

A silent focus

I drew my observations on time perception in movement out of my daily attentive bodily practice- warm-up routine and free improvisation. I chose this time to keep my attention to bodily presence.

Following my previous try-outs, it's clear to me now that whenever I was 'travelling' deeply into my thoughts or memories or 'making dreams' for the near future, my body kept on moving on its own. I was not conscious of my moving body at those moments: it was dancing, taking its own initiatives, avoiding dangers or risks and following its own desires. It still remains a mystery to me how that was happening. But maybe this is a big philosophical question in relation to the 'know how' of the human body.ⁱ

Focusing on the other hand on my bodily presence, I was in the 'now', 'opening' in that sense the doors to bodily perception and awareness. I could describe this experience as a 'meditative' one, since I had the sensation that I was in a state of a silent focus; I felt a quietness inside which enabled me to feel, think and understand my bodily movement. I had the opportunity to explore and intensify my sensorial perceptions, enhancing in turn my consciousness and presentness.

In this sense, paying attention to bodily movement, I could grasp or distill 'micro-diamoments'ⁱⁱ that informed or enhanced the action; I could capture a singular memory and make it present thinking simultaneously what my next moves would be: e.g while I was improvising, I brought my body to a standing position and I curved my spine. That reminded me of a concert that I attended five years ago and in which the conductor was improvising, giving spontaneous directions to all the organs of the orchestra. Capturing that memory, I gradually integrated the conductor's moves into what I was doing at that moment, thinking also what my following moves would be. Once again, I could describe that moment as a 'wide-now' experience where the present moment is expanding as a sensation so that it could enclose the past and the future (*pastpresentfuture*). This expansion of time does not actually happen, but it could 'illustrate' the process that takes place in the 'now' considering the fusion of past, present and future. It could also be encountered as a metaphysical experience in case one is totally present to the moment. Presentness could allow us to enter into the past and / or future through a mental or spiritual journey.

Thickness

While I was moving, I noticed that a thick movement quality was filtered out of the process: As if the body and also the atmosphere were of a dense material. I committed to that quality until the end of the session: It helped me enhance my silent focus, because I felt connected with my body center. My bodily center was fully activated and my whole body was orientated towards it.

What about the speed?

Investing on that movement quality, I then asked myself: what If I constantly changed the speed? Would there be a change in my focus and perception? Will my body keep on producing 'here and now' in the same level?

I understood that either you move fast or slowly -using a variety of differentiations- nothing changes in your perceptual awareness, provided that you are present to the moment (e.g you do not perceive less if you go fast and you understand more when you move slowly).

It is a common sense though that moving slowly intensifies our perceptual consciousness. The 'now' is widening as an experience, providing us with time to feel and understand what's there at the moment. On the other hand, slow motion could entrap us in the frame of diving easily to the 'realm' of thoughts, memories or future dreams.

ⁱ *The notion of embodied knowledge: The body is the subject that knows how to act.* In his *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962), Merleau-Ponty describes the example of knowing how to typewrite as follows: [O]ne can know how to type without knowing how to indicate where on the keyboard the letters that compose the words are located. Knowing how to type, then, is not the same as knowing the location of each letter on the keyboard, nor even having acquired a conditioned reflex for each letter that is triggered upon seeing it. [...] It is a question of a knowledge in our hands, which is only given through a bodily effort and cannot be translated by an objective designation. The subject knows where the letters are on the keyboard just as we know where one of our limbs is – a knowledge of familiarity that does not provide us with a position in objective space. (Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962): *Phenomenology of perception*. Transl. C. Smith. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.)

ⁱⁱ *Diamoments: I created this word by composing the words diamond and moments respectively. By this I mean moments of the present time that worth as a diamond concerning the ways they could unfold, articulate or enrich the main action.*