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**“IT’S ALL OF THESE PUZZLE PIECES.”:  
THE REPRESENTATION AND THE MANIFEST DISCOURSE OF DYSLEXIC  
EXPERIENCE**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy  
In  
Social Anthropology**

At  
Massey University  
Auckland, New Zealand

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**2016**



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## ABSTRACT

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Dyslexia as a term to define bodies has undergone various interpretations in the 120 years since it was first diagnosed (Shawitz 1996:98). The numbers of people calculated as dyslexic world wide ranges from 1 in 4 to 1 in 10 reflecting confusion about what dyslexia actually is, as well as issues around how people are diagnosed (Elliot and Grigorenko 2014:31-34). Research about dyslexia has happened in a variety of fields including education, psychology, and medicine but anthropology has been predominantly silent in the discourse of dyslexia. This thesis explores dyslexia from an anthropological perspective as embodied experience and expression through worlding. Through working collaboratively with people with dyslexia it explores intersubjective relationships, language expression, sensory awareness and being-in-the-world. A central part of this exploration was using art as a way to understand knowing (Rapport and Harris 2007, Hogan and Pink 2010), which expanded into explorations of how dyslexics attune sensory knowing and pay attention to all of the experiences of everyday life. Using art as an empathetic ethnographic invitation I discuss and explore dyslexia as a way of knowing and moving through the world. Therefore, I focus on dyslexia beyond a diagnosis into the way people inhabit and negotiate their experiences as complex, creative agents in their lifeworlds. The research covers creation of artworks, making new words to represent dyslexic experiences and many discussions late into the night. It has been a collaborative exploration of experience. From discussions of whether Giraffes need scarves through to declarations of “we are iron man” my collaborators have expressed their ways of being-in-the-world and this thesis engages with their dynamic ways of interpreting and knowing the world.



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## Acknowledgements

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As with any PhD mine has been a path of discovery, crossing pathways with some incredible people, and finding new ways to think about the world. I am so grateful to everyone who has educated and supported me along the twisting, unusual, path that my research has taken.

Firstly I would like to thank my incredible key collaborators who have travelled so much of the journey with me. You generously shared your experiences and stories and were always ready to clarify anything I was unsure of. Thank you for the in-depth discussions, the laughter, the meals together, making art, and the sharing your lives with me.

Dr Graeme Macrae, you have had the most unusual path to walk but you have trusted the journey. When I first came to talk with you about what to do with supervision you encouraged me to email Andrew saying the worst that could happen was that he would say no. He said yes and that has meant an unusual shared supervision. Thank you for trusting the process even when it seemed I was heading in a different direction.

How do you thank someone who has made such an impact on your research and your life? Dr Andrew Irving from the moment you said yes to my email to be a supervisor you have challenged me to go beyond what I thought I was capable of and expanded my horizons on what anthropology can be. For all of the early morning and late night skype meetings and for the directions you have challenged me to go in I will be forever grateful. This thesis has become so much more than I thought it could be because of the challenges and support you have given me.

To my amazing family who have supported me through the whole process, who looked after pets whilst I was in the UK, on fieldwork, and listened to me as I talked out ideas and theories, thank you! There are few families who would do so much. From the practical help with transport and set up for the art installation, including the nibbles at its opening, you have supported my journey. You have coped with the highs and lows of the process. From practical help with reading chapters to emotional support when I felt that I had lost my way thank you.



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## Terminology

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- DysleXic/DysleXia The use of the capital 'X' defines the experiences and observations coming out of the dyslexic community as sub-cultural knowledge.
- Dyslexic/dyslexia This traditional form of the term is used to relate to medical, psychological and educational perspectives.

### **New Words Created to Represent DysleXic experience.**

- Ness: An experience and an expression of lived experience for persons with dysleXia. Relating to sensory awareness, intersubjectivity and inter-objectivity.
- Noshush: Represents agency when dealing with sensory overload.
- Powlf-ulm : Refers to both the ability to play with and enjoy words as well as the loss of words both spoken and written words.
- Transrobe: DysleXic reading practice where the person reading feels that they are both within the story and surrounded by the story.
- Unness: Dissonance between embodied experiences of ness and societal expectations.
- Waffull : Is intersubjective communication which is full of story details.

### **Senses**

- Equilibrioception: Sense in relation to balance also known as the Vestibular sense.
- Proprioception: Sense of motion, acceleration, awareness of position of body.
- Cronoception: Sense of time within the body away from the clock.
- Introception: Sense within the body and body function.
- Peripheral Chemoreceptors: Sense related to awareness of oxygen levels in the blood triggering breathing and exhalation.



