Scoring Choreographic Poetics

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Abstract

This article considers two 'choreographic objects', *Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing, reproduced* (2009) and *Using the Sky* (2013). In response to articulations from performance researchers Scott deLahunta and Bojana Cvejić, I outline the ways in which such objects can be seen as 'poetics'. Drawing on ideas arising in literary theory from Gérard Genette, and dance studies from Laurence Louppe, I consider how the scores utilize technology to draw together articulations about the process of dance making with the resonance of the body in performance.

Keywords

choreographic objects

poetics

technology

score

process

body

animation

This article considers two recently developed 'choreographic objects'[1] that take the

form of online scores, namely: *Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing, reproduced*

(Forsythe et al. 2009) and *Using the Sky* (Motion Bank 2013). Following Norah Zuniga

Shaw's article 'Animate inscriptions, articulate data and algorithmic expressions of

choreographic thinking', published in this journal in 2014, and two of my own

articles (2015, 2014), I further probe the nature and function of these scores, seeking

to address the 'gap in the literature' (Zuniga Shaw 2014: 95) regarding

'choreographic objects'.

In response to articulations from performance researchers Scott deLahunta (2013b:

2), and Bojana Cvejić (2012: 8), both of whom are at the heart of this emerging field,

I outline the ways in which such objects can be seen as 'poetics'. Drawing on ideas

arising in literary theory from Gérard Genette (2005), and dance studies from

Laurence Louppe (2010), I consider how the scores utilize technology to draw

together articulations about the process of dance making with the resonance of the

body in performance.[2]

First, I introduce the two case studies before considering how they relate to

Genette's and Louppe's conception of poetics. Second, I pay attention to the role of

animation in abstracting and re-presenting the expressive properties of the moving

body. Responding to dance theorist and practitioner Sarah Rubidge's (2009)

discussion of 'liminal imagery', I consider the ambiguous and affective function of

animated images and posit them a central role in the poetic nature of the scores.

Digital scores

The practice of generating pictorial and diagrammatic representation of movement

is arguably as old as dance itself. However digital technology has had a significant

impact on the way that the form is documented, analysed and shared. This is

particularly apparent in the research of contemporary choreographer William

Forsythe, whose interest in the area dates back to the 1990s and the development of *Improvisation Technologies: A Tool for the Analytic Dance Eye* (1999). This CD Rom uses video annotation inscribed over the top of film to demonstrate how Forsythe conceptualizes the relationships between body parts in his improvisational practice. Unlike codified movement notation systems such as Labanotation, Forsythe's tool pays particular attention to his creative process. His interest in visualizing structural relationships was further explored in the construction of *Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing, reproduced* in 2009. For this project Forsythe teamed up with Zuniga Shaw and her colleague from Ohio State University, Computer Science Professor Maria Palazzi.

This site takes as its starting point the question, 'what else might physical thinking look like?' (Forsythe et al. 2009), expressing Forsythe's a motivation to explore the ways in which choreographic principles might be expressed independently from the body (Zuniga Shaw 2014: 97). Forsythe, Palazzi and Zuniga Shaw worked a alongside a large interdisciplinary team to analyse the structures of Forsythe's stage work *One Flat Thing, reproduced* (2000). Using a specially made version of the film by Thierry De Mey (2006), the team gathered data about key structural features of the work, including noting the extensive alignments and cues between the dancers. This information was used to construct twenty digital 'objects' (Forsythe et al. 2009). Drawing on the diverse skill set of the team, these take the form of graphs, charts, animations, interactive tools and so forth. They offer a wide array of information; some clearly outline structural features of the work, whilst others abstract the data

away from any perceivable relation to *One Flat Thing, reproduced*, offering ambiguous aesthetic forms.

Motion Bank was the next stage of the enquiry. The project was initiated by Forsythe and led by Scott deLahunta in collaboration with others, including Zuniga Shaw and Palazzi. It ran between 2010 and 2014 and resulted in online scores of works by Deborah Hay, Jonathan Burrows and Matteo Fargion, and Bebe Miller and Thomas Hauert. *Using the Sky* was the first score to be completed; it was launched in Dusseldorf in 2013. This score is similarly focused on the analysis and articulation of the features of a single work. This time, the Motion Bank researchers took *No Time to Fly* (2010), a solo work by Hay as their starting point for documentation, examination and eventual representation.

In order to develop the site Hay's original score of the work was sent to Jeanine Durning, Juliette Mapp and Ros Warby, who were instructed to rehearse the score alone for a period of three months to develop their own adaptations of the work. Each was then recorded performing their adaptation seven times, resulting in 21 digital versions of the work (Motion Bank 2013). All of these recordings feature on *Using the Sky*. They are aligned with the original score, allowing users to see how Hay's directives were interpreted in different ways. The recordings were also analysed by the Motion Bank team to develop diagrams that map the dancers' use of space and time. The score also features multiple interviews with Hay in which she outlines the key concepts of *No Time to Fly* and her practice more generally. The site also includes an animated interpretation of the work from digital artist Amin Weber.

As Zuniga Shaw (2014) points out, these projects are part of a wider field, comprising multiple artists who are working with researchers to examine and articulate their choreographic processes. Artists such as Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker (Cvejić and De Keersmaeker 2012), Steve Paxton (Paxton and Contredanse 2008), and Siobhan Davies (Davies and Whatley 2009), have recently co-authored online and offline publications, which examine and articulate their processes. These publications offer a new form of dance literature (deLahunta 2013b:1), and extend existing understandings of choreographic processes, structures and knowledge.

How then are we to understand these 'choreographic objects'? How do they relate to existing modes of articulating artistic thought? Referring to her scoring project with De Keersmaeker, Cvejić, suggests that it provides a form of 'poetics', a sentiment similarly articulated by deLahunta (2013b: 2). 'Poetic' is a term that is usually associated with language, perhaps thought of as that which emotes, or describes in a way that need not be objectively 'truthful'. The poetic function of language is described by linguist Roman Jakobson as emotive rather than denotative (in Louppe 2010: 4). So perhaps the poetic function of dance is that which makes it expressive. What then is *a* poetics? French literary theorist Gerrard Genette (2005) draws a helpful distinction between 'criticism' and 'poetics'. He explains that criticism is an internal, formal and/or interpretive analysis of single texts or works, and that this approach does not address the immanence of the work (2005: 1 – 5). A poetics, on the other hand is not purely concerned with critically examining the work. It *also* addresses its expressive capabilities. This is an issue that has been

keenly discussed in dance. The way that the form is conventionally accessed through live performance, means that many have suggested that it can (or should) not be documented, analysed or written down, as this does not capture or account for the way in which the moment of performance is ephemeral, singular and immanent.[3] However, although dance performance is ephemeral, it leaves traces, these are sometimes tangible (such as documents), and often non-tangible, such as memories, mental images, emotions, sensations and so on. This is where the idea of a poetics might be helpful. Genette defines poetics as the 'analysis of (more or less) lasting traits of the literary fact' (2005: 5). Perhaps these scores can be seen to analyse that which exists before, within in and beyond performance, for the choreographer, performers and spectators.

In *Poetics of Contemporary Dance*,[4] Louppe suggest that, 'A poetics seeks to define and uncover in a work of art what touches us, animates our sensibility, and resonates within our imagination' (2010: 4). This articulation aligns with Genette's, implying that a poetics focuses on capturing and re-presenting that which is expressive and effective about a work, as opposed to offering a purely formal, structural, semiotic or deconstructionist analysis. Louppe further suggests that a poetics does not solely focus on the final output. She explains that it has two key purposes – to 'not only tell us what a work does to us, it teaches us how it is made' (2010: 4). So, unlike methods that focus solely on analysing the components presented in live performance, a poetics offers a form of uncovering, revealing the making of the work, alongside its affect on spectators.

Conventionally dance scores have slightly different priorities. Although they take a multitude of forms, they are generally concerned with providing a set of parameters to document and instigate movement. Although at times indicative of a choreographer's working process, they do not generally aim to analyse such features, or replicate the force of the work in performance. In the case of these scores the parameters and structures of the work and process are deconstructed and re-presented by the research team, thus linking them to more conventional scoring and notational practices, however they further expand the notion of the score. The breadth of the term means that describing them purely as scores does not help to demystify their role and function. Whilst they can be understood as such, I suggest that simultaneously conceptualizing *Synchronous Objects* and *Using the Sky*, as poetics reveals crucial characteristics of the objects, helping users to find ways to engage with them. Furthermore, considering their double function as articulated by Louppe, highlights their philosophical and conceptual complexities. These objects draw together interviews, interactive tools, written accounts, recordings, graphs, charts and so forth to inform the user about the construction of the works, furthermore, moving beyond a purely critical approach, the tools utilize the potential of digital media to generate abstract imagery that invites an 'affective' interaction between the viewer and the work. The poetic nature of the scores is further foregrounded by the role of the choreographers, whose intentions and practices are of central concern. Furthermore, the use of ambiguous animated forms offers indeterminate objects of interpretation, relating to the poetic function of language. The following sections draw on examples from the scores to demonstrate such features.

Decision-making and authorship

The film version of *One Flat Thing, reproduced* features seventeen dancers moving over and between twenty tables. The material is typical of Forsythe's trademark contortion of the classical form. The action builds quickly, generating a mass of moving bodies. There is very little unison and few recognizable motifs, meaning the work appears chaotic at first. Yet this disorder is highly structured. The work is built upon a complex system of cues and counterpoint (Forsythe et al. 2009). Zuniga Shaw describes the work as, 'an exquisite chaos that is tightly structured by its three interlocking systems of organization: thematic recombination, cueing and alignments' (2014: 101). *Synchronous Objects* sets out to reveal this structure in order to help viewers make sense of the work.

The twenty 'objects' are arranged in a grid on the homepage of the site. Moving from left to right they become increasingly abstract. The column on the far left features the most didactic tools, which present the raw data from the analysis of the work and use video annotation laid over the film to highlight key structural features. These objects visualize components such as the cues, alignments and movement material. The second column features interactive tools, which engage the user in some of the key principles of the work. The third column comprises graphs developed using a range of techniques from computer design, geography and mathematics. The fourth and fifth columns present the most abstract renderings of

the data. They are described by Palazzi as 'wonderfully complex, abstract animations' (in Forsythe et al. 2009).

[INSERT FIGURE 1]

The first part of Louppe's double function, the suggestion that a poetics tells us what a work does to us (2010: 4), is partially demonstrated by the centrality of the film, which to some extent serves to replicate the work in performance. However the fact that the film is specially made, rather than a recording and supplemented by annotation means that viewing the work in this format is very different to seeing it in a conventional theatre context. However, this does not mean that the experience is necessarily less compelling. The annotations arguably enhance the film's ability to express features of the work. Zuniga Shaw discusses how she and Palazzi aim to generate 'choreographic visualisations', which reveal structures and systems of organization (2014: 97). Annotations such as those pictured above, which highlight the relations between the dancers are a clear example of this intention. However, alongside their structural function, these inscriptions also serve to highlight the trace of the movement through space. Whilst Genette suggests that a poetics considers the 'lasting traits of the literary fact' (2005: 5), these images provide a prolonged trace of the movement act. The impetus and resonance of the body's transition through in space is foregrounded. The annotations therefore serve to foreground 'that which resonates with us' (Louppe 2010: 4), providing inscribed traces of the movement in space

The second part of Louppe's suggestion; that a poetics, 'tells us how a work is made' (2010: 4) is also evident on *Synchronous Objects.* Although there is no explicit account of the creative process, some of the objects allow for users to experiment with Forsythe's choreographic principles, thus uncovering elements of the making process. For example, the Counterpoint Tool provides a set of 'widgets' (Forsythe et al. 2009) that users can control in order to experiment with counterpoint. Starting from the final work, the site leads the user in a process of undoing; deconstructing the structural organization of the work in order to comprehend more about how it was composed. Social anthropologist James Leach suggests that 'choreographic objects' can be seen to be 'reverse engineering the final product – the dance piece – to show its component parts' (2013: 7). All four of the interactive tools facilitate this unpicking of the work by allowing the user to gain experience of key choreographic principles. This allows access to features of Forsythe's decision-making process, whilst avoiding a didactic account of how the work was made. Through experimentation, the user is able to generate a novel understanding of how the concepts function. This undoing further links the score to Louppe's articulations. She suggests that poetics consider the question,

> What path does the artist follow to reach the point where the artistic act is available to perception, there where our consciousness can discover it and begin to resonate with it? (2010: 4)

Through various forms of digital media *Synchronous Objects* draws the user into this question, foregrounding the resonance of the movement through visualizations and offering various ways for the user to navigate Forsythe's creative pathway.

Although articulated differently, Hay's decision-making process is also a central topic on *Using the Sky*. The site includes many insights from Hay and the performers, shared through writing and recorded interviews. These are presented alongside the original score, recorded interpretations and diagrams. For example, the Introduction to Concepts page comprises films from five interviews with Hay and Durning, addressing themes such as Hay's use of language, the various adaptations, the role of Hay's questions and so forth. The recordings are fragmented and arranged non-linearly around the screen. Each video is between twenty- and 90-seconds long, meaning the user is responsible for constructing meaning and forging links between the brief articulations. The interviews draw the viewer into a specific form of engagement with the work, framed by knowledge of the ideas and ideology driving its creation. Although it adopts a very different approach to *Synchronous Objects*, this site similarly serves to disambiguate the movement.

Hay's original score for *No Time to Fly* does not prescribe any movement vocabulary. She generates directives based in her own experience of performing the work, articulating how her decisions are made in each moment of the dance. The first directive of Hay's original score reads,

I appear at the edge of the stage as the last few audience

members take their seats. My behaviour is matter-of-fact. I

have a lot of choices to make in advance of my entrance. I

decide on my entrance site and the direction I will travel in

relation to the audience, plus where that path will end. Then

the light fades. (Hay in Motion Bank 2013)

The 'executants' (Hay in Motion Bank 2013) must interpret these in relation to their

own perception of their bodies and alongside a series of questions, such as,

What if

-'I' is the reconfiguration of my body into fifty-three trillion cells at once?

-'I' practice non-attachment to each moment?

-'I' know nothing? (Hay in Motion Bank 2013)

The open nature of the directives demonstrates the inherent variability of *No Time
to Fly*. Each rendition looks different. The 'executants' are required engage in the

perception of their bodies in space in relation to the score and Hay's questions. The

central role of difference means that the work resists the kind of structural featuring

offered on *Synchronous Objects*. However the analysis and alignment of the 21

interpretations does reveals structures within the work and highlights similarities, as

well as the obvious differences, between the interpretations. This is evident when

watching the interpretations side by side, as well as when consultation of the spatial

and temporal diagrams. *Using the Sky*, however does not focus primarily on

choreographic structure in the same way as *Synchronous Objects*, rather it pays

more in-depth attention to Hay's framework and practice.

So in what way is this site a poetics? How the work resonates with viewers is an

interesting question. In performance the solo is opaque. There is not clear narrative,

virtuosic displays, representational content, movement structure or concept.

Spectators with no knowledge of Hay's practice might be confused or lost, unaware

how to 'correctly' read the work. The site addresses this in multiple ways, which can

perhaps be understood as facilitating the work's resonance between the performer

and spectator. First, the experience of interpreting and performing the work is

articulated through verbal and written accounts. There is an entire page dedicated

to insights from Durning, in which her written accounts of each section are aligned

with the original score and recordings of her interpretations. In relation to the first

directive (quoted above) Durning writes,

> I really try to attend to seeing the curve in the space, on
>
> the floor or in the space itself, rather than just starting
>
> and then finding the curve as I'm doing it. (Durning in
>
> Motion Bank 2013)

Viewing a recording of one of Durning's interpretations alongside this articulation

allows the viewer to share in her experience. This leads to a deeper engagement

with the choreographic principles and arguably changes the way that the work is

experienced. The depth of the performer's practice lends the movement conceptual

weight and arguably facilitates the work's ability to 'touch' (Louppe 2010: 4) the

viewer, as a deeper and more personal interaction is encouraged. Engagement with

the experience of the performer, either 'real' or imagined, seems important to the

reading of Hay's work. Of course this is possible without *Using the Sky*, however, the

score arguably allows a way in to Hay's work for a wider audience.[5]

Similarly to *Synchronous Objects* this score does not directly articulate a specific

process that led to the creation of *No Time to Fly*, however the articulation of Hay's

choreographic practice is more explicit. As demonstrated previously, her

articulations, alongside those of the performers help the viewer to gain an

understanding of how the work originally arose and continues to arise through

multiple interpretations.

[INSERT FIGURE 2]

The role of Hay and Forsythe is significant to our understanding of these sites. Zuniga

Shaw suggests that 'choreographic objects' can be described as 'practice-led artist-

driven research' (2014: 98), highlighting the centrality of the choreographer. Whilst

Hay is present via recordings and text, Forsythe's presence is less tangible. He provides

some audio and textual description, however these are relatively small components

in the overall project. His choreographic framework however is foregrounded via the

structural priorities of the site. In a spoken commentary he suggests that,

> When I read the piece [*One Flat Thing, reproduced*] I try to read the
>
> entire picture. I try not to read a particular person because it was
>
> composed as an entirety. (Forsythe in Forsythe et al. 2009)

This statement implies a structuralist[6] agenda, through which meaning arises from the relationship between components. This way of conceptualizing choreography is evident through the decision to focus on the underlying systems of the work. Furthermore, the design of the site is also reflective of this paradigm. *Synchronous Objects* is devised in a coherent and geometric manner; the twenty 'objects' are geometrically presented in on the homepage. Each object is linked to others that work with the same data set, helping to generate links for the user.

In contrast, the design of *Using the Sky* is more erratic. Alongside the fragmentation of the interviews, boxes of text interrupt one another, meaning that access to information is disrupted. This is equally reflective of Hay's artistic framework. She talks of an interest in discontinuity (2013), and deploys ambiguity as a device through which her work can be interpreted (D'Amato 2014). The centrality of the choreographer in 'choreographic objects' is key. For example, Cvejić clearly states that her project with De Keersmaeker allows for the choreographer to articulate her own poetics (in Cvejić and De Keersmaeker 2012: 8). However, I suggest that the collaborative nature of the scores discussed here are integral to their poetic nature, as it facilitates the range of media that allows the scores to consider both structural

and expressive properties of the works. Furthermore, the design features of the sites further reflect each artist's individual practice and choreographic framework.

Animated liminal imagery

The animations on *Synchronous Objects* the take many forms. They arise from the choreographic data gathered during the construction of the site. For example, the alignment data was used to develop the 3D Alignment Forms object, a digital animation lasting one minute and 50 seconds

[INSERT FIGURE 3]

As in the film version of the work, the 3D Alignment Forms begins with tables being placed in space. However, whilst in the film the tables are dragged forth by the dancers, in the animation they materialize from nowhere, placed on a virtual floor. The camera is at floor level; the tables loom above. Their sense of weight is greatly enhanced by the casting of shadows on the imagined floor. The camera spans the space, revealing the structure of the set and generating a heightened sense of dimensionality. The animated tables are open frames with no top surface, shapes dance through the gaps, highlighting the non-literal nature of the images. Animated annotations carve through space. The shapes are recognizable as the annotations seen previously over the top of the film. However, in this animation they become

three dimensional, the gaps between the lines are filled with digital mesh, the result

of a technique called 'lofting', used by boat designers (Palazzi in Forsythe et al.

2009). The forms accumulate, slowly constructing a virtual sculpture. The camera

spans, moving in and out of the shapes. The film plays with space perception,

continuously moving and alternating between close and long shots. At one point the

camera moves above the form, demonstrating the location of the sculpture, which

resides in between the rear two sets of tables. Seeing the shape in the wider space

the material form emerges. It becomes clear that this contortion of material is

reflective of the moving body.

The 3D Alignment Forms object explores Forsythe's central question of 'what else'

physical thinking might look like. However, despite the motivation to express

choreographic principles without the body, viewing the animation in the context of

Synchronous Objects arguably encourages the viewer to perceive the body-led

nature of the images. For example, encountering the image without knowledge of

how or why it was developed one would perhaps be less likely to think of the form as

bodily. The image therefore occupies a paradoxical space, as the body is visibly

removed, yet perceptually present. This paradox is equally true of an animation on

Using the Sky – a digital adaptation of Hay's original score developed by digital artist

Amin Weber. The animation consists of a continually moving flock of lines,

reminiscent of brush-strokes. They move in an out of bodily shapes, never reaching a

fully representational form. Weber manipulated the medium to maintain bodily

features despite not creating a direct representation of the human form. Like a body,

the animated lines move sequentially. Sketched lines create the impression of a

floor, creating a sense of gravity and giving the form weight. In an interview on the site Weber describes how he started with abstract sketches, but realized that there 'has to be a thing or a form that has the ability that a body has, that way of behaving' (Weber in Motion Bank 2013). He goes on to state that he wanted to avoid developing images that were too 'bodyesque' (Weber Motion Bank 2013), thus he developed a body in abstract form.

[INSERT FIGURE 4]

The body is central to both examples. As with the 3D Alignment Forms, this animation is figurative, inspired by, and expressive of, human action without denoting specific movements. They do not directly mimic the shape of the dancers' bodies, yet the impetus and movement quality is maintained. This creates a complex viewing experience, the animations do not easily belong to any existing category of object – they are at once expressions of choreography, movement works and artistic offerings. Furthermore, both objects are highly compelling – perhaps partly to do with the way in which the context and form of the animations lead us to engage with them as in some way bodily.

Dance practitioner and theorist Sarah Rubidge uses the notion of 'digital liminal imagery' to describe abstract digital images that arise from the movement of the body. She suggests such images are situated on 'a perceptual and conceptual

threshold, hovering in an in-between state that is replete with ambiguity and indeterminancy in both perception and conception' (2009: 2). I suggest that this account closely relates to the animations on *Synchronous Objects* and *Using the Sky*. Both examples arise from, and entail movement, yet the forms are ambiguous – free from prescribed, determinate meanings. The role of indeterminancy in their conception is also a significant factor, as both objects are the result of subjective interpretations of the choreographic data. Unlike notation, diagrams and recordings, they do not aim to 'explain' or re-present the movement, their function is more opaque. The animations are emotive, as opposed to denotative, referring back to Jakobson's conception of poetic language (in Louppe 2010: 4).

It is important to note that the images discussed by Rubidge arise from the moving body, abstracted through motion capture, whereas in the case of the animations, the body has a different form of presence. They are cultivated from hand drawing, in the case of *Using the Sky* and computerized data, on *Synchronous Objects*. They were developed in *response* to the body, as opposed to directly from it, thus the body is abstracted and re-formed through technology. The location of the body in these examples poses many interesting questions; such as is it possible that such imagery can ignite the same form of physical response in spectators as live dancing body? Indeed Rubidge suggests that, 'embodied modes of consciousness are essential to the process of understanding liminal choreographic imagery in the digital domain' (2009: 1). Whilst theorists such as Alva Noë (2004) and Maaike Bleeker (2010) suggest that perception is always 'embodied', these images ignite a different form of response to the didactic tools and verbal descriptions.

Accepting that perception always concerns the body, it is perhaps worth considering the role of 'affect', as a way of understanding how reading the animation differs from other modes of perception. Rubidge draws on the work of Brian Massumi, who describes 'affect' as the 'prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another' (Massumi in Rubidge 2009: 3). So, can this passage occur between live and digital bodies? Rubidge pays close attention to the 'affective' potential of digital liminal imagery, suggesting that 'It is the ability of liminal imagery to create such affective resonances, independent of "content" or "meaning" that holds my attention as both maker and viewer' (2009: 3). Considering the animations to be 'affective' implies that 'affect' is not restricted to the interaction between human bodies in the same space. Rather, that abstract images, with bodily qualities may evoke the same response, extending the expression and resonances of the body into the digital sphere.

Concluding comments

Despite the differences between *Synchronous Objects* and *Using the Sky*, they share many features, including the revelation of structural components, the deconstruction of the making of the work and a concern for capturing the immanence and 'affect' of the body in performance, closely relating to Genette and Louppe's articulations. Of course poetics are by no means dependent upon digital

media, Genette and Louppe both refer to the enquiry as conducted through writing. Cvejić and De Keersmaeker's approach is also more analogue than the scores discussed here. In the case of these scores the collaboration between the artists and research team served a crucial function in their poetic abilities. The design of the sites reflects the idiosyncratic framework of each choreographer, allowing for the digital score to extend their corpus.[7]

The uncovering of the work, articulated by Louppe is enabled through technology as the user is able to take a working role, through interactive tools in the case of *Synchronous Objects*, and through the active construction of meaning through the fragmented frame of *Using the Sky*. Furthermore, the animated rendering of choreographic principles serves to re-present the expression, 'affect' and resonance of the moving body. The ambiguity of such forms allow them to express movement qualities and principles, whilst avoiding the charge of stabalization and potential stagnation at times directed at conventional documentation. Therefore in the case of these 'choreographic objects', technology plays a crucial role in their conception as poetic scores.

Figure 1: Alignment annotations, Synchronous Objects Project, The Ohio State University and The Forsythe Company.

Figure 2: *Using the Sky*, Motion Bank 2013.

Figure 3: 3D Alignment Forms. Synchronous Objects Project, The Ohio State University and The Forsythe Company.

Figure 4: Digital adaptation of *No Time to Fly*. Weber in Motion Bank 2013.

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Notes

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[1] This term is used here to refer to a group of objects that explore choreographic processes, as articulated by Leach, deLahunta and Whatley (2008). The term is also the title of Forsythe's essay from 2008, in which it has a distinct, but related meaning.

[2] This is something I explore in relation to 'Posthumanism' and perception in 'Scoring choreography: Process and bodies in digital form' (2014)

[3] Phelan (1993) is perhaps the most well-known advocate of this view.

[4] Originally published in French in 2004, translated to English by Sally Gardner

[5] Leach posits this motivation as central to the construction of 'choreographic objects' (2013: 1).

[6] See O'Shea (2010) for a description of the relationship between dance studies and linguistic frameworks such as structuralism.

[7] This is perhaps unsurprising in the case of Forsythe, who commissioned the projects. However, Hay has also been particularly engaged by the site. She discussed its merits at the score launch (2013b) and has since made a work for the Culberg ballet based on the 21 adaptations, called *Figure a Sea*, which premieres in Stockholm on 24 September 2015.