals and also plant-life. Barba proposes a direct kinaesthetic connection between the spectator and the performer:

The movement of one person evokes the onlooker's own experience of the same movement. This visual information generates an embodied kinesthetic commitment in the spectator. Kinesthesia is the internal sensation of our own movements and tensions, as well as those of others, in our own body...The visible and the kinesthetic are inseparable...this bond between the actor/dancer's dynamisms and those of the spectator has been defined as 'kinesthetic empathy'. (2010, p.23)

The appeal of an apparently direct connection between individuals in a group as described above, has attracted theatre scholars to theories of social sciences and psychology to investigate more analytically how these connections can be explained and articulated. Social psychologist, Vacharkulksemsuk conducts research to

consider the social and health benefits of 'oneness' through embodied rapport and shared movements among strangers:

General cultural observations suggest that behavioural synchrony fosters a sense of 'oneness' that brings people together: religious activities, military drilling, and rituals among sports teams involve rich amounts of common rhythms to which people can move in synchrony. (2012, p.399)

In that research the social interactions were recorded without sound, i.e. speech, so the participants were then relying on physical cues for their responses. It is interesting how this indicates evidence can be collected to measure the dramaturgic process of transforming spectators from a group of separate individuals into an audience:

For embodied cognition researchers, behavioural synchrony is a novel starting point to investigate how behaviours of multiple people during a shared experience can shape people's judgments of each other and the situation itself. (2012, p.401)

Additionally, clinical psychologist Virginia Lumsden supports the notion that our state of mind will affect how readily we synchronise with others. She analyses how individuals interact in social groups. These studies offer opportunities to examine how empathic connections can occur across audiences and how dramaturgic devices could instigate such opportunities. Lumsden's research (2012) indicates positive consequences are achieved by group communications that can help to articulate some of the experiences in theatre spectating and its affective impacts. She explains that the findings showed how social awareness is a significant part of this experience; 'across two studies we demonstrated that a pro-social mindset was associated with greater levels of interpersonal synchrony than a pro-self focus' (2012, p.749). The phenomenon of audience behaviour that emerges from individuals is a key part of this study. I contend that dramaturgic devices in the performance overtly create opportunities for such behaviour. Clinical and social psychologists use

neuroscientific methodologies to analyse human behaviour in general terms in a similar way to Lumsden's and Vacharkulksemsuk's research. However, social psychologist Selin Kesebir addresses how collective behaviour occurs as synchronicity in dance movements. Her research (2012) draws on the research of neurophysiologist and philosopher, Walter Freeman whose findings propose that questions about mind, consciousness and perception considered as philosophical problems, could be addressed by experimental investigations of the collective properties of neurons. Kesebir offers this conclusion:

The evidence, then, strongly suggests that rhythmic entrainment leads people to an ecstatic state of union with others, wherein the self seems to merge with something larger. Neurophysiologist [Walter] Freeman (1995) described dance and music as the biotechnology of group formation because they are so effective in triggering a collective mental state of we-ness. This sense of unity is not communicated in symbols; rather, participants experience it physically as they move in sync. (2012, p.238)

That research applies to actions of dancing rather than spectating, although as argued by Gallese et al., described above, cognitive neural systems engaged in watching are the same as those engaged in the activity itself. The application of shared concepts across scientific and humanities disciplines is problematic. Gallagher proposes that the scholarly discourse needs to become interdisciplinary and his research aims are to 'remap the terrain that lies between phenomenology and cognitive neuroscience.' (2013, p.10) He addresses the need for clarity and transferability across methodologies and terminologies:

If, as indicated in [...] studies of embodiment, movement contributes to the shaping of perception, emotional experiences, memory, judgment and the understanding of self and of others, then we need an account of embodiment that is sufficiently detailed and that can integrate discussion across the cognitive sciences. (2013 p.10)

Further to Gallagher's assertion on embodiment, Noë questions scientific assumptions of consciousness and proposes that:

The fundamental assumption of much work on the neuroscience of consciousness is that consciousness is, well a neuroscientific phenomenon. It happens inside us in the brain...[but] consciousness is not something that the brain achieves on its own. Consciousness requires joint operation of brain, body and world. (2009 p.10)

Noë claims that cognitive science is not sufficient to articulate affective experiences.

Like Gallagher, he takes an interdisciplinary approach to articulate perception through phenomenology, neuroscience and affect theory. Equally, Noë and Gallagher endorse the position taken by Sheets-Johnstone that requires an understanding of embodiment as connecting affective, emotional responses with body and brain processes.

Cross-disciplinary research in dance and cognitive science is applied in dance spectator studies by Reason and Reynolds' project 'Watching Dance' (2008-2011).

This is viewed in relation to cognitive science research in contemporary theatre practice as advocated by McConachie and philosophical approaches to body and mind in perception as articulated by Noë (2006 & 2010) and Gallagher (2005).

Reason and Reynolds' 'Watching Dance' project comprises of two strands of research consisting of quantitative measurements of neuro-physical changes during the watching of recorded dance, and qualitative accounts and responses based on audience reactions to watching live and recorded dance. Three studies form the core part of their research, in addition to an online discussion forum for participants to record their own individual reactions to the selection of short film extracts. The three studies consist of: laboratory based experiments using Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation<sup>43</sup> [TMS] while watching short film excerpts; sound/music investigation in film and performance; and creative writing workshops following performances. In

---

<sup>43</sup> TMS can be used clinically to measure activity and function of specific brain circuits in humans, most commonly with single or paired magnetic pulses. The most widely accepted use is in measuring the connection between the [primary motor cortex](#) of the [central nervous system](#) and the [peripheral nervous system](#) to evaluate damage related to past or progressive neurologic insult.

the 'Watching Dance' project the function of the discussion forum aspect of the research data gathering seems to function in a way that I term 'leaky', in so far as it occurs outside the experience of a live, shared performance and also outside the directed data gathering research events in the laboratory. The nature of the questions posed in the discussion forum raise issues about expectations of embodied engagement and interpretation of meaning. Questions ask: 'Have you ever been moved by dance?' additionally: 'Have you ever been watching dance and felt your body move in response?' This seems to presume an emotional and/or affective response in the term 'move' but is not explicitly defined. This appears to disregard imaginative work of spectating and suggests a separation between body and mind. Reason and Reynolds evaluate aspects of their research methodology in their subsequent publication (2012) and Shaughnessy [ed.] (2013, pp.39-56). The website<sup>44</sup> links to the Watching Dance 'mind map' and Reason comments on how he sat 'with several pages of A1 sheets of paper and different colour marker pens, post-it notes, scissors and reams of printed transcriptions.' (Watching Dance website, accessed 10/10/2016). The difficulty with the mind map as a method of articulating watching dance is indicative of the challenge of languaging experience. Furthermore, Reason and Reynolds comment; 'Neuro-physical research cannot investigate the social context of the lived experience of spectators, about which we know very little, nor explore what meaning spectators attach to their responses.' (2008). Reason and Reynolds recognise the limitations of neuroscience in its methods and scope of its enquiry and acknowledge the need for more research into affective social experiences. In 'meaning' as expressed above, Reason and Reynolds suggest that meaning is

---

<sup>44</sup> The Watching Dance: Kinaesthetic Empathy project website is accessible here: <http://www.watchingdance.org/research/Papers%20and%20Presentations/index.php>

attached after a response, conversely in this thesis I contend that meaning is in the affective experiences of the responses. In Reason and Reynolds' final study the dance clips were four minutes long in the pre-recorded pieces, but longer in live performances. I would suggest that four minutes is not long enough to investigate real case examples of dance given that the experience over time-space is integral to the affective impact. Bausch's *Viktor* runs at three hours and this is a significant part of its challenge to spectators. Conversely Clark's *New Work* (2012) ran for only twenty minutes and felt short, despite its highly complex choreography. This was part of its disruptive and disorienting affective impact. Reason and Reynolds raise issues they confronted in scientific measurement of kinaesthetic empathy:

...a more discursive understanding of kinesthetic empathy as a concept shaped by language and culture going backwards in time (as influenced by philosophical traditions of the term) and forwards as the research processes impacted on our understanding of its object. Whereas in the neuroscience approach this object of research appeared to be taken more as a given. (2013, p.50)

Reason and Reynolds acknowledge Sheets-Johnstone's caveat on the temptation of over-reliance on cognitive science. Her view holds that it would reduce the focus to the brain at the expense of wider affective corporeal and socio-cultural contexts.

Sheets-Johnstone claims that:

a veritably enlightening conversation between art and sciences will be found not in the reductionism to the brain but in an exploration of dynamics inside and out, a natural engaged-in-the world dynamics. (2012, p.385)

McConachie explores cognitive science approaches to spectating activities and engaging audiences in dramaturgies of contemporary theatre practices (2008). He adopts a two-part approach to affect and emotional responses, as primarily being primitive and instinctive, and secondarily being shaped by social systems that are complex and yet flexible. He suggests that people rely on their emotions to guide them moment-to-moment and also in their long-term goals, and equally spectators



primarily rely on their emotions to shape their responses. (2008, p.191) McConachie discusses at length how socio-cultural influences are involved in making meaning that follows after affective and emotional responses and thus shows he aligns his argument to 'new affect theorists' who tend to separate body and mind processes in affect. McConachie advocates interdisciplinary research to improve understanding across arts and sciences and is interested in the neurobiological elements of emotional systems involved in affective spectating. He draws on the work of medical psychologist Andreas Engels to propose that perception is a constructed process and departs from a psychoanalytical or semiotic approach of finding 'readings' of the work. McConachie considers that relationships between the spectators and performers in spectating theatre can be seen as playful with the focus on doing actions, rather than on textuality. As he states:

activities of spectating, like childhood playing are always embedded in a material and social situation. Not only are spectators effectively 'coupled' with performers and other spectators, as Engels' phrasing suggests, their perceptions are also 'coupled' with the material possibilities and constraints of the immediate environment [...] From an enaction perspective, perception, like the rest of cognition is not only embodied and embedded, it is also ecologically extended. (in Shaughnessy [ed.] 2013,p.186)

It could be that new a discourse of languaging experience can be woven using cognitive science to observe biologically measurable changes<sup>45</sup> to indicate empathic or emotional responses, in conjunction with embedded socio-cultural contextualisation. In the following section I examine key moments in contemporary dance performances that evoke kinaesthetic empathy from the spectators. The examples discussed cover a range of pieces from narrative to abstract dance and

---

<sup>45</sup> According to the work of Jan Panksepp, neuroscientist in biological and emotional systems (in McConachie 2008) symptoms of empathic or emotional responses could include increased blood flow to certain areas of the body, changes in muscle tone or heart and breathing rates.

include Bourne's *Sleeping Beauty*, Burrows and Fargion's *Body Not Fit for Purpose*, Clark's *...to a simple, rock 'n' roll ... song* and Aggiss in *The English Channel*.

### ***Sleeping Beauty* - Bourne (2012)**

Bourne's choreographic methods and dramaturgies give his dancers ways to create opportunities for empathic connections among the spectators. In rehearsal he devises movement phrases according to the characters' situation. Often this is improvised and explored by dancers in early rehearsals.<sup>46</sup>

When Bourne describes the world he has created in such detail it is clear that he knows more about it than we will ever glean from watching the show. He gives each of the dancers a comprehensive background to their character, something that is far more common with actors in theatre than in dance. "When they walk on stage they're certain of who they are, which makes a big difference to you watching" he says. There are many things that make a Bourne work different from a traditional ballet, but the most overwhelming has to be the clarity of his storytelling. (Davis, L, *Liverpool Daily Post*, 25 April 2013)

Bourne's *Sleeping Beauty* is a three-act dance narrative that re-imagines the story of Petipa's 1890 version. Bourne's overtly gothic re-telling includes a new male protagonist, Caradoc, the vampire son of wicked fairy Carabosse. Bourne sets up the conflict between forces of good and evil, between Caradoc and the now male Lilac fairy, Count Lilac. It emerges that supernatural characters, inspired by Victorian gothic fiction are immortal. This is an appropriate aesthetic and context for the piece's origins in the 1890s. There is a three-way power struggle between the two supernatural male characters: Lilac; Caradoc; and the human male character of Leo, the gardener's boy, who replaces the traditional Prince Charming as Aurora's true love. The main plot focus has shifted from Aurora being the central character to its three *male* characters, as Bourne plays out the battle between good and evil. The novelty of the plot brings a heightened interest to the familiar narrative of the piece.

---

<sup>46</sup> My addition from personal knowledge of Matthew Bourne's rehearsal process.

This is a narrative dramaturgic catalyst to engage spectators in a thrilling encounter of threat and redemption. Aurora's character is also re-imagined as a rebellious, even deviant, character rather than as an example of the classical ideal form in the original ballet<sup>47</sup>.

I analyse key movement sections that are notable empathic moments in the production. These are: Baby Aurora sitting in her crib watching Count Lilac and the Fairies as they bring her gifts; Aurora's duets with Leo, the Royal Gardner's boy; Caradoc's wedding party dance with his vampire chorus; and the finale with the Flying Baby, Aurora and Leo's child. They were chosen because of the significant reactions noted in my recorded accounts of the performances and responses of the audiences at The Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury on 15 and 18 May 2013. It is interesting that the audience's attention to the movement seems to change in these different selections.

As the performance opens, spectators are invited into the gothic re-imagining of this familiar fairy tale by recognisably gothic lettering projected onto the closed stage curtains. This textual 'narrator' sets up the title, the place and the era as if we were reading from the first chapter in the story. Once the curtains open the mostly silhouetted Carabosse, standing in profile against a backdrop of misty moonlight in a corseted, lavish dress of red and black raises a puppet of a tiny, sprawling baby high above her head. There is a visceral, emotional engagement with the bold, dark, imposing images sustained throughout several bars of Tchaikovsky's music before it reaches a crescendo.

---

<sup>47</sup> See Appendix Two [pp.224-228] for a detailed comparison of movement for Princess Aurora in Bourne's re-imagined version with Frederick Ashton's classical choreography for The Royal Ballet production.

From this moment, the puppet is afforded supernatural powers by the characters and also by the audience. This affordance device is central to the magic realism of the dramaturgic affect. It is an example of dramaturgic turbulence that shifts perceptions. In this case it is exciting and thrilling, but the narrative format is very clear and also familiar. The audience easily suspends disbelief through a time-shift of 100 years using visual gothic references, stylised movements and a classical musical score. Our senses are overloaded by stimuli and we feel rushed into the 'other-worldliness', just as promised by the written narration.

Image 15: Carabosse in *Sleeping Beauty*  
[photo credit: John Ross]



The auditorium is suddenly plunged into darkness as Carabosse is first revealed, but a red lighting wash spreads outwards, almost into the auditorium and we see the rest of the audience around us. From these first moments Bourne trains our spectating vision and our attention to be multi-dimensional: forwards to the stage; sideways to our neighbours; and upwards/downwards to encompass the whole auditorium, from which the breathy sounds of surprise or laughter are heard.



Image 16: Baby Aurora in *Sleeping Beauty* [Photo credit: John Ross]

The use of puppetry is linked to the idea of manipulation throughout the production, so that the audience understands very quickly that the ideas are presented literally and metaphorically. This is a very rich area to explore and I will focus on the affective impact of the puppetry achieved through kinaesthetic empathy. In Act One, Aurora is a baby, depicted by a highly mobile life-sized baby puppet manipulated by rods. The designers have produced several puppets, which can be moved around the set as she climbs curtains and races across the stage to evade her royal nursemaid. The puppet is afforded the status of a live performer by the other dancers on stage and she has several different facial expressions, including a grotesque screaming baby face, which Bourne revealed was dubbed 'the exorcist' by the company. Affordance theory as articulated by J.J Gibson (1979) operates as a key dramaturgic device to create affective impact in the use of puppetry. In each case the object or puppets dominate the spectator's attention. There is a strong affective response, partly kinaesthetic and empathic, towards the inanimate object being used as if it were 'real'. This reflects Bolton's concept of the dynamic relationship in movement dramaturgies between the spectator and performer.

Movement is using a language that is essentially visual and plastic, similar to that of the puppet, image theatre has identified the common elements of an expressive idiom...no longer placed on the stage to confirm the existence of a reality and an identity that are stable... [But]...inhabiting an unstable equilibrium, bodies in a constant transformation...irreconcilably with real life.. (1991, p.146)

The puppet representing Princess Aurora is larger than a new born baby and this allows the audience to permit her/it a range of movements, including crawling and actually rather implausibly, climbing curtains. Her face is also realistic, with large eyes and an apparently mobile mouth. Dance critic, Luke Jennings makes particular reference to the puppet, attributing significant dramaturgic impact to this device.

Like all his productions, 'Sleeping Beauty' is an eye-popping achievement, and at its best, moments are unforgettable. Baby Aurora is not the usual inert doll, but a life-like puppet, and so magically animated – snapping at her parents, scuttling round the floor at high speed, and in one brilliant sequence actually climbing the curtains—as to be the most expressive character on stage whenever she appears. (*The Observer* 16 December 2012)

Theatre scholar and puppetry practitioner, Melissa Trimingham explains that focusing the spectators' attention to the puppet is crucial in suspending disbelief and bringing the puppet to life.

In de-emphasising what a puppet **is\*** in favour of what a puppet **does\***, Jurkowski prepares the ground for a cognitive approach. I argue that it is the intentionality of operator and audience that ultimately makes the puppet 'do'. In this sense, recent developments in cognitive science, which is closely allied to phenomenology and first person experience, is a promising tool to analyse kinesthetic, empathetic and emotional responses when a puppet moves. [\*emphasis in the original] (Trimingham 2013, p.2)

There are several different puppets used in the production, to give the maximum range of movement and expression. Many critics focus on this in their reviews, and critic Sarah Crompton adds some backstage information, as a leaky encounter for the reader by revealing the company's nickname for the puppets:

...one that sits, one that crawls and one, nicknamed 'the Exorcist Baby', that cries when her nursemaid rotates her head to reveal a scowling face and an uncanny drooping mouth. Bourne is thrilled with the effects. 'There is a magic about it', he says 'the audience is going to love it' (*The Telegraph* 3 December 2012)

In Act One, puppet baby Aurora sits up in her crib placed downstage left, and leans forward to see each of the fairies as they bring her gifts. She moves in time to the music and sways slightly from side to side as if copying the fairies' movements. The puppet reaches her hands out and upwards seemingly trying to touch the fairies. It is an endearing, entertaining section that is particularly funny and memorable when the puppet leans so far over the edge of her crib that she is unstable. This use of instability and off-balance movement for Aurora is a recurring device in Bourne's choreography that creates excitement for spectators. She's almost crawling out with her neck craning forward to get as close as possible when a fairy suddenly darts right towards her and comes very, *very* close to Aurora's nose, but without actually touching her. The puppet draws her head and shoulders right back, so she is now leaning backwards on a long, stretched diagonal line, very suddenly in surprise and shock. The audience spontaneously laughs at the sudden change of direction and the movement joke the fairy has played on the baby to comic effect. Perhaps she is playing our part as audience, being drawn so intently into the action and so absorbed, enjoying the witty and virtuosic dancing of the fairies. It seems as if there is a very clear parallel or mirror effect being shown between the audience and the spectating puppet baby. Bourne is showing us our behaviour as the spectating audience, but allowing us to encounter ourselves as observers. The narrative impact and its dramaturgic affect is completed by our involuntary response of surprised laughter.

This movement sequence is repeated to comic effect in the Garden Party scene, Act Two; 1911, when Aurora is now a grown woman of twenty-one and celebrating her 'coming of age'. As she darts around the groups of guests Aurora moves with swift, swirling actions and runs excitedly rather than walking sedately. In

her rush, she comes very close to one of the guests and pauses, almost nose to nose, in a similar moment to the baby puppet in the crib. This shows us and reminds us of our own surprise at that same moment, that Aurora is just as impetuous as when an unruly, difficult child.

In Act Three; 2011, *Sleep Walking* in the forest scene, the “nose to nose” action is repeated once more, but this time between Aurora and Leo. She is wearing a blindfold to indicate that she is sleeping and cannot see Leo as he searches for her through the wood. Leo is guided by Count Lilac on his search and comes very close to her without realising it until she turns around and he draws back suddenly, just as Aurora did as a baby. She moves on again and he has lost her, but the audience laughs at the sudden light-hearted moment in amongst the desperate, poignant searching and it seems clear that this motif of seeing, not seeing, looking and finding is key to this love story. The audience feels connected to this thematic motif using kinaesthetic empathy as Bourne builds dramatic tension on stage, and spectators are able to see what the character cannot.



Image 17: Aurora blindfolded is lifted by chorus in the night forest [photo credit: Tristram Kenton]

Bourne explores the supernatural physical abilities of Aurora as a wilful child and he achieves this through humour as she outwits the palace staff, and by adding



dramatic effect of fear and danger when she is snatched back by Carabosse. In a last twist of the plot Bourne introduces another baby puppet; this time she is the child of Aurora and Leo. She displays her supernatural virtuosity and has wings so she can fly in triumphant loops above her parents' heads; this puppet is afforded magical powers by the dancers and then audience alike. In the final image of the ballet the non-human character achieves the movement ambition of all mankind and she flies. In this section the cast of fairies frame the action in an inverted 'V' shape drawing our attention upstage to the puppet, Aurora and Leo. The dancers are almost motionless and all eyes are on the puppet; it is a quiet tableau during which the audience, by contrast, is at its most active and vocal, cheering and clapping. This winged baby puppet as Aurora's child is dressed in white, and conveys ideas of redemption and optimism in the final image of Bourne's gothic romance. Her flight seems to suggest the ultimate dream of freedom or even an ambition to defy death.

The Princess Aurora normally does not traditionally appear in *Sleeping Beauty* until the end of Act One, usually at her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations where she is to choose a suitor. She is a character with little opportunity for drama and her role is a device for virtuosic dancing, as an embodiment of classical ballet ideals of female form. Bourne's version explores the character of Sleeping Beauty herself as a protagonist in the drama to create an empathic response from the audience. Her movement vocabulary reflects her independent and powerful character. Bourne includes an active Aurora as a performing character from the very beginning of the ballet and, as discussed, does so through puppetry. The princess puppet, small as she is, dominates the stage. This scenario may feel familiar to many parents, where life in the home can revolve around the needs or demands of the smallest member of the family. This familiarity also adds to the empathic connection the audience feels

with her character. From the opening moments, Bourne uses movement motifs that question Aurora's identity and her character. The crawling, wriggling, climbing and spitting choreography for the puppet shows her as wilful, even spiteful, witty and capable of physically extraordinary feats. All this is telling the audience that she is very different and does not, or will not, conform to the rules and expectations of the royal household. Aurora in Bourne's version is not the natural child of the king and queen, but a gift from the powerful, yet evil, fairy Carabosse.



Image 18: Baby Aurora puppet crawling [photo credit: BBC televised recording of *Sleeping Beauty*]

Bourne's attention to physicality and dynamics is an important feature in his choreography that creates kinaesthetic empathy with the spectator. He emphasises the use of arms, shoulders and neckline with a precise use of the dancers' gaze and focus projecting out into the auditorium. The movements are initiated from the core, pelvic area and reach out through the whole body. It conveys to the spectator an impression of a flow of movement that is kinaesthetically engaging. It seems possible to follow the free, flexible and light energy through the body from the centre as it moves outwards and is projected into space. Bourne notes;

I am particularly interested in the fluidity of movement in the torso and shoulder, clean arms and an abandoned, sensuous head and neck. I guess I'm not so worried about less than perfect feet or loose hips and hyper extended legs. I would rather

have a dancer who knows how to make logical and musical sense of the movement.  
(in Macaulay 2011, p.602)

### **Kinaesthetic empathy in the love duet: The Garden Party**

Aurora's movements are predominantly motifs on running and spinning, turning and twisting around the spine. She uses off-balance or labile movement patterns that convey freedom and also disruption in defying conventions of social codes of etiquette and status. She dances barefoot, where most of the others wear shoes, especially in the palace. Her upper body is often showing open, expansive lines across her shoulders and her upper back is arched with the chest, or sternum, lifted upwards. Arms fling easily and open wide to the sides beyond any conventional or codified dance shaping. Palms are usually held open and upward showing vulnerability or confidence. There are recurring circular motifs where Aurora sweeps her arms overhead in a circular shape and opens them expansively. The dynamics are sustained, light and flexible, as if she is drawing in the air. Her head follows the action of the arms and her eyes trace the lines in space. Her heads tilts backwards easily, without tension in shoulders or arms, showing her agility in balancing in such unstable moments. Bourne directs the use of eyes and the movements of the head with careful precision to indicate to the audience where to look. Instinctively we follow the gaze or head movement across the stage space. Aurora claims the space all around her equally in 360 degrees allowing a maximum range of movement and fluidity in her dancing. It is as if she is demonstrating her dominance over all the space on stage and is not presentational in her movement. Often, there is no obvious "front" to her movement phrases and they could be performed facing any direction. The impact of this is like a choreographer's trick of the space and aims to

include the audience as virtual participant, rather than spectator where we see the movement from only one point of view.

Image 19: Aurora and Leo in garden duet in *Sleeping Beauty* [photo credit: Tristram Kenton]



Bourne's character of Aurora, unlike the classical ballet ballerina, is portrayed as a real person, as an individual who is part of the drama, rather than an icon of virtuosity. Her movements are not codified dance steps, classical ballet nor contemporary, but come from everyday actions of jumping, running, leaping, embracing and are easily identifiable to all audiences. However, the movements are performed with a high level of physical skill; Aurora is athletic, gymnastic, lithe and supple. It is an enjoyable virtuosity; lively, unrestrained and joyful, extending the usual range of movement that belongs to the everyday and to the audience.



Image 20: Aurora as a free spirited girl [Photo credit: Tristram Kenton]

After the rainstorm all the other guests and Royals have left the stage and Aurora dances a love duet with Leo. The whole duet is full of smooth turns and circular motions that allow the actions to flow easily from one shape into the next, from one hold through a release and into the next without any break. They start from an 'S' shaped white garden bench, stage centre. Aurora stands at the very end of the bench, facing to stage right, while Leo stands directly in front of her. Aurora rises on her left leg (downstage) and loops her right leg lightly over Leo's shoulder. He stretches his arms out sideways in a 'T' shape for support. She briefly holds his right hand (upstage) and as if in a playful game he lifts her on his shoulders. One leg is bent and the other remains easily stretched but not fully extended. Aurora tips herself on a slight diagonal so is off-balance, Leo makes a ¼ turn to the left and reveals the diagonal line; her gaze is upwards. Leo's hands are held out flat and he moves as if playing aeroplanes like a childhood or child-like game. He continues to rotate to focus downstage left and Aurora increases the angle of her lean to be almost horizontal across Leo's shoulders. She steadies herself with the back of her left elbow on his left arm and now looks forwards smiling.

It is just like flying and can be interpreted as a prediction of the flying baby daughter puppet in the final scene. Leo continues walking round in a full turn, smoothly rotating Aurora until the shape comes to rest facing the audience. He releases his arms to allow her to slide to standing and embraces her. It is a sustained lift, but performed without any overt virtuosity. We are taken aloft, as if with Aurora, enjoying the exhilaration with her gaze looking around the whole audience, as a crescendo to this duet.

#### **Act Four: Yesterday, Aurora's Wedding and Caradoc's nightclub, Last Night**

It is notable that Bourne sets this scene as 'Last Night', adopting a real-life timescale, so that whenever the audience watches the performance, it seems as though we are already closely linked to the action of this scene. This suggestion that the events are now current, and no longer simply part of a gothic fairy tale, allows the audience to suspend fully its disbelief and permit itself to view the events as plausible. If these events are happening currently, so it appears we also have to accept the existence of the vampire and werewolf characters/creatures we see dancing. This is a major leap of imagination for the audience, but it is an essential part of the seductive, kinaesthetic empathy created in this scene. Hypnotic effects of the dancing combined with stylishly beautiful, red and black catwalk costumes in the sumptuous nightclub pull the audience, as one collective group, under Caradoc's spell.

The movement motifs of Caradoc and the vampire chorus are borrowed from Latin American social dance forms and rhythms, provocatively seductive, virtuosic dancing that brings an unrelenting pulse to the phrases. The rhythm seems to be a strong part of the kinaesthetic effect and affective impact of this scene. There is much use of repetition and variation of the stamping, stepping movements with particular attention paid to the shaping of the arms and hands and the percussive use of the feet to stamp out the beat. The audience is swept along by the pulsing beat of the music. The aural and the visual elements combine very effectively, so the punctuated movements are emphasised by the rhythm and pulse. The audience seems now to be a collective, rather than a group of individual spectators, and lighting helps reinforce this impression, as the deep red lighting engulfs the stage and reaches into the auditorium, so it is quite easy to see other members of the

audience. This adds to the effect of the audience sharing in the action, being part of the scene and united as a group.

The dancers are often in unison in formal lines and groupings across the stage. Caradoc dances downstage centre, as if with the audience as his partner. He is so very close to the edge of the stage that he seems to invite us to participate, but knows we cannot! We do not know the moves or the gestures, or what they mean. Caradoc beckons to us, with both hands held low, casually to his sides, with a slight shimmy in his shoulders, as he undulates his hips from side to side. There seems to be codes in the pattern of movement, but these are codes invented by Bourne; neither codified ballet mime, nor everyday gestures. But somehow these actions seem familiar. The gestures with the hands are complex and difficult to remember as they are performed at a fast pace, one movement per beat. In one phrase, the hands join in an inverted prayer shape, fingers pointing downwards, then wrists rotate, bringing the fingers upwards and the arms lift the hands above the head. The hands make a flat shape, palm to palm, and elbows are held out wide. The hands move through two or three shapes above the head, and then both arms sweep down to the hips. The dancer pivots on the spot, pushing from the ball of one foot, as the hands separate and arms twist tightly around the torso. This is repeated with a stepping pattern and facing in different directions. The dancers' exhalation of breath can be heard as it punctuates the sweeping and cutting actions. Muscular tension and strong dynamics require this degree of effort in the breathing. Hand movements are sudden, strong, direct and bound; then contrast with flexible and light recovery movements that ripple through the shoulders and torso.

The audience experiences kinaesthetic empathy towards the performers as a group. It appears that there is a physiological basis for the sensation of shared

rhythms and experiencing entrainment in the pulse of the music, dancing and breathing, and even heartbeats seem to synchronise. Movements are performed with crisp precision in a highly skilled rhythmic and almost robotic way. This has the effect of emphasising the group, not the individual. Movements are repetitive, linear, angular, strong and punctuated. Actions are shape-oriented, heads sharply turned and the focus of the eyes is directly to the audience or on Caradoc. He is positioned downstage centre and the group copy or echo his movements, adding emphasis to his movement. Caradoc's identity is magnified and we the audience seem part of the group. His power is magnified through this device as the audience admires the virtuosic skill of the physical performance.



Image 21: Caradoc and his vampire chorus in *Sleeping Beauty* [photo credit: John Ross]

As Caradoc enters downstage he performs an expansive renversé jeté, like a rolling barrel jump across the front of the stage. He bends low and jumps high in a display of virtuosity and swooping grandeur. He is dressed in a long, red jacket, which swirls out behind him and the movement continues in the costume so that it includes the whole audience in an arc. Caradoc leads the four-part phrase. The movement motif is performed with hips pushed slightly forward so the shoulders and torso are



leaning back on the diagonal. The pelvis initiates the movement and the impulse ripples through the torso and pelvis in all the transitions. Feet keep the pulse, stepping and stamping out the 4/4 rhythm and syncopations, pushing the energy into the floor with knees always slightly bent. There is imagery of bullfighting and matadors, using arms as a cloak sweeping across the body closed, then opening wide and low to the side of the hips, drawing attention to the pelvis. Caradoc stands centre, downstage with one foot stepping on the ball and the other flat, marking the pulsing tempo. His arms are open at his sides, fingers splayed open, like a show display of peacock feathers. His left arm is bent into his side, the other is reaching out to the right. His right shoulder is raised higher than the left so the whole torso is curving slightly to the left. The group makes an inverted 'V' formation around Caradoc two or three dancers deep, each side of him. As he holds a strong tight 'C' shape, the group snaps suddenly; torsos are suddenly contracted in into low, curved shapes facing off stage, away from Caradoc, with both arms out straight, horizontal on the table plane with the head between the arms, parallel to the floor. The left foot stamps forward repeatedly and the right foot behind balances on the ball of the foot in a pressing movement as if dancers were bulls ready to stampede. Suddenly, all the dancers including Caradoc stand vertical in one count with shoulders pulled back tightly, elbows bent and chests pushed forward, backs arched and one foot stepping slightly forward. In unison, arms pull inwards sharply to a 'V' shape across the body and push the hips backwards. The hands reach towards the knees, which are now nearly touching in kitsch, sexual poses. All dancers are looking directly at Caradoc and he turns his head to look over his left shoulder to the girls' groups, stage left. The dancers and Caradoc pulse their left hips up and down holding the closed 'V' shape.

The audience feels swept along by the energy and virtuosity of the beautiful dancing. Audiences gave energetic, generous applause at the end of this section in both performances. They are entirely seduced by the glamour and rhythm until Aurora is revealed suddenly in a white spotlight, contrasting with the deep red lights bathing the stage and auditorium. Standing upstage centre in her sacrificial bridal white dress, we suddenly remember whose side we should be on, and then the applause suddenly stops. This happened in an identical way at both performances analysed.

#### **Act Four: The Saviours.**

Intense focus on this gothic world and its bloodthirsty revenge is released into calmer, quieter energy once Leo and Count Lilac rescue Aurora from the vampire Caradoc. It is possible to hear the exhalation of breath and the release of tension around the audience. Aurora and Leo are centre on a bare stage in a single spotlight, kneeling facing each other sideways to the audience, as if not aware we are watching them. We can see that now both of them are winged, our affective transformation is echoed in their costume. The journey into that supernatural world has physical consequences!

All is black around them as the movement is reduced to a very simple, small interaction between them. This follows directly after the frenetic, melodramatic, crowded scenes of Caradoc's stabbing by Count Lilac, so is perceived as a stark contrast and felt as a welcome relief. Both kneel on their heels at first, looking into each other's eyes, but lean torsos towards each other. Leo inclines slightly more and raises himself off his heels enough to stretch out to almost touch Aurora's left cheek with his right hand, fingers outstretched.



Image 22: The Lovers' duet in *Sleeping Beauty* [photo credit: John Ross]

Aurora pitches forward in a straight diagonal from her hips, (just like the puppet baby watching the fairies), but just as Leo makes the slightest contact with her cheek, Aurora contracts her torso, inhales and curves her back in a 'C' shape, and raises her shoulders, allowing them to curve round and forward, making her rise off her heels. Her whole torso actually retreats in space, but she is not recoiling from the touch, rather is registering the ecstasy and intensity of the moment. Aurora allows her chin to lift and her eyes close; as Leo continues to touch her cheek, holding his hand still, she inhales further and shivers slightly. This delicate, subtle use of dynamics in sustained, light touch and short, sudden light reaction is almost animalistic and very evocative. The audible gasp in the theatre suggests the audience registers the kinaesthetic and affective impact.

In Bourne's choreography the body is used as automaton, or puppet or object, all of which can be amusing and also deviant. Dramaturgically, the imagery places us temporarily outside our own bodies and gives access to otherworldly realms of Bourne's vampires, fairies and wolves<sup>48</sup>. These are the experiences which audiences remember, share, compare and talk about in animated conversations in the interval and after the show. The company's publicity promises us exhilaration in

---

<sup>48</sup> See Appendix Three [pp.229-233] for comparisons with earlier works by Bourne such as *Highland Fling* based on the Romantic ballet *La Sylphide*

being at one of Bourne's shows. The spectator *is* the central dramaturgic focus of Bourne's work and the theatre promoters understand the power of experience as a marketing tool. This is a reason why non-dance specialist audiences engage with his work. Affective engagement and kinaesthetic empathy in Bourne's productions occur in a simultaneous process of heightened visual attention and kinaesthetically empathic responses. These physical responses seem to be involuntary and subconscious, yet, according to Foster; these empathic reactions have been learnt and are mediated through our daily experiences. The connections experienced by the spectators are not through the narratives or themes, but through a kinaesthetic empathy and visceral connection with the movement phrases and spatial shaping that involve us. Bourne takes time in the piece to slow the action, for spectators to notice themselves, to share the attention with other spectators, to register that this is a social moment. It is as if the turbulent events of the dancing leak into the auditorium. These dramaturgic leaks continue afterwards in conversations and commentaries, even in virtual spaces. This is a kinaesthetic dramaturgy in which turbulences are thrilling, rather than disorienting; anticipated rather than disruptive, thanks to a network of leaky social encounters.

***Body Not Fit for Purpose - Burrows and Fargion (2014)***

Burrows and Fargion create dances that are about their own kinaesthetic dramaturgies; their own physicality of performing, rather than about themes or narratives. They open up a dance work as if it is an invitation to play. There are complex rules and systems unfolded before the spectators, so that they pay close attention to every detail in an effort to de-code the system. In reality, the system is about observing and connecting with bodies in time and space, and thus the performance event becomes a shared experience of empathic engagement.

Kinaesthetic empathy is achieved between spectator and performer through drawing attention to the difficulty of very fast sections or particularly complex, lengthy phrases, which are demanding for the performers to execute. These physical challenges become the focus for the spectator as the words spoken form patterns and sequences which make less sense. Pieces such as *Body Not Fit for Purpose* contain many intricate gestural, eye and body movements and the spectator is quickly trained to focus attention on these. Burrows' work uses humour and audience laughter to forge connections. He writes:

The laughter of a dance performance is a contrary thing, born out of a collision between the tension that arises in the absence of language and the release that comes with anything graspable... Some dance pieces are funny, though laughter's not necessarily proof (2010, p162).

In similar ways, *Speaking Dance*, (2006) manipulates ways of performing speech.

Burt analyses how this juxtaposition of text and action makes connections between performer and spectator.

Much of it looked tricky to do at the fast energetic pace they set themselves. Some sections seemed to have an almost strained intensity that I found strangely moving...Burrows and Fargion seem to have got in touch with some[...]truths about relationships – between each other and between themselves as performers and us in the audience. (2006, Burrows' website np.)

Physicality in the performance and the physical differences between the performers is a key part of the experience for the spectators. It is through the patterns that we recognise the contrast and harmonies with the music or between two speakers talking simultaneously. The embodiment of the words through speech, breath, pauses and actions show the difference between hearing the phrases and seeing the words projected onto the screen. These structural complexities in the performance are understood not through words, but by feeling physical responses.

In this thesis, I propose that articulating the experience of Burrows and Fargion's work is the most relevant way of engaging with the pieces. Conversely,

Perazzo Domm frames most of her analysis of Burrows' work using a linguistic approach, but she does acknowledge the importance of embodied connections. She holds that turbulences between content and meaning function as a catalyst for the intense sensed, affective impact of the piece; '..they touch on profound human feeling and conditions without referring to them directly, awakening the spectators' sensitivity without exposing their processes and intentions.' (in Lansdale [ed.] 2008, p.125)

In *The Cow Piece*<sup>49</sup>, Burrows and Fargion take up their places each behind a table upon which are six plastic toy cows, reminiscent of toy farm model animals, and also their notebooks. The movement material is generated from the tasks performed with the cow models. Both performers rearrange the cows and hold them up to the spectators, as if for examination, or checking, and then replace them on the table. At times it is as if the movement of the cows, their formations and patterns could be the focus of the choreography. The performers act out mini-scenes with the cows in game-like situations and, with a playful energy, intersperse the games with some movements, a little Morris dancing, singing and playing an accordion, ukulele and harmonica. There may be rules to the games, but those are not clear for the spectators to follow. There is a recurring suggestion of themes of death and punishment; "*Wasn't Me! Wasn't Me!*" exclaims Burrows, a referee's whistle blows and Fargion calls out "*Muoio! Muoio!*" (I'm dying). Spectators are quick to engage with the humour throughout the piece, despite the violence acted out. This is reminiscent of Burrows' earlier works such as *Stoics* and *Very*, where ambiguities were produced by the simultaneous violence and humour.

---

<sup>49</sup> *The Cow Piece* recorded in performance is available here: <https://youtu.be/XCNg5ng-KQk> and <https://youtu.be/4roTrHyv-Jw>

It is through juxtaposing one element with another that the comic and complex effects are achieved. There seems to be danger lurking in the make-believe world of the model cows, 'Go away, you fierce skeleton!' and 'Don't fear the reaper!' call out Burrows and Fargion together, sometimes in high-pitched voices as if acting out a character in distress. But we laugh because of the absurdity of the game, even as tiny nooses are looped around the cows' necks and they are lowered off the table and dropped to the floor. Spectators gasp in empathy at the jeopardy and then quickly observe our own absurdity in such attachment to the plastic farm models. We laugh at this contradiction to release our tension and collectively acknowledge our own behaviour.



Image 23 & 24: Jonathan Burrows [left] and Matteo Fargion [right] in *The Cow Piece* [photo credit: Herman Sorgeloos]

There is a vibrant energy to both pieces, which the spectators enjoy in a physical way and express through their laughter and it is due in part to the fast pace of the performances, with rapid shifts from scene to scene, from one idea to another, and the overlapping of these apparently unrelated activities. The spectators seem to join in with Burrows and Fargion and, as theatre critic T'Jonck comments,

'[...]in the end your head starts dancing of its own accord..[and] it is theatre, but not what could be expected or foreseen.' (2010, np.)

*Body Not Fit for Purpose* is a duet in which both performers are initially seated on simple chairs by a table, facing the audience<sup>50</sup>. Fargion performs several short pieces of music on his mandolin, while Burrows speaks a series of short phrases or slogans that draw on contemporary social and political events, familiar figures and situations. Burrows gestures while he speaks, but these do not function to illustrate or explain his spoken text. Instead, they exist alongside the phrases and are composed of pedestrian or ordinary movements, not dance steps of a recognisable movement vocabulary. There is no narrative structure, nor thematic connection to the music. As the piece progresses it appears that there are possibilities for the audience to create its own connections and links between the two aspects of the piece. The pace of the piece is set partly by the music and partly by Burrows' own performance timing which he alters to reflect the energy he perceives in the group of spectators at that particular performance; he will slow down or speed up certain sections depending upon how the spectators as a collective respond. He observes responses and the audience's behaviour throughout his performance and alters his own dynamic and energy levels to synchronise with those he senses from the audience<sup>51</sup>.

I saw this piece performed on 17 November 2014 at the Ellen Terry Theatre, Coventry University as part of the C-DaRE programme. The audience comprised of Coventry University dance students and staff along with a few members of the public. In the post-show question and answer sessions, Burrows began by explaining

---

<sup>50</sup> See Appendix Four [pp.234-238] for full transcript of Burrows' script and production notes made at the performance on 17 November 2014 at Ellen Terry Theatre Coventry University

<sup>51</sup> Burrows explained this process in the post-show talk, 17/11/2014 at Coventry University.



the approach to making the work and the function of the score sheets. Interpreting the meaning of the dance preoccupied audience responses and questions.

The work of Burrows and Fargion radiates delight even as it makes the audience think. Over the past ten years the two artists have built a body of duets, which mix the formality of classical music composition with an open and often anarchic approach to performance and audiences, bringing them a worldwide following. *Body Not Fit For Purpose* is the duo's first overtly political work, taking as its starting point the inadequacy of the dancing body to express that which is of concern and at the same time the inherent radicality of the attempt. The performance unravels the link between meaning and action, raising questions in the midst of our laughter. (Decoda, University of Coventry, November 2014)

"One; the Arab-Israeli conflict", "Two; A curse on Bankers", "Three; Fear of Immigrants", and "This dance is called Silvio Berlusconi"; these phrases are accompanied by, or followed by a sequence of arm, hand or facial gestures, complex, intricate and repeated with slight variations. When juxtaposed against the apparent logic of the spoken text, these seem to be inviting spectators to expect that they are signifying something or probably connected to the phrase. Spectators' attention is drawn to details of action, shaping, time and space in patterns, which have intense affective impact. Mackrell, a dance critic familiar with Burrows' work since the 1980s, has moved away from the temptation to de-code or interpret, and she comments instead on the affective encounter with the actions and rhythms of the work:

There's a beguiling mix of the scholarly, the quizzical and the righteously indignant that is unique to Fargion and Burrows...the concentration of their work demonstrates how much expressive power even a small gesture, a tiny variation of tone or rhythm, can possess. (*The Guardian*, 23rd June 2014)

There is an intensity of effort in the experience of spectating in this work which shares dramaturgic affects with Clark's disorienting virtuosity of movement and with Anderson's manipulation of space, rhythms and visibility; each choreographer works with intensely detailed movements and differences in repetitions. Burt comments:

If *Both Sitting Duet* was made of movement material that was unusual and structured in an unconventional defamiliarising way, it therefore posed the performers the problem of finding new ways of bringing to the audience's attention the particular qualities on which it depended. While on one level therefore, it was an abstract work, it also became an investigation of performance as such. (Burt, 2006.np)

A musical score by American composer Morton Feldman provides the structure for *Body Not Fit for Purpose*. His formalist compositions focus on time, energy and rhythmic patterns. Burt identifies the similarities between the structures and affective components of the music and the choreography. He notes that the music is not heard in the performance, but explains how it serves as a dramaturgic system for the choreography:

Feldman once explained that he used repetition as a deliberate device to disorient the listener's memory[...]because it was difficult to get a sense of the overall shape, the spectator focused more on affects generated through patterns and rhythm which varied in terms of speed, energy and focus. (Burt, 2006 np.)

By making spectators pay such close attention to details of very small differences in time and space through the patterning of movements, of rhythms and dynamics, the pair seem to re-set our attention and affective engagement to be able to notice and engage with these changes so that they become resonant in our own bodies and breath, in the rhythms of our own breathing or laughing and pausing. In *Body Not Fit for Purpose*, the choreographic impact is the work's kinetic, visual and aural processes. Individual spectators become attuned to moments and in these shifting attentions, spectators experience the piece empathically. It is not acting, or pretending or representing, but performing the actions with specific attention to the 'doing of' and 'being in the moment' of doing. Attention is on temporal and spatial features of the doing of actions. It is in this physicality of attention that affective experiences of the work combine in the dramaturgic activities of the spectator.

**to a simple, rock 'n' roll ... song - Clark (2016)**

BBC Four broadcast this work on television in May 2018 as part of a short series on contemporary dance. Below is the summary provided by BBC Four as introduction to Clark's work. The text describes Clark's choreographic style, characterises the impact on spectators and explains the inspirations behind the pieces. The language chosen is highly evocative, physical and focuses on the affective experience of the works.

The triple bill pays homage to three of Clark's greatest musical influences. Act I features commanding choreography, pulsating with a propulsive force to the punk rock of Patti Smith's landmark album, *Horses*. Act II is a reflection on Erik Satie and his influence on Clark's mentors past and present; the dance meticulous, minimalist and coolly refined. Finally, *Act III* is an iridescent tribute to David Bowie; intricate, sublime, the mood moving from elegiac to joyously rebellious. Recorded at the Barbican, London in 2017, this Olivier Award nominated production features arresting choreography performed by a company of fearless dancers including Harry Alexander, who won the Critics' Circle Emerging Artist National Dance Award in 2017. (BBC Four programme note)

In the BBC Four television version of the production, the order of the pieces has been changed, so that *Act II: Land* (music by Patti Smith) is before *Act I: Satie Studs/Ogives Composite*. It is not clear why this has been done but it certainly alters the cumulative effect of affective attention to Clark's visual and kinetic complexities. As described earlier, the spectator is given a challenging range of musical, visual and kinetic patterns as part of the process of affective engagement. In this analysis of visual dramaturgies these works are described in the order presented in live performance on 25 October 2017.

Seven dancers stand vertically in rows from downstage to upstage on an almost shiny stage against a shiny cyclorama of bright green and blue. They wear peach upper body and black lower body unisex lycra suits. In unison, they take a slow relevé rise and pivot  $\frac{1}{4}$ , torque through the spine to create an épaulement,

then pivot  $\frac{1}{2}$  to end up facing downstage, looking at the audience in a twisted crossover leg shape pushing out the right hip. Eyes and heads are precisely choreographed to show a line of trajectory and projection outwards or in a circular overhead pattern. It seems so simple and stark but compelling as a pattern against the rich colours of the lighting on the cyclorama. It seems as though there is too much to look at as the dancers break out of unison into pairs.

Image 25: *to a simple, rock 'n' roll ... song* (2016)  
[Photo credit: Hugo Glendinning]



This image shows a moment from a series of leaps and tilts in penché (tipped) attitudes that show linear shapes and angles of legs and arms. Arms are held in diagonals, stretched to the sides of the dancers' torsos, or lifted up to shoulder level in forward travelling leaps. Energy is directed to the front and sides of the stage, directly into the wings, seeming to indicate that direction of travel or signalling to others out of sight. Two dancers leave (stage left) and five are on stage, then two enter from stage right. All take a  $\frac{3}{4}$  pointe rise and pivot again in  $\frac{1}{4}$ , then  $\frac{1}{2}$  angles as before. Movement is seamless, smooth and fluid with a palpable sense of vertical tension pulling upwards and downwards equally. Edges of the space are drawn as if with invisible lines from the extremities of limbs and traced with heads and eyes so that the stage space seems only part of the space being used by the dancers. Attention is also being directed to space behind, above and sideways, around us and also beyond the stage area. It feels as if the auditorium space is disappearing and the

whole environment is the dancers' space, so we feel we are swallowed up in their space.

Immersed in vibrant orange stage lighting, two men create a duet of sinuous, agile shapes cutting lines into the stage space and beyond. The movements are precisely timed and rhythms, notes and phrases of Satie's piano music are made clear and visible as the movement and music synchronise. In counterpoint and complex rhythms we are able to sense or even see layers of timing of movements and music intersecting through the space. Lighting colours merge from green to royal blue and cover the entire floor and backdrop. Two other dancers enter and the lighting merges into lilac then deep purple. The complex movement patterns look like codes that we do not know. Then the stage divides into a two-part mirror effect and we can recognise earlier patterns and see these in opposition working across from stage left to stage right. The audience knows we have seen this before and we feel like we are part of the game. It is thrilling to feel we can join in as we hear the patterns in Satie's music and we know the rules of the slow rise and pivot turns, we recognise the movement motifs of swift running in circular floor patterns that straighten out to exit into the wings. We notice connections and repetitions across the groupings and find the matching shapes in tipped attitudes, lunges or high arched torso in relevé. Then as lights fade and the last note disappears, the dancers keep moving, the patterns do not stop, the movements continue as the lights blackout as we feel energy continuing among the spectators.

### ***ACT II: LAND***

Image 26: *to a simple, rock 'n' roll ... song* (2016)  
[Photo credit: Hugo Glendinning]



The stage floor is dark and no light leaks into the auditorium. Dancers are in a variety of flared, shiny, black Lycra trousers and patterned, shiny, monochrome tops. Hips lead and heads pivot; this is a swirling free flow series of agile, supple, fluid moves. Sounds are heard first before any movement is seen; talking, rhythmic, pulsing and then clicks as dancers enter with hip rolls, sharp, angled torsos held like monoliths with arms in tight by the sides. Taking long, deep lunges, other dancers enter and move across the space. The singing starts and large, looping, blue projections appear on the dark cyclorama. Squares of light are marked out on the dark floor and we are drawn to watch carefully who fills the lit area. A trio of dancers smoothly wraps around each other and the two men lift the woman high above their heads. Others move swiftly across on the diagonal from upstage left with demi-contretemps and petite batterie<sup>52</sup>; footwork is dazzling, intricate and light. Their energy is easy, light and fast, using momentum to find motion and take shapes across a wide stage into very swift runs.

The projections include a dark section with silver rain and dancers can only be seen if in this section of the stage. Often the stage is dark and dancers emerge into the lit area giving a spontaneous, playful feel. Bleeker's notions of dramaturgies of visibility, viewpoints and perspectives are embodied in Clark's choreography. Spectators seem invited to enjoy the playfulness of the movement as dancers look directly at the audience with relaxed, open faces. Much of the movement vocabulary is reminiscent of Clark's own sinuous agility and virtuosity. Dancers take easy full jetés across a circular pattern and approach us with double ronds de jambes en l'air, which lead into smooth pirouettes and arabesque penchés. It is athletic, fun and youthful. We see the complex virtuosity, but by using such light dynamics and

---

<sup>52</sup> Classical ballet allegro (jumps) in which a dancer's feet beat or cross several times before landing.

flowing spatial patterns to the Patti Smith music, it feels like we are taken along for the ride, to dance along vicariously. The events can be modelled in dramaturgic engagement of spectators as 'becoming entrained' or significant moments of shared, sensed spectating of the works. In these events, the sensations of entrainment can be noted as a shifting awareness from separate, individual self to the others, to the group and perceiving a shared experience.

This phenomenon, according to Sheets-Johnstone's assertions (2009), can be communicated between bodies as visceral contagions, spreading in complex patterns across the auditorium to explain synchronisation in an audience. Clark's dramaturgies draw attention to the auditory and kinaesthetic perceptions of the spectators' responses; breathing, movements, even stillness or lack of any sound at all. In Clark's work, the notion of surfaces, edges and depth are manipulated to explore kinaesthetic qualities. The opening of *New Work* shows a solo dancer, (Harry Alexander in the earlier version, but Julie Cunningham in 2014), lowered very, very slowly from the overhead rig, until the tip of a pointe shoe is just making contact with the stage. The intensity of attention and expectation among the audience creates an unusually still focus at the start of this piece. There is a collective audible exhalation of breath as the dancer's foot just touches the ground and they continue moving downwards until curled in a ball on the stage floor. During the descent, spectators' gazes are drawn upwards to this solo figure even though there are other dancers entering and exiting across the stage space beneath them. It is a challenge to choose where to focus and for how long, but it is not possible to watch everything in detail at once.

The piece starts with an empty stage except for a pool of coloured light, mostly green, while a dancer is slowly lowered on a wire until finally landing en pointe. In

the 2012 version, it was the largest dancer in the company, Harry Alexander who performed this role, but in 2013 it was the petite Julie Cunningham. There is a different effect created by seeing a tall, athletic man or small woman landing very slowly en pointe. The way spectators engage kinetically with the performer in the space can change even though the movement activity is the same. Attention is on the body lowering and how the space around the dancer is amplified as the body moves into the spatial zones from high to middle to low areas. As the dancer's kinesphere and the pool of lighting become the zone of attention, the spectators' focus shifts to this spatial arrangement on stage. There is very little activity; the dancer is just holding a linear shape, thus emphasising the verticality and the gap between dancer and stage floor. As the gap narrows we attend to the shrinking distance, but are not sure exactly how far is left as the extended foot seems not to quite touch the floor as the landing is very slow and controlled with a very light, sustained, dynamic quality. There is no climax or conclusion when the contact is made, as the dancer simply holds the vertical shape and body tension until two other dancers enter and remove the harness, swiftly and smoothly moving into a trio of tilting and tipping and linear limbs extending into the space on diagonal lines. They are marking out linear pathways and we are aware of the formation and patterning of shapes made, with no opportunity to note the end of the descent before the next movement has begun, giving spectators:

a spectrum of experiential phenomena - physical, emotional and /or behavioural – ranging from 'anotic' responses (feelings that function without neocortical involvement or conscious knowing), via 'noetic' responses (based on knowledge, including semantic and episodic memory systems), to 'autoneotic' (higher reflective mental) processes of conscious awareness. This affective-continuum model reinforces the 'embodied cognition' hypothesis, which rejects Cartesian dualism. (Rokotnitz, in Shaughnessy [ed.], 2013, p.117)



There is always activity moving into and out of the wings of the stage, as if more events are continuing out of sight. This creates the impression of a hugely expansive performance area and that our view is only partial. The energy, dynamics and performance intention of the dancers continues beyond the boundaries of the stage and they enter with movements and dynamics as if they are mid-sequence, and started before we could see it happening. These disorienting visual images combine with rhythmic and musical structures, which add to the complexity of the kinaesthetic sensations. Clark's choreography and use of projections of visual images causes confusion about the surfaces and depth of what we see before our eyes. Duration and spatial patterns are manipulated through the choreography. Spectators focus attention on how the performers' bodies move in time and space. Expressed in this way, the play between dancers' bodies, lighting and film, and even the physical experience of the music, allows for the spectator to enjoy the disorientation and turbulence produced by these interactions. Space, depth and surface are manipulated in Clark's choreography and invite spectators to become aware of their own exteriority and space in the auditorium. Paul Carter, artist and author in creative practices and embodied understandings explains thus:

Turbulence is associated with open systems, with networks; it is not simply a 'complex and unpredictable cultural and predictable environment'. It is the phenomenon of feedback, or, more exactly, it is the self-conscious awareness of the power of feedback mechanisms to inaugurate new behaviours. It is associated with changes of state that appear spontaneous (or unscripted) because they respond to or interact with surface phenomena in real time. As the response involves recognition or coding, the emerging states are not meaningless but incorporate, consolidate and render complex. (2014, p.1)

Karen Gilbert, education and cognition scholar, considers re-viewing the turbulent body using concepts from post-industrialisation and cybernetics:

If we give up the metaphor of the body as a thermodynamic machine in favour of a body that seems more like an aggregate of microscopic marine creatures subject to the lunar tides, we are in need of methodologies with which to approach the

economies of these bodies. These economies are those of information and of emergent complexity. We might ask: How does the turbulent body operate? (in Clough-Ticineto 2007, p.79)

Clark's choreography manipulates images in time and space to create kinaesthetic experiences of turbulence and disorientation, but his dancers, by contrast, appear supremely controlled, dispassionate and precise. Clark's collaboration with Atlas on the lighting design and film in this work contributes significantly to a visually striated, filmic approach to the overall dramaturgic effect of turbulence or disorientation. It is through a combination of complex visual stimuli, Clark's use of rhythm and melodic patterns that the spectators experience a kinaesthetic engagement of unbalance and precariousness.

### ***The English Channel - Aggiss (2012)***

Spectators engage closely with the affective qualities of Aggiss's movements indicating kinaesthetic empathy in accordance with Sheets-Johnstone's proposition (2009) that humans connect with each other's movements in a primal, instinctive way. The corporeality of Aggiss's fleshiness creates a turbulent dramaturgy and also evokes affective and kinaesthetic experiences for the spectators. When Aggiss speaks to the audience after an energetic section of performance, she is out of breath and we hear her puffing into the microphone. This highlights the physical and vocal impact of her work. It is a highly visceral performance style in which we are made to confront Aggiss' body and her attitude towards it and furthermore, how society views the bodies of older women. She writes:

Her performances have a distinctive expressive, grotesque and British music hall movement style, and integrate text, film and humour. Her performance persona creates an open and engaging relationship with the audience.

Her work resists formality, and looks at gender politics and the representation of women in dance and society. The work exceeds expectations of what her particular fleshy, post-menopausal, dancing body should be doing, why she should be doing it and where it should be done. (Aggiss 2012)

At *The English Channel* spectators are chatting and relaxed as Aggiss appears by the audience's seats during the interval, dressed in a formal, starched uniform of a nurse from the Second World War. Aggiss continues the show as spectators pass around bags of traditional sweets (rhubarb and custards, pineapple cubes and sherbet lemons). She encourages us all to suck a sweet with a cheerful innuendo joke, in keeping with her music hall style performance delivery. For many of the audience these will evoke childhood memories of traditional sweet shops with sweets from jars, weighed out in ounces. There is a strong, evocative and shared kinaesthetic experience as many spectators are sucking or crunching on sweets, perhaps in the role of children, while Aggiss, in her formal, starched nurse's uniform, instructs us, then exits. Attention has been focused on our own bodies in the physical action of eating and the following scene magnifies the impact of this kinaesthetic attention in bleak descriptions of physical illness.

The recorded voice of the speaking clock is heard; 'at the third stroke, it will be ...'. This recorded voice repeats four times, but the script is not as expected. It is changed to; 'at the third stroke, there will be dizziness/ there will be paralysis/ there will be a blinding headache/ there will be ...', silence followed by 'beep, beep, beep'. This creates an eerie, sombre effect and Aggiss enters walking slowly from upstage left to downstage right. She exits stage right and re-enters with three brown paper bags. She stands by the microphone and blows into each bag and ties it at the top. The sound of her breath is amplified and creates a powerful kinaesthetic impact with attention on our own breathing. Aggiss places these bags on the floor very close to the audience. Images are evoked of taking a last breath, or possessions of the deceased placed in brown paper bags for the relatives.

Once her duties as nurse are completed, she stands untying her nurse's apron and addresses the audience. 'That wasn't much fun was it?' Aggiss comments. And of course there is laughter as tension is dispelled. Spectators laugh at some anecdotes and fall quiet at more poignant moments, but we sense an empathic connection between us. At the end of the performance the audience is led from their seats by volunteers as Aggiss calls them to dance with each other, linking arms, swinging and changing partners as Aggiss hands out programmes to the show, which are rolled into 'Certificates of Embarkation'. Aggiss manipulates turbulent kinetic dramaturgies by conflating text, movement and meaning. She uses dramaturgic devices, such as humour, purposefully to open the gaps in unresolved meaning, showing us the collisions. This connects her work to that of Burrows and Fargion whose witty word play and detailed movements engage spectators in cognitive and kinetic puzzles. Frequently the meaning of the language is problematised. Aggiss makes puns, repeats and alters lines of her script in a witty stream of consciousness delivery. At times her direct interaction with the audience feels like an improvisation. Spectators are aware of the jolts in meaning and the playing with language; Aggiss uses this disruption to create a space in her work to splice her movement and text together, yet it is still a turbulent crossing.

This disruption is not the violence of dramaturgic collisions between text and movement as articulated by Barton (2014) and Barba (2000), because in Aggiss's work spectators enjoy the journey, relish its turbulence and share in the exhilaration of relief at our collective safe landing. Mackrell's review of *New Dance* and its important choreographers from this era, includes extensive descriptions of the turbulent movement styles of several small-scale companies that have relevance to those discussed in this study. These can be considered as dramaturgic devices and

include layering of images, sounds and pedestrian actions onto codified dance steps. Anderson and Bourne's works show influences from Spink's choreography for *Second Stride*, in particular from works such as *De Gas* (1981) made in collaboration with designer Anthony McDonald and composer Jane Wells. Anderson's dramaturgy is also recognised for her collaborations with costume designer, Sandy Powell and composer Drostan Madden, among others. Bourne's choreography is known for the gender swaps in certain roles; including male swans in *Swan Lake*, Count Lilac in *Sleeping Beauty* and the lead role of Luca in *The Car Man* [based on *Carmen*]. Spink's *De Gas* was provocative in its turbulent movement dramaturgies, using male dancers to perform the actions of the painter Degas' women washing and drying themselves.

Mackrell records:

During the course of the piece they gradually removed their evening dress, washed their feet in enamel bowls and dried themselves on large bath towels. But these ordinary movements were translated into phrases of dance by the graceful unison with which they were performed and by the careful groupings of the dancers on stage. (Mackrell, 1992 p.104)

Dramaturgies of movement, character, narrative and speech combined in Spink's *Further and Further into the Night* (1984), based on Alfred Hitchcock's film, *Notorious*. It is likely both Anderson and Bourne were influenced by seeing this piece performed in London when they were students at The Laban Centre. Elements of movement style and dramaturgies of Spink's work can be traced in Anderson's *Edits* and Bourne's *Cinderella*, re-imagined in the 1940s, *Play without Words* and *The Red Shoes*, adapted from the film. Mackrell describes how

Spink took gestures and words from certain scenes and then, as in *De Gas*, repeated with different variations. The tying of a scarf round the waist, or drinking out of a glass would be performed by the dancers in unison or in canon, and the performers were always arranged in neat formal groupings around the stage. Orlando Gough's repetitive score emphasised the way dancers repeated the same words and actions over and over again [...] the piece took on its own distinctive drama when different fragments of actions were played out by different dancers, particularly when men's parts were played by women and vice versa...having very different emotional and

sexual implications. On the surface, the piece was so formal, so cool, that the violence of certain gestures was exaggerated and the piece became a study of the aggression that lies beneath the surface of social conventions. (1992, p.112)

There are similarities too with early works by Burrows, such as *Very* (1991) that played with ambiguities in actions of violence and aggression and evoked comedy. Critical discourse found such turbulent, kinetic dramaturgies challenging, and similar responses were recorded to Spink's *Bösendorfer Waltzes* (1986). It appears that recent works by choreographers in this study are to some extent less turbulent; I contend that this may be in part due to some leakages from exposure to earlier works that result in some familiarity among spectators with collisions between action, text and meaning. Reviewing *Bösendorfer Waltzes*, Mackrell writes;

As in *Further and Further into the Night* the dancers often doubled up as the same character, or swapped parts, and there was a similar reversal of sex roles. At one point Giradau, dressed as a dapper little matador, was paraded in arabesque by another man very much as if he had been put on display for the woman who was watching him. The piece ended with Sally Owen making an impassioned speech about the sacredness of the artist's freedom; the works attempt to mix so many art forms and ideas could be seen as a statement of its own liberation from convention. Audiences were very divided about *Bösendorfer Waltzes* – some enjoying the richness and strangeness of the material, others complaining that they couldn't make head or tail of it. (It certainly helped if you knew *The Firebird* or had some background information on the Surrealists.) (1992, p.14)

Resonances are apparent between Spink's works and the choreographers discussed in detail in Chapters Two, Three and Four. Existing critical discourse of dance appreciation and analysis is still not fully effective in articulating the spectating experiences in Spink's productions of the 1980s, nor in later pieces by other choreographers, such as *Body Not Fit for Purpose*, (Burrows) *The English Channel* (Aggiss) and *Edits* (Anderson). This study proposes that concepts and terminologies of affective dramaturgy are more appropriate to articulate spectating experiences. Mackrell captures a moment in time at the early 1990s in her writing about several key choreographers in the early stages of their careers and evaluates

the influences of New Dance on a re-theatricalised contemporary dance style showing increasing synergies with Bausch's Tanztheater. It is notable that Mackrell's writing focuses more and more on what the dancers do than attempting to interpret meanings within the pieces and as such suggests a shift towards thinking about what the dance does, which is the central premise of this thesis. She considers:

Dance-makers continue to use film, speech, song and props as material, and more importantly continue to raid all forms of movement to extend their own language. Anderson's idiosyncratic gestural range, Snaith's fast, hard version of release, DV8's impassioned and dangerous use of manoeuvres developed out of contact improvisation – are all legacies from the ideas and experiments of the 1970s.

And she draws attention to the affective impact of the physicalities of contemporary dancers:

The effect of the New Dance movement can also be seen in the appearance of today's independent dancers, many of whom bear little resemblance to the physical stereotypes that used to dominate dance companies. There's nothing sylph-like about any of The Cholmondeleys or Snaith, while among The Featherstonehaughs, one dancer is a delicate five-foot and another reaches a startling six foot seven. (1992, p.136)

In her examinations of some of the pieces by these choreographers, Mackrell focuses on the actions not the meanings, for example; [in *Town and Country* (1991)] 'Bourne extends the gestural base of his choreography to include neat springing footwork, strongly sculpted body shapes and inventively decorative arm movements.' (1992 p.136) I draw attention to how descriptions of movements become increasingly significant in the discourse and I connect this to the affective impact of kinetic turbulence in the dramaturgy of contemporary dance. Anderson's *Big Dance Number* (1987) is one of several early pieces for The Cholmondeleys described by Mackrell:

This opened with the saccharine strains of an old Hollywood dance tune but the dancers did not wear ballgowns or dance waltzes: they were dressed in brown smocks and their movements were very constricted. Rooted to the spot, they arched and rippled their backs, weaving lavish and complicated shapes with their arms. Gradually the dance built up in complexity...They circled the stage with fast rhythmic steps and they ended by jumping over Sen and Barker who were lying on the floor. This was a reference to one of Astaire and Roger's most famous dances, which ends with them appearing to jump out of a window. (1992 p.130)

Snaith's choreography has some similarities with that of both Anderson and Aggiss, in particular in the use of costumes, props and staging to create other worlds. Her movement training at Dartington is notably different to Anderson, Bourne and Clark, being mostly based on contact improvisation and release technique elements. In this way she shares some features with Burrows' dance vocabulary that he learned through working with Rosemary Butcher. Snaith's release-based dancing also incorporated acrobatic movements from martial arts like Capoeira. Her movement style was a continuous flow of movement energy streaming across the space, punctuated by unexpected stillness in strong visual images.



Image 27: *Diction* (1992) [photo credit: Chris Nash]

In this photograph, taken during a live performance at the University of Surrey, the dancers can be seen throwing 6ft long wooden poles across the stage space while other dancers run to catch them. These poles were painted to look like cross poles from horse jumps. *Diction* sets out episodes of events like games or sports controlled by complex rules, sometimes as instructions by dancers, or sometimes dictated by actions and rhythmic sounds made by banging the poles on the floor. The stage floor is marked out in grids, reminiscent of a large game of chess,



and upstage there are ladders leading to huge chairs for omnipotent umpires, who can descend to play the game at certain points. There are white feathers collected together upstage from an earlier section in which feathers cover the floor and dancers roll, slide and leap in fluid acrobatic sequences as if in a highly physical game of 'tag'. After the game dancers circle the stage with the umpires' large black cloaks sweeping vigorously to clear all the feathers away; even this transition is apparently part of 'the game'; but spectators do not know how the rules work, or who is winning or losing. *Diction* is powerfully affective because the risky falling, catching and leaping movements entrance spectators in its intense physicality and kinetic turbulence. In this way Snaith's work shares elements of kinaesthetic impact with Clark's pieces where the dancers' athleticism and complexity of rhythm and pace create a disorienting, yet thrilling effect for spectators.

Overall, it can be summarised that kinetic features and movement styles of contemporary dance choreographers from this era share some influences even though the dance productions by each choreographer are distinctive. I consider these influences to be part of leaky dramaturgies; such as those Aggiss foregrounds in her own performances. She demonstrates, often to comic effect, that she is part of a lineage of dance training and performance aesthetic ranging from German expressionism and cabaret to British musical hall. In the next chapter leaky dramaturgies are examined by analysing how opportunities for encounters are increasingly available to spectators and followers in actual spaces and in virtual spheres of social media. The implication of this leaky encountering is proposed as part of the new dramaturgies of contemporary dance; and the relationship between turbulence and leakiness is explored. Indications in this study suggest that increased access to certain companies and pieces, such as Bourne's popular large-scale dances,

through a range of leaky encounters has reduced the turbulent affective impact of his productions, because spectators are already familiar, to some extent, with the choreography before seeing the performance. In other examples, such as Clark's or Burrows' works, where there is less opportunity to access the choreographers or to share comments or images on social networks, so the affective impact remains disorienting and turbulent. In the following chapter a range of leaky encounters, activities and social connections are explored in relation to several productions, with a view to assessing the impact these leakages have on the affective experience of spectating those pieces.

## Chapter Five

### **Leaky Encounters outside the performances:**

#### **Making a dramaturgic network of connections**

Leaky dramaturgy of encounters happens outside the performance itself.

These encounters may be beforehand, afterwards and not even at a time close to the performance. I illustrate in this chapter how social media systems of communication, such as interviews and blogs, or responses to a work shared between and among spectators offer a wealth of access to a company, to a work and its performers. I acknowledge the associated vocabulary of 'leaky' has negative connotations, as indeed does 'turbulence' which I reinterpret in terms of dramaturgy in this thesis.

The prevailing association with leaky or leakiness is one of dysfunction or accidental event. Leaks can infer a mishap or breakage and can be symptoms of a problem. In relation to bodies or health we are wary of leakiness and try to avoid it. In this thesis, the use of 'leaky' applies to the dramaturgy of encountering contemporary dance through opportunities that arise separately from the performance. Therefore this use of 'leaky' is separate from dysfunctional contexts, but models 'leaky' as a system of communicating and as an encounter across and between people and the dance work, extending across social spaces. Leakiness as a feature of the dramaturgy allows a wider context of the production including the previous works, movement training and physicalities of the choreographer, and of the dancers. The leakages are sometimes intentional and indeed led by the company or dancers. These may be in the form of participatory workshops, interviews or posts

on social media. Other leaks occur beyond the control of any company, choreographer or dancer and these are the encounters between spectators or followers; these can be live conversations or in virtual spaces. In this respect, the leaks can become turbulent, as they are uncontrolled activities that transmit information and opinions about the works and choreographers unpredictably and cannot be stopped. In the analysis of works in this study, I refer to and draw upon all leaky aspects of my own dance knowledge, spectating and embodied experiences, as well as interactions on social media. These leaky systems show how we understand kinetic connections, ways of visualising space and rhythms, and identities of performing bodies through how a dancer perceives their body in action, in communication with spectators. Such systems are apparent in each choreographer's style of work, and in turn, reflect, echo and draw upon their own embodied experiences.

The term 'leaky' has not been used previously in dance dramaturgy, and in this way, this thesis makes an original contribution to the discourse. The term leaky is found in other fields; for example, in the concept of 'leaky bodies' by Margrit Schildick, psychologist in feminist bio-ethics and gender studies who draws on feminist theories of the body, biomedical discourse (1997). It also appears as an aspect of decision or choice tasks in cognitive functions, but has different terms of reference than those applied in this thesis.

Developing the feminist ethics of Margrit Schildick's research, it is interesting to consider how far it is possible to consider this leaky dramaturgy as a feminised activity in a theatre context. Given the associations with female bodies leaking and their subversive qualities in a patriarchy, I propose that these leaky connections and communications can be then linked to a notion of turbulence across our social media

networks, as a virtual leakage that offers non-violent turbulence. It extends invitations to the encounter in wider social contexts than were previously possible and that are beyond the scope of activities and interactions led by a dance company, a venue or a choreographer.

I employ the term 'leaky' in this study as part of dramaturgies of encounter in a more positive way to show how the encounter with a performance work does not finish when the performance is over and may in fact begin before it has started. In this way, I find these external events to be like fluids because it is not clear where they will start or finish. Ongoing discussions and posting about a work or choreographer on social media has no need to stop and it will be a fast flow of activity around a new work, but then can diminish to a trickle as people move their attentions to something else. However, given the longevity of some forms of social media posts, these elements of encountering the work and its impact on spectators can linger for a long while, even years, and thus it appears that this type of encounter is a dramaturgic system that operates like a fluid. It moves among spectators or potential spectators, and even includes those who did not see the work, but will nevertheless engage with its ripple effect across people's phone and computer screens. Often this material uses images or videos from the works as well as additional 'fan-base' material or behind the scenes footage to create an authentic and connected sense of community and connection with the work.

This is the first study on contemporary dance and dramaturgy to articulate these extra encounters as integral to the dramaturgy of the work and to apply the term 'leaky' to these activities. I bring the notion of leaky dramaturgies into dialogue with its own turbulence seen through invitations on social media and among spectators, as well as scholars, who share their experiences in discussions. These

discourses are involved in the challenge of languaging experience. These analyses draw on Van Kerkhoven's notions of new dramaturgies and bring a dialogue of leaky processes to spectator engagement. In Chapter Three I discuss Anderson's exhibition *Hand in Glove*, at the Victoria and Albert Museum that presented her archive of dance costumes from productions created for The Cholmondeleys and The Featherstonehaughs. This account focused on the visual dramaturgy of Anderson's work and spectator engagement with the costume design, yet it was a significant leaky encounter with Anderson's work especially given that her companies had been disbanded, so spectators were no longer able to see the pieces being performed. The dancers exhibiting the costume were students from the London Contemporary Dance School rather than Anderson's company dancers, and as such the cast itself were encountering the work through a leaky encounter with the costumes and their roles in the exhibition. In the images below from the exhibition in 2016, it is clear that visitors (or spectators) are able to walk around the exhibition hall while dancers display the costumes. This is a costume from *Yippee!!!* where dancers take on the superficial glamour of Hollywood musicals, but their bodies belie the illusion of glamour and exuberance.



Image 28: *Hand in Glove* exhibition from *Yippee!!!* [photo credit: Lea Anderson]



Images 29, 30, 31, 32 & 33 *Hand in Glove* exhibition at the V&A 2016 [photo credit: Simon Corder]

In this series of images from the exhibition it is clear that visitors are very close to the dancers and encountering the work differently to its performance context. This spectating focuses on costume more than on choreography at very close quarters. It is different to watching the complete piece and there is scope for an intensified kinaesthetic response and increased turbulence due to the proximity of the dancers and the exaggerated distortions of body parts by the costume design. Both Anderson's companies have disbanded but there is still some leaky access to her previous choreography through events such as the *Hand in Glove* exhibition and archive film recordings, as well as Anderson's new work promoted through her

website<sup>53</sup>. The use of social media and YouTube is increasing for Anderson, but is small-scale compared to Bourne's leaky encounters online.

Anderson's choreography has been accessed by GCSE and A Level dance students and teachers in film and resource pack formats issued by examination boards and the Times Education Supplement<sup>54</sup>. These leaky encounters of studying the productions, such as *Flesh and Blood*,<sup>55</sup> brings a wide audience of dance students to Anderson's work; some of whom will also have become spectators. The resources produced for the examinations are leaky materials and, as discussed earlier, raise issues about interpretative readings of Anderson's pieces. The published presentation includes short interview material from Anderson and identifies some approaches to her choreography to deconstruct the making of this piece. It gives visual examples of Escher's reptiles, used as inspiration for sequences in *Flesh and Blood*, and references quotations of critical analysis by Sophie Constanti and Sherrill Dodds. These elements function for school students as indicators to the meaning of the dance and explain how the choreography is constructed and places in the genre of postmodern. This leaky encountering with Anderson's work is not without difficulty, as the discourse around the choreography is limited in its scope.

---

<sup>53</sup> Lea Anderson's website is accessible here: <http://www.leaanderson.com> and gives details of current or forthcoming pieces such as:

'Lea has been commissioned by the British Council to create a new work for Danza Contemporanea de Cuba in Havana. The new piece is based on a work by English choreographer John Weaver (1673-1760) entitled *The Loves of Mars & Venus*, which was premiered in London in 1717. Lea is working with 25 dancers with new music by Steve Blake, costume and staging design by Simon Vincenzi and lighting design by Simon Corder. The work will receive its premiere in Havana at the Alicia Alonso Theatre in Havana on the 28 September 2018.'

Her latest work is *An Alien's Guide to Dance Gone Wrong*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VRIGUi61WDo>

<sup>54</sup> A TES presentation and resource pack can be accessed here: <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/lea-anderson-flesh-and-blood-6408779>

<sup>55</sup> A filmed version of *Flesh and Blood* is available for reference here:

<https://youtu.be/iPCXwEDf4ys>



## New Adventures

Bourne's large-scale dance company, New Adventures, enjoys hugely popular appeal and creates ways for spectators and supporters to engage with the company beyond the performances. This fosters a sense of belonging to a social community outside the performance that has its own identity on Facebook and Twitter. The New Adventures fans are given information about productions in other countries so this is not a simple promotional activity to sell tickets for the next show. It certainly promotes Bourne's work, but more overtly it promotes the benefits of being a supporter of the company and its work. As a result of social media platforms, these leaky encounters function dramaturgically to give structures, spaces and identity to the phenomenon of 'New Adventures' followers. The following images from Facebook show these encounters and online conversations between spectators.



Image 34 Facebook post [credit New Adventures]

This image from New Adventures informs fans about *Swan Lake* at the New Wimbledon Theatre. It is not only a direct sales advertisement, but in wishing the company 'Good Luck' also operates as a social communication to involve fans and potential spectators in the pre-show excitement of an opening night. The company

social media presence is busy, lively and always seeking comments, opinions and feedback from the fans. This offers agency to the fans that continues from production to production, thus allowing people to feel personally connected to New Adventures and to Bourne. The company offers photographs of behind the scenes rehearsals, short video clips of extracts from pieces, as well as interviews with dancers and designers. When a production is on tour it is tracked geographically on social media to inform us all of where the work is next being performed and shares with us all the joys of successful performances and the enthusiasm of audiences. The posts also publically thank the host venues, cities, and especially the audiences themselves. This post is written and shared by members of the public and is unprompted by New Adventures. The distribution and connections made from such posts into a network of comments, feedback and responses are free-flowing and leak across the digital outlets, such as Facebook, in an organic, unstructured way, extending the encounters further and further. These spectator comments show some judgement and approval of Dominic North's performance presence and how the affective impact of certain dancers is successful. The final addition changes tack in the conversation to prompt yet another person to go and watch the show.

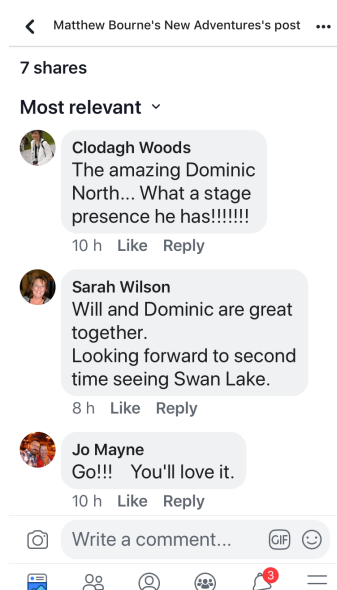
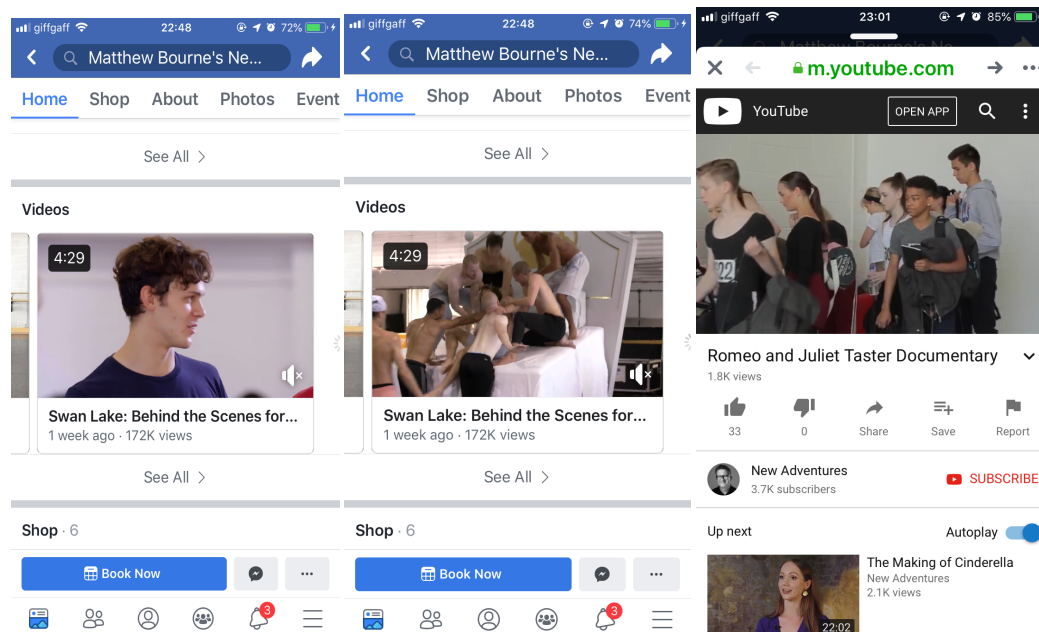


Image 35 Facebook post – general public comments

In Bourne's work, his choreographic aesthetic and dramaturgic devices direct attention to the sensed collectivity of an audience and its shared affective

experiences of engagement. Bourne's dramaturgies of narrative dance movement with character and emotional affect values experiencing above interpretation. He brings contemporary dance to large-scale, commercial venues and still retains an innovative identity in his choreography. I contend that experiences of the spectators are the central focus of Bourne's productions and this can be clearly evidenced through the performance, but also in these extensive activities of leaky encounters from *New Adventures*. The following images are still images from short video clips that show behind the scenes rehearsals or interview footage with dancers. This access to the rehearsal studio and to individual dancers gives fans and spectators additional information about a production, so that elements are familiar when seen in performance. This minimises the turbulent or disorienting effects of unusual choreography or changes to gender in certain roles. In this way the turbulence becomes a feature or a significant moment to be shared with the spectators, anticipated and enjoyed as thrilling, not disruptive. Note from the small caption under the still image that this video has had 172,000 views - a significant number of encounters in this leaky dramaturgy. The third image shows young dancers at an audition for a place in the *Romeo and Juliet* young cast, to support the main company's new production due to premier in Summer 2019. This video is a documentary following the whole project from recruiting to rehearsals and has attracted 1,800 views; this is months before the new show has even been seen.

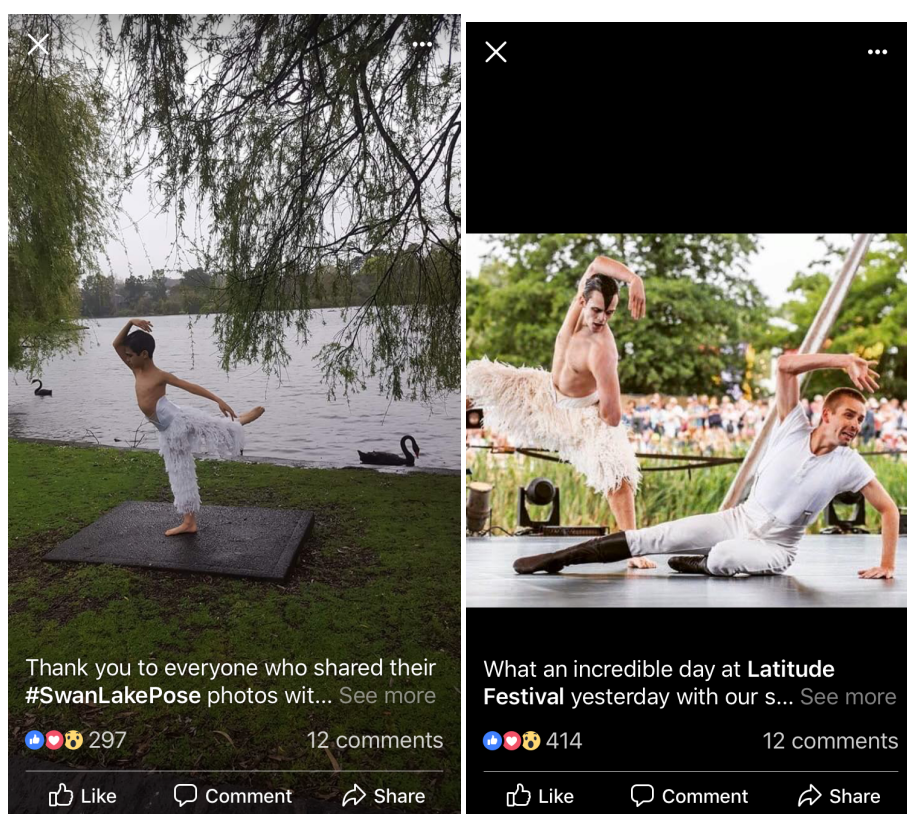


Images 36, 37 & 38 Facebook posts by New Adventures about current and forthcoming productions

The number of subscribers to New Adventures, 3.7K is visible under the *Romeo and Juliet* image and this indicates the current spread of these leaky encounters.

The process of leaky dramaturgies can start weeks before the performance, as part of the build-up to the new work being premiered, and conversely these can continue for many weeks after the spectator has attended a performance. The longevity of this dramaturgic leakage brings into question the notion of interpreting a work during the performance. In such examples, the dramaturgy of Bourne's work is operating without a dramaturg and it could be claimed that spectators are adopting the role of multiple dramaturgs. A correlation can be found between the activities of these spectators and Heathfield's notions of performative writing in conversational dramaturgy. In these conversations the interpretation process continues and evolves through shared communication about the piece for some time after seeing it. The two images below show other types of sharing and encounters that are part of the leaky dramaturgies. The young boy in the photo on the left has

uploaded, to the New Adventures Facebook page, an image of himself in a Swan pose, even in costume, which is part of a series of invitations to fans to send in photographs of themselves in poses linked to a particular production. The other image shows members of the company performing an excerpt of *Swan Lake* at the Latitude Festival, where the stage was on the lake at the festival site. These spectators at Latitude may not otherwise have seen contemporary dance and this is an example of leaky encountering, as even though it is a performance, it is not a full performance of the entire production. Spectators can be seen on the bank watching casually in an informal setting, and able to share reactions together very easily in the daylight and relaxed, social context.



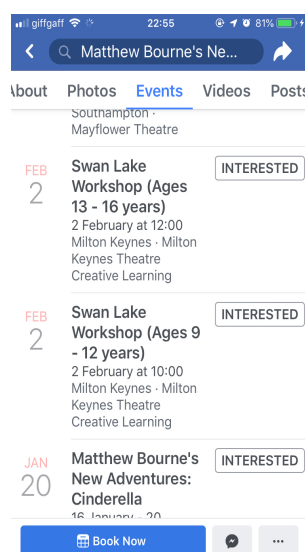
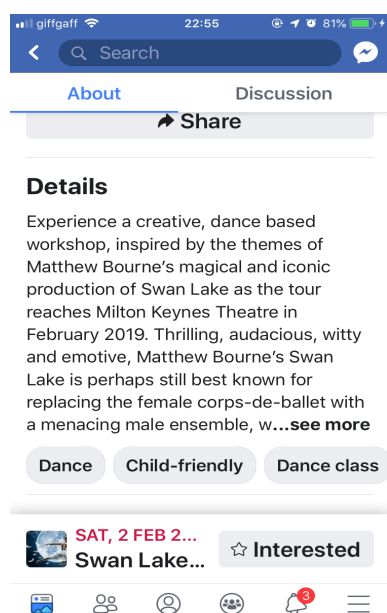
Images 39 & 40 *Swan Lake* Facebook posts [40 from Latitude Festival] by New Adventures

It is interesting to note that this community of dramaturgs does not have to contain any experts, scholars or professionals. Instead there is a democracy across the discourse that opens up further opportunities for disruption by handing over

agency and power to those not involved in making the work or even those involved in the scholarship surrounding dramaturgies and contemporary creative practices. New Adventures' leaky dramaturgies display characteristics of shifting power and authority that resonate with Stanger's notion of sabotage (in Georgelou et al. 2017). This notion borrows its definition from the story of workers uniting against tyranny of industrialisation by stopping the machines with their clogs. Stanger employs this metaphor to articulate disruption in creative processes of new dramaturgies. I find similarities here between how agency is given to Bourne's spectators as they comment on the work and how the mechanism of expert opinions of critics and scholars is interrupted by commentaries on social media.

Participation in dance workshops is a leaky encounter that is a more traditional way of engaging with a choreographer's style of movement. New Adventures hosts activities and workshops mostly for young people, rather than for trained dancers. It offers straightforward explanations of the workshop content and explains the features of Bourne's choreography. The description below as; 'thrilling, audacious, witty and emotive' highlights the affective impact of *Swan Lake* and prepares spectators for their experience of a live performance. It is notable that the 'child friendly' workshop is not about teaching professional repertory, but instead the participants' own creativity is more important than the expertise of the choreographer or the virtuosity of the dancers. There is a vast capacity for engagement in collective social and shared virtual encounters. Fans connect through their experiences of the live performances by sharing favourite moments, images of themselves at productions and comments on the work. I suggest these communications feed the appetite for the next encounter at a performance. The spectators may have built up their expectation of the work before seeing the

performance. Those spectators will feel connected and will have seen images from the performance. When they recognise those key moments on stage this reinforces the affective impact of leaky dramaturgies.

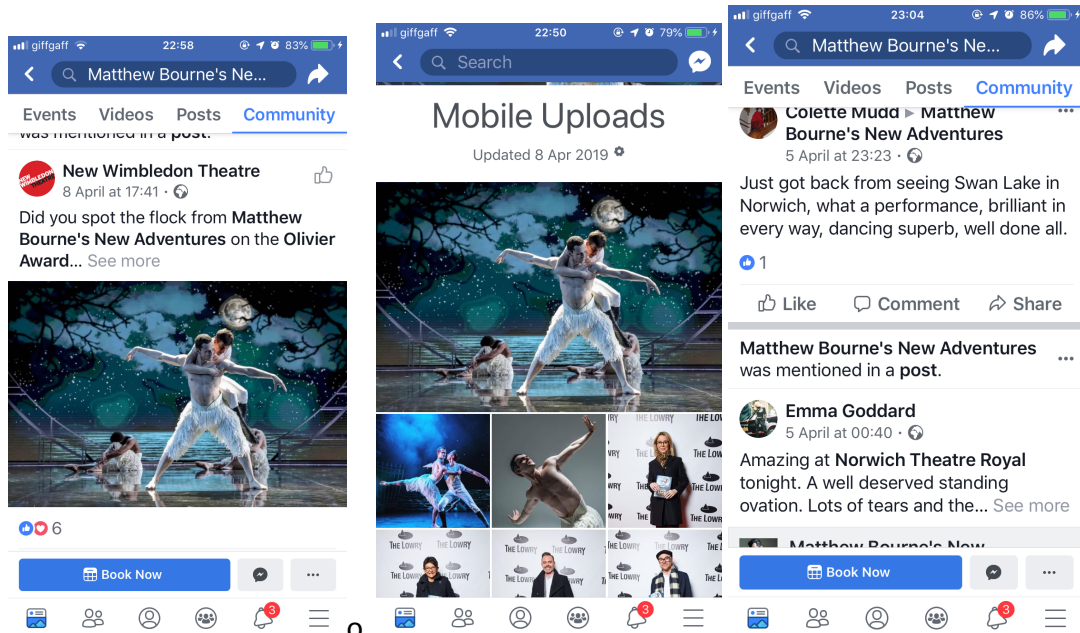


Images 41 & 42 participation opportunity - dance workshop on *Swan Lake*

Here is an example of Fensham's concept of familiarity in genre theory, and frequent perceptual processing as applied in affect theory, as discussed in Chapter Two. In the three images below it can be seen that the same moment is posted for two different stories. The first connects us from the New Wimbledon Theatre to the Olivier Awards at which Bourne was presented with the Special Recognition Award<sup>56</sup> and, as part of the award ceremony his dancers performed an extract of *Swan Lake*. This event is also a leaky encounter with Bourne's work. The middle image shows current photographs of the company's production and also famous people who have attended a performance; and the third shows posts in a shared discourse between spectators, recording their enjoyment of *Swan Lake* at Norwich Theatre Royal.

<sup>56</sup> An interview with Matthew Bourne announcing the presentation of the Olivier Special Recognition Award 2019: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQLWvRpi7ss>





Images 43, 44 & 45 leakages of key images lead to familiarisation and decrease turbulence.

Front of House displays of lavish and colourful images from the production create visually evocative impressions on entering the theatre venue, even before spectators reach their seats. I suggest this functions as another leaky encounter, as a dramaturgic invitation to step into another world. It is one of make-believe and magic spells, especially for Bourne's productions such as *Sleeping Beauty* or *The Red Shoes*. These Front of House materials create an affective environment to prepare spectators visually, imaginatively and kinaesthetically for the performance.

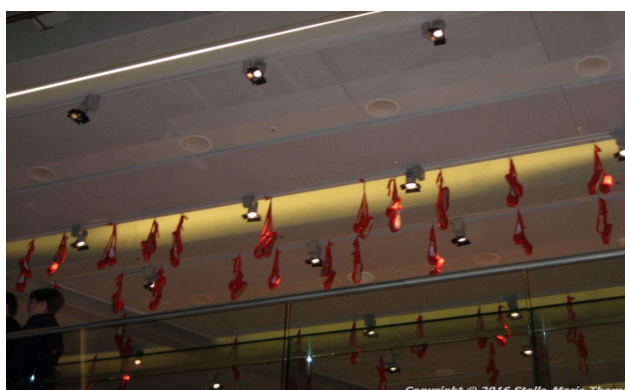


Image 46: Front of House display of red satin pointe shoes at Sadler's Wells Theatre [photo credit Stella Maria Thomas]



This encounter sets up spectators to connect imaginatively and affectively with the dancing, visuals and music; to share the encounter socially with other spectators.

I contend that there are significant creative leakages to be seen in the connections between choreographers during this era and as part of the lineage of British contemporary dance. I recall that dancers, designers and choreographers saw many new and innovative productions, particularly as part of the Dance Umbrella Festivals<sup>57</sup> in the 1980s curated by Val Bourne. After watching performances we shared and discussed freely together and these conversations are echoed in the Facebook posts between today's audiences. Inevitably influences were found leaking between each other's work. Bourne was influenced by Spink's choreography and dramaturgies of affective movement images; use of costume, prop and adaptation of other performance media. One such example is *Further and Further into the Night* (1984), as can be seen in Bourne's 1992 production of a new work, *Deadly Serious* inspired by Hitchcock's film, *Notorious*. I consider such influence and cross-fertilisation as an example of leaky dramaturgies between creative practices. Stephanie Jordan examines Spink's work as part of a European dance lineage that differs from Davies and Alston's choreography for *Second Stride*;

Text, set, costume, props, music and dance all play their part, the emphasis on one or the other shifting from moment to moment, piece to piece.

As an exponent of post-modern dance theatre, Spink belongs to the European tradition of Pina Bausch and Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker who began their careers in the 1980s. He is far more part of this tradition than Alston, Davies or Butcher (1991, p.206)

Jordan's account of several pieces by Spink give detailed descriptions of dancers' actions, staging and in her vocabulary suggest affective impacts of the work.

---

<sup>57</sup> Poster image of 1984 Dance Umbrella Festival and 40 years celebration timeline information available here: <http://timeline.danceumbrella.co.uk/dance-umbrella-1984/#.XL3QbWRKjx4>

About *De Gas* (1981) her writing is more detailed than Briginshaw's, conveys less about gender and more about the kinaesthetic impact of the scenes:

*De Gas* introduced to Spink's work the elegance and detail of McDonald's theatre designs and was Spink's most prop-ridden piece to date. Towel rails, fans, mirrors, bowls, jugs and towels invade the dancing space and even become part of the choreography. Suddenly, out of nowhere, to an angry burst of music, there is a coup de theatre loop of choreography involving towels, a chair, as well as the three dancers. One after another, each man is covered with a towel, brought swiftly down the diagonal, and back to fall centre stage. Then he is up to throw a towel over the next person, over the chair at the back, and the chain continues. Finally Jeremy Nelson is escorted, skidding on his towel to end up with his feet in a bowl of water downstage. Spink used the loop structure in several later works. (1992, p.188)

Macaulay refers to *Further and Further into the Night* as a 'deconstruction of the Hitchcock film...it just took incidents, atmosphere, and values from that film and put them together in a highly ironic, non-narrative, very imaginative way.' (2011, p.34)

Bourne acknowledges the effect of seeing Spink's work on the development of his own pieces:

I actually went to a performance in 1985 at the ICA where they showed *Further and Further into the Night* and then *Notorious*. But I think I'd already seen the piece once before, during Dance Umbrella 1984<sup>58</sup>. I very much liked it; and I can't pretend that our own Hitchcock piece wasn't partly triggered by it, by wanting to do something like that. I also think some of Spink's methods of choreography have influenced me. In that piece and others he used both repetition (repetition of individual movements, of short sub-phrases) and a particular way of working with character. *Second Stride* was a great model for us as a company, because it too felt like a company of strong people: strongly individual, characterful dancers. (In interview with Macaulay 2011, p.35)

At that time dancers and choreographers were working in a context of shared practice and moving between companies for different projects. Macaulay recalls

---

<sup>58</sup> I also saw *Second Stride* perform *Further and Further into the Night* at Dance Umbrella 1984 and there was a great excitement about this theatrical style of contemporary or post-modern dance among dance students at Laban and at The Place. Bourne was in his final year of the BA Dance Theatre course at Laban and I was in my first year. We spoke about performances at Laban with Alastair Macaulay who taught Dance History; and those of us especially interested in Macaulay's dance history and criticism modules gathered socially; including Matthew Bourne, Jonathan Thrift, David Massingham. I recall one other piece having such a resonant affective impact and that was Clark's *Swamp* for Rambert Dance Company performed in Battersea Park. Again Bourne and others discussed the piece; its impact and subsequent choreography is clearly influenced by Clark's movement vocabulary and staging. Massingham especially preferred Clark's dance technique to Bourne's gestural dance and left *Adventure in Motion Pictures* to work on his own choreography; David Massingham and Dancers.

how the diversity of work offered rich experiences for audiences, and the emerging new generation of choreographers and dancers:

The mid 1980s was a period when you could see the work of certain British choreographers in the repertoires of more than one British company. Sue Davies was choreographing not just for Second Stride (then later for her own dance company), but also for London Contemporary Dance Theatre. And Richard Alston, who'd been one of the founders of Second Stride, was the resident choreographer of the Rambert. (2011, p.35)

Bourne discusses how *Deadly Serious* consists of two sections, one in black and white and one in colour, and I note that a similar device is used in his recent production of *Red Shoes*, also an adaptation of a film. Leakages occur between choreographers' own works and become recognisable as features of the style. He explains:

It was billed as a double feature; and it was presented like two films. Part One – based loosely on the black and white era of Hitchcock – is mainly ideas from *Rebecca*. Part Two – based on Hitchcock's colour movies – is partly *North by Northwest*, but quite a few other Hitchcock's thrown in. They had title as well. The first half was called *Overwrought*, which is a word Mrs Danvers says in *Rebecca*; 'You're feeling overwrought, Madam'. The second half was called *Rear Entry*. These titles were in the programme...*Rear Entry*, danced in glorious technicolour and not starring... And it had a year: 1958. The first half was 1939...I think most of it comes across as fairly comic but there are some chilling moments. It ends that way...the duets could be love duets [...] it's actually a murder you're watching and not a love duet – and you see the closeness of those things. The end is a light bulb being hit, swinging from side to side across the stage. Quite chilling. (2011, p.84)

There are several connections to be drawn between Bourne's *Deadly Serious* and Anderson's *Edits* (2010) and also with Burrows' choreography such as *Stoics* and *Very* that explore affective impact of movements that are ambiguously comic and violent. Other companies and choreographers, such as Burrows and Clark, offer fewer leaky encounters and perhaps as a result turbulences in their productions are more marked according to critical reviews and commentary. As previously noted, in Clark's early career the boundaries were blurred between his own personal life and his dance productions. He brought the adrenaline fuelled, flamboyant and risqué life

style of the 1980s Gay nightclub community to his choreography, designs and production scenography. This is less apparent in his current work, but his homage to David Bowie is clearly stated in his commentary on his 2016 piece, *to a simple, rock 'n' roll ... song*<sup>59</sup>. Leaky encounters and social connections are examined in the following section of this chapter in relation to Clark's spectators.

### **The Michael Clark Company**

An encounter with the Michael Clark Company is, for most spectators, almost entirely through the experience of watching the dance. There are rarely pre or post-show talks or interviews with Clark or his dancers. Workshops or technique classes offer some insight to the company's work and repertory, but in contrast to New Adventures, these usually are open only to trained adult dancers, or those with a strong background in physical performance skills<sup>60</sup>; nor are recordings available for spectators to buy as DVDs<sup>61</sup>. However, the BBC Four's Dance on Film broadcasts in May 2018 provided some access to footage of Clark's work. Clark's most recent piece *to a simple, rock 'n' roll ... song* (2016) was presented as part of the programme. Musician, Jarvis Cocker, a collaborator with Clark since 2012, introduced the episode (6 May 2018). He gave an overview of Clark's work since the 1980s and described his own interest in contemporary dance through Clark's work. It is notable that Clark was not part of the interview, nor was there footage of work in development in rehearsal studios. Leaky dramaturgies are significantly less frequent in Clark's work than in Bourne's and I propose that there could be a relation between the role of the

---

<sup>59</sup> YouTube clip of *Aladdin Sane* by David Bowie as soundtrack to this extract of the piece: <https://youtu.be/9NNiIkBAFL0>

<sup>60</sup> Company website information on classes for professionally trained dancers and those with similar skills: [www.michaelclarkcompany.com/news.php](http://www.michaelclarkcompany.com/news.php)

<sup>61</sup> Press page on the company website provides information about professional film recordings made with Clark and how to access these, including archive locations. [N.B. The Laban archive is now located in Trinity Laban, Greenwich, not at Goldsmith's College]

spectator and access to the work outside the performance. The website for the Michael Clark Company displays its name in a flashing, neon green font in bold, capital letters to a short, pulsing soundtrack. In each section there is an image of dancers in Clark's recent works and one image of Clark in a handstand. The news section celebrated dancer Harry Alexander winning the 'Emerging Dancer Award 2017' selected by the Critics' Circle National Dance Awards, and also Michael Clark's nomination in the category of 'best modern choreography' for the current work, *to a simple, rock 'n' roll ... song*, (2017). There is no background information about the pieces, or rehearsal images, or footage or any links to social media pages for audiences to share experiences. This is an echo of the dramaturgy employed in the dance itself; it is sparse in its visual clarity and precise in its arrangement, but offers no explanations or background to the company or the works. Here it demonstrates how spectators are not treated as a fan-base, fed with preview glimpses of company information to help feel connected or part of the group. Spectators are separate and are outside Clark's work, but perhaps this cultivates more individual loyalty to the company by Clark's followers, precisely because we are expected to rely on ourselves as spectators. It seems it is not necessary to know any information in advance of the performance. It is quite simply, what it is.

Access to the company's work through participation in dance activities reinforces the attention to the physicality of the dance, emphasising embodied engagement as a significant affective aspect of its dramaturgy. In order to access Clark's work outside the performance, some practical dance workshop events are organised by the company, but given the demands of the choreography, these opportunities are clearly stated as only suitable for those with dance training. The Clark company dancers delivered a week of professional level dance classes at

Greenwich Dance Studios, London (March 2017). It is interesting that the physicality of the Clark company dance style that is described as part of the class content is very similar in vocabulary to the ways in which critics write about the choreographic works themselves. These recurring terms include: featuring skills of stability, coordination, articulation and clarity. The aim of these participation opportunities is that dancers learn about Clark's work through experiences of the physicality, rigour and technical skills, rather than via any thematic or narrative ideas. The participants in class would then know in their bodies more about what the work is, and when spectators watch Clark's company of dancing bodies it is possible to see and *feel* how the work is, as a result of the clarity performed by the company's dancers.

The relationship with the spectators is a pared-down and sparse approach that gives little prior access. It gives more emphasis, and potentially more agency to the spectators who by default take more responsibility in building a collective audience. There is only very little or no experience before seeing the work from which spectators share discourse. In 2016 The Barbican offered an opportunity for trained dancers to access Clark's work by application only, promoted as a 'Lab' suggesting something scientific or research-based. From the outline description it is not clear how the event exactly fulfils the function of a 'lab', rather than a dance studio, but it is implied that rigorous knowledge about the work is exchanged and examined through the embodied learning in dance, only available to those with sufficient professional dance training.

**Barbican Weekend Lab, 10 - 11 December 2016<sup>62</sup>**

Led by company dancers, this **two-day workshop** is an opportunity to delve into the techniques demanded by Michael Clark's choreography. You will learn elements of

---

<sup>62</sup> The neon green font is retained as an example of the website image and it functions as a hyperlink to the event information: [www.michaelclarkcompany.com](http://www.michaelclarkcompany.com)

company rep, featuring material from the recent Barbican premiere of *to a simple, rock 'n' roll . . . song*.

This Lab is by application, and is suitable for current dance students, recent graduates and emerging professional dancers, with strong contemporary and/or ballet technique, aged 18+.

Here, the knowledge base about Clark's work is placed firmly in the world of trained dancers and recognises the reality of the virtuosic rigour which is the core characteristic of his choreography. The above examples of leaky dramaturgic systems privilege dancers and that these in turn, seem to reflect the identity of the company currently. Clark has previously worked with non-trained performers, but his productions now do not include any non-dancers. These dramaturgic choices, as described below, signpost to audiences that when we encounter the piece, it is as a spectacle of physical, visual and musical complexity, which focuses on the corporeality of the dancers' performances, and the work on actions required of spectators demands our engagement to be highly attentive to kinetic, aural and visual precision.

There is a particular aspect of leaky dramaturgy found in Clark's choreography that functions differently to other examples of leaky dramaturgies explored thus far. In Clark's work there are obvious leakages from his own private life into his work; Clark's own life is closely woven into his dance life. This was expressed in his early productions<sup>63</sup> in the ways he combined his friends, lovers and artists from London's gay clubs and punk music culture alongside dancers sharing his classical ballet and Cunningham modern dance vocabulary. Clark flaunted his extrovert, hedonistic lifestyle in his vibrant, risky, provocative shows. His work has always reflected his

---

<sup>63</sup> Early productions in which Clark's private life and performances were closely connected include: *New Puritans* (1984); *our caca phony.H our caca phony.H* (1985); *No Fire Escapes in Hell* (1986); *Because We Must* (1987) and *I am Curious Orange* (1988).

life, his interests and his inspirations and this phase of work (2012-2017) does the same. The programme details for *to a simple, rock 'n' roll ... song*, tell us that:

In the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Erik Satie's birth, Mr. Clark found himself reflecting on mentors and colleagues, past and present: Frederick Ashton (Monotones I & II), Merce Cunningham (Septet, Nocturnes), John Cage, Yvonne Rainer (Satie Spoons) and how Satie's music has elicited from them some of their most inventive and strikingly original yet emotionally moving works. (The Barbican programme 'Michael Clark Company', 25/10/17)

I note that Clark features a tribute to his beloved mother, who passed away earlier in 2017, entitling his Bowie piece, "Act III: my mother, my dog and CLOWNS!" A photograph of Clark with his mother is found on the company website next to the announcement of her death and giving details of her funeral arrangements for those supporters and friends who wish to know.

Since BodyMap were collaborators on productions in the 1980s, Clark has been very interested in design, visual art and fashion. The Scottish fashion company, Pringle, commissioned him to choreograph for its 200<sup>th</sup> year celebration, with performance pieces in London Fashion Week.<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> Pringle 200<sup>th</sup> year celebrations performance pieces at London Fashion Week:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yKMPvDTuAQ>



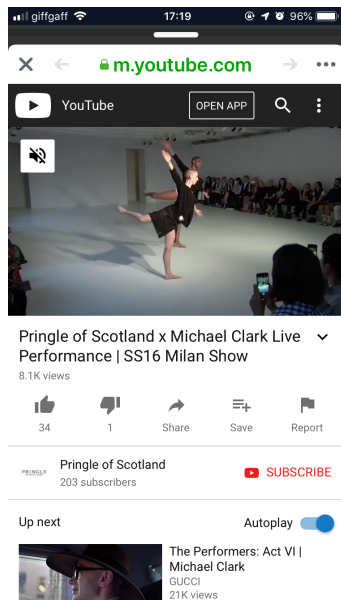


Image 47 Facebook posts of YouTube performance excerpt [photo credit: Pringle]  
 Image 48 Gucci promotion on YouTube [photo credit: GQ]

The YouTube Pringle clip records over 8,100 views, and similarly to Bourne’s leaky encounters on social media, that indicates a considerable number of people engaging with Clark’s dances, albeit in a virtual space. He has also worked for Gucci and these short documentary-style videos collect over 21,000 views<sup>65</sup>. There seems to have always been and continues to be, a very slim divide between Clark’s personal life and his work, and this can partly account for the loyalty of his supporters, who shared an era with Clark and find some connection to their own lives in his works. The following discussion about the next choreographer makes explicit how her work presents the connections and leakages that have influenced her productions and her performance style. She positively encourages her audiences to communicate as part of the performance as well as afterwards, and sets up an expectation that they also appreciate how other people or social expectations influence their own lives. Aggiss

<sup>65</sup> Gucci campaign [www.gucci.com/fr/en\\_gb/stories/people-events/article/gq-the-performers-act-vi-michael-clark-shoppable](http://www.gucci.com/fr/en_gb/stories/people-events/article/gq-the-performers-act-vi-michael-clark-shoppable) and Clark’s video documentary: <https://youtu.be/D5hucpH05jI>

gives her audiences permission to resist these expectations, conventions and influences if they wish.

### **Liz Aggiss**

The leaky dramaturgies in Aggiss' choreography are distinctive in this study with the particular contexts and traditions of her dance presented as dramaturgic leakages made visible in her performances. Leakages flow through her works from the influences from Ausdruckstanz, with movement vocabulary and performance styles that are influenced by Mary Wigman<sup>66</sup>, Hilda Holger, Gertrude Bodenweiser and Hanya Holm.

'Space is something, not nothing!' Aggiss learnt this mantra about the body in space from her teacher and professional mentor, Hilda Holger, a German Expressionist dancer. Aggiss roots her choreography and performance work in aesthetic attitudes to the body in space, passed from generation to generation from 1920s - 1940s German Ausdruckstanz as pioneered by experimental dance makers such as Rudolf Laban, Kurt Joos and Sigurd Leeder. Rudolf Laban and Mary Wigman were formative dance makers, performers and teachers in the development of German Expressionist dance and their work has influenced the evolution of modern dance and contemporary dance in the U.S. and the UK. Aggiss' dance training was with Hanya Holm in the U.S. who had worked with both Laban and Wigman before fleeing to the U.S. in the 1940s. In London, Hilda Holger mentored Aggiss, refining and consolidating her close connection with Ausdruckstanz. Aggiss was her private pupil and learnt precise reconstructions of 1930s choreographic repertory by Laban,

---

<sup>66</sup> Mary Wigman's *Hexentanz* is an example of the grotesque element of German Expressionist dance seen in some of Aggiss' choreography: [https://youtu.be/wmDz\\_3JdEII](https://youtu.be/wmDz_3JdEII) and her *Pastorale* is a contrasting expressionist piece: <https://youtu.be/37sEaUhFzpl>

Wigman and others, in which Holger had danced when in Germany and subsequently brought with her to England. The choreographic style produced new generations of dancers sharing the Laban-based attention to a dancer's body in space, its planes, levels, vectors and its range of effort dynamics, use of weight and, in particular, the ability to move between the stable and labile, combining emotionally affective qualities to communicate and connect with spectators. The leaky dramaturgy described here operates to inform and influence the dances made by Aggiss and as such is part of leaky encounters in a creative process for the choreographer.

The influences of Laban's training are fundamental to Aggiss' dramaturgies of body in space and her relation to the spectator. They offered a different attitude to training dancers in a system, which worked a core physicality, strength and coordination without a wholly codified set of virtuosic 'steps'. The aim was to extend and challenge each individual body to connect through space and to articulate effort dynamics to become more expressive, controlled and precise. Choreography was not taught, as it was believed that this was where the student became an artist and had to form his or her own movement expression. But the approaches to 'composition' gave a range of approaches to making dance work. Students were taught the repertory of Laban and Joos such as *The Green Table* (1932), to give a physical and imaginative understanding and experience of challenges inherent in performing the demanding choreography with attention to its aesthetic impact. A key characteristic of the Laban/Wigman practice was the collective cohesion achieved through group movement choirs in unison movement practice. The attention to body, space and the choreographic aesthetic contributed to the *Ausdruckstanz* performance attention that informs Aggiss's work.

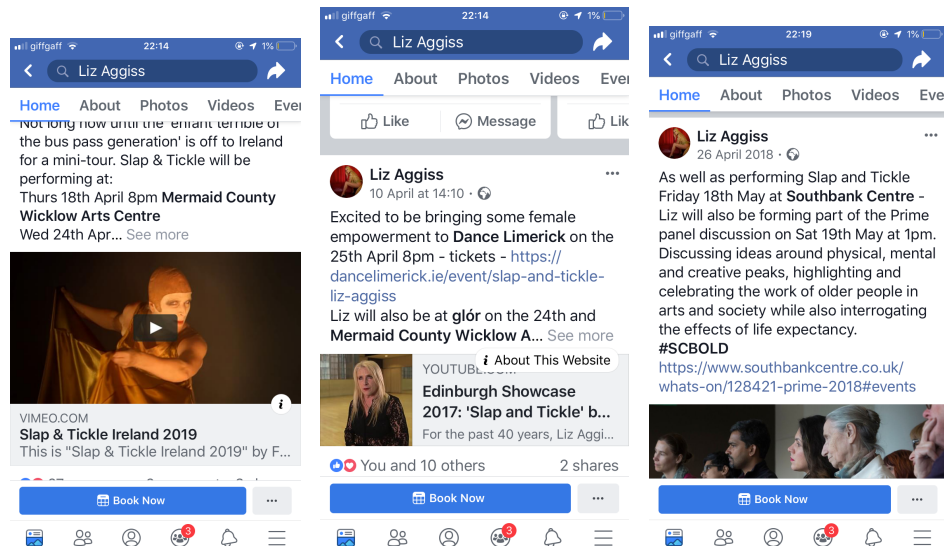
Copies of these primary source archive materials, such as photographs, writings and sketches of Laban/Wigman works were used by Aggiss in her two-day choreography research workshop on *The English Channel* at C-DaRE, University of Coventry, which I attended. This showed how Aggiss's choreography borrows movement patterns, spatial aesthetics and dynamic ranges from the Laban/Wigman works and methodology.

Aggiss's work is programmed most frequently by small-scale venues, often part of academic institutions or training conservatoires. In fringe venues her work more recently has been programmed as part of festivals and under an umbrella category, linking her work with others. Often this has a socio-political agenda such as gender, identity or even age. Accessing her work outside the performance encounter is then shaped by the programming venue or commissioning organisation. The leaky encounters for spectators are workshops, residencies, talks and discussions, in which Aggiss shares her choreographic practices and working methods within the context of the socio-political and creative framework of the festival. These examples of social media posts [below] show *Slap & Tickle* as part of Women of The World 2018; these examples include spectator comments, informal exchanges, and a casual dressing room photograph of Aggiss promoting her new production *Crone Alone*, currently in development. In post-show talks and Q&A sessions she encourages spectators to share their own experiences rather than explaining her work to them. Aggiss uses social media to keep followers updated on her next show and tour itinerary. Often these posts are phrased as invitations with a personal, familiar tone. There are often comments of support or praise linked to the posts, which gives a place for spectators to share a snapshot of their experiences.



Images 49, 50 and 51: Aggiss's Facebook posts

As with Bourne's social media presence, this creates a sense of belonging to a collective or group of like-minded supporters of Aggiss and her work. It is likely that much of her online audience is comprised of people who have seen her work previously. The three posts from Facebook below indicate a range of virtual, online, leaky encounters with Aggiss. She gives promotional information and short trailer clips about forthcoming performances, as per the first image. This operates in a similar way to Bourne's leakages, not only to promote sales, but also to familiarise audiences with aspects of the show and its choreography. I contend this enhances the affective impact so turbulences are enjoyed as highlights of the work, instead of disturbances. The middle image shows Aggiss from an interview clip in which she discusses her new work and the final post gives information about a performance and panel discussion on older artists and creative practice. These examples indicate Aggiss freely leaking dramaturgies of encounter with her work in its wider context of feminist socio-political and cultural activism.



Images 52, 53 & 54 Facebook posts on *Slap & Tickle* and advocacy of older artists

### Choreographic Workshop 7-9 November 2013 C-DaRE - a participant's account

During the choreography workshop hosted by the University of Coventry's Centre for Dance Research, C-DaRE, Aggiss shared her personal experiences of her creative process and made connections to her own teachers and inspirations. She encouraged participants to do the same for their own past. The aim was to find current inspiration for wanting to choreograph and specifically understand reasons for wanting to be in the studio with Aggiss. One exercise, called 'Make a solo dance of two minutes, and make it on a really good idea', was designed to foreground choices of sources and inspirations and how participants felt about themselves in relation to these leaky influences. Solos had to start with a short introduction spoken into a microphone stating 'This dance is an homage to...'.

This approach and performance style seems similar to cabaret and does not follow conventions of contemporary dance practice that uses programme notes to tell spectators about the dance. This task provided experience of the mixed media style of Aggiss's pieces, emphasising how a personal commitment to your performance is

part of the dramaturgy of connection with the audience. The choreographic task has a dramaturgic device of awareness of connection to an audience. These decisions are about how the spectator is shown the work, what is important and ensuring the performing skill clearly 'frames' the spectators' looking. Listed below are key and often-repeated phrases, or slogans that guide Aggiss in her dance making and in her mentoring of others in their work. Each was applied as participants wished to their own work. Each time the focus of the phrase was on clarity and effectiveness of choreographic decisions:

- Space is something not nothing
- Choreographic and Movement Ideas; go on try them, and then immediately find a new one
- The King is dead – Long live the King. This needs some explanation and relates to the practice of performance commitment: for each single moment a performer must commit to it, perform it fully and then move to the next. Each time in improvisation aiming to find another solution, and the best will last
- Being in it – Being it (feeling the movement *and* attitude to performing)
- Less is more
- Specificity
- Sculpting (this refers to attention on the body tension, imagined and indicated space and lines of energy through the space)

These task-based approaches to the dramaturgic structure and to the making of the choreography bring clarity to the shape of the work that is focused on spaces for the spectators to participate and engage, in some visible or audible way. Aggiss spoke in response to the pieces created, that a solo is not just one performer and one dancer,

but in that work is the influence of many teachers and dancers before and in the training of that performer's body is the understanding of movement and expression that has come from many other performers. The body shares in a practice that has been performed by many through daily exercises and movement training. In the approaches to making choreography and performance work, Aggiss aims to find an identity in a body, to find clarity in framing of the performance. The following account gives a personal description of participating in the workshop. I record how the leakages from my own dance experiences were accessed by the workshop tasks.

I found that it was a surprisingly emotional experience, which reconnected me with training experiences from twenty years previously. As Aggiss led and demonstrated Hilde Holger's training movement exercises, I realised these were the same exercises I had practiced daily when studying at the Laban Centre. I had not remembered these for years, but the movement patterns were suddenly so vivid that I simply relied on my body to process the sequences and tried not to think about the order of movement. I felt clarity in moving through the space; while we were only following the movement and dynamic pattering of the prescribed exercises the actions were already feeling expressive. My body remembered clearly, in some detail, how it had learnt to control the required muscle tension and use of breath in transitions. The material being taught by Aggiss to the whole group, at first seemed new, yet my body was dancing again these once familiar actions and making connections with knowledge that had been forgotten. This was an empowering and overwhelming experience of reconnection with myself. I felt humbled by realising how privileged I had been to have been taught by these significant individuals in the 1980s who shared connections with Ausdruckstanz. Many British trained contemporary dancers will have also shared this vocabulary and studio practice. I



remembered teachers and fellow students from 1984-1987 at The Laban Centre for Movement and Dance, Goldsmith's College University of London. For my solo piece, I chose the title 'An homage to friends and teachers almost forgotten, but never left behind'. Aggiss had set the task on the second day of the workshop and the task was to create a two minute solo which was to be performed as 'An homage to...' with a conscious decision in the making of and performing of the piece that it was designed expressly for certain individuals, or a specific group. Looking back over the old notebook I used in the studio to make my solo choreography notes I had written down the title and it read as: 'and many sharing one journey, and being both one and many'.

In this leaky encounter I had been connected to Aggiss' heritage with Ausdruckstanz and also reconnected to my own dance training experiences. This is an example of a personal experience of embodied leaky dramaturgies that flow around the performance and its creative practices to evoke an affective impact on a spectator. Leaky encounters are varied and offer many ways of engaging with a production, dancers or with choreographers. These encounters and communications can be initiated by the company or by the spectators and fans on social media and can create extensive networks of connections. Some interactions can be practical such as workshops or talks, but it appears that all leaky encounters have a relationship to the performance itself. The more frequent the leaky encounters around a production become, the less turbulent or disorienting are the reports of the performances. Notably, New Adventures cultivate an anticipation and expectation about a Bourne production that involve and prepare spectators and thus reduces the potentially disruptive impact of Bourne's choreography or re-imagined narratives.

The thesis has examined affective dramaturgies of turbulence in spectating British contemporary dance with a range of examples and illustrations from myriad of choreographers and pieces from the 1980s onwards. The notion of leaky dramaturgies is a new contribution to the critical discourse and I propose that these encounters are significant in developing a more appropriate way of articulating the affective impact of this body of work over the last forty years. In the final chapter, I bring the thesis to a conclusion that offers ways of using notions of affect and dramaturgy, to bridge the gap between creative practices and critical discourses.

## Conclusion

### **Bridging the gap between discourse and creative practices in contemporary dance. Affect, dramaturgy and spectator encounters**

In this thesis, I have shown that articulating affective experiences of spectating is integral to the critical discourse on contemporary dance practices. Existing discourse relies on frameworks of semiotic or descriptive approaches that are limited to de-coding meanings or recounting the actions of the performers. I have explained how the spectating encounters need to be located centrally in the discourse and this has opened up a re-assessment of the relationship between spectating and dance. The dominant discourse in dance performance analysis relies on locating a meaning that is placed outside the dance and is separate to the *experience* of spectating. I maintain that affective experiences of spectating need to be articulated in order to understand the work rather than to evaluate the dance as a device for communicating other ideas. I conclude that we need to be able to articulate what the work *does*, not the ideas. This research demonstrates that there is value in re-addressing our understanding of contemporary dance that was made and performed in the 1980s and 1990s; an era dominated by concepts that expected dance to be expressive of something, or to convey ideas, themes or narratives. Prevailing discourses interpreted dance as semiotic studies and commentaries about socio-cultural issues to 'read' the work and the dancers' bodies as 'text'.

In this study, I have examined works by British choreographers as part of a lineage of creative practices that provoked new discourses and disrupted existing scholarship through turbulent relationships with meaning and the attention these pieces demanded from spectators. This is the first research to bring these choreographers together to illustrate the shared characteristics of their

dramaturgies. Those shared features explain how spectating experiences have evolved in parallel with the innovations made by these choreographers. The analyses explain how contemporary dance performances have demanded new ways of spectating and engaging with their works. Through the evolving concepts of dramaturgy and affect it has become possible to explore areas of shared understanding across dance scholarship and theatre dramaturgy.

I conclude that dramaturgic analysis based on phenomenological frameworks of affect and cognition is more appropriate to articulate the characteristics and demands of these works. Recent research in performance aesthetics, philosophy and interdisciplinary fields across sociology, cognitive psychology and neuro-aesthetics adds to discourses in affect, the corporeal and cognition. These developments have evolved in response to the rapidly shifting nature of performance practices and the resulting body of creative works so that previously independent areas of academic enquiry and methodologies have become more closely connected in attempts to answer the challenges of 'linguaging experience', to use the phrase coined by Sheets-Johnstone. The complex and interconnected systems of emotional and imaginative engagement within corporeal and cognitive bodily processes are explored across academic disciplines in the arts and sciences. I have contextualised this study within current interdisciplinary research in dance and spectatorship that applies cognitive neuroscience and philosophical methods.

I have illustrated how spectator experience is driven by the affective dramaturgies of structures or systems in the work that draw attention to specific aspects of what is done by the performers/dancers and the production elements. Those dramaturgies modify the spectators' perceptions in turbulent and disorienting ways that influence our work of spectating. As such, the dramaturgic systems are

self-reflexive activities, making us aware of our involvement in spectating during the performance event and in its leaky activities outside the performance.

A direction for future research opportunities arising from this thesis stems from my notion of leaky dramaturgies; namely that there are ways to access and engage with contemporary dance across social media and that in these ways fans, potential audience members and those who have already seen the work can communicate and share experiences or see images of the work made available by the company or artist in advance of the performance or during a tour. Beyond the marketing and promotional advantages for the companies, social media also creates a virtual network of interaction where dramaturgic engagement happens even though we are not at the performance event. It could be interesting to explore how these leaky encounters in virtual spaces may also evoke affective impact and furthermore, may enhance spectating experiences. As described in Chapter Five, there is a range of posts across social media networks that provide behind the scenes information, videos and photographs that make us familiar with the dance piece and its performers. There are also opinions and comments shared by other fans and spectators that endorse our own responses. In this thesis, I emphasise that shared connections and affective impact are key choreographic concerns of these contemporary dance choreographers, so propose that the connections in social media can function affectively as an additional layer of the performance dramaturgy in a wider space for interaction outside the performance venue.

More broadly, it is apparent from this research that new dramaturgic systems in contemporary dance are more all encompassing than traditional models and suggest themselves to terms such as 'stretchier' or 'fluid', conveying the idea that the edges of the choreographic piece are not set firm as a defined object. In this way

its leaky encounters and on-going conversations<sup>67</sup> that extend our engagement echo the wider context of internet-based communication. The systems and methods through which individual spectators connect and communicate as audiences indicate how inter-personal communications are shared in complex, embodied and non-linguistic systems. Affect, empathy, and entrainment are embodied notions informing this research to connect with discourses across other art forms of performance studies and beyond the arts into sociology, psychology and neuroscience. Audience activities of heightened attention in looking and empathic engagement, including nonverbal communication, reflect our behaviours in life outside the theatre and as such, my research is in dialogue with broader sociological and political aspects of affect studies and cognitive science. In exploring how we behave and communicate as spectators, there is scope to investigate complex systems of inter-personal relations that can be rich areas of enquiry for further research in how we acquire and value embodied knowledge about situations and others in order to make decisions that influence our actions.

Dance scholarship considered each of these choreographers to be worthy of critical attention, but the dominant approaches of 'reading' the work or applying concepts of textuality in analysis have been at odds with the choreographic and dramaturgic systems driving the creative practices of the works. Contemporary creative practices place spectator experience centrally as the focus of the choreography, so that in the encounter with the work we sense our own embodied reactions. Indeed, we also share in being part of a community that forms around a pre- or post-show event, or in a social media and online presence, as well as in a live

---

<sup>67</sup> On-going conversations and performative writings 'of' the work and subject to its force are ways in which Heathfield (2011) conceives of the opportunities for articulating experience through language.

encounter. Spectator engagement is part of the process of the piece and its dramaturgy is in performance experiences of being at the shared event between spectators and performers. Spectators' embodied engagement and affective dramaturgies of the contemporary dance piece combine in turbulent and leaky encounters that do not require translation into socio-political or linguistic concepts in order to construct an interpretation about its meaning. The essence of the engagement is in what we *do*, and how we perceive, rather than how we think of the piece. I conclude that this is most appropriately framed by phenomenological discourse that can meet the challenge posed by Sheets-Johnstone of 'linguaging experience'. I have shown that contemporary dance creates affective, dramaturgic impact for spectators. I propose that our understanding of spectating should move from the notion of looking at the dance performance in order to de-code its meaning, to *being* at the dance performance and sensing its meaning through our shared experiences.

## APPENDIX ONE

### ***Viktor* by Pina Bausch: A Turbulent Encounter**

*Viktor* was premiered on 14 May 1986 in Wuppertal and recently re-staged in London at Sadler's Wells Theatre. Dance Theatre in Europe and the UK has been fundamentally influenced by the radical work of Bausch and her company, Tanztheater Wuppertal. Bausch's work was a catalyst in breaking new ground for Dance Theatre and her evocative, post-dramatic and yet emotionally resonant choreography is still challenging audiences as her company continues to perform her works, almost a decade since her death.

I share my own spectating encounter with *Viktor* on 11 February 2018 to explore the demands of the work; my sensations of the performance and to illustrate how critical discourses of dramaturgy need to encompass the richness of affective spectating. The performance is about bodies, movements, time and space, and the spectators' encounter with it is what makes the work function. *Viktor* was the first piece in a series of works created in response to experiences and impressions of cities around the world. Bausch and her company were invited to Rome to create a new work, and *Viktor* is the result in a multi-layered, episodic complex and poignant exploration of imagined moments and ensemble dancing. Spectators have too much to take in when the stage is filled with objects, people and animals, and then we are waiting, watching the pauses in between those moments of excess. This account is a collection of personal impressions and memories, as I spectated and engaged with this piece towards the culmination of my doctoral research process. As such, I have allowed this account to explore the first hand sensed individual and shared encounter. This account shows how challenging it is to articulate the turbulence of the dramaturgic systems in the choreography, visual and aural elements of the piece. It is



about being there, being in the moment of becoming part of the piece, and about accepting the invitation for spectators to encounter the dance.

*Viktor* starts with a ceremony, perhaps a marriage, of two people, perhaps being dead, lying on the stage. I notice the bodies making shapes on the floor and notice the gravity and weight of their limbs when they are moved about, all this more than I am following any story. Activities happen in separate areas of the huge stage: a carpet is rolled out and a woman lies down at one end and is rolled up, by the two men. I recall the image of Cleopatra and Marc Anthony, but this looks like a house removal. The images and actions continue and performers seem not to notice us in the audience, but I am aware how the piece is demanding my attention and transitions between events are swift with more than one thing happening at once. We have little guidance about where to look and I realise that this choice is our work. Spectators make our own connections with the events of the work by choosing where to look and what to watch and for how long.

Dance critic, Mackrell makes connections to the impact Bausch's early work had on Dance Theatre in the UK and how her expectations of spectators was so radical. Mackrell notes:

When Pina Bausch's work was first shown in London in 1982 it changed the way we thought about dance. Bausch made the stage look like a whole new playground of possibilities, creating some indefinable genre of dance theatre that hovered between choreography, performance art, and absurdist theatre and dreaming. (February 9, 2018)

This indicates that Bausch's work makes demands on the ways in which spectators engage with her work, and refers to the mixed elements of the production across movement, visual, aural and staging components. In the performance event itself, lasting over three hours, there is a huge quantity of material, movement sequences, staged set with furniture and props, spoken voice, music and sound. Mackrell refers to Bausch's work as 'spectacles', and it certainly feels like spectators are seduced by

the spectacle of the imagined world inhabited by those dancer characters. We are not quite part of it, but we feel invited in when we recognised familiar music, and see ‘normal’ activities from everyday life, unexpectedly alongside dance sequences. We enjoy the comedy of moments exchanged between characters and also between spectators as we all share in the choreographer’s joke at the expense of one of the performers.

I enjoy the thrill of watching women in their beautiful pastel long dresses, suspended from long rope gymnasium hoop swings. They are lifted up to grab hold of the hoops and pushed off by suited, elegant men until they had build up enough momentum to keep themselves swinging joyfully and independently. This is a kinesthetically evocative section, which many of the audience around me also enjoy. The noise levels in this sections rise as there was music and spoken text, the stage lights are bright and the auditorium is also partially lit, allowing us to see other spectators. It feels very much like an invitation to join in the beautiful garden party, I can see people smiling and even quietly talking to each other. One of the effects of the piece being so long is that at times in the audience, the attention and convention of silence drops and spectators engage with each other.

I delight to see the dancers bring their white clothed tables close to the audience, then take their seats to eat scones and jam. It is now all feeling very like we are a community and this episode is a vivid memory. In other sections I feel wary of the group working as an ensemble and want to keep a distance between them and us. The sequences include a series of arm and body swings across and over the head, dropping with weight to the side, relentlessly moving towards the audience. The dancers are orchestrated by a conductor figure and sent to the back of the advancing columns as they almost reach the front of the stage and it feels like a relief that we are saved from the invasion of these unstoppable dancers in ever-lasting loops of

momentum. In watching that sections I feel lulled by the rhythm and weight of the movement, and also aware of the sense of building threat it creates.

There is a sense of relief when it is clear that the dancers are being kept to their own world. Their activities are purposeful even if we do not know the purpose, we sense that the actions are real, not pretending to be, but actually happening and spectators are witnesses, willing or unwilling, to whatever occurs on that stage. Zoe Anderson, dance critic for *The Independent*, describes several actions and events from the piece and indicates only briefly by her choice of adjectives, how she feels about those events. It is intriguing that in the absence of being at the event, the best a critic can offer her readers, is not a judgment or evaluation of the work, but a detailed, close description. This indicates that the doing of actions and our being part of the event are what the piece is actually about. The non-sequitur account in Anderson's review echoes the similar effect in Bausch's fragmented episodic choreography, keeping us alert to new images and forcing us to drop quickly any idea we had been holding onto.

Chorus lines of dancer shuffle through a repeated step, winding across the stage and down into the audience. To a repeated folk tune, they rock and hurl their bodies through insistent patterns, a shared ritual they keep returning to. ...Viktor is long – well over three hours – and sometimes gruelling, but its parade of images is utterly distinctive. Three waitresses could not be more bored by their work, or their male customer; another lights up when she describes seeing “a juicy rat”. (12 February, 2018)

It is about sensing what there is right in front of us and around us from our fellow spectators, but it is too much to take in at certain moments and it has been going on for too long. I wonder whether it matters that it was formed from impressions of Rome; it is instead their impressions of what Rome *did* for them- and now this *Viktor* is *doing* something for us. So in this spectating we must let go of the reference to something other than what this is – let it be what it is. The dramaturgic systems of repetition, images, spatial arrangements and reality of doing actions all contribute to the instructions for spectators and how we find ways to encounter *Viktor*.

It becomes real and our actions of spectating are real: the dog is a real dog on stage; the two sheep are really there; the groups of old men are old men smoking and talking on stage. Spectators do not need to search for a metaphor or an image beyond what we see.

The connections to our own lives are revealed in front of us, there for the taking and we do not need to look anywhere else other than to Bausch's stage to see them as a mirror of ourselves. Life is complex, contradictory and *Viktor* shows for a time during the encounter with this work that we can experience being connected to each other through our affective spectating.

At the end of the performance, we all share in a huge, wonderfully energetic thrilling excitement of applause, standing ovations and cheering. It signals that we are all still here, and alive; that we had 'got' it and we loved it. We felt it and it was good. It was difficult and it was beautiful. And that was that. It had finished and now we must catch the train home. But I sensed that in leaving the theatre, things were not quite the same. The faces in the crowd on the staircase in the foyer were smiling and people were connecting. Maybe that was just in my imagination, but I hoped that other people saw it too.

## APPENDIX TWO

### **The Royal Ballet's *Sleeping Beauty* Aurora's Variation Act One**

The following analysis shows how the traditional classical ballet choreography differs from Bourne's re-imagined character of Aurora. This analysis is of The Royal Ballet production choreographed (1946) by Frederick Ashton, after Marius Petipa and is danced by Laura Cuthbertson.

#### **Synopsis:**

Princess Aurora is invited to dance for us at her Coming of Age birthday party. From upstage the master of ceremonies, under instruction from the King and Queen, performs the traditional ballet mime action, 'Dance, dance!', and signals to the audience that Aurora will dance for us, and her guests. The mimed command consists of light, fluid neat hand and arm actions, rolling wrists over each other and lifting arms high above the head in a fifth en haut position. There is no narrative to be told in this section, but it is simply an evocation of Aurora's youth, beauty and celebrates her transition from a child to an adult in the royal family. In movement terms, it is spatially simple but technically very challenging, with a series of virtuosic steps performed without the support of a partner or corps de ballet. It shows Aurora exposed, and pared down to the essence of classical ballet, the unattainable female form of the ballerina. She is poised and delicate, yet strong and seems to defy gravity. She is the representation of perfection in the traditional codified idiom of classical ballet.

Aurora's solo is long by traditional standards of Petipa choreography. In this version, it lasts for three minutes and 36 seconds. The main characteristic movements are light, fast, dextrous, intricate steps of pointe work; bourées, petits développés and posé tours, contrasted with virtuosic balances in arabesque. In these

arabesque balances, Aurora presents herself to the audience, usually in profile as this spatial arrangement best displays a classical dancer's line. Her virtuosic skills are to be admired for their aesthetically pleasing, classical lines. In this solo, the spectator is engaging with Aurora as an objectified, highly trained performer who can execute extremely virtuosic movements, which most of the audience is not able to copy. Nevertheless, there is a kinesthetic engagement involved in the spectator's aesthetic appreciation of the movements and an empathetic response to the sustained balances, the precision and clarity in the lines and shapes of recognisable classical ballet movements.

Aurora takes centre stage in a tight, fifth position relevé en pointe, as if two legs become one foot. Her arms are in a circle above her head, fifth en haut, framing her face and so she presents herself to the audience, rather than to the courtiers or to her royal parents. This strong spatial statement shows the audience that Aurora is dancing for us, not for the other performers on stage and that this dancing will not be part of the dramatic narrative of the ballet. She lowers from 'en pointe' into a deep, diagonal croisé lunge in fourth position. She is facing the downstage right corner and many of her movement are performed along this diagonal line. Spatially, it is the most dominant pathway on the proscenium arch stage and always used in traditional classical ballet for the most important entrances or it is featured in the choreography for the most important characters. Bourne uses the same diagonal for Aurora in her sleepwalking scene in the enchanted forest, but does not use it in her duets with Leo, which is the equivalent section of the ballet in his production.

She steps out onto full pointe in a first arabesque, facing stage right, so she is in profile to the audience. This is the epitome of the classical ballerina's pose and

shows her classical line, the balance and control, and demonstrates her virtuosic command of the idiom.



Image 55: Aurora in First Arabesque presents herself to the audience

[Photo credit: Tristram Kenton]

Aurora lowers into another deep lunge then rises into an attitude, arms above her head, fanning her face, and she is directly facing the audience. She repeats a phrase of stepping into the arabesque and the attitude with luxuriously controlled, deep lunges between each. She is displaying her virtuosity through the two most difficult classical balances. Later, the attitude shape is repeated in the famous Rose Adagio. Her four suitors, who each present her with a rose to hold, partner her. They each promenade her in the attitude position on her right leg and then face-to-face, they pause with Aurora facing stage right, showing her perfect line to the audience. She gently releases her hand to bring both arms above her head in fifth position. This happens four times and each time Aurora holds the roses overhead in her balance. In this solo, it is as if her movements are predicting this motif in the Rose Adagio and preparing the audience's aesthetic and kinesthetic attention for this image. Aurora then performs a series of smaller intricate footwork steps, progressing along the

diagonal, (*usl to dsr*), stepping and rotating her legs in circling patterns These steps are small and precise; her arms frame the action either showing the diagonal line, or held out to the sides, in soft undulating curved shapes with a gentle slow ripple through her shoulders.

To finish the solo, Aurora has a series of large, fast leaps and turns all around the perimeter of the stage, which build up in speed and height of execution. This is an impressive culmination of the solo with much faster and stronger energy, as she moves through the space, rather than holds classical poses. She finishes downstage left after a line of very fast turns in a tight fifth position, ending in her starting movement of a deep *croisé lunge*, with arms lightly held, curved downwards on each side above her tutu.

*Sleeping Beauty*, in its rightful state, is the non-plus ultra of ballets, a fairytale transported to the pristine peaks of pure classical style. The Rose Adagio, in which the Princess Aurora performs her triumphant balances to the sound of Tchaikovsky at his most rapturous, is more than just a high point in ballet; it is a moment of significance in art, in civilization.

(*The Telegraph*, 27 July 2012,) [Reviewing Peter Shaufuss's production by English National Ballet at the London Coliseum].



Image 56: Bourne's Aurora and Leo, the gardener. [Photo credit: Tristram Kenton]



The choreography tells of the love story between Leo and Aurora. Her movements are free flowing, fluid and have very few posed shapes. Here she is in an attitude, but it is much softer than a classical line. She is leaning backwards on Leo, so he takes her weight against his torso. This is not a move found in traditional classical ballet and is a contrast to 'classical' Aurora's display of solo virtuosity. Bourne's Aurora has a duet at her Coming of Age party. She dances barefoot, suggesting freedom and rebellion, so this contributes to the thrilling dramaturgies of turbulence and disruption experienced by spectators as we empathise with Bourne's vigorous Aurora.

## APPENDIX THREE

### *Highland Fling, a wee romantic ballet*

#### **Bourne's 20<sup>th</sup> Century Romantic ballet, *La Sylphide***

This analysis of Matthew Bourne's *Highland Fling* (1994), examines how the turbulent dramaturgies borrow and adapt iconography from the Romantic ballet era. Bourne's recurring turbulent dramaturgies can be traced throughout his works from *Spitfire* (1988), through to *Swan Lake* (1995), *Edward Scissorhands* (2005), *Dorian Gray* (2008), and in *Sleeping Beauty* (2012). In *Highland Fling* Bourne was directing the audiences' attention to the socio-cultural context upon which this work draws for its effect.

Bourne's choice of title refers to a genre of Scottish folk dances, which may be characterised informally as Highland Fling. The physicality of 'fling' is worth noting as its choice in this ballet becomes increasingly important throughout the ballet given the development of the themes of abandon, temptation, passion and freedom and even the ethereal as James's excesses lead not only to his downfall but also to the tragic destruction of the sylph, complete with blood splattered costumes. 'Fling' suggests an action, which is maybe violent, reckless and moving from the self out into space, unrestrained. All these references to the physical are developed by Bourne in his piece so it becomes very clever shorthand to summarise the whole plot and the protagonists' tragic characters; their destruction is predicted, but is seemingly unavoidable given the unchangeable flaws in their characters.

The original production was premiered in 1832, created by Fillipo Taglioni, with his daughter, Marie Taglioni in the title role of *La Sylphide*. The plot tells of a Scottish young man, James, who on the eve of his wedding to childhood sweetheart

Effie, is enchanted by a sylph. He jilts his bride to follow the unattainable winged sprite into a moonlit forest to his doom and her destruction. James hopes to capture the sylph in a magical chiffon scarf given to him by a witch, but it is poisoned, thus James attempt to trap the sylph kills her. James returns to his village to see his best friend marrying Effie in his place, and in some versions, James dies of a broken heart. In Bourne's 1994 version, James is an unemployed welder living in a council flat and his sylph is a wild, barefooted savage creature. Bourne's plot sets the opening in a graffiti strewn toilet at a nightclub where the key characters are celebrating at James' stag night, drinking and taking drug. The drug- induced vision is integral to many Romantic ballet scenarios and so is not so modern after all! The Sylph is first seen emerging from a urinal as vision before James.

The sylphs are an extension of and a community embodiment of The Sylph, they feel her pain and share her joy. This device emphasises, through repetition and unison choreographic techniques, the importance of The Sylph and how she is manifest, simultaneously both as one and many, adds to the effect of her 'other-worldliness'. The death of The Sylph is blamed on James in Bourne's version as he has removed Madge, the witch, entirely from Act Two and Bourne explains that he wanted to focus attention on the male protagonist, making it clear that the reason why the Sylph loses her wings is entirely to do with James' will. The whole show is built around him.

Bourne's three versions of the productions; 1994, 2005 and 2013, are interesting to consider in the light of the staging by the Scottish Ballet. This is the first ever staging of a Bourne piece by another company and as such is especially note-worthy for the questions it raises about the development of the choreography and dramaturgic concerns about authorship, ownership, style and authenticity.

While it is true that company members of New Adventures are now predominantly classical ballet trained, this was not the case of the dancers in his first company Adventures in Motion Pictures, which devised the original production of *Highland Fling*. Classical ballet as the core training for dancers is becoming more usual in New Adventures, but the dancers are recruited by Bourne for their acting abilities as well as their dancing, but once a production is handed over to another company, in this case, Scottish Ballet one can ask questions about how Bourne's choreography and style may fit into their repertory and how do those dancers' bodies perform Bourne's movement style. In Bourne's *Highland Fling*, religious attitudes toward to the earthly body and Romantic concepts of the spirit and ethereal are highly significant and drawn to the spectators attention through explanation in the programme and background information about the 1832 original production of *La Sylphide* with Marie Taglioni dancing the archetypal romantic ballerina character of La Sylphide, choreographed by her father Fillipo Taglioni. More than this, Bourne extends the notion of moral, spiritual and physical by presenting his characters as cartoon-style exaggerations of socially marginalised, drug –taking, disaffected and unemployed working class in late 20<sup>th</sup> century Glaswegian high-rise housing blocks.

Bourne's work frequently features references to popular culture, often to comic effect, such as male underwear catalogues brought to life in *Spitfire*, or 1960's British theatre such as Pinter's work referenced in *Play without Words* (2002). The transformation of fairies into werewolves and vampires and in *Sleeping Beauty*, (2012), which may have been developed from the vampire type, wild creature of sylph characters in *Highland Fling*. Bourne handles the subject matter with light touch, setting actions skilfully to music and often with subtle humour, yet there is a darker element to *Highland Fling* and Bourne's interest in the outsider, a tragic hero,

as would be fully realised in *Swan Lake*, (1995).

Bourne uses exaggeration and distortion in the set, costumes and movements to bring irony and humour to the caricatures, which inhabit the off centred rooms. The excess of tartan in the design and the off kilter angles in the set walls show the distortion and shifted perspective, as if not quite reality. This marginalised setting, in the men's toilets, usually out of public view, finds the main character James slumped in the urinal.

Linguistically some very interesting elements contribute to the dramaturgy and also to the overall affect of the production. It is a very clear way to make the character and setting and story relevant, in language understood to be modern, but clearly using Scottish dialect, to contribute to the sense of place and even authenticity, yet not hard to understand, but recognisable in its place and character. The use of Glaswegian graffiti in the toilet scene, shows where colloquial language and innuendo is used to convey what the movement could not. Bourne democratises the characters through the use of everyday vernacular language and also through his choice of conversational dialect, such as 'a wee ballet'.

Bourne and set designers combine the written text from the conversational and vernacular to help create effects in building the scene and character without introducing speech, but uses the graffiti style to suggest a certain type of action behind the writing which is transgressive, socially unacceptable, even criminal, to convey the ideas of this abject version of a most loved Romantic ballet. The 1994 programme design has the text printed in block white against a coloured scene, or skyscape above the city. However 'Fling' is written on an angle, as if in thick marker pen, suggesting a handwritten addition to the block print, and beneath this in smaller text size and suggesting with a smaller pen, the subheading 'a wee Romantic

ballet' appears as if someone has written these words for our information. In *Sleeping Beauty*, (2012) we see a similar dramaturgic device in the Gothic font lettering on the scenery to draw spectators into our memories and association of Brothers' Grimm Fairy Tales and other Gothic-style influences. Bourne's re-imagining of the characters as werewolves and vampires directly connects with spectators' popular culture rather than a dance or ballet culture. Our imaginations allow us to delve into our fears, anxieties and sensations we usually hide. There is a shared experience of triumph and exhilaration at the end of *Sleeping Beauty* that has references to the turbulent dramaturgies of *Highland Fling* and unites his audiences in synchronous reactions.

## APPENDIX FOUR

### Transcript of Burrows' script in *Body not Fit for Purpose* (2014)

#### Performance Account with production notes in performance

Recorded on 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2014 at the Frankfurt LAB and seen in live performance on 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2014 at Coventry University Ellen Terry Theatre.

**Layout:** one large table downstage centre stage, one chair behind – central, one chair to stage right angled to downstage left corner (diagonal to the table). Each chair has at middle level a microphone on a stand nearby and a notebook laid open on the table in front of each chair.

**Costume:** plain dark T shirt and black jeans with black DM style shoes (Jonathan Burrows – JB) and mid blue shirt with blue jeans and casual shoes (Matteo Fargio-MF).

MF has a mandolin on the table.

**Lighting** is bright white on floor and in a general wash, but no lit backdrop. The house lights remain on as dancers enter and take their seats and only dim once they indicate by a slight nod to technicians. Each piece is approximately 40-50 seconds long and there is a short pause between each dance or section.

Spoken words are shown in quotation marks.

#### **Start**

JB starts by speaking: 'One - the Arab Israeli conflict' MF plays the mandolin. JB remains seated and moves hands arms and head in sequences of gestures while

reading his notebook and not looking at the audience at all. JB uses the table surface to tap, stroke or swipe as part of the gestures.

JB 'Two – this dance is called George W. Bush' – MF plays different music and JB moves in sequences again – but different patterns and movements

Audience laughs at the synchrony of the frenetic movements and music with a flourish to finish despite the deadpan material – incongruous.

JB 'A curse on bankers' JB calls out 'Dah Dah!' and dances.

JB 'Fear of immigration' JB dances and MF plays but each time the melody is different although there are recognisable phrases and motifs. This time the music is reminiscent of eastern European folk tunes.

JB 'The dance is called Silvio Berlusconi'. There is no music and MF simply sits and watches JB who focuses on his notes and does not make any eye contact with the audience. Then JB looks out directly at the audience and stops.

JB plays a harmonica and MF accompanies on the mandolin – it is almost the same tune.

6'40"

MF introduces this dance: 'Number seven – How you sometimes wish you were Black or conversely wish you were White' (There are snorts, derisive comments and a little laughter from the young Black students sitting along the row from me in the audience.) MF plays and JB dances.

This dance stops mid phrase musically and in the movement.

MF 'Eight -Sometime I wish I lived the simple life in a loving community of people with low carbon emission' Audience in general laughs... JB gets to his feet to dance and steps to the side of his chair then sits down once finished.



MF 'This dance is called AK47' JB vocalises 'Ah' with a squawking sound and softly 'urm'

9' 27" MF 'Number ten - Respect the Poor' JB is on his feet and stays behind the desk dancing but finishes after the music.

10'37" Harmonica and mandolin duet – longer this time.

11'13" they nod to each other – no introduction and no title. JB dances MF plays

11'53" MF 'Special interrogation techniques' JB dances MF plays

13' 05" JB 'Come now you Rich' JB walks round to the front of the desk and dances as if 'preaching' to the audience making the most eye contact so far.

'weep and how!!' repeated over 6 times.

JB return to the chair and sits

14' 10" MF plays and JB watches, MF sings 'Bankers' x3 then plays then repeats like a chorus. JB nods and sways with the music and leafs through his notebook and then replaces it on the table.

15' 25" JB starts the dance but no music or introduction.

16' 14" JB 'This dance is called Bank bailout number three' JB dance standing up and MF plays – JB sits when finished.

JB 'Sixteen - My father was the Emperor of China and my mother an Indian Princess and I come here tonight to collect my inheritance'

17' 49"

17' 54" MF begins playing music part way through; JB 'This dance is called the purpose of this performance is to demonstrate that arm waving and laughing cannot tell you that we don't talk to Israel, that we recycle our plastic, glass, paper, cardboard, batteries, food waste, including bones, garden waste and that we have

marched against the (MUSIC STARTS) war and against those whose policies have allowed the rich to inherit the Earth.'

18' 20" B sits and dances – 18' 47" music stops 18' 40"

MF 'So this was the first half of the presentation and I think I'll move now straight to the second half' JB dances

19' 00"

20' 03" MF 'this one is called kids who are raised around guns and taught how to use them are very responsible with them'.

JB dances and speaks 'bravo, hah', exhaling.

JB 'artist 54 happy to gentrify your city, no pension at all'

21' 29"

MF plays and sings 'Bankers' x 3 JB dances

21' 19" MF 'This one is called the war on drugs' MF and JB do the actions and vocals: 'yah' together.

Then MF plays and sings 'yay' and JB dances in very fast sequences

JB 'Number twenty two- we are the many they are the few ....they are the few' MF plays using a stick on the mandolin and sings 'hip' JB watches then gives a few quick movements

23' 40" MF 'This in is called You are being held in queue and will be answered shortly'

JB stands with his back to the audience and facing upstage dances MF plays and hums

24' 44" JB 'This dance is called Vladimir Putin MF plays JB dances and speaks 'Vladimir Putin'

26' 16" MF 'This one is called in everything we have represented this evening we have followed the structure of La Folia – one of Europe's oldest melodies' MF sings 'Bankers' repeatedly and JB sits back in his chair to watch.

27' 01"

JB 'This is dedicated to my Father who on my 10<sup>th</sup> birthday bought me a copy of the Communist manifesto and Chairman Mao's Little Red Book'  
Harmonica and mandolin duet.

27' 58" MF harmonica and mandolin together by himself. JB mouths words and phrases as if giving a speech silently to the audience and has the most eye contact for the whole piece.

28' 45" MF indicates a 'switching' action to the stage crew and the lights go to black out.

## REFERENCES

- Adair, C. (1989) 'The Cholmondeleys' *Spare Rib*
- Adair, C. (1989a) Viewing Women – the second sex. *Dance Theatre Journal*  
Summer
- Adair, C. (1992) *Women and Dance*. Palgrave Macmillan
- Adshead, J. and Layson, J. (1983) [eds.] *Dance History: An Introduction*. London: Dance Books
- Adshead, J. [ed.] (1988) *Dance Analysis: Theory and Practice*. London: Dance Books
- Adshead-Lansdale, J. (1994) 'Dance Analysis in Performance' *Dance Research* Vol. 12 No. 2  
pp.15-20
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1999) [ed.] *Dancing Texts: Intertextuality in Interpretation*. London:  
Dance Books
- Aggiss, L., Cowie, B and Bramley, I [eds.] (2006) *Anarchic Dance*. Abingdon and New York:  
Routledge
- Aggiss, L. (2013) *The English Channel - Do I please you or Do I please myself?* [The Ellen Terry  
Theatre, Coventry University, 7 November 2013] and recordings on website:  
<http://www.lizaggiss.com/current/english-channel>
- Allain, P. and Harvie, J. (2006) *The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Performance*.  
Abingdon and New York: Routledge
- Alston, A. Unpublished presentation at IFTR World Congress, University of Warwick, June  
2014
- Altieri, C. (2003) *The Particulars of Rapture. An Aesthetics of the Affects*. New York:  
Cornell University Press
- Anderson, L. (1998) *The Featherstonehaughs Draw on the Sketchbooks of Egon Schiele*  
[The Place Theatre, London, November 1998]
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2010) *The Featherstonehaughs Draw on the Sketchbooks of Egon Schiele* [The

- Place Theatre, London, 9 November 2010] and on  
websites:<http://www.leaanderson.com/>
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2010) *Edits* [The Village Underground, London, 5 November 2010]
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2016) *Hand in Glove* exhibition at the V&A museum YouTube link:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wA3hcQVeBMk>
- Anderson, Z. (2011) 'The Featherstonehaughs Draw on the Sketchbooks of Egon Schiele, The Place' *The Independent* [Accessed 25 April 2012]
- Ashton, F. (1946) *The Sleeping Beauty*, The Royal Ballet [The Royal Opera House, London, 23 February 2014]
- Barba, E. (1985) 'The Nature of Dramaturgy: Describing Actions at Work'. *New Theatre Quarterly* Vol. 1 no. 1 pp. 75-78
- Barba, E. and Barba, J. (2000) 'The Deep Order Called Turbulence: The Three Faces of Dramaturgy' *The Drama Review* Vol. 44 (Winter 2000) pp. 56-66 MIT Press  
Available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1146862> [Accessed 18 August 2018]
- Barba, E. (2010) *On Directing and Dramaturgy: Burning Down the House*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge
- Barton, B. (2005) 'Navigating Turbulence: The Dramaturg in Physical Theatre' *Theatre Topics* Vol. 15. Issue 1 pp.103-119, John Hopkins University Press
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2013) 'Moving Thoughts' *Canadian Theatre Review* 155 Summer pp.41-45  
DOI:10.3138/CTR.155.010
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2014) 'Performing the Paradox of Affect and Interpretation' *Performance Research* Vol. 19 no. 5 pp.61-68
- Banes, S. (1993) *Writing Dance in the Age of Postmodernism*. London: Dance Books
- Bassolino, M et al. (2013) 'Training the Motor Cortex by Observing the Actions of Others During Immobilization' *Cerebral Cortex*, Advance Access pp.1-9  
Epub. 2013 Jul 29.

- Bergson, H. (1911) *Matter and Memory*. London: Allen and Unwin [trans. Paul, N. and Palmer, W. (1988) New York: Zone Books]
- Behrndt, S. (2010) 'Dance Dramaturgy and Dramaturgical Thinking' *Contemporary Theatre Review* Vol. 20 (2), pp.185-196 Taylor & Francis
- Best, D. N. (1974) *Expression in Movement and the Arts*. London: Lepus Books
- Best, D.N. (1985) *Feeling and Reason in the Arts*. London: George Allen and Unwin
- Bleeker, M. (2003) 'Dramaturgy as a mode of looking' *Women and Performance: a Journal of Feminist Theory* Vol. 13. No. 2 pp.163-172
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2011) [reprint] *Visuality in the Theatre – the locus of looking*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- Bläsing, B., Puttke, M., and Schack, T. (2010) [eds.] *The Neurocognition of Dance: Mind, Movement and Motor Skills*. Hove and New York: Psychology Press
- Boenisch, P. (2010) 'Towards a Theatre of Encounter and Experience: Reflexive Dramaturgies and Classic Texts. Encountering the Parallax of Theatre' *Contemporary Theatre Review* Vol. 20 (2) pp.162-172
- Bourgeois, P. and Hess, U. (2008) 'The Impact of social context on mimicry' *Biological Psychology* Vol.7 pp.343-352
- Bourne, M. (1994) *Highland Fling* New Adventures [The Churchill Theatre, Bromley, 18 February 2005]
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2012) *Sleeping Beauty* New Adventures [Sadler's Wells Theatre, London, 28 December 2012 & The Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury, 15 May 2013] and DVD recording by New Adventures.
- \_\_\_\_\_ website for New Adventures: <https://new-adventures.net/>
- Facebook: <https://en-gb.facebook.com/MBNewAdventures/>
- Bremser, M. and Saunders, L. [eds.] (2011) *Fifty Contemporary Choreographers*. Second Edition, London and New York: Routledge
- Briginshaw, V. (2001) *Dance, Space and Subjectivity*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

- Briginshaw, V and Burt, R. (2009) *Writing Dancing Together*. Basingstoke: Palgrave  
Macmillan
- Brown, I. (2010) 'Cheap lecture and The Cow Piece' *Theartsdesk.com*, 14 October
- Bunker, J. and Pakes, A. and Rowell, B [eds.] (2013) *Thinking through Dance. The Philosophy of Dance Performance and Practices*. Binstead: Dance Books
- Burrows, J. (2010) *A Choreographer's Handbook*. Abingdon: Routledge  
\_\_\_\_\_ website:<http://www.jonathanburrows.info/>
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2014) *Body Not Fit for Purpose* C-DaRE Coventry University Ellen Terry Theatre  
17 November 2014
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2009) *Cheap Lecture & The Cow Piece* Dance Umbrella 2009 and Motionbank  
recording:<https://vimeo.com/68313485> & <https://vimeo.com/68313484>  
(21/09/2012) <http://motionbank.org/en/content/jonathan-burrows-matteo-fargion.html>
- Burt, R. (2007) *The Male Dancer; Bodies, Spectacle, Sexualities*. Second edition London and  
New York: Routledge
- Burt, R. (2006) 'Speaking Dance' *Criticaldance.com* available at  
<http://www.jonathanburrows.info> [Accessed 12 October 2015]
- Carroll, N. (1981) 'Postmodern Dance and Expression' in Fancher, G. and Myers, G.  
*Philosophical Essays on Dance*. New York: Dance Horizons pp. 95-104  
\_\_\_\_\_. (1992) 'A Philosophical Narrative' *Dance Chronicle* Vol. 15 No. 3 pp.317-331
- Carter, A. (2004) [ed.] *Rethinking Dance History – A Reader*. London and New York:  
Routledge  
\_\_\_\_\_ (2010) *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader*. Second edition Abingdon:  
Taylor and Francis.
- Clark, M. *New Work* (2012) The Barbican, London;  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral* (2013) The Barbican  
\_\_\_\_\_ *to a simple, rock 'n' roll... song* (2016) The Barbican Theatre London.

\_\_\_\_\_ BBC Four Dance Season Sunday 6 May 2018

\_\_\_\_\_ Website: <https://www.michaelclarkcompany.com/>

Clough-Ticento, P. (2007) *The Affective Turn – Theorising the social*. Durham and London: Duke University Press

Copeland, R. and Cohen, M. (1983). *What is Dance? Readings in Theory and Criticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Copeland, R. (1993) 'Dance Criticism and the Descriptive Bias' *Dance Theatre Journal* Vol.10 No.3 Spring/Summer pp.26-30

Cotter, S. and Violette, R. [eds.] (2012) *Michael Clark*. London: Violette Editions

Crisp, C. (1992) 'Very Burrows' *The Financial Times* November 5 p.19

'Decoda' Coventry website accessed 7/10/2013 Legacy site available at:

<http://www.decoda-uk.org>

Deleuze, G. (1994) *Difference and Repetition*. [trans. Paul Patton] New York: Columbia University Press

Dierckx, L. (2009) 'The Music is Virtuosoic' *The Flemish Theatre Institute, Corpus Art Criticism* available at <http://www.jonathanburrows.info> [Accessed 12 October 2015]

Dodds, S. (2011) *Dancing on the Canon*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Dom Perazzo, D. (2005) 'Burrows and Fargion's Speaking Dance: The Storm after the Calm' *Dance Theatre Journal* Vol. 22. No.2. Available at <http://www.jonathanburrows.info> [Accessed 12 October 2015]

\_\_\_\_\_. (2007) *Dancing Poetry: Jonathan Burrows' reconfiguration of choreography*. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of Surrey

\_\_\_\_\_. (2008) 'Jonathan Burrows and Matteo Fargion's *Both Sitting Duet* (2002): A discursive choreomusical collaboration' in Lansdale, J [ed.] *Decentring Dancing texts The Challenge of Interpreting Dance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan pp. 125-142

Fensham, R. (2009) *To Watch Theatre, Essays on Genre and Corporeality*. Brussels. PIE Dramaturgies No.16



- Foster, S. (1985) 'The Signifying Body: Reaction and resistance in Postmodern dance'  
*Theatre Journal* Vol. 37 no. 1 pp.45-64. The Johns Hopkins University Press
- \_\_\_\_\_. [ed.] (1995) *Choreographing History*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana  
 University Press
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2011) *Choreographing Empathy*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge
- Fraleigh, S. (2002) 'Essay Review of Maxine Sheets-Johnstone's 'The Primacy of Movement''  
*Dance Research Journal* Vol. 34 No. 1 pp.119-125
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2004) *Dancing Identity: Metaphysics in Motion*. Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh  
 University Press
- Fuchs, E. (2008) 'Book Review of Postdramatic Theatre by Hans-Thies Lehmann' *The Drama  
 Review* Vol. 52:2 (T198) Summer pp.178-182
- Gallagher, S. (2005, reprint 2013) *How the Body Shapes the Mind*. Oxford: Oxford  
 University Press
- Gallese, V. et al. (2008) 'Empathy, Embodied Simulation and the Brain: Commentary on  
 Aragno and Zepf/Hartmann' *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*.  
 No.56 pp.769-781
- Georgelou, K, Protopapa, E and Theodorou, D. [eds.] (2017) *The Practice of Dramaturgy  
 Working on Actions in Performance*. Amsterdam: Valiz
- Gilbert, J. (2012) 'All Hail Britart, the ballet...but there is not enough of it' *The  
 Independent* 21 October 2012
- Gilpin, H. (1997) 'Shaping Critical Spaces: Issues in the Dramaturgy of Movement  
 Performance' pp. 83-87 in Jonas, S. Proehl, G. and Lupu, M. [eds.] (1997)  
*Dramaturgy in American Theater*. Harcourt: Brace College Publisher
- Goodman, N. (1968) *Languages of Art*. Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill
- Goodridge, J. (1999) *Rhythm and Timing of Movement in Performance Drama, Dance and  
 Ceremony*. London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

- Gregg, M and Siegworth, G. (2010) [eds.] *The Affect Theory Reader*. Durham and London: Duke University Press
- Griffiths, P. (1997) *What emotions really are*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Hansen, P. and Callison, D. (2015) *Dance Dramaturgy Modes of Agency, Awareness and Engagement*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- Harris, S. (1993) *Ambiguity in Jonathan Burrows' Choreography: The paradox of Humour and Violence*. Unpublished MA dissertation. University of Surrey
- Heathfield, A. (2011) 'Dramaturgy without a dramaturge' in Eiga, A; Bellisco, M; Cifuentes, M.J. [eds.] *Rethinking Dramaturgy, Errancy and transformation* pp.105-116 Madrid Centro Parroga Centro de Documentacion de Estudios Arantados de Arts Contemporaneo
- Horton Fraleigh, S. (1998) 'A Vulnerable Glance: Seeing Dance through Phenomenology' pp.135-143 in Carter, A.[ed.] *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader*. London and New York
- Horton Fraleigh, S. and Hanstein, P. [eds.] (1999) *Researching Dance Evolving Modes of Inquiry*. London: Dance Books
- Jackson, N. (1994) 'Dance Analysis in the publications of Janet Adshead and Susan Foster' *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* Vol. 12 No.1 pp.3-11
- Jennings, L. (2010) 'The Featherstonehaughs: Edits' *The Guardian* 7 November
- Jordan, S. (1992) *Striding Out: Aspects of Contemporary and New Dance in Britain*. London: Dance Books
- Jordan, S. and Grau, A. (2000) *Europe Dancing: Perspectives on Theatre Dance and Cultural Identity*. London: Routledge.
- Jurkowski, H. and Francis, P. (1988) *Aspects of Puppet Theatre*. Red Globe Press, Macmillan International Higher Education

- Kesebir, S. (2012) 'The Superorganism account of human sociality: How and when human groups are like beehives' *Personality and Social Psychology Review* Vol.16 no.3 pp.299-361
- Keysers, C. (2011) *The Empathic Brain*. Social Brain Press
- Kunst, B. (2009) 'The Economy of Proximity: Dramaturgical work in contemporary dance' *Performance Research* Vol. 14 no. 3 pp.81-88
- Laban, R (annotated by Ullmann, L [ed.]) (1966) *Choreutics*. London: MacDonald and Evans
- Langer, S. (1953) *Feeling and Form: A theory of Art*. New York: Scribner
- Lansdale, J. [ed.] (2008). *Decentring Dancing Texts. The Challenge of Interpreting Dances*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- Lehmann, H.T (1999) [Trans. Jürs-Munby. K] (2006) *Postdramatic Theatre*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge
- Lepecki, A. (2004) [ed.] *Of the Presence of the Body: essays on dance and performance theory*. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2006) *Exhausting Dance Performance and the Politics of Movement*. London and New York: Routledge
- Leys, R. (2011) 'The Turn to Affect: A Critique' *Critical Inquiry* Vol. 37 No. 3 pp. 434-472
- Longstaff, J.S. (1996) *Cognitive Structures of Kinesthetic Space Reevaluating Rudolf Laban's Choreutics in the Context of Spatial Cognition and Motor Control*. Unpublished PhD. Thesis, City University, London
- Luckhurst, M. (2006) *Dramaturgy: A Revolution in Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Lumsden, J. et al. (2012) 'Who syncs? Social motives and interpersonal coordination' *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* Vol. 48 no. 3 pp.746-751.  
DOI:10.1016/j.jesp.2011.12.007
- McFee, G. (1992) *Understanding Dance*. London and New York: Routledge

- McGrath, A. Unpublished presentation at IFTR World Congress, University of Warwick, June 2014
- Macaulay, A. (2011) [Revised edition] *Matthew Bourne and his Adventures in Dance*. London: Faber and Faber
- Mackrell, J. (1989) 'Taking a Rain Check' *The Independent* 2 October
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1992) *Out of line: The Story of British New Dance*. London: Dance Books
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2010) 'Cheap Lecture and The Cow Piece' *The Guardian* 14 October
- Manning, E (2007) *Relationscapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy*. Cambridge Massachusetts and London: MIT Press
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2013) *Always More Than One. Individuation's Dance*. Durham and London: Duke University Press
- Massumi, B. (2002) *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Durham: Duke University Press
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2015) *The Politics of Affect*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- Monahan, M. (2012) 'Michael Clark Company, Barbican' *The Daily Telegraph* 19 October
- Nadel, M. and Miller, C. [eds.] (1978) *The Dance Experience - Readings in Dance Appreciation*. New York: Universe Books
- Noë, A. (2006) *Action in Perception*. Cambridge Massachusetts: The MIT Press
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2009) *Out of Our Heads. Why you are not your Brain and other lessons from the Biology of Consciousness*. New York: Hill and Wang
- Parker, Z. (2013) 'Liz Aggiss is The English Channel' *CultureVulture.com*  
<https://www.hdv.darts.com/>[Aggiss website]
- Parry, J. (2010) 'Cheap Lecture and The Cow Piece' *Ballet Magazine* October
- Pavis, P [ed.] (1996) *Intercultural Performance Reader*. London: Routledge
- Percival, J. (1992) 'Moving Beyond Dance' *The Times* 30 October
- Phelan, P. (1992) *Unmarked: the politics of performance*. London: Routledge

- Preston-Dunlop, V. (1984) *Point of Departure: the dancer's space*. London: Preston-Dunlop
- Preston-Dunlop, V. and Sanchez-Colberg, A. (2002) *Dance and the performative, a choreological perspective – Laban and Beyond*. London: Verve
- Reason, M (2010) 'Kinesthetic and Related Pleasures: Exploring audience responses to watching live dance' *Dance Research Journal* Vol. 42 No.2 Winter pp. 49-75
- Reason, M and Reynolds, D. (2011) watchingdance.org legacy website accessible: <http://www.watchingdance.org> Watching Dance: Kinesthetic Empathy Research Project (2008-2011)
- Reason, M and Reynolds, D. [eds.] (2012) *Kinesthetic Empathy in Creative and Cultural Practices*. Bristol: Intellect Ltd.
- Redfern, B. (1983) *Dance, Art and Aesthetics*. London: Dance Books
- Sheets-Johnstone, M (1966) Anniversary edition (2015) *The Phenomenology of Dance*. Madison: University of Wisconsin
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1999) Second edition (2011) *The Primacy of Movement*. Amsterdam Philadelphia: John Benjamin's Publishing Company
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2009) *The Corporeal Turn. An Interdisciplinary Reader*. Exeter: Imprint Academic
- Shildrick, M. (1997) *Leaky Bodies and Boundaries: Feminism, Postmodernism and (Bio)Ethics*. London and New York: Routledge
- Shaughnessy, N [ed.] (2013) *Affective Performance and Cognitive Science Body, Brain and Being*. London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama
- Snaith, Y. YolandeSnaith theatredance; *Diction* (1992) University of Surrey  
website: <https://www.yolandesnaith.com/> and archive: <http://www.dance-archives.ac.uk/about/snaith>
- Sutherland, C. (2013) 'Michael Clark Company leaves audience speechless' *OneStop ArtsOnline* [Accessed 25 November 2013]

- Thomas, H. (2003) *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- Thelen, E. & Smith, L. (1996) *A Dynamic Systems Approach to the Development of Cognition and Action*. Cambridge Massachusetts: MIT Press
- Trencsényi, K. and Cochrane, B. (2014) [eds.] *New Dramaturgy: International Perspectives on Theory and Practice*. London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama
- Tucker, M. A (2013) 'Night of World Class Dance and Music' *Huffington Post* 19 October [Accessed 25 November 2013]
- Turner, C. and Behrndt, S (2010) *Editorial Contemporary Theatre Review* Vol. 20 no. 2 pp. 145-148
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2016) [revised edition] *Dramaturgy and Performance. Theatre and Performance Practices*. London: Palgrave Macmillan
- Vacharkulksemsuk, T. and Fredrickson, B. L. (2012) 'Strangers in sync: Achieving embodied rapport through shared movements' *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* Vol. 48. pp. 399–402.
- Van den Dries et al. [eds.] (2002) *Bodycheck: Relocating the Body in Contemporary Performing Art*. Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi
- Van Imschoot, M. (2003) 'Anxious Dramaturgy' *Women & Performance: a Journal of Feminist Theory* Vol. 13.2 pp.57-68.
- Van Kerkhoven, M. (1994) 'Introduction' *Theaterschrift On Dramaturgy*. No.5-6 pp. 8-34
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2009) 'European Dramaturgy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century' *Performance Research* Vol. 14. no. 3 pp.7-11
- Vass Rhee, F. (2006) 'Integrating Dance and Cognitive Science: Towards Emancipatory Research' *Continuing Dance Culture Dialogues: Southwest Borders and Beyond Proceedings of the 38<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Congress on Research in Dance*. Tempe AZ, November 2-5, pp.149-155

Watson, K. (1992) 'Very Strange – was that a slap or just a tickle?' *Hampstead and*

*Highgate Express* 6 November

\_\_\_\_\_. (1999) 'Dance with the boring bits taken out' *The Guardian* 11 September 1999

Wilkinson, S (2010) 'Edits' *The Stage* 5 November 2010

Wollheim, R. (1999) *On the Emotions*. New Haven: Yale University Press

Zanotti, M. *Edits* 1 June 2013 YouTube <https://youtu.be/m6UsEshJSSw>