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BECOMING IN/DISCIPLINED

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Abstract

'Disciplines cut and chunk human, more-than-human and other-than-human experiences into separate and hierarchized knowledge fields' (Hughes, 2020), producing a façade that knowledge is coherent, organized and manageable. This micro-moment is an invitation to think/do/make knowledge beyond, outside or otherwise than in disciplines and to find ways to refuse the disciplining of bodiesmindshearts that disciplines so often require. The paper focuses on a speculative intra-action with the questions: How can we work/move together to co-create a more capacious way of knowledge-ing? and how can we enact posthumanist feminist materialism to become in/disciplined? This paper is based on a research-creation event that was part of the Dream Team entitled (Un)teachable micro-moments in post-qualitative research, which focused on how micromoments in the context of post-qualitative research offer exciting possibilities to move beyond boundaries, educational spaces, strict disciplinary discourses, and traditional instructional practices. The micromoment explored in this paper concerns in/discipline through movement. It's focus on objects-bodies-spaces invites learning through relations and relationality.

Keywords: Movement methodologies, objects-bodies-spaces, discipline, becoming in/disciplined, micro-moment

1 INTRODUCTION

This paper takes off from work that I have been doing with the *Get Up and Move!* collective, a group of academics and doctoral students who have been working collaboratively together using walking, movement and arts-informed methodologies over the past two and a half years. My particular interest in this paper is movement, stillness, the body and the potential of transdisciplinary theorizing. It is inspired by reviewer comments the *Get Up and Move!* collective received on a collaboratively co-authored paper called 'Concept-ing with the gift: Walking method/ologies in posthumanist research' submitted to the *Journal of Posthumanism* (now published). The main aims of this paper were to bring Marcel Mauss's anthropological sociology on gift practices into relation with posthumanist thinking on concepts and embodied walking methodologies. However, one of the anonymous reviewers engaged with our paper in an 'appreciatively expansive' way, encouraging us to think away from and alongside the paper. Their comments asked us to push further with the points we had made about:

- The limits of bipedalism and the new horizons that open up by walking in a less aligned way;
- Embodied cognitive science, enaction theories, the intrinsic relation between thinking, neuroplasticity, and movement;
- The body's sense of movement, which is a non-conscious movement-sensing that we share with all life forms and that can open ways of overcoming the human-nonhuman divide that still tends to re-enter through the back door in most posthumanist thinking.

We couldn't attend to these things adequately in our revisions for the Gift paper as they were peripheral to its central argument. As the *Get Up and Move!* collective continue our work together we will no doubt circle back to these comments and enfold our thinking on them into our future work. This paper is my own initial foray with the reviewer's comments which have continued to roll and roil in my head. These comments have made me itch, made me think; they are seeds germinating quietly and not so quietly. I wanted to move and walk to work out what they mean – more than that, I wanted to move and walk with others to see what they produced. The micromoment that follows is a first experimental 'outing' with movement practices to respond to these comments.

2 CHOREOGRAPHY

This micromoment works with Erin Manning's (1) conceptualization of 'the witness of body-worlding' and enfolds individual-collective experience. It is an invitation to engage in some object-bodies-spaces choreographic practice-ings and to see what knowledge-ings may emerge from them.

In the Dream Team session on *(Un)teachable micro-moments in post-qualitative research* at the European Congress of Qualitative Inquiry 2023 In Portsmouth, UK, I asked the participants to:

Please stand up. Feel free to move as I'm speaking. Use your senses to tune into what is going on in your body and with your body and with those around you.

Perhaps as you read this you would also like to follow these 'instructions' for a moment. Of course, they are not 'instructions' but rather an invitation: An invitation to continue the walking and movement methodologies emanating from the *Get Up and Move!* collective over the last few years and the walking and moving that occurred in the Richmond 0.10 room at Portsmouth University on 11th January 2023 with Karin and Viv and Mirka and Jayne and Candace and at least 25 other human bodies and desks (pushed out of the way) and chairs (ditto) and window blinds and doors (open for air) and coats (cold and wet outside) and clothes and shoes and bags and pens and pencils and laptops and iPad and mobile phones and hair and skin and jewellery and computer and interactive whiteboard and water bottles and masks (Covid is still with us and some people are masking) and and and. The specificities are important. What specificities surround you as you read this? Chair-body-table-computer-eye-brain-skin-air-movement. Why not get up and move now? Please stand up etc etc.

Movements are matterings comprising a constellation of human–nonhuman agencies, forces, events, affects, atmospheres, and spaces. Attending theoretically to movement's mattering invites us to engage in posthuman new material feminist theorisations of matter (2), understandings of objects from material culture studies (3, 4), to affect studies (5) and analyses of space from human geography (6, 7). Drawing together these disciplinary threads and weaving them into a transdisciplinary choreography provides a better analytical purchase on the detailed specificity, density and materiality of movement's micromoments. It helps us attend to how actions and relations materialise in human–nonhuman assemblages (8) and apparatuses (2) in ways which complicate notions of human agency and human relationality.

'Choreography starts from any point' says Erin Manning, citing William Forsyth. Choreography is a proposition which produces an 'occasion' to activate relational potentials. Choreography is 'an act that sets into motion a milieu'. Choreography is about letting movement take you elsewhere, of using movement to go elsewhere, of going with movement's tendencies towards new becomings. Choreography is a practice of encounter. It is an arranging of relations between objects-bodies-spaces and an 'act of interfering with or negotiating ... an order' (1 p. 75–76).

How – in the space of this room, this conference space, and also in other academic spaces, in your study or writing space, in your classroom, in university spaces – might we get up and move and engage bodies in practical acts of interference and negotiations? How can we create spaces so that we can let movements' tendencies take us elsewhere? How can we move beyond bipedal uprightism and towards moving modes of dis/alignment?

Manning (1) provides practical guidance to thinking with these questions though what she calls 'diagrammatic praxis'. What follows are two experimentations. The first is Manning's; the second is an experiment of my own devising, inspired by the first. Both experimentations were enacted in the space of the conference room and were oriented to engaging the materialities of bodies-spaces-things-thinking-moving in the moment. Their aim was to enact a mode of knowledge-ing (9) that was emergent, processual, sensorial, and somatechnical and to put body-space-movement experiments in contact with feminist in/disciplinarity to move towards an elsewhere of knowing-feeling-moving.

3 EXPERIMENTAL ENACTMENT 1: RESEARCH-CREATION

1st Activity

The purpose of this first activity is space-body attunement and attention.

Step 1: Lie down on the floor. Close your eyes.

Step 2: Begin to create a diagram of the space. Allow the diagram to settle.

Step 3: Find an open space in the diagram and move into it, virtually.

Step 4: Locate another open space. Move into it.

Step 5: Wait. Feel time's elasticity. Feel the space shifting.

Step 6: Keep your eyes closed as you continue to keep moving in and through the diagram.

Step 7: Slowly stand up, eyes still shut. In the standing, re-encounter your diagram.

Step 8: Wait.

Step 9: Find another opening within the diagram.

Step 10: Move into it, actually this time.

Step 11: When your movement slows to a standstill and the diagram has solidified, slowly open your eyes.

As a coming out of this activity, you may want to shake or make a noise or jump or move in another way – do it!

4 DIAGRAMMATIC PRAXIS

Manning calls this experiment 'diagrammatic praxis'. Deleuze's comment that the 'essential thing about the diagram is that it is made in order for something to emerge from it, and if nothing emerges from it, it fails' (10 p. 159). Manning's diagrammatic praxis is an experiment in space-shaping and body-shaping. This is not about the body occupying space but about becoming more aware of the 'quality of experiential spacetime' and how this 'is felt most keenly through movement' (1 p. 134). It draws attention to the tendencies of the virtual as they become active in the actualities of the movement. It is about becoming more attentive to movement's resonances; it is less about an individual body and more about 'movement's inherent relationality'. Rhythm, vibration, velocity, sensation. 'Choreography happens everywhere, all the time', Manning (1 p. 91) says – it can be used to provoke different doings but most likely habit sets in and you use the space as you usually do. Erin Manning urges us to use 'choreographic thinking [as] an impetus for a mobile architecture in the making' (1 p. 107) – folding in surfaces, objects, landing sites into a moving praxis to attend to differentiated and 'distributed relational movement' (1 p. 108). Nothing is rehearsed and all is collective.

5 EXPERIMENTAL ENACTMENT 2: RESEARCH-CREATION

2nd Activity

The purpose of the 2nd activity is a little bit more directed to exploring and enacting ways to undiscipline bodies-objects-spaces through movement.

Step 1: Individually, devise 3-5 body-shaping/space-shaping movements which are about moving your body in different ways than you normally would when in a university or research space. Keep in mind what I said before about choreography as ‘an act that sets into motion a milieu’, about letting movement take you elsewhere, of choreography as an arranging of relations between objects-bodies-spaces and an ‘act of interfering with or negotiating ... an order’ (Manning, 2013, 75–76).

Step 2: Find a partner.

Step 3: Enact/show your body-shaping/space-shaping movements to your partner. Work out how to join your body-shaping/space-shaping movements into one sequence of movements.

Step 4: Find another pair. Work out how to join your body-shaping/space-shaping movements into one sequence of movements.

As a coming out of this activity, you may want to shake or make a noise or jump or move in another way – do it!

6 BODY-SHAPING

This activity in body-shaping/space-shaping opens minor gestures, in Erin Manning’s terms, of movement possibilities that point to the dynamics of bodies in relation. This happens all the time, of course, each time we move, but we are hardly attentive to it, it seems so ‘natural’. What is not so usual is using movement to disturb academic life, whose routines and rhythms discipline, constrain and condition our bodies in so many ways. Academic life makes our bodies tighter, smaller, less flexible, less mobile. We sit, we look ahead, our bodies ossify, and our senses wither. Academic disciplines arguably, over time and through their routines, procedures and canons of who to read and who to cite, do the same to the mind. Academic life and academic disciplines rely on the mind/body split. They also rely on the world as seen through human eyes. How can moving academic bodies disrupt this anthropocentric gaze? How can we transgress the injunctions of the mind/body split in our everyday academic lives?

7 BECOMING IN/DISCIPLINED: FEMINIST PRAXIS, ACADEMIC SPACES AND THE POLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

What happened in the room as we moved together, as we shifted shapes, displaced time and space, swirled arms and air, rolled on the floor, swerved, fitted bodies to objects and materialities, walls and chairs, as we smiled, focused, concentrated, as we moved into the unthought time-space-mattering of movement’s unthinkingness?

McCormack's (11) observation that it is unproductive to explain what bodies are so it is better to focus on what bodies do is pertinent here. And yet ... what did happen? I have no photographs to 'show' you. I have no 'data' to present. I have memories enfolded with sensorialities and affects that I could summon up into descriptions. But I refuse such nailings down, such after-the-event narrations. *The event unfolded as it did then in that moment*, it lived and breathed as we moved. It was not a butterfly to be captured in a net and nailed down on a page to be reproduced in the necropolitical mode of representational research.

This refusal partakes of post-qualitative research modes of research-creation (12) which fuses academic research and creative practices. Research-creation produces thinking-in-action (13) via creative practices which activate immanent co-creation of knowledge in the specificities of the *now*. As Fairchild et al. (14 p. 8) note, such 'research-creation is speculative theory-practice in motion; its occurrence cannot be limited by interpretation or categorization. It is affective and dynamic and productive in the moment'.

What I re/member is: mobile bodies, still bodies, relational bodies, bodily escapes in the specificities of a co-produced milieu, bodily aesthetics, grace, clumsiness, trying out, smiles, laughter, fingertips and feet tapping rhythms and refrains. A movement of stillness, a moving with-ness; a micromoment of collective affective effervescence. Here-there-now-then-known-gone.

McCormack (11) suggests that bodies together do three things. One, bodies move physically in all sorts of different ways; two, bodies' movements entail physical, affective, kinaesthetic, imaginative, collective, aesthetic, social, cultural and political dimensions; and three, bodies produce and generate spaces, in the sense that the 'quality of moving bodies contributes to the qualities of the spaces in which bodies move' (11 p. 1832). McCormack (15) brings together these three things bodies do in his notion of corporeal geography which he characterises as an affective, experiential and enactive relation between the moving body and space. This accords with my sense-ing of the two research-creation experiments as an unfolding and enfolding of movements-bodies-matterings within a 'relation-specific milieu' which Deleuze and Guattari's (8) describe as 'a vibratory block of spacetime constituted by periodic repetition of certain directional components'. But, as Manning (1) reminds us, we never know in advance what directional components might occur nor what vibrations might ensue. The challenge, then, is how to create conditions for something (whatever that might be) to emerge so that we can release the tendencies, to use Manning's word, in all their variability and potentiality to transgress the enclosures, striations and ossifications of contemporary higher education research and pedagogy.

These two micromoments are small choreographic experimentations that align with Barad's (16 p. 208) description of experimentation as '[s]tepping into the void, opening to possibilities, straying, going out of bounds, off the beaten path--diverging and touching down again, swerving and returning, not as consecutive moves but as experiments in in/determinacy'. They speak into post-qualitative, posthumanist and feminist materialist urgings to move out of our disciplines and territories to 'interfere with' academic order-ings in ways which try to 'foster constructive engagements across (and a reworking of) disciplinary boundaries' (2 p. 25)? Certainly, disturbing the academic business-as-usual machine is sorely needed. I wonder, in our own situatedness, what un/disciplining can we do through objects-bodies-spaces choreographies in our academic lives in higher education institutions, in teaching, learning and research? Maybe we could try one act of feminist in/discipline a week, such as standing up in meetings, lying down and thinking in corridors with cushions and a few colleagues, or doing walking-moving-learning sessions with our students.

Acts of feminist in/discipline do effective boundary work by bringing attention to and undoing the presumptions on which boundaries rest. In this, they produce 'thick, complex and rigorous forms of knowledge' (17 p. 689) so that we might better attend to embodied and embedded power circuits, entangled complicities, and ethical accountabilities entailed in the relations, connections and dynamics unfolding between human-nonhuman bodies, materialities and spaces. Doing feminist in/discipline

means that details matter, that the micro matters, that micro-spaces and territories deserve our attention, and that we have to do what we can in such spaces to undo the 'god trick', that absurd, masculinist view from nowhere, and its manifestations in colonialist, patriarchal, racist and sexist teaching, learning and research regimes that valorize 'objective' and 'rational' research endeavours and the regimes of scientific 'truth' they maintain (18). Feminist irruptions of and into in/discipline through attending to object-spaces-moments-matterings can reveal the efforts that go into maintaining competitive, neoliberal higher education regimes and the affective and physical micropolitical strains they produce: stress, exhaustion, shame, guilt, illness, burnout. This micromoment's experiments highlighted the resonances produced by movements palpably felt, which traverse multiple human-nonhuman bodies, and which hold a 'simple but profound promise of contact' between 'disparate forms and realms of life' (19 p. 21).

Feminist in/discipline is a call to action to do the politics of knowledge production differently in academic spaces and places, including conferences. What bodies do, how they matter, and how they move in concerted choreographic matterings with other bodies is a question of the politics of knowledge production – because knowledge production is always a materialization of situated politics and the politics of location (18, 20). Feminist in/discipline, in feminist materialist, posthumanist, transdisciplinary work, matters deeply because it charges 'qualitative research with particular ethical, aesthetic, and political tasks' (21 p. 9). The micromoment on which this paper is based concerns in/discipline through movement, focusing on how objects-bodies-spaces can invite learning through relations and relationality. Feminist in/discipline is a moving space of hope – a mobile architecture – that can, when practiced in experimental vein, give life to minor gestures for doing knowledge. Feminist in/discipline can emerge from and help choreograph relational, sympoietic and affirmative alliances across difference, producing new affective entanglements (22).

8 CONCLUSION

Erin Manning (1) suggests that choreography is about letting movement take you elsewhere, of using movement to go elsewhere, of going with movement's tendencies towards new becomings. With that in mind, here are some questions with which to end:

- How can we best attend to movement's sensory and rhythmic pulses to undo disciplinary?
- How does our sense-ings of our bodies and their invisible and visible movements communicate with/in the wider world in way which can overcome the human-nonhuman divide?
- The limits of bipedalism and the new horizons that open up by walking in a less aligned way;

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