

Exploring the positionalities of dancer, choreographer and editor in screendance from the perspective of surveillance

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Abstract

This paper is a self-review and reflection of a screendance choreographic project, arguing that screendance is an art form that invites surveillance. Surveillance, seen as a power of watching, was distributed to three positionalities (choreographer, dancer and video editor, all encapsulated in an individual with only one exception) in managing the choreography, dance and video editing. This power of watching was embedded in the relationship between watching through camera lenses and the positionalities. The analysis of panopticon and synopticon was later applied to extend the idea of self-surveillance and the viewer society in the screendances, respectively. Also, these screendances brought insight into the power negotiations of positionalities during the choreographic process. And this decentralisation of control will also be discussed in the paper.

Keywords: Screendance, surveillance, choreography, dance, positionality

Introduction

The screen is everywhere and people have never stopped staring at it, watching it, especially when gulping for stimulation on social media. On-screen are the movements of images capturing narratives and poetics that are an open invitation for the viewers' experience. So, there is no surprise when the number of screendance creations (professionally or casually) soars during the year-long global lockdown. It is one of the ways to stay connected and for artists to continue their artistic investigations. However, they often required the collaboration of multiple authorial perspectives. It inevitably called for gazes, scrutiny and, specifically, surveillance to be appropriated in the creation process. Hence, this writing reflects how surveillance is epitomised in the three-pronged positionalities of choreographer, dancer and video editor when creating

screendance. My (the first author) analysis will be based on a project entitled *Eye See*, and the two screendances that were created for this project. These two works, "It Doesn't Go Away" and "Now You See Me", dealt with self-surveillance and the exploration of surveillance from multiple positionalities in work, respectively.

Screendance can come in many forms. "It is the art of filmmaking that translates the liveliness of dance" (Rosenberg, 2006, p.13). Pottratz (2016) defined screendance as "a moving image work, where the content, combined with the technical and creative language of cinema", has its choreographical intention (p.182). There is an established relationship between the bodies, movements, camera sequencing, and subsequent edits in creating a screendance. However, I would like to argue that screendance is an art form that makes surveillance possible, conveying the power of watching to the positionalities involved in this project. Since the global lockdown, camera lenses have been bringing continual images into one's living room. I felt that it was appropriate to create a project that reflected the involuntary overdose of camera lens use, eventually promoting the idea of surveillance. So, even though physical rehearsals and video shootings were impractical during the lockdown, the process of working through camera lenses would help contemplate the situation.

When it comes to surveillance, the image of a person watching behind some monitors comes into my mind. This person could pause, playback, zoom in or ponder over the images. That is immense power for one to hold and select what to watch. More importantly, this person, from different positionalities, would be watching during the process of making screendance. According to Manlove (2007), the gaze is used to elaborate on the hierarchical power relations between two or more groups. This visual nature and the power of watching change places from time to time. The seemingly contained various layers of power would gradually spill out throughout the creative process. Each position has its bull's eyes to hit but also compromises to make. This paper intends to discuss the negotiation within different positionalities, exploring their power of surveillance through the making of screendances.

"Eye See"—The Production

Eye See was a double-bill screendance production inspired by the current global lockdown, and the title was intended to be a play of words for "I see". The multifold of "I" watched and negotiated in the different layers of positionalities, and the eyes were more than just the visual system in the human body. The two works in the double bill were "It Doesn't Go Away" and "Now You See Me". The duration for the former was 9 minutes and 16 minutes 30 seconds for the latter. It was live-streamed on Cloud Theatre, an online platform, free of charge, with the requirement of ticket RSVP on the platform itself. The digital performance was presented on 23rd April 2021, at 8.30 pm.

"It Doesn't Go Away" was my solo, and it was also choreographed and edited by myself. This solo was an attempt to extend the idea of self-surveilling my mundane personal life during the lockdown. It was almost like a journal, self-surveilling my state of mind from time to time. This was achieved by using everyday objects such as water and glass, not only for their symbolic undertones but also for their direct connection to surveillance. The camera lens brings light to a fixed focal point to create images; the refraction of light, passing through water and glass, also formed images, albeit bent or

altered (see Figure 1). This, to me, was another form of watching for all three different positionalities. The choreographer had a chance to re-examine her ways of watching instead of just focusing on the camera. The dancer was able to explore more possibilities in connecting the movements to the images. In the end, the editor watched the multiple states of mind proposed by the choreographer and selected the clips that expressed the theme the most. Surveillance is seen in many fields of study. And from the psychology point of view, the concept of self-surveillance could be used to see and discuss this screendance from the perspectives of different positionalities.



Figure 1. Refraction, screenshot from “It Doesn’t Go Away” (Tan Bee Hung’s personal collection).

"Now You See Me" was an attempt to look at the readiness of the contemporary world in accepting social media gazes with basically nothing to fall back on. This work was created together with five dancers. The main element in this work was the relationship amongst the dancers, the camera lenses and the act of seeing from the three-pronged positionalities. Dancers would perform in spaces intimate to themselves but were able to make decisions more arbitrarily. Even though they had such decisive power, it was a power that could be negotiated, specifically through the camera lenses and also the editing, betraying this power ruthlessly. In addition to the end goal of creating a screendance, this work also invited the dancers to participate in the watching (Figure 2). I found the dancers' intense gaze at the camera very captivating. It highlighted the movements of the eyeball and the focus we gave in watching. Hence, Figure 2 was choreographed so that the dancers would stare at the camera simultaneously. I, as the choreographer, however, would stare back at them but hidden in the background. Both works were motivated by the mundane life during the global lockdown. What strikes me is that the creation of this project took many acts of seeing. These acts revealed a



kind of surveillance. Hence, I argue that screendance is a form of surveillance, and positionalities were crucial in mapping the power negotiation during the creative process.

Figure 2. Participating in the watching, screenshot from “Now You See Me” (Tan Bee Hung’s personal collection).

Screendance: An Invitation to Surveillance

Rosenberg (2012) suggested that screendance is an extensive term, and it entails all forms of dance and non-dance choreographies created to be mediated through all forms of screens (p.3). However, there is yet a hard and fast criterion for a definition of screendance. In order to put a frame for this screendance project, Pottratz's (2016) definition of screendance as "a moving image work, the content of which has the choreographic compositional intention, combined with the technical and creative language of cinema" (p. 182) was adopted. In addition, screendance also “facilitates a reconstruction of space and time not possible in the theatre alone” (Preston, 2006, p.82). It is an art form that invites interdisciplinary collaboration. It is a conversation amongst the choreography of the dancing bodies and camera lenses, the site, the music and the editing. The motions of the dancing bodies and the camera lenses helps deliver the visual experience to the viewers. It holds power to decide what the viewers could ultimately watch.

To tie screendance to surveillance theory, White (2017) has written extensively on how screendance might invoke voyeurism in the act of viewing surveillance (p. 29). White (2017) postulated that "screendance manipulates the aesthetics of surveillance as a means of setting up viewers to feel as though they are watching unsuspecting, anonymous people" (p. 34). Perampalam (2014) also asserted that surveillance and voyeurism co-exist (p. 227). It is "an ongoing exposure of intimacy” that “emerges with images of daily life" through various mediums (Perampalam, 2014, p. 216). With

that in mind, I propose that the choreography of the camera lenses, the framing and composition, and the editing technique could create the impression of surveillance. This impression was made possible by the power of watching held by these different positionalities. I imagine a person standing behind monitors watching whenever it comes to surveillance. And this person would be able to zoom in, playback, delete, duplicate, recreate. When it comes to this screendance project, this manipulation of power was controlled by the different positionalities. Even though they might practise their power differently, the choreographer, dancers and editor had their respective places in surveillance.

Surveillance: The power of watching

The idea of the panopticon conceptualised by Foucault (1977) actually began with Bentham's architectural panopticon, which was the first model for the ideal prison. Foucault later looked into it from the perspectives of surveillance and discipline. The panopticon or prison-panopticon was created to centralise surveillance. Under this centralised surveillance apparatus, the subjects perceive they are being watched, although they would not know when. It is a situation where the few are watching the many. Foucault (1977) wrote that "visibility is a trap" and that "invisibility is a guarantee of order" (p. 200). "Visibility" refers to those being watched, and "invisibility," the watchers, establishing a relationship with the former where they have more of the power. The characteristic of watching from the centralised tower was much the same as surveillance, watching behind the monitors. Screendance carried a somewhat similar trait as seeing behind the monitor, affecting the correlation of visibility and invisibility. Furthermore, the watching in screendance is carried out not only by the watchers but also through the medium of the camera, which represents another pair of eyes watching.

In the contemporary world, the availability of camera eyes encourages the rampant act of watching. It is through the camera's mechanical eyes that surveillance comes into the frame. Vertov (1984) famously wrote, "I am kino-eye, I am a mechanical eye. I, a machine, show you the world as only I can see it" (p. 17). He then elaborated on the idea of the kino-eye as "kino-eye = kino-seeing (I see through the camera) + kino-writing (I write on film with the camera) + kino-organisation (I edit)" (p. 87–88). This idea of kino-eye highlights the manifold "eyes" or I's in this screendance project. Vertov (1984) intended his camera eyes to be objective through and through, as the kino-eye did not discriminate. However, the eyes behind the camera lenses could always be subjective, as these eyes hold the power of watching. To break it down would mean that the choreographer positionality saw the movements through the camera (kino-seeing); the dancer interprets the narratives of the work (kino-writing), and the editor uses her editing knowledge and instinct to edit (kino-organisation). The reason behind using Vertov's concept was for the multiple layers that he laid out in capturing images. Just like the three-pronged positionalities in this screendance project, each positionality embodies its own power of watching.

Within this power of watching, Vertov's kino-eye concept encouraged a form of collaboration and distributed the power of creating a screendance to these three positionalities. It is irrefutable that collaboration is vital in any creative process. Whilst each creative positionality has its responsibilities, it is often fluid. The three positionalities understood and acknowledged their responsibilities, but they often worked independently

and interdependently. In "It Doesn't Go Away", each positionality was self-surveilling in her own capacity. The choreographer composed the scores for the screendance, but was optimistic in looking for possibilities in the dancer and editor's interpretation of the scores. Vertov's kino-eye model laid out the power distribution; however, it could not hold itself in today's world when technology allowed the overlapping of power. For example, the editor could "re-write" what was written by adding effects (see Figure 3) in the screendance. Figure 3 shows the video clip before and after the editor added the fish-eye effect for a more unsettling mood. "Now You See Me" sees this concept dispersed even more because of the dancers' decisions in their movements as well as the camera angles. Their decision would destabilise the model wherein the kino-eye became subjective. The choreographer's score could be altered and could be interpreted differently by the dancers. Figure 4 sees that two dancers interpreted dancing closer to the ground and low differently. Figure 4 sees that two dancers interpreted dancing closer to the ground and low differently. Hence, this concept addressed the importance of understanding one's role but could become fluid because the kino-eye is ultimately controlled by the human eye.

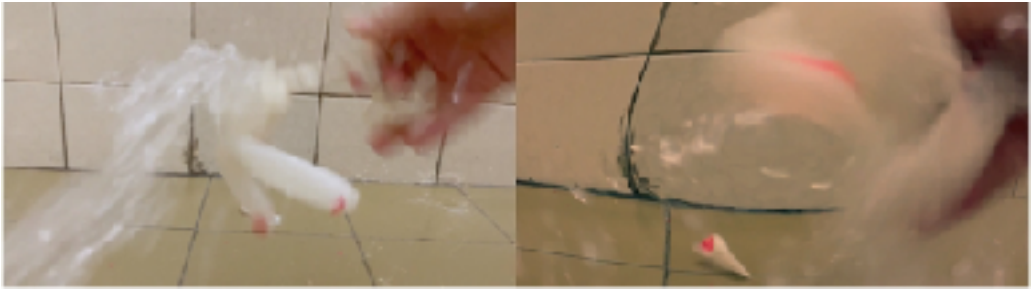


Figure 3. Before (picture to the left) and after (picture to the right) the fish-eye effect. Adding this effect gave out a more unsettling mood to the work, from "It Doesn't Go Away" (Tan Bee Hung's personal collection).

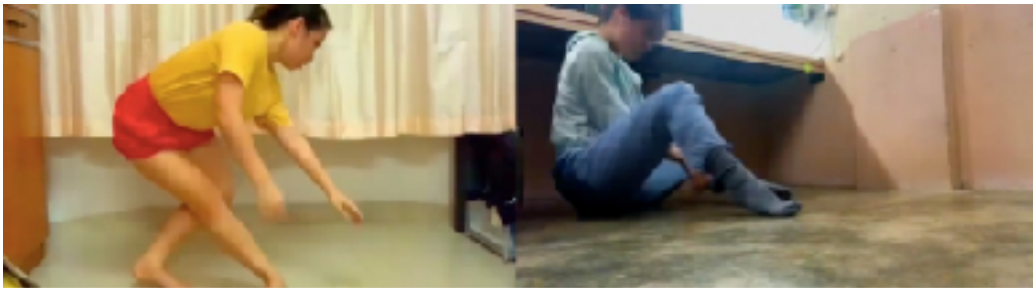


Figure 4. Different interpretation by the dancers. Dancers' task was to find a corner and create a sequence. One chose a corner of the room; the other dancer chose under the table. Screenshot from "Now You See Me" (Tan Bee Hung's personal collection)

Modern mass media has definitely changed the ways of seeing. It has literally changed how we see and react to images. Today, surveillance can come in many different forms. It used to be the powerful few watching the weary many. But now, instead of just being passive watchers, the users have the power to share themselves in the digital space. It was what Mathiesen (1997) foresaw in modern technologies. Centralised surveillance has shifted power to the many seeing the few (Mathiesen, 1997). With a swipe on the device, access could be granted to any space or place the viewer wants to reach. If Foucault's panopticon looked at the surveillance gaze imposed by the few people who were in control, today, the position shifted to those who were used to being watched. Surveillance is tightly knitted to technology, and the same goes for screendance. Since screendance can now be streamed online using different social media platforms, this has shifted the power of who is watching and who is allowed to watch such an act.

Self-surveillance in "It Doesn't Go Away"

In this work, I intended to look at screendance from the perspective of self-surveillance. This extends from the idea of surveilling the mundane life of lockdown, and it was choreographed, performed and edited solely on my own. It was almost like a journal, self-surveilling my state of mind from time to time. The movement and the dancing body was crucial to the journaling. In fact, I was inquisitive of my physicality and mentality during the entire period of lockdown. Hence, screendance was used to conduct such self-surveillance. This is mainly because there is an internalisation of gaze in surveillance. Foucault's panopticon touches on the internalisation of gaze by pointing out that the many would regulate their own behaviour while being watched (Vaz & Bruno, 2003; Goodyear, Kerner & Quennerstedt, 2017). Also, today's technology is "not aimed at the other, but at the self" (Bay-Cheng, 2014, p.51). The self or users may also voluntarily participate in self-disclosure and self-monitoring. What this meant in my screendance project was that both self-surveillance and self-disclosure has prepared me for a solid platform in exploring the screendance. All was made possible through the camera lenses.

I find Rosenberg's (2006, p. 13) description of the camera as "carnal, predatory nature" very apt in revealing that the camera does more than just galvanise the dancing on screen; the act of looking through the camera preys on the self on screen. During the rehearsals, previews and the dance shooting, I was fully aware that I was recorded and viewed repeatedly after the shooting. The viewing was only by myself and with a closed group of people. But the dancing body was also portrayed in the way it wanted to be seen, knowing that the screendance will be shared online ultimately. "Viewing" may be a milder word to describe the act of watching; I was more "monitoring" and "observing" compulsively everything that took place in the recording. However, despite the contrast, the process of monitoring and observing were part of Foucault's analysis of the panopticon. There were three elements in the panopticon power, and they are revelation, normalisation and examination. I attempted to use these three elements to look at the surveillance of my dance recording. So, surveilling the dance recording is a form of revealing (surveillance) during the creative process. The process



would not be complete without the dance recording, and through this form of normalisation (the documentation), that examination (discipline) could be executed. These



mechanisms were essential in the creation process, particularly when the creation cadre was solely limited to me.

Figure 5. Moving with the camera, screenshot from “It Doesn’t Go Away” (Tan Bee Hung’s personal collection)

Figure 6. Low camera angles, screenshot from “It Doesn’t Go Away” (Tan Bee Hung’s personal collection)

The element of surveillance was also deeply embedded in the choreography of the camera lens and movement. It would then affect how each positionality views or surveils the work. As mentioned, "It Doesn't Go Away" was mainly about self-surveillance. Here, apart from the images on screen, surveillance was also possible in the refraction. This refraction stirred different sentiments of surveillance in the three positionalities. The choreographer in me was able to find a new perspective of looking at myself. But then again, it also felt like a recollection of my entire lockdown experience. Only that now the experience was brought into solidified images, a form of documentation, and was exciting for the dancer, me. Movements were then choreographed to allow for the refraction to be captured.

Nonetheless, this refraction did not mean anything when I was dancing, for it was impossible for me to see the entire image. For the editor in me, it was an electrifying find. Adding editing effects like zooming into the refraction assumed some additional forms of visceral and emotional impact. To enable this, I needed to plan and organise my movements in relation to the camera lens. Since I was videoing myself without a videographer, the camera was often static. Hence, the editor took charge and used editing techniques to overcome this issue. Another means for me to overcome this issue was to literally dance with the camera. It was also one of the ways to echo the theme of the screendance. I would hold the camera in my hands and include it as part of the movement. It was almost like scanning through the body using the camera, surveilling and examining myself using a moving camera (see Figure 5).

Since the smartphone is the ultimate go-to device for video recording and sharing on social media, it was a snap decision to shoot both my screendances using the device. It was also the most straightforward method to document my efforts in making the works. The recording of the rehearsals was a revelation in the many layers of surveillance. Considering that I was the dancer and videographer for "It Doesn't Go Away", the smartphone camera and the laptop (after the transfer of the recordings) were there to record for me to analyse the electronic documentation later. Only through that was I, as choreographer, able to correct or troubleshoot the choreography of movement and camera lens. I also avoided high and bird's eye view camera angles intentionally. These angles often led to the impression of unwanted supervision, which was not the motive for this work. The camera angles were low and close to me most of the time (see Figure 6). Later, I, as editor, chose to zoom in even further to enhance the sense of surveillance. Another perhaps noteworthy discovery was how I, as dancer needed to pay attention to the screen, sometimes using the front camera to shoot, worrying that my dancing had gone outside the frame. Needless to say, it slowly became an obsession to look at the screen during the recording of the dance; it then became a form of reflection. This repeated process prodded the realisation that the making and the final product of screendance were subject to even more surveillance and examination later. That is to say, surveillance is no longer limited to grainy black-and-white images. The watchful eye of surveillance has indeed shifted to the technologies in our hands.

The Synopticon in “Now You See Me”

While the main idea of "Now You See Me" was a reflection on the rampant use of social media, it was indeed the concept of viewer society raised by Mathiesen (1997) that attracted me to this form of surveillance. Extending from Foucault's Panopticon, Mathiesen (1997) wrote that today's modern mass media has changed the surveillance landscape. He considered Foucault's panopticon insufficient in understanding today's technology and surveillance; hence he developed the concept of a viewer society, the synopticon. Mathiesen (1997) put forth that the synopticon is composed of visual elements with many people watching together (p. 219). However, the nature of watching and being watched was distinct to the panopticon. Instead of being surveilled, people can indeed expose themselves to be surveilled. It became a voluntary act of one's sharing of personal space. The watching is now expanded to the many watching the few, where the few are the ones who share their personal images on social media. Captivated by this idea of viewer society, I invited a few dancers to join me for a screendance exploration by creating a small circle of the viewer society.

The rehearsal process for "Now You See Me" relied heavily on the camera lens. And this is because most of the rehearsals were mainly held over Zoom. Zoom is the leader in modern enterprise video communications, with an easy, reliable cloud platform for video and audio conferencing, chat, and webinars across mobile, desktop, and room systems. One of the requests during these online rehearsals was for the dancers to keep their cameras on. So, my primary task was to keep my eyes on the dancers on-screen; and edit the dance on the screen. It was a one-way point of view, surveilling the dancers' movements and their living space. There was a sense of intimacy, yet the thought of intruding on the dancers' space was even more prevalent in my observation. The watching was essential because it was the only way to decide if their movements were suitable or whether the camera angle was coherent with the narratives.

Furthermore, it also created an ecology of the viewer society. When the dancers left their cameras on during rehearsals, it almost resembled a live-stream event on social media, which is not dissimilar to the viewer society. However, the dancers might decide to leave the synopticon halfway through the rehearsals. There were many other reasons that the dancers needed to switch off their cameras, but it is important to note that this is precisely the power that users in the viewer society have. When this happened, the choreographer (me) lost her power to watch and instead needed to wait for the dancers to start sharing again. Another example for the application of the synopticon was the availability of the 'hide self-view' function on Zoom. Some rehearsals needed to be recorded on Zoom, and this function gave a full demonstration of surveillance in action. In this event, I (as the choreographer) would hide my self-view so that the recording only captured the dancers. The dancers would not see me, and often they would ask if I was still in the session with them. It was in this sort of moment that I could acknowledge the prerequisite of surveillance. And it had to be reminded that this was made possible for the screendance production.

"Now You See Me" felt more like a contest between the choreographer and editor. Since the initiating motive for this work was to create an environment that produced a biosphere for synopticon, it was natural for the choreographer in me to want to connect to the phenomenon as faithfully as possible. Many live streams happened at home, and it

was something that I would like to replicate. Hence, when the dancers sent in their individual videos recorded from home, I, the choreographer, intended to include them the way they were in the screendance. I felt that it was a form of staying true to the situation. However, the editor in me disagreed. Instead of editing the dancers' videos, one by one, they were collaged together. Figure 7 is a collage of dancers performing the same set of movements. One of the issues that the editor had was the lack of an ensemble dance in the screendance. Hence, while the choreographer was satisfied with the individual video placed side by side, the editor found that the aesthetics of putting together a screendance outstripped the mere raw videos provided by the dance



Figure 7. Piecing up videos, screenshot from “Now You See Me” (Tan Bee Hung’s personal collection)

Again, it needed to be emphasised that the experience of creating the work in a viewer society was crucial for the choreographer. In "Now You See Me", the choreographer expects to fully view the dancers' working processes. Camera angles and movements were also carefully planned by the choreographer to match the dancers' movements and spaces. The fact that the choreographer was denied the ability to watch when the dancers decided to switch off the camera also affected her surveillance power. On the other hand, the editor did not have to participate in the same environment as the choreographer. During the editing, the editor in me was really watching only for the relevant footage. She did not make assumptions about the outcomes. All she needed was to ensure that she could exercise her surveillance power to organise the screendance. Therefore, the first-hand experience in a viewer society was not as critical for me at this editing stage.

Positionalities in Screendance Production

To me, surveillance represented a kind of power in seeing. And indeed, there are many ways surveillance can be implemented in screendance. Creating a screendance requires the forces of many parties, meaning that screendance often works with multiple authorial perspectives (Blades, 2017, p. 93), and one is usually a collaboration of the choreographer, dancer, videographer and sound artist. Whenever there is a collaboration, there are different views in such undertaking. These different views, imploring for power negotiation in the works, serve as a form of subjectivity, creating a possible hierarchy in the works created for this project. For "It Doesn't Go Away", I had to assume three different responsibilities, ranging from choreographer to dancer to video editor. "Now You See Me" saw me choreographing and editing, with five other dancers responsible for the movements and video recording.

The global lockdown in response to Covid-19 made the three-pronged positionalities in one individual feasible since the working nature of screendance production changed. And this working nature allowed for the work to contain full authorship. Inspired by Blades (2017), I equated making a screendance on one's own to a portrait painted by an artist. "Portrait," explained Blades (2017), "denote a visual image in which an artist has set out to represent a particular person or group" (p. 94). But I was also interested in the idea of self-portrait, where "it is an image constructed of oneself by oneself" (Blades, 2017, p. 94). A portrait is when there is a collaboration within a group of people, where the work could carry the voices of the first and third persons. However, a self-portrait narrows down the authors' narratives, giving full authorship to a single entity. I attempted to bring this argument into both of my screendances, sifting the different weights that each voice carried into the creative process. At no point will I claim that screendance can be form entirely from one voice; however, just as Blades (2017) postulated, how much weight does one have in screendance if it was to be compared to a painter painting on a canvas. How much of the "paint" belongs to these three different positionalities in this entire single piece of work? One can't remain objective for the whole process, but the power structure in the process can deem one voice to be more dominant over another. My positionalities changed from time to time depending on the situation that I was in. I could see my signature in one of the screendances, but I pondered over the weight of authorship in "Now You See Me".

Negotiation of Positionalities in *Eye See*

'How does one mediate within oneself' was a question that lingered throughout the process while making *Eye See*. In this project, I came up with the narrative, the choreography, the movements, did the editing, also I constantly reasoned with my multiple selves whenever there was the need to decide. This ongoing negotiation highlighted the subjectiveness of each entity, since each envisioned their goals differently. While each positionality has its own responsibility, there was a hierarchy waiting to be deciphered. The positionalities in this project carried the first and third-person perspectives. These perspectives would determine the ultimate authorial viewpoint. Therefore, answering the question earlier was vital.

Positionality is critical in this research. Identifying one's position in the study helps to shape a particular research insight (Qin, 2016, p. 1). In this screendance project, I have

positioned myself as a choreographer, dancer and video editor. These three-pronged positionalities have impacted many decision-making processes during the production. There were moments where the positionalities needed to take its merry-go-round turn, hopping from insider to outsider perspectives. However, the "self-monitoring of, and a self-responding to, our thoughts, feelings and actions" could help assure impartiality in this project (Corlett & Mavin, 2018, p. 377). In different positionalities, therein lies different reflexivities. These reflexivities had helped to reorganise and realign my thought processes. Also, the study of positionality concerns visibility and power politics (Morrison, 2015, p. 127). And this goes hand-in-hand with surveillance theory, in which the power of watching is immensely enmeshed. Therefore, I will be looking at the power that each positionality has, with respect to its insider perspective.

Here in this project, the choreographer seemed to be at the top of the hierarchy. She would need to look into the artistic and technical sides of the performance. In *Eye See*, there was more than just the choreography of the dancing bodies. It was also essential to look at the choreography of the camera lenses. Both needed an equal amount of focus to meet the project's brief. As a choreographer in both works in this project, I had to concentrate on the big picture to make things right. The surveillance and power in watching were some of the points in question calling for answers. The power of watching was apparent in this project due to the nature of the working process. Camera lenses were the primary medium in the project; they were utilised to watch the dancers, video the dancers, and surveil the space and time during the rehearsals. Since there was no videographer in the project, I had to control and decide where the camera should be placed. The dancers would need to open up part of their personal space to me to observe the choreography of the camera lenses.

However, since the dancers were involved in the dance, they too had their first-person perspectives. While the choreographer in me could suggest or communicate the overall choreography plan to the dancers, any sort of movement research could undermine this plan. Dancers are not just a tool in dance. They come with their body, presence, energy, aesthetics, ideology. Thus, the dance work may be choreographed, but the dancers would have left their interpretive traces regardless. Hence, this project endeavoured to reflect on the assertion of a possible convergence of the first-person perception. Even though the choreographer would have held most of the power in the creative process, when the task landed on the dancer's brief, it became the dancer's vision in the end. This was evident when I danced in "It Doesn't Go Away", I would always detract from the choreographer's instruction during the rehearsals. It was not on purpose, but the body would spontaneously ransack its past experiences and then react to the choreographer's narrative. The same goes for "Now You See Me", where things were even more challenging because each dancer had their own interpretation of my words. The choreographer's first-person perspective was further reduced when dancers approached the camera lenses differently from what I asked.

Visibility of the dancers was very much needed during the rehearsals and video shooting. This was difficult to achieve when everybody worked with different tools. Switching on and off cameras happened very frequently during the rehearsals. In addition to this, dancers also had the ability to video themselves after the rehearsal sessions ended. This indirectly resulted in the disappearance of visibility; the idea of having the dancers join me to create a synopticon habitat vanished. It would not be possible for

me to continue my observation on screen. With that said, the choreographer still had the power to decide what should go into the final work. Yet, it was contentious to say whether it was entirely the choreographer's self-portrait.

One of the intentions of this project was to look at how screendance could be created during the lockdown. This would include doing everything myself. The task to edit was very much like choreographing. That includes organising, utilising the mind of imagination, and deciding what was needed in the final product. Editing and choreographing all on my own, at times, felt like it was a play of power-sharing. While being a dancer gave a certain degree of authorial perspective, the dancer's responsibility ended when the shooting ended. That said, the positionality as a video editor was somewhat similar to the role of the choreographer. According to Pearlman (2006), who has written extensively on editing as a form of choreography, the similarities include how they shape the physical movements, emotions and story. Being an editor, in this case, was liberating because I was able to use my intuition to unfold the images and movements in ways still relevant to the theme. My positionality as the video editor was devoid of the filmmaker's principles and limitations. I felt all right to work with my preferences and aesthetics without being susceptible to any editing doctrine.

However, conflicts could arise between the choreographer and the editor. There was always room for either one to dominate, possibly removing the choreographer's prime authorial voice. In a screendance-making process, the editor usually came in later when most of the video resources were compiled. With the materials in hand, the editor could then confer with the choreographer on the direction of the work. However, the role of the editor came into the picture at a very early stage in this project. My role as the choreographer and video editor changed from time to time. Therefore, even at the very early stage of the choreography, the editor started to work on any videos available. In fact, both of them worked side by side most of the time whenever there were videos available. Most of the time, the editor would know better about what a screendance should be delivering. The editor would better understand the suitable transition, or perhaps what colour tones could present the atmosphere in the dance. While I might not have the proper knowledge on how editing works, but being instinctual, watching loads of screendances, studying and researching for the possibilities gave me the necessary courage to do works that would represent my statements. But then again, it was also necessary to pay attention to the choreographer's instinct. The choreographer would also be able to understand what movements would fit into a screendance. It really felt like a tug of war during the working process.

The different layers of surveillance in this choreographic research project see the power shifts in the parties involved. First, the choreographer surveilled the dancers by watching them through the camera lenses. But power sometimes shifted to the dancers, who had the power to be surveilled or otherwise. So, as suggested above, the power of watching was unstable, and it could be negotiated. Also, a choreographer had her say when laying out the theme and concept for the work; she would continue to watch and control the direction of the choreography, including the editing before the screendances were finalised. But then again, since the editor had more say in the final outcome of this project, the choreographer would need to surrender some of her power.

Conclusion

This project found that there was surveillance in the panopticon and synopticon in making screendance. The power of watching could never be overlooked, especially from the three-pronged positionalities. Working as a choreographer, editor and dancer in one of the pieces amplified my understanding of authorship. This, to me, was crucial. The recent lockdown encouraged one to make everything, including choreographing, editing, and dancing on one's own. But it was difficult not to look at the hierarchy of power when creating the screendances. I needed to examine how I could mediate these positionalities, while observing the event of destabilised power at play in the screendance arena. "Now You See Me" saw the ecology of synopticon's surveillance created within the screendance creative process. "It Doesn't Go Away" saw the constant power negotiation even though it was only within me. The hierarchy in making the screendance meant that there is still a need to decide who has the ultimate power. In this current screendance project, being an editor gave me slightly more power than being a choreographer. A lot of the decisions were being decided in the role of the editor. However, I also felt that I could trust my choreographer's intuition to end the screendance project. All in all, creating a screendance all on one's own would give the maker a deeper understanding of how far one can push her artistic direction. Looking at this screendance project through different positionalities gave me more clarity and insight into how the works should be.

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