

Sharing with the dancers one

Am I moving through time?

Do I move my body and 'hear' time?

How do I experience the duration of time while I am moving?

Apart from my personal try-outs, I shared the above research questions with the dancers for bodily exploration and theoretical investigation. I didn't give them specific directions in this initial phase, because I wanted to see how they would perceive and embody the questions. Since the research topic is widely based on time perception and experience, it is essential for the performers to research on their own perspective.

So, after practicing on their own for a period of time, they sent me their video-summaries of their embodied approach to the questions. Then, we had an on-line discussion for feedback and feedforward.

It was quite interesting to see their diverse perspectives, not only in comparison with each other but also with my personal approach. I understand that the research would keep on broadening in this way. Thus, I thought that it might be effective if I pinpointed our common ground so as to move forward in terms of my research.

Reflecting on our practical research, as well as on our discussion, I 'illustrated' specific outcomes. Having that in mind, I reformed the initial questions. I sent by email my outcomes and insights along with the reformed questions to the dancers for further investigation. They would similarly send me back their video recordings and then we would have a discussion on-line.

I am thinking of utilizing this research method, as long as working physically with the dancers is forbidden due to lockdown.

Take your time to look at the material:

Lia Vasdari: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NThqvs_pb3A&feature=youtu.be

Concerning the first question, Lia focused on slowing up / delaying the initiation of her moves or enlarging her movement. (0,00-1,42)

In her attempt to move through time she commented that she can't move through time, unless she isolates time; this could occur if she were a time traveler. In this light, she changed the question from 'move through time' into 'move along with time', in order to physically approach the task.

In this sense, she didn't approach the second question at all. She said that in the same way she can't 'hear' time, unless she isolates it. She underlined that this question is written in a poetic writing style. She also wondered why I preferred the sense of hearing and not for example the sense of taste?

Regarding the ways she could experience the duration of time, while she is moving (third question), she was changing the ways she was 'going' from e.g. point one to point two, utilizing repetitive moves. For instance, she was testing if she could feel the duration of time by moving her arms directly to point two and then by moving them through the periphery. (1,42- 2,17).

Vicky Chatzi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCLl0k1ycZg&feature=youtu.be>

Vicky approached the three questions through a general as well as psychological perspective. She tried to show with her movement the 'conflict' between her inner time and rhythm and the time and rhythm of her body's movement. She tried slow, silent, repetitive moves. However, she mentioned that she was mad at that moment, feeling 'noisy' inside. She also commented that humans nowadays, even if they seem calm, they are frequently 'busy' inside. Thus, there is an opposition between what they show and what they feel.

Knitting the threads...

It was quite compelling and enlightening to see that one of the dancers worked separately on each of the questions, thinking and embodying them through a literal perspective. This led us to a deep philosophical conversation concerning time in terms of the first especially, as well as the second question. I would say that me and the other dancer took the three questions as one, approaching them under the general prism of how we experience time and duration while we are moving. I also have the thought that we embodied the questions in a creative or even poetic way.

Given this, I will document my outcomes focusing on each question separately. I will, therefore, explain the reasons the three questions will be reformed and probably become the three fundamental cores of my research.

Am I moving through time?

I could sum up what was mentioned into these:

- I could move through time only through my mind: by travelling into the 'world' of memories or by making 'dreams' for the future. When this takes place while I am improvising, I understand that even if my body moves in the present time, my mind is travelling into the 'realm' of thoughts. Thus, there exists a separation between thinking and moving; between the mind and the body. In this sense, I am not connected with my experience of the moment; I am not at the present time. Being at the moment, though, is a fundamental principle in instant composition. Thus, I could move 'along with time'- not 'through time'- in order to be in the present moment. We could also say that we move in time.
- Space-time approach: I can move through space. I could move through time only if I could isolate it. Could I isolate time? According to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, we are situated in the world as embodied beings. Our body is our space; it is our general medium for having a world; our bodily senses form and develop our perception of the world; we can perceive and experience time through our bodyⁱ e.g. we can understand the duration – the passage of time – through bodily damage/ change. In addition to that, every memory or projection in the immediate future that arises while we are improvising, is created by a stimulus that the body receives at the

present moment. If it weren't for the space and the body -as a space within the space-, where would we receive stimulus from? How would we recall memories or make dreams for the future? Time and space are integrally connected. If it weren't for the body, we might experience a pitch black: only the thought would probably exist! We would eternally be thinking; our thinking process would have a continuous fluidity without a beginning or an end, without past or future.

- I approached the question through a wide, creative perspective. So, I explored the 'task' under the prism of how I experience time and duration in general while I am moving. I observed that my attention was towards my body moving in the 'now'. I was connected with my body in the present moment. I was present to my experience. In this sense, I felt that my bodily perception and awareness was expanding during those moments.

'Having in mind the below key-phrases/ elements:

- we are 'of' time;
- the moving body in the present time;

'Continuing my practical research on the fundamental general question:

- How do i experience time and duration while I am moving;

The first question is reformed into this:

How do I experience time, while I am moving in the present moment?

The sub-key – words/ elements: memories and future projections are put forward for further investigation. I define memory as the one (bodily memories: habits, material from previous dance pieces, moves derived from an on-going improvisational session/ past experiences e.g. an event, an image, a sensation) that could possibly arise in the present of an improvisation, while the body is moving in the present time.

Do I move my body and 'hear' time?

The second question could be reformed into:

Do I move my body and 'hear' its temporalities?

As it has been mentioned during our conversation, we can 'hear' the music. Music is time. We count time in music through our breathing or through our steps. When we move, similarly, we could 'hear' our body's and our moves' 'qualities' of temporality. We could also 'hear' our bodily time: breathe, heartbeats. In this sense, we could count time in movement though e.g. our breathing.

How do I experience the duration of time while I am moving?

This question will stay the same.

It includes all the elements that we have explored so far in terms of our physical investigation: slowness, enlargement, opposition, diverse ways of utilizing the space.

It was quite clear that both of the dancers approached the experience of duration through a slow temporal quality.

Regarding the ways we could feel the duration of time, I summarize what was said into these categories:

- We sense time 'rolling' too fast. Every moment is preceded by another moment and this is a quick on-going process. We feel, though, the duration of time, the passage of time as a process that takes place slowly.
Following that, we could explore elements like expansion, thickness, stillness, oppositions (also the contradiction between the inner rhythm and the rhythm of bodily movement).
- We are able to perceive and experience the duration of time through the changes that take place as time is passing by (e.g. day-night, summer- winter, birth-death, physical damage).
- Time and duration are perceived through repetition (e.g. *The myth of Sisyphus*).

The first question is fundamental; the moving body in the present moment. In what ways do the past and future enter the present time? Do I feel the moment expanding while I am moving in the now?

The second and third question are aspects of the generic question: How is it to move in time? I understand that this is a more 'technical' question: we explore the

temporal elements of movement; we build the frame whining which we move in time (maintaining the presentness and the wide-nowness in regards to the first question).

I asked the dancers to work on the first question for a period of time and then meet again.

ⁱ Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945). Translated by C. Smith. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
