

Presentation

Joa Hug

Introducing not my research, but my APPROACH

Short Intro:

- dancer/researcher; doctoral researcher at the Theatre Academy Helsinki; subject of my artistic research: what is the impact of performance training on the process of perception of the performer? How does training change the way the performer perceives him or herself in relation to him or herself and in relation to others? How does training *alter* habitual modes of perception?
 - approaching the research from the perspective of the performer-as-researcher, i.e. I am doing research in and through my own practice
 - more specifically speaking, the research is grounded on an artistic practice called 'Body Weather'.
 - Body Weather is an approach to training and performance that emerged in Japan since the late 70's/early 80's; one of the standard definitions of Body Weather is that it is a "comprehensive training and performance practice that investigates the intersections between bodies and their environment; bodies are not conceived as fixed or separate entities but are - just like the weather - constantly changing through an infinite and complex system of processes occurring in- and outside of these bodies".
 - Body Weather training methodology consists of three main parts. I am particularly interested in closely examining one part of BW training methodology that is called the Manipulations.
-

Showing the Manipulations Video....

Not going in more detail – the point now: here is a practice: the Manipulations
What is it that this practice *does*? What happens when the practice is done?
There is something that is visible – and there is something that we cannot see...
How can the visible and the invisible of the practice of the *Manipulations* be articulated???

Based on my own experience, one crucial capacity of the Manipulations is to alter the mode of perception, the relationship between sensing, perceiving and reflecting, of both the receiver and the giver of the Manipulations

➔ challenge: how can this process be articulated in a way that not simply EXPLAINS the practice, but in a way that opens up and ENHANCES the process of reflection, and thereby, ENHANCES the process of alteration in and through Manipulations? That ENHANCES or deepens the process of embodying an altered mode of sensing, perceiving and reflecting???

Phillipp Zarrilli, a theatre director, performer and pedagogue who is specialized in psychophysical theatre training processes writes in an essay titled "Negotiating Performance Epistemologies: knowledge's 'about', 'in' and 'for'" (2001):

"(...) [P]ractices are not things, but an active embodied doing, they are intersections where personal, social, and/or cosmological experiences and realities are negotiated. Extraordinary energy, time, and resources are often invested in creating cultural specialists from shamans or priests to actors or dancers, or even to scholars, etc. whose embodied practices are a means by which personal, social, ritual, aesthetic, political, and/or cosmological 'realities' are created through enactment. To examine a practice is to examine these multiple sets of relationships and experiences. (...) **[A] practice is not a discourse, but implicit in any practice are one or more discourses and/or paradigms through which the experience of practice might be reflected upon and/or explained.**" (34/35)

➔ The question then, is: What are the discourses and/or paradigms through which the experience of the practice *Manipulations* might be reflected upon (and/or explained)?

In my understanding there is a number of discourses and paradigms through which reflection (and explanation) can be approached.

➔ Art Historical: How did Body Weather come into being? How did it develop? What is its place and position in relation to other artistic training and performance practices?

➔ Artistic/Aesthetic: what is the performability of a performer trained by Body Weather? What are the skills and the technique? What is virtuosity? What, where and how does a BW practitioner perform?

➔ Pedagogy: linked to methodological question: how to pass on the knowledge of the practice both in terms of form and content?

➔ Epistemology: what is the knowledge that is embedded in and created through the practice of the Manipulations?

➔ Dance Research: Bodily Knowledge – knowing in and through the body – how is this knowledge linked to language???

→ Artistic Research: linked to the debate about knowledge production – what is the specific knowledge created in and through artistic processes and the reflection in and through artistic processes?

→ Philosophy: what is the philosophy that is embodied in and through the Manipulations? What kinds of philosophical questions or issues are negotiated through this practice? Phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty), Pragmatist Philosophy (body without organs, Deleuze), Poststructuralist (Foucault); Embodied Realism (Tompson/Varela), Enactive Approach (Noe); Eastern Philosophy (Taoism)

→ Politics and Ethics: what are the political and ethical issues? What is the subject-object power relationship between the giver and the receiver? What kind of subjectivity is cultivated? How are agency and authorship renegotiated? What is the relationship between self and others (human/non-human → Eco-logic)

→ Sociological/Intercultural: What happens when a (supposedly new) cultural practice is developed by agents from various cultural and artistic backgrounds? What happens when a training and performance practice is transferred from one specific cultural setting into another?

→ Somatics: what is the concrete neuro-physiological transformation on the various levels of the body: bones, muscles, organs, fascia, nervous system)

CHALLENGES: how to approach the writing? Through which discourse or paradigm? What is the narrative that I am creating? For whom is my research most relevant? → choosing key concepts and building a conceptual framework; making a linear narrative out of a non-linear process

Questions/Comments

- is your analysis relevant to other artistic fields and disciplines (Maija P.)
 - are you including an analysis of the experience of others, how they experience the Manipulations?
 - “At our department the Manipulations were used in actor training, but I didn’t know that they were originating in Body Weather” (Victoria Brattström)
-