

Expanding intersubjective awareness: the anthropology of kinaesthetic diversity

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When people with widely diverse bodily characteristics collaborate in dancing together, an exploration and communication of movement and embodied knowledge takes place through dialogue and shared practice. Engagement in these activities develops participants' awareness of and appreciation for kinaesthetic complexities and diverse embodiments, promoting an understanding of bodily difference as contributing to, rather than detracting from, the realm of physical arts and society as a whole. Based on fieldwork conducted in Israel and the United States with integrated dance projects bringing together people with and without disabilities, this article offers an ethnographic analysis that continues the anthropological endeavour of revealing the ways kinaesthetic knowledge (awareness and knowledge of the movement and spatial orientation of one's body) is fostered. Introducing disability into movement theory, I offer an understanding of movement/stasis as a spectrum of ways of moving, looking at what happens when individuals who are different from one another engage in shared, critical reflection upon their movement practices.

I just really want to push that boundary of physicality and human strength ... to push non-disabled dancers' sense of familiarity with their habitual movement.

Marc, a 37-year-old disabled artistic director and choreographer, Interview with author, October 2014¹

The case study of integrated dance, an art form *arising from the collaboration* among dancers with and without disabilities, allows a mutual discussion to take place between ethnographers' explorations of what and how dancers know (Parviainen 2002: 13), and disability studies' critical examinations of embodiment (Garland-Thomson 2013: 925; Henderson & Ostrander 2008: 3): that is, individuals' bodily way of being-in-the-world that both shapes and reflects cultural norms and ideas. In modern Western cultural imagery, dance is typically associated with ability, strength, and physical capital, while disability is associated with weakness, dependency, and lack of physical strength. Moreover, dance is traditionally identified with aesthetics, beauty, youth, and sexuality, while disability is identified with sickness, old age, death, and asexuality (Broyer 2017: 332; Cooper-Albright 2013: 287; Houston 2015: 37; Kupperts 2001: 26; Morris 2015: 143; Siebers 2010: 27). Thus, by bringing into a shared space two categories considered oppositional and in conflict with each other – dance and disability – integrated dance



Figure 1. Axis Dance Company dancers Sonsheree Giles and Joel Brown. (Photograph by David-DeSilva, 2014). © Axis Dance Company.

compels questioning our conceptualization of a dancing and moving body, and of movement itself. Broyer (2017: 332) addressed this complicated union of dance and disability as the ‘epistemological collision’ that threatens to relegate integrated dance to what she calls ‘dis-dance’. ‘The common assumption’, she explains, is ‘that disabled people lack the ability to dance . . . The impaired body and the dancing body . . . are loaded with conflicting cultural meanings’.

My study of integrated dance in Israel and the United States, in which participants with cognitive disabilities, dancers with one arm or leg, or performers using wheelchairs, crutches, or prosthetics collaborate among themselves and with able-bodied individuals (see Fig. 1), focuses on this ‘epistemological collision’ that takes place when dance and disability are merged. It follows a phenomenological approach that emphasizes the ‘body-as-subject’, the lived body and its subjective experiences, alongside a sociological tradition of interpreting the ‘body-as-object’ (Beauchez 2019: 486-7), emphasizing the culturally acquired habitus of bodily movements as discussed by Mauss (1979 [1935]) and Bourdieu (1977).

Combining dance and disability with anthropology of the body, I ask: how do people with widely differing bodies explore and articulate kinaesthetic knowledge, that is, the bodily sense of locomotion, the knowledge and feeling of the movement of one’s body and its orientation in space?² What happens when individuals whose bodies are fundamentally different from one another explore together the biomechanics of gestures, rhythm, balance, weight sharing, centre of gravity, use of space, and partnering techniques? And what does integrated dance tell us about additional contexts of integration and meeting with the Other not only in relation to disability but also on the basis of gender, race, religion, and class, and about the role of bodily difference within social relations?

These are some of the questions this article addresses based on fieldwork conducted between 2014 and 2018 with integrated dance companies in Israel and the United States, including seventy-three interviews with professional dancers, practitioners, directors, choreographers, and staff members with and without disabilities, and participant and non-participant observations in company classes, rehearsals, outreach

programmes, workshops, and performances.³ In this article, I use field notes from observations and quotes from verbal interviews to focus on the knowledge practitioners communicate and develop regarding movement practices such as tilting, pushing, balancing, climbing, spinning, skipping, stretching, curving, bending, shaking, rolling, lifting, positioning, and aligning. While the methodological challenges of producing a written text explicating embodied research have been discussed by dance ethnographers and anthropologists of the body (Katan 2016: 5; Potter 2008: 446; Samudra 2008: 666), verbal descriptions are highly relevant for my case study since, as I will demonstrate later, these articulations bridge the conceptual and the experiential. When working in an integrated studio in which participants' bodies are vastly different from one another, dancers must explicitly examine and verbalize the details involved in the production of movement. Thus, the verbal is central to integrated dance, and in my fieldwork dancers discussed their kinaesthetic knowledge not only with me but also with each other, offering me opportunities to document verbal exploration of the body and movement in a variety of settings, such as classes, workshops, guest lectures, and staff meetings.

Nonetheless, while in this article I bring examples from written field notes and (verbal) interviews, my methodology is also sensitive to non-verbal knowledge, continuing my previous explorations of 'sensory knowledge' (Hammer 2019: 14), belonging to research such as Ophir's of dance teachers in Israel, research engaged in 'not only studying *the body* but also *through the body by means of the body*' (2016: 190, emphasis in original). In such studies, the researcher's body becomes a tool and locus of knowledge through which the researcher knows and interprets the field (Crosby 1997). And indeed, even though I am not a dancer, my bodily experience within both participant and non-participant observations informed my collection and interpretation of kinaesthetic knowledge. In some instances, I took part in warmups and workshops and was sometimes invited to participate in the workshops I documented. My body informed the way I understood movement, ability, and disability also when sitting in the studio and observing dancers as they observed me. It informed what I wore during observations and packed in my bag for rehearsals; it was present when practising yoga with dancers who became friends; it informed the data I collected when sharing train rides, drinks, meals, lunch breaks, and weekend hikes with interlocutors; it informed my understanding of objects when learning how to load a wheelchair into a car, and my understanding of accessibility when spending time in public spaces with wheelchair user dancers; and it was part of the interview process when having coffee or sharing a meal in a dancer's home, and when describing and drawing in my journal movements that dancers demonstrated during our meetings. In all of these instances, I conducted a study that emphasized 'the quality of being *inside* the experience' (Crosby 1997: 74, my emphasis), paying attention to kinaesthetic details and narratives.⁴

In the following analysis, I identify the mechanism through which participants develop critical awareness and self-reflection regarding their movement practices and notions of ability and disability, arguing that engaging in integrated dance allows developing an awareness of and appreciation for kinaesthetic complexities and diverse embodiments. As Marc, an experienced disabled dancer and choreographer, indicated in the opening quote, integrated dance 'pushes' participants' 'sense of familiarity' beyond their '*habitual movement*'. By engendering a dialogue among differently abled practitioners, the artistic process of integrated dance *expands and challenges* participants' embodied schema – a person's subconscious system of procedural and habitual sensory-motor knowledge, which, as Katan explains in her study of the Israeli

contemporary dance form Gaga, is ‘the body’s “knowing how” to work according to familiar regulation’ (Gallagher 2005, cited in Katan 2016: 78). When people with widely different bodies collaborate in an integrated dance studio, their habitual movement practices, as Marc stated, are transformed, as dancers become conscious of and reflective about new movement knowledge when exploring, for example, the circular motion of wheelchairs or the aesthetics of the movement of a body with or without one arm. This process gives rise to creative modes of expression through movement, to new forms of moving on which to reflect, stretching typical conceptual boundaries around ability and disability. Participants with disabilities, participating in a kinaesthetic realm supposedly not available to them, practise virtuosity, ability, and motion; and non-disabled participants explore small gestures, stillness, vulnerability, and interdependency – traits less commonly associated with the dancing body. In these meetings, *kinaesthetic diversity* is the central, driving force; therefore participants’ knowledge of the kinaesthetic Other becomes broadened, indicating the potential created by the intentional merging of disparate cultures in a space of mutuality. In this case, the meeting between dance and disability provides a platform from which new understandings are formed, expanding not only the participants’ repertoire and know-how practices, but also conceptions of ‘human’ kinaesthetics, and, ultimately, the human experience. This analysis of what happens when (supposedly) conflicting categories collide encourages consideration of the conditions that promote contexts of integration, multiculturalism, inclusion, and meeting with the Other in schools, in the workplace, and in everyday life.

Mindful embodiment and performative dialogue

By looking at how mindfulness of kinaesthetic practices is developed in integrated dance, the discussion builds upon and contributes to anthropological studies of the mechanisms through which kinaesthetic knowledge is cultivated within realms emphasizing the physical body, such as dance (Dalidowicz 2015; Hahn 2007; Sklar 1994), sports (Wacquant 2005), medicine (Hammer 2017; Harris 2015), martial arts (Downey 2010; Samudra 2008), crafts (Marchand 2008; 2009), and everyday life (Elyachar 2011; Geurts 2002; Ingold 2010).⁵ Anthropologists of apprenticeship, sensory enskillment, and skilled learning have investigated how knowing in and through the body is developed, transmitted, enacted, interpreted, and transformed by those who engage in these endeavours. Such studies argued for the ways embodiment is tightly bound to knowledge and cognition, challenging binary dichotomies between body and mind, perception and action, somatic and semiotic, or sensory and material (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 3). In so doing, scholars have aimed at, first, challenging the notion that bodily habitus is beyond the ‘grasp of consciousness’ (Bourdieu 1977, cited in Samudra 2008: 666; see also Downey 2010: S23), whether it can or cannot be verbally phrased. And, second, scholars have aimed at tracking down not only ‘propositional knowledge, or knowledge “about” things’, which ‘is privileged in Western thought’, but also ‘sensory and experiential knowledge’, and ‘skill knowledge’ (Samudra 2008: 666). The philosopher of the body Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, for example, in her phenomenological analysis of kinaesthetic consciousness, offered the terms ‘kinetic intelligence’ and ‘thinking in movement’ (2011: 424), challenging the ‘Cartesian assumption that minds think and bodies “do”’, and ‘the widespread assumption that there is no thinking outside language’ (2011: xxxi). And Marchand, who has studied knowing-in-practice within the context of craftsmanship (2008: 257; 2009: 7), looked at the ways practitioners think ‘with and through action and movement’ (2010*b*: S101), demonstrating the ways ‘morals,

muscles, and mind' are tightly integrated (2009: 6): for instance, in the ways masons incorporate an embodied, physical way of calculating mathematical relations and proportions (2009: 126). The case study of integrated dance builds upon such studies and extends anthropological interest in movement as an epistemological and analytical category. Owing to the diversity of abilities and body types present in this setting, integrated dance provides a distinct opportunity to study embodied knowledge – that is, knowledge that reflects both subjective bodily meaning and habitual cultural norms – and the ways this knowledge is mindfully exercised and explored.

Integrated dance can be framed along other contexts of dance training that promote mindful exploration of movement practices, such as Gaga (Katan 2016: 25) and contact improvisation (Cooper-Albright 2013: 236; Sheets-Johnstone 2011: 420). In Gaga, for example, dancers are encouraged to develop bodily 'attunement', a state of oneness with the body, as well as with the mind (Katan 2016: 91). However, unlike other dance contexts, integrated dance requires questioning, exploring, *and* verbalizing movements as practices unique to *each participant's* body. Faculties typically taken for granted in a 'regular' or non-integrated dance setting, such as the ability to carry weight, do lifts, conduct floor work, stand or walk on two legs, or sense touch through the entire body, must be consciously and verbally explored. The intricacies of body-specific movement, therefore, are a focus of discussion, prompting an understanding of dance as the performance of movements that can be translated from one body type to another, and between bodies and objects (such as wheelchairs). In the words of Sonya, a 55-year-old non-disabled choreographer who has been working with integrated companies for fifteen years: 'It [integrated dance] really does affect you as a choreographer to *redefine* what is what. What is a gesture? And what is it to move through space?' (Interview with author, May 2014). This 'redefining' of gestures Sonya mentioned is of anthropological importance, since it contributes to a key question raised by anthropological theories of embodiment: how does one know (Parviainen 2002: 11)? As Marchand (2010a: S3) explains with reference to relations between minds, bodies, and environment: 'The majority of anthropological analyses stop short of providing satisfying explanation (or approximations) of how learning, knowing, and practice actually occur, take shape, and continually transform with situated bodies and minds'.

The heightened requirements of articulation and exploration of movement in integrated dance and of movement as defined by participants' diverse bodies allow witnessing the ways in which kinaesthetic knowing 'actually occurs and takes shape', in Marchand's words. These characteristics turn integrated dance into a 'demanding form' (Downey 2010: S22) of kinaesthetic engagement, offering an opportunity to dive into the what and the how of the ways embodied knowledge and movement practices are explored and communicated.

The second theoretical trajectory in which this case study is located is the anthropology of performance, and, more specifically, the nature of dialogical performances and the role of performance in bridging differences. The anthropology of performance has examined, among others, the role of social dialogue as a tool of critical self-reflexivity (Conquergood 1985: 10; Turner 1986: 24); recognizing cultures and persons as dynamic, creative entities (Conquergood 1989: 83); and the ways everyday and theatrical performances may bring people together and create a shared human experience (Blacking 1976: 99). Surprisingly though, disability is rarely the lens through which dance or the performance of movement is examined (see Browning 2010: 83; Geurts 2015: 163), and very little attention has been given to the lived experiences of

disabled dancers and to the meeting among disabled and non-disabled practitioners. In this article, I seek to remedy this lacuna by examining integrated dance as a meeting between people of varied bodily skills that allows learning of the role of the dialogical in human life (Taylor 1994: 33). In this, I pay special attention to the dialogue among individuals different from one another and to its role as a catalyst for the transformation of social identities. As differences among participants of integrated dance are essential to the artistic process, these collaborations develop a recognition of the role of 'intersensory interactions' (Hammer 2015: 517) in promoting dialogical encounters with disability.

The theoretical lens of dialogical performance is also helpful in explaining the reasons why integrated dance is relevant to broader studies interested in inclusion (see Allman 2013) and in what happens when individuals who are different from one another engage in shared critical reflection upon their bodily practices. Integrated dance not only brings to the fore the ways in which dialogical relations are encouraged by the presence of diverse notions of embodiment (e.g. disabled/non-disabled), but also allows rethinking the modernist notion of an individualized identity: that is, an identity formed through listening to our *inner* selves, with an emphasis on *inwardness* (Taylor 1994: 29). The awareness formed in integrated dance, on the other hand, is *intersubjective*, based on a sense of self in relation to and in relationship with the other, and is expanded by a shared exploration and practice. This allows 'rethinking the human as a site of intersubjectivity' (Butler 2008), suggesting that when people who are different from one another explore movement together, they are not only inspired but also expanded by one another, broadening their conceptualizations of, for example, what counts as human 'ability' worthiness, virtuosity, and aesthetics.

In what follows, I attend to the 'what' and the 'how' of the ways intersubjective kinaesthetic awareness is constructed within the meeting among differently abled dancers: that is, the mechanisms involved in the development of a heightened attentiveness to the nuances of movement practices residing in and reflected by one's own and other moving bodies. First, I address two aspects that comprise the 'what' of intersubjective kinaesthetic awareness: (1) *exploratory practices*, accentuated by the presence of bodily difference; and (2) *the expansion* of participants' bodily awareness and skills. I then attend to the 'how', addressing the *transmission* of intersubjective kinaesthetic awareness, examining linguistic processes and the practice of 'translation'. I conclude by arguing for the wider significance of an expanded intersubjective awareness as enhancing agents' self-expression (Marchand 2008: 261) and human consciousness, and revealing the conditions under which co-operative interaction among human bodies (Blacking 1976) may engender a productive, shared space between Otherness and normalization, the type of space Taylor (1994: 41) identified as created in the endeavour to form not a homogenized society but one that acknowledges myriad particular identities.

Exploratory practices of intersubjective kinaesthetic awareness

Participants of integrated dance described their involvement with this art as encouraging critical ruminations on questions such as: What is dance? What does it mean? How should my body be and look? What's virtuosity? What is a movement? And what is it made of? In the words of Nate, a 30-year-old non-disabled dancer in an integrated modern dance company, integrated dance functions as a catalyst for inquiry, encouraging participants to ask each other questions such as, 'What feels comfortable? Is it possible to do this? Are you able to?' (Interview with author, October 2014).

And although such questions are not exclusive to integrated dance, they are indeed accentuated when people of different abilities meet. ‘With a group of able-bodied dancers’, Nate explained, ‘there’s probably more of a “jump in and let’s try it” mentality, more so than here’.

These queries are a focal point of the exploration and problem-solving activities dancers are involved with as they search for ways of moving and partnering, revealing the crucial impact of disability in promoting dynamics of ‘figuring out’, ‘exploring’, and ‘finding’ movement ‘solutions’ and ‘possibilities’, as dancers called them. As Aujla and Redding (2013: 80) argued: ‘Art created and/or performed by dancers with disabilities can provide fresh movement material, new choreographic challenges, and provoke debate’.

Such exploratory practices are heightened in integrated dance, for several reasons. First, common associations of the disabled body as fragile and vulnerable can cause non-disabled dancers and choreographers to be concerned about hurting disabled partners.⁶ Reese, for instance, a 31-year-old non-disabled dancer in an integrated dance theatre project, described partnering with a dancer using a wheelchair as something that made her critically reflect on her movement choices. ‘I did a lot of duetting and partnering with Cristina [a power-chair user dancer]’, Reese recalled:

So, at first, I was always concerned, like, ‘Am I hurting you? Am I touching you in the right places?’ ... ‘Am I going to hurt the person? Am I going to do something that’s going to end up causing them more pain?’ ... I don’t want to damage your equipment, I don’t want to jump on your wheelchair too hard and break it (Interview with author, April 2015).

Other non-disabled dancers similarly expressed their uncertainty in partnering with disabled dancers. Nate addressed the way partnering with someone with a disability challenges notions of safety and feasibility. As he detailed:

In dancing with people with disabilities ... the idea of dancing with someone, or putting my weight on them or lifting them up, there’s hesitancy, at times, like – ‘Is this safe? Is this going to hurt this person? Do they have injuries I don’t know about?’ There are so many questions that come into ... what’s possible. What’s safe. What’s feasible, as far as movement and interaction with this person ... ‘Is it alright if I put my hand here?’ Or I’ll start to put weight [and ask] – ‘Is this too much?’

Nate’s description emphasizes how the presence of disability in a dance context invites ‘hesitancy’ regarding kinaesthetic expectations and knowledge, demonstrating what Benjamin (2002: 7) recognized, arguing that ‘when disabled and non-disabled people meet in the dance studio, especially for the first time, such feelings [of uncertainty] may be magnified’. This uncertainty, Benjamin explained, invites a mutual exploration of an ‘unknown territory’.

In addition to notions of caution and hesitancy that disability adds to dance, disability provokes exploratory practices within the creation of intersubjective kinaesthetic awareness by rethinking what Browning (2010: 83) called the ‘body proper’, suspending ‘ableist norms’ (Sandahl 2005: 255) typically structured into dance training. Such norms expect bodies participating in physical training to perform a desired standardized goal, ‘separating a dancer and his/her movements’, as one dancer said. In contrast, disability requires *individualization*, an exploration of the choreography according to each participant’s specific abilities. This was evidenced in an observation I conducted in an American integrated modern dance company rehearsal in 2015. Three dancers new to the company were studying a work that had been created a year prior for two non-disabled dancers and a wheelchair user dancer (see Fig. 2). The piece explores the



Figure 2. Axis Dance Company dancers Sonsheree Giles, Joel Brown, and Sebastian Grubb performing *Divide* by Marc Brew. (Photograph by Andrea Basile, 2014) © Axis Dance Company.

concept of minimalism, focusing on the arms, hands, shoulders, and torso, playing with angles, lines, and shapes in space (see Fig. 3).

Learning this piece posed a challenge to the trio, since Dwayne, the wheelchair user dancer, has a different type of injury in a different location in the spine, from the dancer he replaced, which meant that his range of movement, the body parts he moves, the way he uses the chair, and the areas in which he has sensation are different. While following them, I wrote in my field journal:

When Dwayne opens his arms and does the sequence of movements, he can't stretch his fingers into straight lines, and all of a sudden the shoulders get the focus. The folded fingers bring new aesthetics to the piece, and his movement from the shoulder, through the arm, to the fingertips, creates whole worlds of meaning with a new nature and quality (April 2015).

The specific ways Dwayne moves, then, not only changed the aesthetics of the piece, but also required the new dancers to re-explore, 'to solve', as they put it, how to partner and maintain the original message of the dance.

Finally, disability gives rise to exploratory practices that promote intersubjective embodied awareness because it calls into a conscious awareness participants' 'sensory self-reflexivity' (Serematakis 1996: 7). Like dancers and people in other embodied professions, people with congenital disabilities or those who have experienced an incapacitating bodily injury develop a meticulous kinaesthetic knowledge through relearning or understanding differently concepts such as range of movement and centre of gravity. Some scholars of the body (e.g. O'Donovan-Anderson 1997, cited in Parviainen 2002: 17; Sobchack 2005: 55) and many of my interlocutors described the ways having a disability challenges the taken-for-granted ease of everyday tasks such as sitting, walking, and even breathing, offering an intimacy with the body, and a concrete bodily and spatial awareness. In integrated dance, some of this awareness possessed by dancers with disability becomes available also to the non-disabled dancers collaborating with them through the diversity of bodies and movement possibilities that disabled dancers expose.

This function of bodily difference as a catalyst for exploration was evidenced in an observation I conducted in a year-long, school-based integrated contact improvisation



Figure 3. Axis Dance Company dancers Sonsheree Giles and Joel Brown performing *Divide* by Marc Brew. (Photograph by Andrea Basile, 2014) © Axis Dance Company.

project in Israel. Co-taught and directed by a dancer with and a dancer without a disability, this project consisted of weekly meetings of a group of fifteen 16-year-old high school dance students with a group of five disabled youth from the same city to create an integrated dance piece they performed at the end of the year. The fourth meeting was dedicated to what one of the two teachers, who uses a wheelchair, called ‘a sharing-weight laboratory’ in which groups of students, each including one student with a disability (two were using different types of wheelchairs, one used a walker, and one had a cognitive disability), explored different techniques of tilting, giving and sharing weight, and maintaining balance (see Figs 4 and 5). As Hai, the wheelchair user instructor explained: ‘We’ll start in a . . . kind of a laboratory of different weight sharings, so today we’ll take this issue of leaning and weight and *play* with it a bit’ (December 2016, my emphasis).

During class, the students carefully investigated what their bodies could do together, how their different centres of gravity could meet, and how to use their bodies and equipment to create balance and weight-sharing possibilities. The instructors explained



Figure 4. Dancers, choreographers, and co-founders of the integrated dance project Vertigo – The Power of Balance, Hai Cohen (who uses a wheelchair) and Tali Wertheim (on the left), instructing the ‘sharing-weight laboratory’ in an integrated dance school-based project. (Photograph by the author, 2016.)



Figure 5. Tali, the instructor (on the right), working with two students at Vertigo – The Power of Balance ‘sharing-weight laboratory.’ (Photograph by the author, 2016.)

that the goal was not to create the highest lift or the fanciest position. Rather, the purpose of this laboratory was for the students to explore their movement ‘options’, as Tali, the non-disabled instructor, called them, bringing to mind the type of ‘movement research’ taking place in Gaga, which, through an activity that increases the sensorial volume, such as a deep plie, requires dancers to search for new movement possibilities at ‘the peak of exertion’ (Katan 2016: 87).

The sharing-weight laboratory I observed, therefore, used bodily difference as a vehicle for engagement in conscientious kinaesthetic exploration by asking the students

to challenge their ‘ease of movement’. Through exploratory practices that brought to the fore the bio-mechanical and conceptual essence of pushing, pulling, falling, and leaning *as performed by different bodies*, participants became aware of the tonus of the body, of angles, intentions, of speed and momentum. Tali and Hai, having physical capacities different from one another, demonstrated varied ways of sharing weight, focusing on centre of gravity, or simply ‘centre’, as they called it, and how sharing weight among different bodies, some using wheelchairs, invites intentional exploration of what and where this centre is. For example, when working with a group of non-disabled dance students and a student who uses a wheelchair, Tali instructed them to consider the location of centre for a person using a wheelchair. ‘You start from here [pointing at the wheelchair user’s waist]’, Tali explained, ‘rather than here [pointing at her abdomen]’. This brought forth the students’ awareness of the variations in their own centres of gravity, influenced by their different heights and proportionality. As students described when I asked about what they learned in the workshop: ‘We found new ways of moving and dancing’; ‘And to use each other’s body as a source of inspiration’. The students ended class, then, with a new appreciation of bodily variety, of where their centre was and how it could be used to perform different actions, demonstrating how disability provokes exploratory practices within the creation of intersubjective kinaesthetic awareness.

Expanding bodily awareness and skills

In addition to practices of study and exploration, intersubjective kinaesthetic awareness developed in integrated dance consists of practices that expand participants’ embodied skills. According to Cassidy, a 25-year-old non-disabled dancer in an integrated dance-theatre project: ‘Partnering [with someone with a disability] has broadened what’s interesting to me in movement’ (Interview with author, April 2015). In their sharing-weight laboratory, Tali and Hai also emphasized the idea of expansion, indicating that the act of lifting in this setting should be ‘an expansion of the options that arise from the movement itself; of the spiral, of the momentum . . . It’s just an expansion of something that already exists – of listening, of touch’.

The meeting among different bodies in the context of dance broadens movement possibilities among participants into new ‘gestural routines’ (Noland 2009: 6). As Cassidy further explained in regard to partnering with someone with a disability: ‘I was experiencing the difference of weight, and where the strength was, and the balance’. Although similar to the ways practitioners of other skilled activities such as martial arts come ‘to new understandings and a deeper level of knowing’ (Dalidowicz 2015: 840), the development of new embodied knowledge through integrated dance is related specifically to the presence of different apparatus such as wheelchairs,⁷ and to varied body types. Amir, for example, a 46-year-old performer and dancer with a disability who has used a wheelchair for twelve years, addressed the wide and varied kinaesthetic awareness he has developed during the years he has been dancing in his chair. In our meetings, Amir emphasized that when he started using the chair in dancing, he discovered more kinaesthetic options. As he described:

[There are] whole worlds of how you move around with this thing [the wheelchair]. How you dance with it. In this thing there’s an entire field open for investigation and it’s incredible . . . You can dance when the chair is still, and you can use the chair as a prop, you can dance on the chair, and with the chair, all sorts of things. And how to dance with other people . . . so you discover new things all the time (Interview with author, February 2016).

In addition to the impact of apparatus such as wheelchairs, for dancers with disabilities an expansion of kinaesthetic awareness takes place owing to this art's treatment of bodily difference as a platform for the creation of new movement. Hailey, for instance, a 31-year-old dancer and teacher, described how integrated dance expanded her movement possibilities as a woman with a disability. During adolescence and as a young woman, she avoided moving, and although she was physically able to get out of her chair (e.g. she could crawl, or walk upright on her knees), she chose to be primarily sedentary in an attempt to avoid negative judgements regarding the way her body moves in space. Integrated dance, however, legitimized such motions, challenging verticality and what the dance philosopher André Lepecki (2006: 17) called acceptable notions of 'how to move on a ground', allowing her to comprehend disability as something that can be 'cool, athletic, and dynamic', as she said. '[Integrated dance] was really inspiring to me to explore more of how I can move and what I can do, rather than just kinda being like, "Well I can't walk, so I can't dance"' (Interview with author, October 2014).

Dancers without disabilities also described the expansion of their bodily awareness owing to the integrated work. Sequoia, a 37-year-old non-disabled choreographer and teacher in an integrated modern dance company, addressed the ways integrated dance allowed her to develop a new type of virtuosity and unique techniques she could not practise with other non-disabled dancers, who are 'all roughly the same build'. 'There's no new movement coming out like there is with mixed ability', she said.

I can stand on Bonnie's [a wheelchair user dancer] battery box while she goes really fast in a circle, and then stops short, and I fly off. I couldn't do that [in a contemporary dance company]. I could use that maybe as a point of departure, but it will be different (Interview with author, May 2014).

Non-disabled dancers expand their intersubjective kinaesthetic awareness also when trying out choreography made by dancers with disabilities, as in the case of dancers working with Marc, who deliberately asks non-disabled dancers to explore his materials. 'One of these things', Marc described in our interview, 'is about me giving them *my* material, you know? So of course, they're not going to be moving that way, they're taking information from a person with a physical disability, so how do they make that work for them?' Susie, a 32-year-old non-disabled dancer, described this experience, addressing the new techniques she developed by working with someone different from herself:

Depending on who you're working with; you pick up different skills. Like, I was working with this guy [a disabled dancer whose legs were amputated] who walks on his hands, and he has huge hands, he has incredibly articulate hands ... so ... you work with him for three months, and you start thinking about your own hands, and it creeps up into your own body, and you think, 'Well, actually I walk on my feet', so you start to use your feet in this way that you've seen him do it ... It's such a diverse pull of different types of movements, and if you're the kind of person who's interested in picking up bits from other people, it's such a rich pool of information (Interview with author, May 2014).

Susie also described developing 'interesting new counterbalances and spins' from working with people in wheelchairs. 'Working with ... someone who works in a wheelchair, you just have these moments of pivots and swooshes', Susie described, 'and you can try to replicate them in your own body'. Expanding bodily awareness through experimenting with different forms of embodiment (dancing on hands or wheels) serves as a type of kinaesthetic border-crossing (Sklar 1994: 19) that is also observable in religious gatherings, for example, or when otherness is bridged through 'kinaesthetic empathy' (Parviainen 2002: 20; see also Foster 2011: 10; Hammer 2015: 517;

Noland 2009: 14) and ‘shared somatic states’ (Blacking 1977: 14), in which members from different groups perform in tight collaboration, and are, to some extent, dependent on each other. In integrated dance, though, the shared experiences and the expansion of kinaesthetic techniques are based on an embodied category rather than on religious or ethnic affiliations, and are achieved through the collaboration among people with a wide variety of bodily skills.

Finally, participants with and without disabilities described expanding their bodily awareness to include a new appreciation for and practice of stillness and small motions, challenging the notion that dance should include big, lavish gestures, and shaking up the binary conceptualization of stillness and movement, as well as the social association of stillness with ‘coldness . . . illness, injury, or the absence of life force’ (Potter 2008: 459). Sonya addressed her discovery of small gestures and stillness as a choreographer working with an integrated company. She explained how she started incorporating small gestures in her choreography, rethinking movement through the performance of what Seremetakis (1996, cited in Lepecki 2006: 15) called ‘still-acts’, which, in the context of dance, is ‘a performance of suspension, a corporeally based interruption of modes of imposing flow’. ‘My work is really about relationships’, Sonya said,

So just a small gesture of reaching out to touch would be so amazing, and it [working with an integrated company] made me believe in that. I don’t need to spin, point the foot, jump; I could just have somebody lying beside you, and looking at you and take the moment to register, and that’s great. That’s where I find that a moment of stillness can be so beautiful. The intimacy of small gestures, which I could create with this [integrated] company so much . . . affected me in the sense of finding that sometimes less expresses a lot . . . I think because it [integrated dance] is more limited, it forces you to be really clear . . . like, ‘Do we really need these fingers for these certain things or do we not?’

Sonya emphasized, then, that her discovery and ‘belief’ in the artistic value of stillness, and of small, intimate gestures, is linked directly to the integrated work and the physical limitations disabled dancers work with. Similarly, an exploration of the art of small gestures was taking place in the school project I described earlier. The choreography for the end of the year performance was based mainly on the movement of folding and stretching the hands. The two teachers deconstructed the movement to its smallest segments, and asked the students to explore the simplicity of holding their hand to the side and stretching their fingers further outward. The students practised the ways body parts like the chin, the forehead, and the ears could lead a movement, becoming aware of the ways small gestures of the head and hands may be enriched. ‘I discovered the beauty of simplicity’, one of the students told me. ‘I discovered that lack of movement is not the opposite of movement’, another commented. ‘You can also move when you’re still, through breathing and touch’.

While exploratory practices and expansion of bodily knowledge described thus far constitute the ‘what’ of intersubjective kinaesthetic awareness developed in integrated dance, it is also important to ask about the ‘how’, addressing the ways it is transmitted among different bodies.

The transmission of intersubjective kinaesthetic awareness

Intersubjective kinaesthetic awareness is transmitted from one person to the other via two methods that continue former studies arguing for the ways the somatic is integrated with the semiotic and that skilled actions can be ‘parsed’ (Hammer 2017: 141; Marchand 2008: 263; Rice 2010: S54): the method known in the field as ‘translation’, and the use of what I call ‘kinaesthetic syntax’⁸

Intersubjective kinaesthetic awareness is formed among different bodies through a practice called ‘translation’ – an adaptation of movement in one body type as it is expressed in another. The practice of translation involves distilling a movement to its essence, and then transferring that essence to different locations, body parts, and ways of moving. For instance, the translation of the movement called ‘starfish’ in contact improvisation focuses on the principles of expansion and contraction of the body, like a starfish. One participant, therefore, may contract and stretch the entire body, another the hands, and another one the eyes only. Anneke, a 35-year-old education director and teacher in an integrated modern dance company, explained the ways she uses translation: ‘You’re keeping the essence of what it is that you do and you translate it to another body. It’s about analysing it [the movement] and then finding a different way of expressing it’ (Interview with author, May 2014). Anneke gave me an example of how she translates skipping, a practice I also documented in my research observations in her integrated dance classes for kids. ‘I want[ed] to . . . introduce skipping and hopping and realized that there were three students [in the class] who use a wheelchair and have actually never skipped or hopped in their whole life . . . So even for them, finding ways of translating that to their movement was hard’.

Somewhat similar to the ‘living translation’ Pritzker (2014) offered in her study of the translation of Chinese medicine into practice in the United States, the method of translation in integrated dance involves ‘both a distillation as well as expansion’ (Pritzker 2016: 150) of the concept being translated. When dancers practise and develop translation, they do not attempt to replicate the motion being translated, but aim at understanding the emotional, gestural, and physical *essence* and meaning conveyed by the movement in order to translate that into their own, unique body. In Anneke’s example, during her class she analysed the meaning and physics of skipping (e.g. hopping or jumping), and then transferred the concept to movements that could be done in a chair, or with another body part such as the head, creating a wide repertoire of body motions students could creatively choose from. ‘Find the skip or hop in your body’, Anneke instructed them. Through practising the ways in which their bodies could produce this phenomenon, students developed a kinaesthetic awareness of ‘skipping’ as a concept that can be physically expressed in various ways through a variety of body parts, understanding it as the act of producing a motion that resists then succumbs to gravity. The practice of translation developed in integrated dance adds to Pritzker’s ‘living translation’ framework the aspect of disability, which operates as a register of meaning and the catalyst behind the ambition to distil the essence of a movement and translate it through language into different bodies. Simultaneously analysing, distilling, interpreting, and expanding ‘originals’ allows ‘blending between cultural categories’ (Pritzker 2016: 153) – in this case, between the categories of abled and disabled ways of moving.

In addition to the practice of translation, linguistic processes are important within instances of intersubjective kinaesthetic exploration and practice. In these instances, practitioners create a vocabulary, a linguistic dexterity I call ‘kinaesthetic syntax’, through which they talk about bodily practices, experiences, and knowledge, bringing the somatic and the semiotic into a shared space. My interview with Vital, a 35-year-old award-winning wheelchair user dancer of Para Dance, was helpful in pointing out how kinaesthetic knowledge can be communicated with words and actions, and the ways bodily practices ‘interface with language’ (Marchand 2010b: S101). Vital explained the importance of verbal explicitness when working with people of different bodies, giving

me an example of how she communicates with her dance teacher. ‘Remember that I have a splint in my spine. And another [disabled] dancer has neck problems, and the third [disabled] dancer has no back muscles. So the three of us are conducting the same movement by using completely different muscles’ (Interview with author, December 2015).

The collaboration of people with different bodies, then, involves a discussion of the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of each motion, a verbalization of the origin of the movement and the muscles operating it. Different to the transfer of bodily knowledge among other craftspeople or people involved in physical training, though, the learning of skilled actions in integrated dance cannot occur only through watching and observing, since each of the dancers in the studio where Vital works has a different body and use of different muscles. ‘You need to be in dialogue with the dancer’, Vital emphasized: ‘A lot of time goes into learning each dancer’s body. It can take me forty minutes just to figure out how I do a turn, and how someone else does a turn, and how to make my turn faster, which would be totally different from how another makes hers faster’.

The importance of verbalizing movement and creating a shared syntax was also expressed in observations in master classes on dance pedagogy taught by instructors of integrated dance. In those observations, instructors with and without disabilities put special emphasis on methods of teaching that rely on verbalizing *and* physically demonstrating choreographic cues to students in a manner that allows everyone to apprehend the kinaesthetic concept and participate in their own way. Luca, for example, a 34-year-old professional breakdance performer, director, and teacher who uses crutches and ‘happens to have a disability’, as he says, had his American college students of dance (see Fig. 6) wear a blindfold during one part of his class so that he could demonstrate the importance of using words and movement simultaneously to convey choreographing cues such as ‘arms in the air’ or ‘cross arms’ to all students, whether or not they could see his movements.

Words, then, as Vital, Luca, and other dancers described, play a crucial role in the exploration of movement practices happening in integrated dance. The use of language,



Figure 6. Luca ‘Lazylegz’ Patuelli teaches a master class for dance students and teachers. (Photograph by the author, 2018.)

however, by no means replaces embodied experience, and does not imply that knowledge must rely on language,⁹ but indicates how a kinaesthetic syntax may be formed and used within movement study. In the context of integrated dance, dancers and teachers must communicate in ways beyond demonstration, *verbally describing* abilities, limitations, range of movement, the regions of their body that have sensation, preferred ways of partnering, and usage of apparatus. Moreover, when practitioners ask each other, for example, as one dancer described, ‘What’s your technique for engaging with someone in a chair? Do you bend over? Do you bend with? Do you match your pelvis to the centre of gravity of their chair? Or the pelvis?’ they perform ‘thick description’ (Samudra 2008: 666) and are engaged in ‘articulating’ their body work. In so doing, they conduct what Latour (2004: 206) called ‘body talk’: that is, the ‘ways in which the body is engaged in accounts about what it does’. This practice challenges not only the Western division and hierarchy (Farnell 1999: 346) of verbal and non-verbal actions, but also the notion that embodied practices may be ‘verbally inexpressible’ (Samudra 2008: 666), and that verbal explanations may interrupt the process of acquiring embodied skills.

Conclusion: Embodying kinaesthetic diversity

Observations of integrated dance and interviews with practitioners revealed that people with diverse abilities dancing together expand their intersubjective kinaesthetic awareness, resulting in a transformation and critical reflection of movement practices. This transformation, ‘a challenge of perceptions’, as Marc called it, is of broader cultural importance, for two main reasons: it offers an opportunity to look into processes of embodied knowledge making and the ways participants enhance their embodied skills; and it indicates the ways social and bodily diversity may give rise to dialogical human relations that allow understanding human abilities on a spectrum and rethinking values attached to the body, such as those perceived as normal/virtuosic/proper.

First, participants of integrated dance, through an exposure to and close collaboration with varied forms of movement, extend the what, how, and why of their kinaesthetic know-how practices. As Sequoia, a non-disabled dancer reflected: ‘It [integrated dance] helped me to own my physicality’ (Interview with author, May 2014). In this setting, ‘owning my physicality’ means developing an intersubjective bodily awareness that imbues participants with an expanded ability to articulate the kinaesthetic. This results in a wider range of expressive choices available within a richer, more sensitive world (Latour 2004: 207). The mosaic of movements that participants actively and consciously practise and explore in integrated dance, then, reveals more broadly the ways an informed use of the body is developed; ‘What happens when I learn a bodily skill?’ Parviainen (2002: 19) asked in her phenomenological study on dance knowledge. ‘I am reshaping . . . a mode of acting’. The intersubjective awareness developed in integrated dance supports Parviainen’s arguments, suggesting the ways habitual actions and skills in general, not only kinaesthetic ones, may be brought into conscious practice and exploration. This offers possible answers to questions that have accompanied anthropological research regarding the ways people ‘engage bodily in the world’ (Marchand 2008: 246), asking, for example, how, through embodied learning, people can better connect knowing and practical doing, develop mind-body relations, and acquire social knowledge, world-views, and moral principles (Marchand 2008: 246), and how art and other performative events can enhance human consciousness (Blacking 1976: 108).

Second, the centrality of bodily difference in a space where participants come into intimate, physical contact with a body different from theirs contributes to the question of accommodating otherness. As a cultural field that brings together conflicting categories and kinaesthetic experiences such as variation and unison, presence and absence, movement and stillness, integrated dance maintains an elusive cultural space between othering and normalizing. Instead of organizing ability and disability into binary categories, the exploration and expansion of kinaesthetic knowledge allows participants to construct a bricolage of bodily experiences where contradictions and variations can exist side by side, in the same body, and in the same artistic moment. The existence of such a space is not trivial, since typical social encounters with disability ask to conform it to the normative social order to reduce the ambiguity and instability associated with it as a category located between death and health, body and mind (Garland-Thomson 1997: 30), or in Douglas's (1966: 36) terms, 'a matter out of place'. Within integrated dance, disability is understood and expressed not as insufficiency, but as an additional human experience. As such, all participants can expand their bodily awareness, challenging an unequivocal distinction between disabled and non-disabled bodies in favour of more intersubjective and fluid moving selves. In this, integrated dance offers a broader model of identity-shaping through exchanges with others, not only in relation to disability, but also within theories of multiculturalism, inclusion, and symbolic boundaries of race, class, gender, sexuality, and religion, bringing the body into Taylor's (1994: 32) argument of the human mind as something that is developed in a dialogue with others. This demonstrates how dialogues that explore a realm of differences can actually take place, and how physical and symbolic space may bring together different worlds of being through an expanded conceptualization of bodily experiences.

If we go back to Broyer's (2017: 332) term mentioned in the introduction, integrated dance is not a 'dis-dance', but a type of art that takes its inspiration from the *meeting* between different bodies. This meeting allows a rejection of cultural and gestural routines (Noland 2009: 3; Noland & Ness 2008: x): a rejection of ability/disability and movement/stasis as fixed categories, and a rejection of the 'dance world movement syllabus' (Quinlan & Harter 2010: 385) that looks for whole and fit bodies, as well as of the medical model's perception of disability as a lack and deficit in need of cure, challenging what 'proper bodies' do (Browning 2010: 83). Introducing disability into the anthropology of movement and anthropology of dialogical performance, the framework of kinaesthetic diversity foregrounds disability and movement as central analytical categories for the study of both embodied knowledge and social inclusion, allowing a broader conceptualization of the slippery space in which categorization and boundaries collide.

NOTES

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¹ When quoting participants, I use an alias unless interlocutors asked to be identified by their own name. While in this article I distinguish participants mainly as disabled versus non-disabled (in accordance with their self-identification as disabled/a dancer with a disability/non-disabled/able-bodied), in my broader study I address the role of gender, religion, age, professional background, and type of disability (cognitive/physical,

congenital/acquired) in the creation of knowledge. Moreover, I detail controversies that exist within my field regarding terms such as 'disabled', 'abled', 'able-bodied', 'non-disabled', as well as 'integrated dance' versus 'mixed-abilities' or 'inclusive'.

² For a broader historical and linguistic definition of the term kinaesthesia, see Foster (2011: 73).

³ The ethnographic examples presented in this article are part of a wider anthropological study on the construction of sensory practices and disability embodiments within disability performance art in Israel and the United States. The first stage of the research took place between 2014 and 2015 in two regions of the United States with three integrated dance companies (ballet, modern dance, and dance theatre). The second stage of the research took place in Israel between 2015 and 2017 with two integrated dance projects (contact improvisation and sign-language dance theatre). In 2018 I conducted observations on a US tour of an international breakdance crew comprised of differently abled dancers, and in 2019 repeated observations in Israel. In addition to observations, the study included seventy-three interviews with sixty-three practitioners with and without disabilities (I met with eight interlocutors more than once: before, during, and after the creation of a dance piece). Interlocutors were between the ages of 19 and 68, and include twenty men and forty-three women from different dance backgrounds and nationalities. Twenty-six had congenitally or acquired disabilities of different types. Interviews with Israeli participants were conducted in Hebrew and translated into English. A comparison between different artistic genres of integrated dance and between the American and Israeli contexts is outside the scope of this article.

⁴ My 'thick participation' (Samudra 2008) in the field was multifaceted, including a 'physical merging of theory and practice, scholarship and participation' (Crosby 1997: 70). It was expressed through a range of theoretical and practical activities, including asking participants how they learned to dance in an integrated context; comparing how integrated dance is practised in different locations and genres; taking a class in performance studies theory; reading books on dance ethnography; learning to think of what I eat and drink from a dancer's perspective; trying out wheelchairs and crutches in the studio; and negotiating concepts such as ability and disability within my moving body.

⁵ For a theoretical background of the anthropology of the moving body, see Csordas (1993: 135); Farnell (1999: 341); Marchand (2008: 246).

⁶ While the view of the disabled body as fragile represents stigmas that associate disability with dependency, weakness, and lack, dancers with disabilities may indeed injure themselves owing to conditions that accompany specific disabilities, such as calcium deficiency, which makes bones more fragile when carrying weight, or lack of sensations in different body parts. This, once again, requires exploring each body individually when dancing together.

⁷ An elaborated discussion of the role of objects in integrated dance and of what I call 'human-non-human translation' is outside the scope of this article.

⁸ I offer an additional interpretation of translation elsewhere (Hammer forthcoming), focusing on the framework of cultural translation, and discussing the practice of distilling a movement to its essence, the use of objects in translation practice, and its political aspects. Yet, the additional analysis does not pay specific attention to linguistic processes and to kinaesthetic syntax.

⁹ As Marchand (2009: 126) explains: 'Research with athletes, dancers, and craftspeople confirms that knowing extends beyond propositions that are thought and expressed in words. Human knowledge necessarily includes ways of knowing that are thought and expressed in action and skilled performance'. By discussing the method of 'kinaesthetic syntax', I embrace Sheets-Johnstone's (2011: 427) call to avoid binding thinking exclusively to language. Rather, I discuss the integration of the linguistic with the kinaesthetic as a method of transferring bodily knowledge that *relies on* bodily exploratory practices and expansion of movement.

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Élargir la conscience intersubjective : anthropologie de la diversité kinesthésique

Résumé

Quand des personnes présentant des caractéristiques physiques diverses collaborent pour danser ensemble, une exploration et une communication du mouvement et du savoir incorporé se produisent par le dialogue et la pratique partagée. La participation à ces activités développe la sensibilité à la complexité kinesthésique et l'appréciation des incorporations différentes, favorisant ainsi la compréhension de la différence physique et enrichissant le domaine des arts physiques et la société dans son ensemble au lieu d'en éloigner. Sur la base d'un travail de terrain mené en Israël et aux États-Unis, dans des projets de danse intégrés réunissant

des personnes sans handicap et handicapées, l'analyse ethnographique présentée dans cet article prolonge l'étude anthropologique des moyens par lesquels est favorisée la connaissance kinesthésique (conscience et connaissance du mouvement et de l'orientation dans l'espace de son corps). En introduisant le handicap dans la théorie du mouvement, l'autrice offre une compréhension du mouvement et de la stase comme un éventail de manières de bouger, et observe ce qui se passe quand des personnes différentes les unes des autres participent à une réflexion critique partagée sur leurs pratiques motrices.

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