

The definition of a knowledge problem

Aspects of my current practice

Stern (1985) referred to *vitality affects* “as those dynamic, kinetic qualities of feeling that correspond to the momentary changes in feeling states involved in the organic processes of being alive” (Stern, 1985, p.156).

He suggests that they become essential to an understanding of attunement. “*Vitality is ideally suited to be the subject of affect attunements*” (Stern, 1985, p. 157) and he explains that this happens “*because it is composed of the amodal qualities of intensity and time...and thus to provide a continuously present-though changing- subject for attunement*” (p.157).

The problem that Stern (1985) mentions and I wanted also to explore through my practice is how we get from perception of others to feelings in ourselves, as far as it concerns the spontaneous way that vitality affects communicate.

More specifically, the question that I pose now is how can sensory modes in our bodies permit us to perceive the dynamic and kinetic changes that happen at the moment and we experience them as vitality affects? Do the properties of intensity, timing and shape allow us to experience a movement as “forceful” or “explosive” or any other feeling that it can affect both performers and spectators?

The solution that proposed by Suzanne Langer (1967), was her suggestion that in works of art “*the feeling is in fact an apparition, an illusion, a virtual feeling*” (Stern, 1985, p.158).

But, what about improvisation in dance practice? Do the ‘open’ scores that I chose to work with, present virtual feelings?

“*Dance as actual effortful movement and gesture presents virtual ‘realms of power, a play of powers made visible*” (Ghosh, 1979, p.69): explosions and implosions, restraint and effortlessness.

My approach in practice, based on the impact that the theory of the unity of the senses has to our embodied actions, made me decide to involve consciously the bodily sensations in order to test the resonance of the theory.

Cultural theorist Mark Hansen argues that “*bodily sensations are actions of the body on itself through which it can become both virtual and reflexive.*” (Hansen,

2004, p.224) and consequently “*they open up an expressive- affective- space within the body is felt from within, rather than seen from without*” (p. 225)

Thus, I concluded to practice with a duet of performers, in outdoor abandoned ruins or buildings with natural environment. I thought that the contradiction between the qualities of the space (energetically and architecturally) and the sense of aliveness in nature could create the conditions for the bodily senses to act and to challenge vitality affects to reveal (or not).

Also important for me was the fact that I could observe what the perception of the performers’ actions would be, in the way they shared their experience through their embodied exploration, and what kind of affect has to me as a spectator (if it has off course..). This is the reason that I created ‘open’ scores, focusing on the conscious utilization of senses of vision, hearing and touch (literally objects, metaphorically the space and body parts) and giving attention to the unexpected changes of every information in space, searching for these dynamic, momentary changes in their feeling state during the process that could be translated in the qualities of time, intensity and shape in movement.

Can I facilitate the transmutation from the perception of timing, intensity and shape via cross-modal fluency into felt vitality affects in our bodies, when we are watching the performers? (This means that we sense the movement in our bodies, not only that we watch them performing...). What kind of interventions could be used in my improvisation movement practice?

Reference List

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