

Few Hops and a Pause

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Blackbirds are skittish birds, taking a few hops or steps then pausing, then again towards the next stop just like their singing that bursts into melodies with notable pauses in between. I love these virtuoso melodic bursts wrapped into unhurried delivery. Each phrase is a distinct production with a significant pause from the last, and no phrase immediately repeated. They run/hop in short bursts on grass before the pause to look of and strike at earthworms and insects.

What is about these long pauses and fully formed bursts of action that happen in between? The time-wise compressed ebb and flow of pausing/acting, nothing/everything at once?

I experience that to follow a pattern is to be patterned. By following the pattern, I become part of that pattern and experience myself in interconnectedness, in rhythmic/flowing melodic relationship or static tension. It allows to open up to empathy and entrainment with the pattern. And patterns here I would say are not about grids, it is more about a flow within a system, to bend oneself to fit/follow the pattern, at times to guide the movements, choices which lead the body being, and sounding the way it does in relation. Is this a way of co-operating by corresponding to the patterns of reality? In this sense, isn't this type of dance also has to do with ritualizing reality? To think this way, would it pave way for a physical questioning/understanding and therefore a physical knowing?

In a way this is a kind of dance. And isn't dancing, something that we not only do with our feet and body, but also with our thoughts? What could dancing through thoughts mean? To turn, twist and leap in our thinking? To turn, twist, and skip in the same way as the Blackbird moves and sings.

And this skipping, how could it not only be concerned with getting from here to there, but rather, with being here, in the body, acting through orienting imagination? How to explore a three-dimensional connection of skipping from here to there, where I am still "here" but now also "there" to where I have jumped in my projection, in my act of imagination. Sarah Ahmed says:

"Orientations are about how we begin; how we proceed from "here" which affects how "there" appears, how it presents itself. In other words, we encounter "things" as coming from different sides, as well as having different sides." (Ahmed, 2006)

So, to imagine being somewhere else also qualifies where I am, my orientation. It's perhaps placing the given now and the given body in relative relationship to the "not-yet" of the projection of where one can do and imagine oneself actually being. And this being is quite a "bodily" inhabitation. Again, with Ahmed's words through the topic of migration:

"Migration involves reinhabiting the skin: the different "impressions" of a new landscape, the air, the smells, the sounds, which accumulate like points to create lines, or which accumulate like lines to create new textures on the surface of the skin" (ibid, p.9)

Coming to realize that I jump in my thinking and in entangled patterns, all the time really, feeling emerging effects on the "skin" (again speaking with Ahmed). And this is weaved into how I improvise. In improvisation practice, instead of responses that solely depends on ones will, isn't there always a listening, a receptivity that inserts pauses, allowing for some space so there's not just an immediate "I'm going to do this"? What are those spaces made of? Judith Butler says in her Interview with Tracy McMullen:

"We don't act without being acted on. We don't generate ourselves. We're not self-created creatures. We're always moved by something and it's only because we're moved that we act." (McMullen, 2017, p.31)

Could this thread of ideas perhaps be related to how bodies arrive and the conditions of arrival?

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