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Intellectual Disability, Sensation and Thinking Through Affect

Anna Hickey-Moody

People with an intellectual disability, along with their families, carers and social workers, tend to live – or work – mainly in relation to paradigms of thought established by medical and sociological knowledges of intellectual disability.ⁱ These knowledges are important. They connect physiology and society, and offer frameworks for understanding and interacting with people with intellectual disability. Yet, as discursive systems, they are limited.ⁱⁱ Indeed, their utilitarianism often constitutes their limit. The narrow field within which issues relating to intellectual disability are thought means that there are extremely select ways in which people with intellectual disability can be known. Certain milieus of sense, feeling, and expectation become attached to the idea of intellectual disability and the body of the person with intellectual disability. For example, the sweet and simple minded person,ⁱⁱⁱ the dirty and evil idiot,^{iv} the social burden^v are but a few popular social stereotypes that arise from medically and sociologically based knowledges of intellectual disability.

Dance theatre is one creative medium, amongst many, that has the potential to re-imagine intellectually disabled bodies.^{vi} Restless Dance is Australia's leading youth dance company inspired by cultures of disability (see Figure 5.1). Many of the dancers in Restless have Down syndrome, Autism, general developmental disabilities or Cerebral Palsy. Each of these conditions is a mode of acting in the world that affects other bodies in unique ways, and which prompts heterogeneous visions of the world. Other dancers in Restless do not have an intellectual disability, and are undertaking tertiary dance or theatre training. Restless is one of a select number of companies operating in this field of integrated dance^{vii} in Australia.



Figure 5.1 A close up from Proximal. Duet by Mario Spate and Nadia Ferencz (Photograph and Copyright Eric Algra, Reproduced Courtesy of Restless Dance Company)

In 2001, I was a performer in Restless Dance Company's major work for 2001, *Proximal*.^{viii} I was also undertaking ethnographic fieldwork on the Dance Company for my doctoral thesis. As a colleague and friend of the director of the performance, we discussed theoretical frameworks for thinking the body. Deleuze's reading of the body as surfaces of varied intensity and sites of connection across which forces flow, and his notions of smooth and striated space, inspired the directorial imperative to perform corporeal bodies as maps of life histories and to inscribe these corporeal patterns into space. I take *Proximal* as a case study through which to explore ways in which dance theatre can re-imagine intellectually disabled bodies. Specifically, I am interested in the performance ensemble as an expanded body that increases

individuals' capacities to affect and to be affected. Following Spinoza, Deleuze takes material bodies as a challenge to think through the physical world. Deleuze states:

Spinoza proposes to establish the body as a model: 'we do not know what the body can do' We speak of consciousness and its decrees, of the will and of its effects, of the thousand ways of moving the body, of dominating the body and the passions – but we do not even know what a body can do.^{ix}

Dance theatre sources and extends the limits of 'what a body can do', through evaluating the positive and/or negative affects created by movement. Bodies are no longer intellectually disabled, or not intellectually disabled. Rather, there are bodies that enter into equation with spectators through affect; forming assemblages in which the intellectually disabled body becomes known through kinaesthetic economies that no longer pertain primarily to notions of intellectual disability. For example, spectator + affect + extended dance body = a new kinaesthetic system of relation. I employ the term '[+_bodies]' to articulate the corporeal form produced through these kinaesthetic economies that do not rely principally on notions of intellectual disability.

In this chapter^x I take up Deleuzian^{xi} concepts of affect^{xii} and sensation^{xiii} in arguing that integrated dance theatre is an affective realm that – through the production of [+_bodies] in a performance ensemble – changes the ways that bodies with intellectual disability are thought. Integrated dance theatre is expressive of change within social imaginaries. It shifts the understandings of viewing bodies by staging relationships between dancers and audience members. The aesthetic, embodied labour of Restless dancers affectively disrupts medically based discourses of intellectual disability. Through mobilizing Deleuze's reading of Baruch Spinoza^{xiv} and Deleuze and Guattari's writings on affect and sensation,^{xv} I argue that dance theatre doesn't try to create or imagine change, but is itself an instance of change. By constructing a relationship between the choreographic processes employed in the

Restless Dance performance titled *Proximal*, and Deleuzian conceptions of corporeal capacity, I explicate the physical ways in which Restless Dance imagines fleshy bodies positively; in terms of context and capability. For Deleuze, and within Restless, embodied capacity is always defined through collective relations.

Proximal: Place, space and the virtual dance body

I am interested in the temporality of *Proximal*, as manifest in the different times that constitute rehearsing and performing dance theatre. Times of rehearsal and performance fold back to compose various elements of this chapter, as do the different times of writing. As an accordion-like compression of a range of different writing, performing and rehearsing times, this chapter also incorporates different modes of writing, such as journal writing, description and analysis, which have taken place across an extended period of time.^{xvi} Bodies, ultimately the instruments that write dance, are living testimonies to the fact that all texts are a composition of different times. Physical features, such as scars, eye colour and a person's walk, function as signifiers of different temporalities and other places. People's histories are primarily embodied, and the histories of people with intellectual disabilities are often solely embodied, their physicality constituting the sites where their personal stories are recorded. Dance texts created by people with intellectual disability are therefore unique articulations of their histories, and are in themselves, like all texts, compositions of different times.

The concept of bodies as collections of temporalities allows the practice of integrated dance theatre to be seen as [+_bodies] re-articulating their histories and experiences. This is not to say that the concept of corporeality as a collection of temporalities must necessarily play a conscious role in the lives of these [+_bodies]. Cultural histories of people with intellectual disabilities are lived out through social attitudes, lifestyle options and modes of mainstream representation, all of which

fold into bodies to create signifiers of history. Hence the histories and identities of individuals with intellectual disability are specific aspects of these individuals' embodiment. Points of a body that tell a particular story, such as prostheses, shunts, scars, tattoos, piercings, stretch marks and corporeal brandings of various forms, create different intensities and lines of latitude and longitude across which to read life stories. These are connected and re-articulated through the process of making and performing dance theatre.

Place

Deleuze and Guattari tell us that, 'architecture is the first of all the arts' and that its most crucial task requires that it 'endlessly produces and joins up planes and sections' According to this formulation, architecture [and spatial design] operate as a sieve of chaos, that uncertain realm we discover just beyond our familiar thresholds.

Frichot^{xvii}

Spatial design can push the viewer beyond their comfort zone. It can ask spectators to leave familiar thresholds and enter new conceptual and aesthetic terrains. *Proximal* was a place-making project, as much as it was a new dance work. It was designed to create an 'uncertain realm we discover just beyond our familiar thresholds'.^{xviii} Ingrid Voorendt choreographed and directed the work, in collaboration with the Youth Performance Ensemble dancers.^{xix} Composer and musician, Heather Frahn, developed and performed an original score for the work and the Company's resident designer, Gaelle Mellis, conceived the set and costumes for production.^{xx} *Proximal* was the Company's first substantial foray into video technologies. Restless collaborated with Tamsin Sharp, a film and video maker, in devising video text that spoke to the choreography and constituted a core component of the performance. *Proximal* was devised in the Restless Dance Studio,^{xxi} and was performed at the South Australian State Opera Studio, from 23–26 October 2001. The dancers' work began in July, 2001. As such, the production was a

4-month project for the dancers and a longer, more extensive process for the Company Manager, Artistic Director, Company Director and Stage Manager.

Gaëlle Mellis' design highlighted the dancers' bodies. The stage was bare and stark white, against which the dancers' forms were very distinguishable. It consisted of a large floor and seven-foot wall that ran across the rear. The bright white paint that covered these surfaces was cracked, resulting in a textural appearance reminiscent of, although much whiter than, skin. The paint cracks gave the impression of giant pores, upon which the dancers overlaid inscriptions of their embodied histories through movement. This barren appearance was inflected with elements of landscape through small clusters of dried tree branches, which sporadically lined both sides of the stage. The right hand side of the backstage wall contained a white screen, which featured Tamsin Sharp's video work. Videotext ran across the duration of the performance. The simple set constituted an extension of the aesthetics^{xxii} that were articulated in costume design. Women were dressed in supple, 1950's style frocks and the men in cotton pants and shirts. Dancers performed in bare feet, without any jewellery, makeup or artifice other than clothes. Themes of starkness, simplicity and softness, each developed in different ways through the costumes and set, also provided the basis for the production's lighting design. David Gadsden, production lighting designer, plotted lighting states that moved from enfolding the dancers' bodies in a warm glow, to piercing through choreography and the clustered branches with bright white rays of light. The soundscape also built in intensity across the duration of the performance. Sonic ambience was created by Frahn's initial womb-like sounds of heartbeats, rushing blood and breathing. This gradually increased into a fervent wall of vocal percussion, song and pre-recorded digital effects. The production's set; costume, lighting and soundscape harmonized and became critically enmeshed with the choreography. So too did Sharp's video, which detailed aspects of the dancers' bodies and constituted a core element of the performance text.

Videotext was an articulation of the concepts guiding the production. Taking the body as a site in (and upon) which individuals' histories are performed, video images scoured the dancers' bodies for eloquent points: scars, birthmarks, stretchmarks, tattoos; corporeal inscriptions which told stories without words. All video footage was shot close-up, the focal range moving between a framed shot of a dancer's face, to skin filmed so closely that its location on the body was unclear. Eyes, tongues, fingers, backbones, nipples and navels were edited together with front-on face shots, scars, birthmarks: an itinerary of corporeal features specific to the dancers' bodies. Video recording took place over 2 days and occurred in relation to the process of devising choreographic material. Editing occurred once the dance theatre text had been composed. As such, the video included 'beginning' and 'end' moments, as well as a rhythm of progression, which complemented the dance theatre text. It added an intensity and intimacy to the performance that was specific to the capabilities of this medium. Offering a 'peep hole' into the dancers' bodies and lives, shots were unnervingly close-up, and thus confronting, yet at moments they also rendered the dancers in a particularly fragile light: creases of flesh, moments of vulnerable nakedness that are particular to human bodies, bring the viewer to the remembrance that bodies are sensitive foldings of soft tissue, smooth skin and striated muscle. The intense, laborious and inquisitive perspective on the body articulated in video technologies was also expressed in the choreography of the production.

Space

Human beings not only inhabit extensive spaces, they themselves are extensive spaces.

DeLanda^{xxiii}

The body is an extensive physical mass: it fills space. But the body is also a liminal^{xxiv} space that connects context to subjectivity^{xxv} through a network of affective systems.

As Graham^{xxvi} notes, we cannot assume 'a clear boundary between objects and persons'. We must remember virtual^{xxvii} possibilities for body-space connections and changes, and an absolute belief in unambiguous boundaries 'must be abandoned... [as] persons do not finish at their skins'^{xxviii} The body is extensive space, it produces virtual spaces and it inhabits shared spaces.

Playing with notions of the body-in-space, the body as space and the possibilities of virtual space, Voorendt, the *Proximal* performance director, modelled the choreographic techniques employed to devise the work around the dancer's body as a spatialized map of life histories, and their bodily actions as (re)positionings of embodied histories. The title of the work highlighted the importance of in-between bodily spaces, those that we simultaneously inhabit and move away from unwittingly in the pedestrian experience of living. It is in, and through, *Proximal* spaces that embodied histories are carried, performed and re-framed.

In choreographic terms, *Proximal* space is the area closest to a dancer's body; a virtual extension of corporeal surface area. The personal atmosphere one moves through in life is an inextricable part of how we actualize the virtual, what we 'are'; what we can and cannot do. Taking this notion as a starting point for devising performance material, Voorendt encouraged the dancers to extend their *Proximal* space in order to encompass an entire performance venue. As such, embodied histories of corporeality and spatiality were re-territorialized^{xxix} through the dancers' work in *Proximal*. The space that bodies performed in became more than a given condition of performance: it was acknowledged as a historical, political artefact. This is what Deleuze and Guattari^{xxx} call a 'smooth space': an environment in which ratios between matter and virtual possibilities are reworked.

The process of devising and performing Restless Dance Company's *Proximal*, occurred in relation to the re-production of dancers' smooth, embodied and

Proximal spaces. This development involved 'small tactile and manual actions of contact',^{xxxii} actions which constituted the process of mining dancers' corporeal specificities. How much power can environment have? How effectively can the politics of a physical space inform the way a body moves, breathes, feels, sees, senses? And how does one create a space with an atmosphere that positively transforms the ways in which bodies can be thought? These are questions posed by *Proximal* in a space filled with singularities brought together in sensation. Dancers created, through movement, answers to questions such as: how can you write yourself into space? how can you become void?

Body

There are psychic clichés just as there are physical clichés – readymade perceptions, memories, phantasms The fight against clichés is a terrible thing Only when one leaves them behind, through rejection, can the work begin.

- Deleuze^{xxxii}

Creativity challenges ready-made perceptions. It slips between cracks in consciousness, assumption and the 'known' through making new bodies and creating accompanying original ways of knowing. Collective creativity re-defines communities through articulating a virtual body of difference. The devising process for *Proximal* began with erasing a clichéd virtual dance-body of difference that I call 'ballet's little Frankenstein': an energetic (virtual) body of dance movement and film, inscribed flesh and past experiences. This process of creation began in a collection of inbetween spaces, compiled from dancers sites of corporeal rupture (burns, piercings, tattoos, scars, birthmarks), which performers were asked to identify and articulate creatively through movement (see Figure 5.2). Dancers responded to this task by categorizing parts of their body that open out and connect with other assemblages:^{xxxiii} one dancer's armpit is scarred with a razor cut, which connects her to socialized ideas of gender, 'femininity' and consumerism. Another's

childhood knee injury – the product of an unfortunately positioned stick when falling – has left traces of white scar tissue running across her leg. These silvery lines tie her to childhood memories, her family, and her engagement with sympathy as a powerful social tool. A purple welt on Orla's thigh marks a cut from a surfboard, connecting her to 'surfie' youth subcultures and her idea of being a young person in Australia. The burn on Trent's leg from a match links his body with practices of sadomasochism, dissent, subversion, and his addictions. The connections that are forged by making dances on such sites of corporeal rupture are immanent. For example, Violet's grown out piercing scar in the webbing between her thumb and index finger embodies subcultural practices of body modification, a friendship bonding ritual between two girls, and the years that it has taken for the jewellery to be rejected by her flesh. This scar is inseparable from these processes. These bodily marks are a performance of the ways in which we are always already part of a range of different machines^{xxxiv} at any given moment in time. Violet's scar is but one cog in a subcultural machine of body modifications; a small component of a friendship machine and it is a marker of the passing of time. These bodily marks are not symbols or metaphors for something, but are themselves connections between present and past and conjunctions of certain people in particular places.

The number of sites of rupture upon the Company members' corporealities as a whole, and the multiple significances of these sites for Company members, is potentially infinite. The lines of connection between these sites are moments of union between the corporeal forms of the dancers, their virtual futures, their embodied histories and their styles of dance. Such union is a body, it is a 'Body without Organs';^{xxxv} the virtual power of a collection of singularities, which produces the energy and intensity that offers these performers the force they give form to in creating sensation. This particular 'Body without Organs' is 'Ballet's little Frankenstein', the body of virtual possibilities afforded by the relational space of the Company's corporeal ruptures, unorthodox dance styles, it is a virtual stitching

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together of methods of movement, histories of dance, and medical ideals, with dancers' body parts, stories and corporeal markings.



*Figure 5.2 Dancing women. Duet by Rachel High and Lisa Englaar
(Photograph and Copyright Eric Algra, Reproduced Courtesy of Restless Dance Company)*

As well as inspiring choreographic material, the dancers' assortments of corporeal brandings formed material for filming. These bodily marks are personal intensities, erogenous zones of the body that are coded through duration (embodied time) rather than processes of psychoanalytic sexualization. The often hetero-normative libidinal economies of the body, economies that are invested and coded through psychoanalytic sexualization, are re-worked here. Individually specific personal intensities of the body are shot close up and cut together in an unlikely series of connections. In the videotext, to re-appropriate a traditional Afro-American Gospel song,^{xxxvi} 'the backbone's connected to the eyeball, the eyeball's connected to the fingertip the fingertip's connected to the nipple'. This ever increasing 'body machine' (body parts complied on to video) was screened during the performance of *Proximal*, serving as a poignant reminder of the constructed nature of libidinal economies of anatomy.

This employment of videotext, and the accompanying creative method of sourcing choreographic material from the dancer, is an artistic articulation of Deleuzian theory – in *Proximal* and for Deleuze: 'the body is a surface where forces play',^{xxxvii} *Proximal* spaces become corporeality, as dancers extend and embrace space as 'an intensive discontinuity in which the subject degenerates'.^{xxxviii}

Material thinking

A thinker may modify what thinking means, draw up a new image of thought. But instead of creating new concepts that occupy it, they populate it with other instances, with other poetic, novelistic, or even pictorial or musical entities. These thinkers are 'half' philosophers but also much more than philosophers. They are hybrid geniuses who neither erase nor cover over differences in kind but, on the contrary, use all the resources of their 'athleticism' to install themselves within this very difference, like acrobats torn apart in a

perpetual show of strength.

- Deleuze and Guattari^{xxxix}

For Deleuze and Guattari, artists are material thinkers, 'hybrid geniuses', 'philosophers but also much more than philosophers'. As material thinkers, artists give form to new aspects of the world. The 'very difference',^{xi} to which Deleuze and Guattari refer in the quote above, is sensation, the aesthetic compounds created by artists. Such aesthetic compounds – such sensations – are a material realization of a new aspect of reality. In dance theatre, dancers themselves are installed within the entity of sensation. The dance becomes an aesthetic compound that articulates new differences and speaks to emerging images of thought. Creating a being of sensation in dance theatre is a way of conceptualizing bodies differently.

Through producing 'beings of sensation'^{xli} – sensible inhabitants of a work of art – performers re-territorialize their bodies through affectively disrupting medical and sociological territorializations of their bodies.^{xlii} They generate new affects through crafting sensory beings that transform and augment existing milieus of sense in which the intellectually disabled body is positioned. In vernacular discourses, generating new affects is a way of fighting back, a constructive way of refusing stereotypes. In the case of the Restless dance piece, *Proximal*, dancers resist implications of uselessness and inaction associated with medical ideas of intellectual disability by pushing their bodies into a space where capitalist uses of the body become radically use-less. The dance work *Proximal* is an articulation of a space in which new beings are formed:

This stage space is white, though at times, warmly lit. Its paint is splintered with a thousand tiny cracks. The dancers' bodies are framed by clumps of willow, foliage that articulates notions of youth, possibility and immanent futures. Although this space is a 'forest' of sorts, it's a forest that's not of this world. The world to which

this space belongs is timeless and opaque; speaking of the possibilities of youth and generations of pain. This is a universe perched close to the edge of a Body without Organs^{xliii} produced by bodies with intellectual disability; a social/psychological mass of majoritarian cultural denial, anger, fear, and prospective genetic annihilation. This Body without Organs is constantly feeding into the Restless Dancers' practice of 'nomad art'^{xliiv} – as bodies on stage perform generations of embodied and institutionalized majoritarian social disavowal. A film screen fixed upon the splintered white surface that marks the back of the stage shows up minutiae of physical details. The body is objectified; scrutinized, and seemingly unrelated corporeal parts are connected. The viewer is a voyeur of sites of human fracture, and their potential for destabilizing ways of thinking about bodies. The screen becomes a technology of the dancers' corporeality as it performs the interconnectedness of singularities inscribed in flesh. It traces life histories through corporeal inscriptions, connecting the audience and the performer in a nexus of different understandings. The viewer is attached to the eye of the camera, as it fixes on a dancer's extensive head scar, which links us up to the surgeon's scalpel and an operating theatre. Body technologies, and the embodied histories (durations) that constitute them, are coupled through the eye of the camera and the viewer. Movement excerpts that are included in the film allow the screen to morph into dance, in a becoming-movement of this usually stable display. Dancers' bodies echo the sensations that inhabit the film screening on the wall behind them. Bright garbs cheer the scarred bodies that move through this thickened atmosphere, which pulses with sounds of amplified heartbeats and rushing blood. To get lost in your own body is a terrifying proposition; yet here bodies willingly step into a gallery of corporeal inscriptions in order to etch themselves again through movement.^{xliv}

This descriptive passage illustrates the interface of political resistance and aesthetic labour that folds in to make *Proximal* as a dance theatre text: a performance that is a way of creatively refuting negative stereotypes of intellectual disability. Raw

Anna Hickey Moody, Pre-publication print of 'Re-Imagining Intellectual Disability: Sensation and the Outside of Thought' in *Deleuzian Encounters: Studies in Contemporary Social Issues* (Eds) Hickey-Moody A.C and Malins, P. Palgrave Macmillan, London. pp. 79-98, 2007.

unformed flesh, mistakes, inertia, laziness, daydreaming, bodyscapes, and the prospect of dissolving, are re-invented as aesthetic compounds that make up this work (see Figure 5.3).



Figure 5.3 Girls writing their lives in space. Dancers: Gemma Coley, Anna Hickey-Moody, Rachel High (Photograph and Copyright Eric Algra, Reproduced Courtesy of Restless Dance Company)

Sensory becoming and beings of sensation

In Deleuze and Guattari's^{xlvi} thought, the human body is an effect of its own movements and processes of connection. The body doesn't precede the flow of time through which it becomes. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that we do not begin as fixed subjects who then have to know a fixed world. Rather, they argue that there is experience and from this experience we form an image of ourselves as distinct subjects. All life is a series of 'foldings'. Every cell, every organism (and the human

body) are folds of the milieu of life. Our bodies are the becoming-actual of aspects of our virtual possibility. The body is a limit set in chaos that is a resolution of infinite speeds. Subjectivity is an effect of our processes of becoming. For dancers in Restless, such processes of becoming, of becoming subject, incorporate dance theatre work into a performer's subjectivity. The collective virtual and material bodies created in making a dance theatre work change what individual bodies are capable of and how they can become.

Thinking through the concept of becoming, bodies are multiplicities; sites of intersecting multiple surfaces: [+_bodies]. In a dance theatre performance [+_bodies] become part of an assemblage that includes, movement, film text, sound and space. A dance performance produces a being of sensation; a synergy of movement, music, design, staging and conceptual development which constructs a whole that is more than the sum of its parts. Then the spectator becomes connected to this being of sensation, creating a sensory assemblage in which the viewing body is modulated in relation to sensation and the extended dance body.

A being of sensation is an aesthetic compound which, even if it only lasts for 'a few seconds will give sensation the power to exist and be preserved in itself in the eternity that coexists with this short duration'.^{xlviii} There is a virtual eternity that accompanies new images of thought, in this instance, it is a re-territorialization of Ballet's little Frankenstein, a virtual dance-body that remakes medical ideas of the body and orthodox methods of producing dance.

Becoming in art, the sensory becoming the dance theatre work undertakes in crafting a bloc of sensations, will always push the dancing body and the viewing body past their purported limits. Sensory becoming creates a textual aesthetic affect, a change produced by a work of art; and corporeal affect: a change produced in an embodied human subject. There is an economy of sensation here: art imagines

virtual possible words through sensations. These sensations are compounds of aesthetic affects (a being of sensation in dance is a compound of movement, bodies, design, sound). The subjective modulation that these affects produce in the viewer can alter, if not reconfigure, the viewer's kinaesthetic response to bodies. A new catalogue of feeling and response is established.

The trajectories of blocs of sensation cut across the territories of those who produce them: dancers, directors, technicians, musicians, designers, and also those who behold the sensation, audience members. In *Proximal*, embodied percepts, the product of ensemble process, collect along with other synthetic media in order to create a being of sensation that is generated by bodies 'with intellectual disability', yet which does not frame these bodies in terms of discourses of intellectual disability. It deviates from, and perverts the affective logics articulated by medical and social ideas of 'intellectual disability'. Here, the extended dance body: [+_bodies], ideas, media, movement styles, choreographies; milieus of a certain aesthetic terrain, 'cut across the [medical] territories of other species forming interspecies junction points'.^{xlviii} These 'interspecies junction points' are places in which bodies inhabit a nomad's land of in-between-ness, no longer a singular 'human', neither an open space; they are remade as a collective. Dancers create 'junction points' marked by the production of blocs of sensation. Choreography, sets, music, costumes and lights all affect ensemble dynamics, and in turn affects the production of sensibility in a performance text. These junction points are movements of destratification; corporeal transformations undertaken through group process. Their limit, which is never reached, is chaos.

Affective disruptions

Deleuze and Guattari's^{xlix} discussion of substance as that which is distinguished by 'movement and rest, slowness and speed (longitude)', lays a broad conceptual

framework within which a body and its capacities are determined in relation to corporeal context and affective capacity. Context forms the latitude, or accessible power, that defines what the longitude, or consolidated matter can perform. Movement (longitude) is immeasurable. It can be known only through what it does. A body's movements are both internal and external, in the respect that bodies – individuals, institutions, Nation States – have capacities for self regulation. This self-regulation exists in relation to external forces that act upon bodies. A force produced by art – a work of integrated dance theatre or an image – can inform, or be folded into, individual processes. Movement is the ongoing process of becoming by which bodies continuously evolve in relation to greater and lesser bodies. The affective force of *Proximal* is a sensory disruption of dominant affective compounds of 'movement and rest, slowness and speed',^{li} which are articulated by discourses of intellectual disability.

The being of sensation created by *Proximal* is a liminal zone;^{lii} a place in which the borders of bodies and the disciplinary lines that mark the outside of ways of thinking about bodies are reworked: 'liminality is a time and place of withdrawal from normal modes of social action, it can be seen as potentially a period of scrutinization of the central values or axioms of the culture in which it occurs'.^{liii} As a kinaesthetic force, the liminal affect of *Proximal* cuts across closed ways of reading bodies, positing a reality in process, as yet unformed, in which assumed conceptual boundaries and ways of knowing are re-worked. This liminal^{liv} reality has the capacity to alter the ways in which audience members think about [+_bodies] and about intellectual disability. When experienced by an observer, sensation produced by integrated dance theatre is a site of multiple processes of becoming-other, which involve renegotiations of viewers' subjective limits.

Sensation can create movements within thought, journeys conducted by 'aesthetic figures'^{lv} that exist in meta-contextual relationship with other works of art.

Aesthetic figures^{lvi} dialogue – or resonate – with other aesthetic figures and conceptual personae.^{lvii} It is through exchanges between aesthetic figures and conceptual personae,^{lviii} through a conversation between art and thought, that art can instigate becomings of thought.

By inviting us to think outside the boundaries of 'majoritarian' thought, aesthetic figures push sensory becomings into the realm of the conceptual, through creating experiences in which one is challenged to partake in 'the action by which the common event itself eludes what it is'.^{lix} Here, the event of a body on stage is no longer the performance of accepted or predictable cultural norms. Rather, within the work of *Restless*, bodies pose questions that the audience must endeavour to answer, such as: What is intelligence? What can a body do? What bodies can hold power? How are bodies with intellectual disability transformed through their relations with others? It is through creating sensation that the work of *Restless Dance* produces aesthetic figures that actively question the nature/s of assumptions in thought. Such figures draw upon what Deleuze and Guattari have called 'the possible as an aesthetic category'^{lx} and refute 'intellectual disability' through re-imagining bodies that are given this name.

Notes

ⁱ Scholars in Disability Studies make this point in different ways. Moreover, numerous projects in this area take the premise that medical and sociological knowledges of intellectual disability are definitive aspects of the lives of people with an intellectual disability as their point of departure. See the following references for examples of both trajectories of thought: Cocks, E., Fox, C., Brogan, M. & Lee, M. (Eds) *Under Blue Skies: The Social Construction of Intellectual Disability in Western Australia* (Perth: Edith Cowen University Press, 1996); Goodley, D. & Rapley, M. 'Changing the Subject: Postmodernity & People with Learning Difficulties', in Corker, M. & Shakespeare, T. (Eds) *Disability/Postmodernity: Embodying Disability Theory* (London: Continuum, 2002), pp. 127–142; Manion, M. & Bersani, H. 'Mental Retardation as a Western Sociological Construct: A Cross-Cultural Analysis', *Disability, Handicap & Society*, 2(3)(1987) pp. 231–245; Osburn, J. 'An Overview of Social Role Valorization Theory', *The International Social Role Valorisation Journal*, 3(1)(1998) pp. 7–12; Rock, P. 'Eugenics & Euthanasia: A Cause for Concern for Disabled People, Particularly Disabled Women', *Disability & Society*, 11(1)(1996) pp. 121–127; Rushton, P. 'Idiocy, The Family & The Community in Early Modern North-East England', in Wright, D. & Digby, A. (Eds) *From Idiocy to Mental Deficiency* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 44–64; Ryan, P. 'Unnatural Selection: Intelligence Testing, Eugenics, & American Political Cultures', *Journal of Social History*, 3(1997) pp. 669– 685; Simpson, M. 'The Moral Government of Idiots: Moral Treatment in Seguin', *History of Psychiatry*, 10(2)(1999) pp. 227–243; Simpson, M. 'Idiocy, Incompetence, Power' Paper presented at 'Power/Resistance', British Sociological Association Annual Conference, 7–10 April 1997, University of York.

ⁱⁱ These discourses, such as those established by the work of Édouard Seguin, see Seguin, E. 'Origin of the Treatment & Training of Idiots', *American Journal of Education*, 2(1856) pp. 145–152; and Thomas Merton, see Merton, T. *Mankind in the Unmaking: The Anthropology of Mongolism* (Sydney: Bloxham & Chambers, 1968), are clearly reflected in the later model for disability service provision developed by Wolf Wolfensberger. This model for disability service provision is exemplified by texts such as: Wolfensberger, W. *A Brief Introduction to Social Role Valorisation as a High – Order Concept for Structuring Human Services* (Syracuse: Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency, 1991); Wolfensberger, W. *The Origin & Nature of our Institutional Models* (Syracuse: Human Policy Press, 1975); Wolfensberger, W. 'Eulogy for a Mentally Retarded Jester', *Mental Retardation*, 20(6)(1982) pp. 269–270; Wolfensberger, W. 'The Story of the "Cruikshank Chairs" at Syracuse University: A Contribution to the History of the Brain Injury Construct', *Mental Retardation*, 39(6)(2001) pp. 472–481; Wolfensberger, W. 'Human Service Policies: The Rhetoric Versus the Reality', in Barton, L. (Ed.) *Disability & Dependency* (London: Falmer Press, 1989), pp. 23–41. Contemporary scholars such as Edgar Miller, see Miller, E. 'Idiocy in the Nineteenth Century', *History of Psychiatry*, 7(3)(1996) pp. 361–373; and Mark Rapley, see Rapley, M. *The Social Construction of Intellectual Disability* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) have critically reflected on the ways in which such early projects led to circumstances in which bodies with intellectual disability are popularly understood in negative or patronizing ways. I extend such critical arguments by explicating the physiology of audience – performer relations, associated emotional connections and possibilities for constructing images in thought, which are made by integrated dance theatre.

ⁱⁱⁱ In 'Challenges for Adults with Autism', NorthJersey.com 29 September 2006, staff writer Bob Ivry notes that: 'The public face of autism is young and cute. When most people think of autism, they think of children. But children grow up. They stop being cute. At 21, they stop getting the help they need.' Accessed 8 January 2007 from: <http://www.northjersey.com>.

^{iv} For an example of the power that the trope of the dirty, evil idiot holds see Larsen, R. & Haller, B. 'The Case of "Freaks": Public Reception of a Real Disability', *Journal of Film & Popular Television*, 29(4)(2002) pp. 164–169.

Anna Hickey Moody, Pre-publication print of 'Re-Imagining Intellectual Disability: Sensation and the Outside of Thought' in *Deleuzian Encounters: Studies in Contemporary Social Issues* (Eds) Hickey-Moody A.C and Malins, P. Palgrave Macmillan, London. pp. 79-98, 2007.

^v For further discussion, see Gillgren, C. 'Once a Defective, always a Defective: Public Sector Residential Care 1900–1965', in Cocks, E., Fox, C., Brogan, M. & Lee, M. (Eds) *Under Blue Skies: The Social Construction of Intellectual Disability in Western Australia* (Perth: Edith Cowen University, 1996).

^{vi} Scholarship that supports this argument includes, but is not limited to, Goodley, D. & Moore, M. *Arts against Disability: The Performing Arts of People with Learning Difficulties* (Plymouth: BILD, 2002); Kueppers, P. *Disability & Contemporary Performance: Bodies on the Edge* (New York: Routledge, 2003). Texts that make this argument in relation to integrated dance theatre more broadly include Benjamin, A. *Making an Entrance: Theory & Practice For Disabled & Non-Disabled Dancers* (London: Taylor & Francis Books Ltd, 2001); Cooper Albright, A. *Choreographing Difference: The Body & Identity in Contemporary Dance* (London: University Press of New England for Wesleyan University Press, 1997); and Leveté, G. *No Handicap to Dance* (London: Souvenir Press, 1982).

^{vii} I employ the term 'integrated dance theatre' to discuss dance theatre devised and performed by people who identify as being with and without intellectual disability. In contexts other than this chapter, the term 'integrated dance theatre' is employed to discuss dance theatre performed by people who identify more broadly as being with and without disabilities, not specifically intellectual disabilities.

^{viii} Restless Dance Company *Proximal*. Directed by Ingrid Voorendt, State Opera Studio, Netley, SA, 23–26 October 2001. *Proximal* was primarily funded by the Australia Council Dance Fund and the South Australian Youth Arts Board.

^{ix} Deleuze, G. *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* (French: 1970) Trans. R. Hurley (San Francisco: City Light Books, 1988), p. 18.

^x I would like to extend my thanks to Christian McCrea from The University of Melbourne for his comments on an early draft of this work and Simon O'Sullivan from Goldsmiths University, London for his feedback on a later draft.

^{xi} The texts I draw on here are: Deleuze, G. *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* (French: 1981) Trans. D. Smith (London: Continuum, 2004); Deleuze, G. *Spinoza*, op. cit.; Deleuze, G. *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* (French: 1968) Trans. M. Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1990); Deleuze, G. *The Logic of Sense* (French: 1969) Trans. M. Lester and C. Stivale (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); and Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. *What is Philosophy?* (French: 1991) Trans. G. Burchell and H. Tomlinson (London: Verso, 1994).

^{xii} Affect is a term developed by Deleuze, and Deleuze and Guattari, to refer to changes in what bodies are and are not capable of. The body to which Deleuze refers is not necessarily human. Rather, it is a degree of power. Affects extend or decrease the limits of 'what a body can do'. An affect is the margin of modulation effected by change in capacity: a material section in its own right that articulates an increase or decrease in a body's capacity to act.

^{xiii} Sensation is described by Deleuze as a means of rendering virtual forces material. The act of articulating the virtual transforms or augments the virtual force through giving it form. Deleuze states: 'Force is closely related to sensation: for a sensation to exist, a force must be exerted on a body, on a point of the wave. But if force is the condition of sensation, it is nonetheless not the force that is sensed, since the sensation "gives" something completely different from the forces that condition it.' Deleuze, G. *The Logic of Sense*, op. cit., p. 48.

^{xiv} Deleuze, G. *Spinoza*, op. cit.; and Deleuze, G. *Expressionism in Philosophy*, op. cit.

^{xv} Deleuze, G. *Francis Bacon*, op. cit.; Deleuze, G. *The Logic of Sense*, op. cit.; and Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. *What is Philosophy?*, op. cit.

^{xvi} Deleuze and Guattari suggest that a book is a folding of time and space back onto itself. See Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (French: 1980) Trans. B. Massumi (London: Athlone, 1987), p. 3.

^{xvii} Frichot, H. 'Stealing into Gilles Deleuze's Baroque House', in Buchanan, I. & Lambert, G. (Eds) *Deleuze and Space* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), p. 64. Parenthesis my own.

^{xviii} *Ibid.*, p. 64.

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- ^{xix} Sally Chance, the (then) Company Artistic director, also worked on the later stages of the project.
- ^{xx} The production lighting designer was David Gadsden, and sound technician was Nick O'Connor.
- ^{xxi} In Franklin Street, Adelaide.
- ^{xxii} I employ a Deleuzian notion of aesthetics which articulates the capacity of art to challenge and re-define epistemological structures through altering people's perception and sensibilities. Here, aesthetics is a synthesis of an ethics of practice (making and viewing art) and a trope of affects constructed within an artwork (the materiality of the art and margin of change the art effects). Aesthetics are signifiers of emergent epistemologies. Deleuze suggests there is a 'whole ethics [and] an aesthetics too' in 'what we are capable of seeing and saying'. Deleuze, G. *Negotiations* (French: 1990) Trans. M. Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 100.
- ^{xxiii} DeLanda, M. 'Space: Extensive and Intensive, Actual and Virtual', in Buchanan, I. & Lambert, G. (Eds) *Deleuze and Space*, op. cit., p. 82.
- ^{xxiv} For a discussion of liminality, see Turner, V. *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: PAJ, 1982).
- ^{xxv} After Deleuze, I read subjectivity as 'a specific or collective individuation relating to an event' Deleuze, G. *Negotiations*, op. cit., p. 99. Human subjectivity is a collection of individuations which are activated differently in various machinic arrangements.
- ^{xxvi} Graham, M. 'Sexual Things', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 10(2)(2004) pp. 299–307, see p. 299.
- ^{xxvii} Deleuze develops a specific notion of the virtual. After Henri Bergson, Deleuze characterizes the virtual as possibilities for the actual: as the non – material aspect of the actual world. The virtual has a different temporal structure from the actual and as such it folds in upon the actual in ways that bring the past into the present and connect the present to the future. While the actual and the virtual are distinct, they are also two halves of a whole; one exists in relation to the other.
- ^{xxviii} Graham, M. 'Sexual Things', op. cit., p. 299, parentheses my own.
- ^{xxix} The act of re-territorialization changes the aesthetic tropes and bodies of knowledge through which a spatialized body is known. In so doing, reterritorialization augments what the spatialized body 'is' and what it can become.
- ^{xxx} Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. *A Thousand Plateaus*, op. cit., p. 488.
- ^{xxxi} *Ibid.*, p. 371.
- ^{xxxii} Deleuze, G. Francis Bacon, op. cit., pp. 71, 73 and 76.
- ^{xxxiii} An assemblage is a contextual arrangement in which heterogeneous times, spaces, bodies and modes of operation are connected. The examples in this chapter show assemblages of personal biographies, histories, bodies of medical knowledge, dance practices, times and spaces of performance being arranged into the collective body of a performance piece called *Proximal*. Diverse components become aspects of one assemblage. See also the note on 'Machine' in this chapter.
- ^{xxxiv} I employ the term 'machine' to express Deleuze and Guattari's notion of 'assemblage', that is the arrangement, organization and connection of bodies.
- ^{xxxv} Here I use 'Body without Organs' (or BwO) to mean immanent possibility. BwO can be read as the immanent possibility of matter; degree zero of form, open and unstructured potential. The Body without Organs is also the outside of form, disarticulated matter.
- ^{xxxvi} 'Dry Bones' or 'Dem Dry Bones' is a traditional African American Gospel song. The melody was written by James Weldon Johnson and the lyrics are based on the Biblical passage 'Ezekiel 37:14', in which the Prophet Ezekiel visits the 'Valley of the Dry Bones' and animates these bones through bringing in his religious beliefs. Parallels to white colonization and the role played by the Christian religion in this process are embedded in this story, as much as the political agency exhibited by African American peoples in advocating Gospel song is part of the 'Dry Bones' melody.
- ^{xxxvii} Braidotti, R. *Patterns of Dissonance* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), p. 74.
- ^{xxxviii} *Ibid.*
- ^{xxxix} Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. *What is Philosophy?*, op. cit., pp. 66–67.

^{xi} Ibid., p. 67.

^{xli} Ibid., p. 165.

^{xlii} In Hickey-Moody, A. 'Folding the Flesh Into Thought', *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, 2(1)(2006) pp. 187–195, I critique aspects of medical discourses of intellectual disability, on the premise that Cartesian methods for thinking about the body are implied and affirmed within such discourses. Cartesian ways of conceiving corporeality can be traced through select studies of the social construction of intellectual disability. In opposition to Cartesian methods of thought, I argue for an understanding of corporeality that medical and sociological discourses of intellectual disability are not able to realize.

^{xliii} Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (French: 1972) Trans. R. Hurley, M. Seem and H.R. Lane (London: Athlone, 1983); and Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. *A Thousand Plateaus*, op. cit.

^{xliiv} Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. *A Thousand Plateaus*, op. cit.

^{xli v} Ethnographic field notes – *Proximal*, Restless Dance Company, 2001.

^{xli vi} See Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. *A Thousand Plateaus*, op. cit.; and Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. *What is Philosophy?*, op. cit.

^{xli vii} Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. *What is Philosophy?*, op. cit., p. 166.

^{xli viii} Ibid., p. 185.

^{xli ix} Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. *A Thousand Plateaus*, op. cit., pp. 41, 43, 52 and 252–254.

^l Ibid., p. 254.

^{li} Ibid.

^{lii} Turner, V. *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: PAJ, 1982). Here, Turner draws upon the work of Arnold Van Gennep who wrote a classic anthropological exploration of liminal space called *The Rites of Passage* (French: 1909) (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960). For further discussion of liminality, see also: Turner, V. 'Betwixt & Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage', in *Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967).

^{liii} Turner, V. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 167.

^{liiv} Ibid.; and Turner, V. 'Betwixt & Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage', op. cit.

^{liv} Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. *What is Philosophy?*, op. cit., p. 177.

^{lvi} Ibid. Note that Deleuze and Guattari contend, aesthetic figures, and the style that creates them, have nothing to do with rhetoric: 'They are sensations, percepts and affects, landscapes and faces, visions and becomings. Aesthetic figures are not the same as conceptual personae. It may be that they pass into one another, in either direction insofar as there are sensations of concepts and concepts of sensations.'

^{lvii} . 'The conceptual persona is not the philosopher's representative but, rather, the reverse: the philosopher is only the envelope of his principal conceptual personae and of all the other personae who are the intercessors the real subjects of his philosophy'. Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. *What is Philosophy?*, op. cit., p. 64.

^{lviii} 'The difference between conceptual personae and aesthetic figures consists first of all in this: the former are the powers of concepts, and the latter are the power of percepts and affects', *ibid.*, p. 65.

^{lix} Ibid., p. 177.

^{lx} Ibid.