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Ensayo

Thinking trough movement: A proposal for feminist pedagogy.

Pensando a través del movimiento: Una propuesta para la pedagogía feminista.

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ABSTRACT

In the following essay I tried to elaborate on the idea of a body as a thinker by explaining the philosophical underpinnings of the movement practice as a way of knowing/making/becoming. By accepting the feminist critique of the epistemological foundations of mainstream education that erase body from the process of knowing, my attempt was to make a movement laboratory to primary school teachers in Portugal, during the meeting of the APECV (Associação de Professores de Expressão e Comunicação Visual). The laboratory focused on the exploration of how movement can be felt before it actualizes (Manning, 2014), how autistic perception that is an inherent characteristic of artful process can be facilitated, and how an expression can emerge in between conciseness and unconsciousness not as an act of free will, but as a continuation of a process of "thinking-with" body (Manning, 2014). In doing so I offered a rational of the background idea

RESUMEN

En el siguiente ensayo trato de elaborar la idea del cuerpo como el pensante, explicando el apoyo filosofico de la práctica del movimiento como una manera de saber/hacer/convertir. Aceptando la crítca feminista de las bases epistemológicas de la educación habitual que elimina el cuerpo del proceso de aprendizaje, mi intento se basaba en crear un laboratorio de movimientos para profesores de primaria en Portugal durante la reunión de la APECV (Associação de Professores de Expressão e Comunicação Visual). Laboratorio se centrasen en la exploración de como el movimiento puede sentirse antes de transformarse (Manning, 2014), como la percepción acústica, que es una característica inherente del proceso artístico, puede ser una facilidad y como la expresión puede emerger entre la consciencia e inconsciencia: no como un acto de libre albedrío sino como como una prolongación del proceso de "pensar-con" el

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of the movement laboratory buy explaining the framework, which is to a great extent influenced by thinking of Erin Manning, but also referring to a poetry as a way of thinking, knowing and relating, and finally offering to a reader direct access to images created by the participants during the lab. I believe that multiplicity can reveal the variety of experience, looking at it through kaleidoscope.

cuerpo (Manning, 2014). Para hacer tal cosa, oferté la idea base del laboratorio del movimiento de manera racional a través del enmarcamiento teórico, que está influenciado en gran manera por el pensamiento de Erin Manning pero, a la misma vez, se refiere a la poesía como una manera de pensar, sabiendo y relacionando, para finalmente ofrecer al lector un acceso directo a las imagened creadas por los participantes en el laboratorio. Creo que la multiplicidad puede revelar la variedad de la experiencia, observandola a través de un caleidoscopio.

Palabras clave / *Keywords*

Cuerpo, pensar, laboratorio, movimiento, tocar, epistemología, feminismo, saber/ Body, thinking, movement, laboratory, touch, feminist epistemology, knowing

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Introduction:

Education for gender equality, including feminist pedagogy has been focused on giving voice to "the excluded" and on the critical analysis of the assumptions that form power relations in the existing patriarchal world. Opening space for opinions and personal experiences is well known and established procedure that aims at empowerment through the deconstruction of the existing norms and emphasis on personal and subjective. Although feminist pedagogy challenged traditional rigid educational structures and existing power relations, most of the teaching methodologies are still reproducing the same modernist vision of the world and education by practising extensively the idea of free will within the rationalist discourse (author, 2016). However, feminist epistemology has challenged the privilege of the cognition and draw attention to the deletion of body within the education, but still it has failed to influence mainstream education. Knowledge is related with consciousness and thinking about the world that exists outside of the thinker. The question that I want to play with trough the research and practice is how to create processes and activities that facilitates thinking trough movement. Being political means challenging the dominate conceptions of "thinking about" and try to create space for "thinking-with" (Manning, 2014). Movement through body opens possibility for new worlds becoming of what is not-yet, but only if we conceptualize body not as a predefined and existing flesh in motion, but as a process, as bodying (Manning, 2009). The challenge is not to invite docile body (Foucault, 2012), neither to force authentic movement which is perceived to be an expression of the self, but to wonder the world directly through movement (Manning, 2014). The first step is to try to avoid the dualism between I who decides to move and movement but to look at the movement as "the process of recalibrating an 'I' that will eventually emerge, unmoored" (Manning, 2014, p. 167). During the laboratory designed for the primary schools teachers I tried to focus on the facilitation of movement that emerges with body as an activation of the felt force that develop and continue to exist and form in between relations. The intent of the laboratory was to invite and work with immanence of movement that emerge trough touch in relation with another body. I tried to create condition for what Manning (2016) refers as an autistic perception which is opening to experience without trying to fragment it, categorize it, but rather to embrace the totality of sensing, which is not transformed into form. "There is here as yet no hierarchical differentiation, for instance, between colour, sound, light, between human and nonhuman, between what connects to the body and what connects to the world" (Manning, 2016, p. 14). Usually experience is attached to a meaning even before it is fully lived. For example, the experience of touch is habitually interfered with signifies of who is touching, where, is the touch warm or cold, we tend to touch with our hands and relate to another body through already existing and strictly defined norms of touching which serve us to interpret the experience by giving the cognition higher status in comprehending the relation. Hence, the experience and the process of knowing are paralyzed by already defined signifiers constructed trough language. Thought had been subsumed to words, preferably with precise and unambiguous

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meaning, leaving out the richness and possibilities of living what has not been lived yet. Thought is seen as a product of thinking, the end in itself.

La Fisica del Erotismo
Cuerpo – la intesidad de la carne
El volumen del deseo y el fracaso de la accion
Error en la vestimenta
Sexo platonico con perdida no deseada
La voluntad que termina en impotencia.

This superior position of rational processes in Western society has led to the notion of freedom which prioritise act of volition as a conscious decision making and "I who makes a movement", thus separation a movement and body from the act of thinking. Moreover, being free often means liberate oneself from the intensity and dictate of instinctual and affectual, liberate from desire. Erin Manning, by relying her thinking on Bergson, propose quite different conceptualization of freedom: "Freedom is not to be found in the ordering of experience, in its measure, but in the dynamic intensity of the event's unfolding" (2016, p. 25). She introduced the concept of minor gesture which is open to the force as-yet-unformed, a thought less concerned with certainty. "It gives value to the processual uncertainty of thought as yet unformed, and gives that thought the space to develop collectively" (Manning, 2016, p. X). Minor gesture is born between consciousness and unconsciousness and it lead us to what was not thinkable, a knowledge that has not be assigned to subject, but allowing new worlds unfold. It is political in a sense that engage with what is not-yet and "creates sites of dissonance, staging disturbances that open experience to new modes of expression" (Manning, 2016, p. 2). It intersect the past and present, born in the eternal duration of an event. I understood minor gesture and autistic perception as a way to open a space to artful experience, but not as a participation is existing structure of an artistic event which, even if it enables engagement, limit the act to what has been already planned as possible product. My attempt was to create conditions for thinking-moving-making process that is itself an artful state. It was an experiment aimed at inviting the feeling of minor gesture through focusing on body and relation that can possibly be inception of intensity-expression. I tried to create activities that embrace sensing the world and give up the idea of linear process as feeling-thinking-expressing structure, but open a space for merging of those three processes.

Living the worlds not yet expressed.
A breath of philosophy
A poem as a soul portrait.
Thinking in colours and movements.

In order to do so I have used the Sesame approach to drama and movement therapy as a way to facilitate entering into a space where we loosen our restrictions around how our bodies move, especially how they move in public space when we feel observed. "This symbol or image language is expressed through the use of movement, drama, touch, story enactment, improvisation, and use of voice, explored in a safe and playful environment. Experiencing and embodying an inner image through movement, taking on a role in a story, or enacting a character which is new or in contrast to the everyday way of dealing with life, are each ways that Sesame uses to work with people. The meaning of what is expressed may take time to be integrated and understood." (Sesame Institute, 2015). I focused on specific structure based on Sesame methodology, which through playfulness, gentle mirroring

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and acknowledgment of presence of participants enable them to arrive to their body and follow the impulses that move them. It is an invitation to "an improvised body" that does not enter time and space, but create it through sensing and moving (Manning, 2007). However, it is always a challenge to find a thin line between making space for people to feel comfortable enough, and still working around limits that provokes new becomings. Throughout my practice and research I have found that well established and gentle approach of Sesame methodology enable people to enter the spaces around the edges without feeling too pressured to perform. I will focus on the explanation of the main event that involves ideas that were already explained in the previous paragraphs. The initial activities served as a pathway for participants to arrive to space in which they feel comfortable to work with movement and touch. I found the work with felt force and movement can be a bit confusing and challenging for people who do not often participate in the similar activities. We unlearned to let our bodies be and do and follow the felt intensity, so it is always a risk to ask people to go to that forgotten place that is at the same time full of memories and futures. As to enable the possibility to work on that level, I wanted to involve touch as the direct way to engage with relational movement and come to the intensity of connection and interior movements that touch reveal. Transforming the felt intensity of the touch into movement that creates lines on the paper opens possibility for autistic perception – there is no pause for reflection, but sensation of touch is directly experienced and transmit into something else that was not predicted or planed. Touch and movements created a space-time, but not in a linear meaning of the time that passes, but as a subjective feeling – a sense of place.

Feel the pressure of the touch, the intensity, the colour. Focus on the sensations and let it move. Let the interior movements in your body influence you. Let your body draw with the movements and trough them. Feel the connection. Try to work with your eyes closed, and your eyes open.

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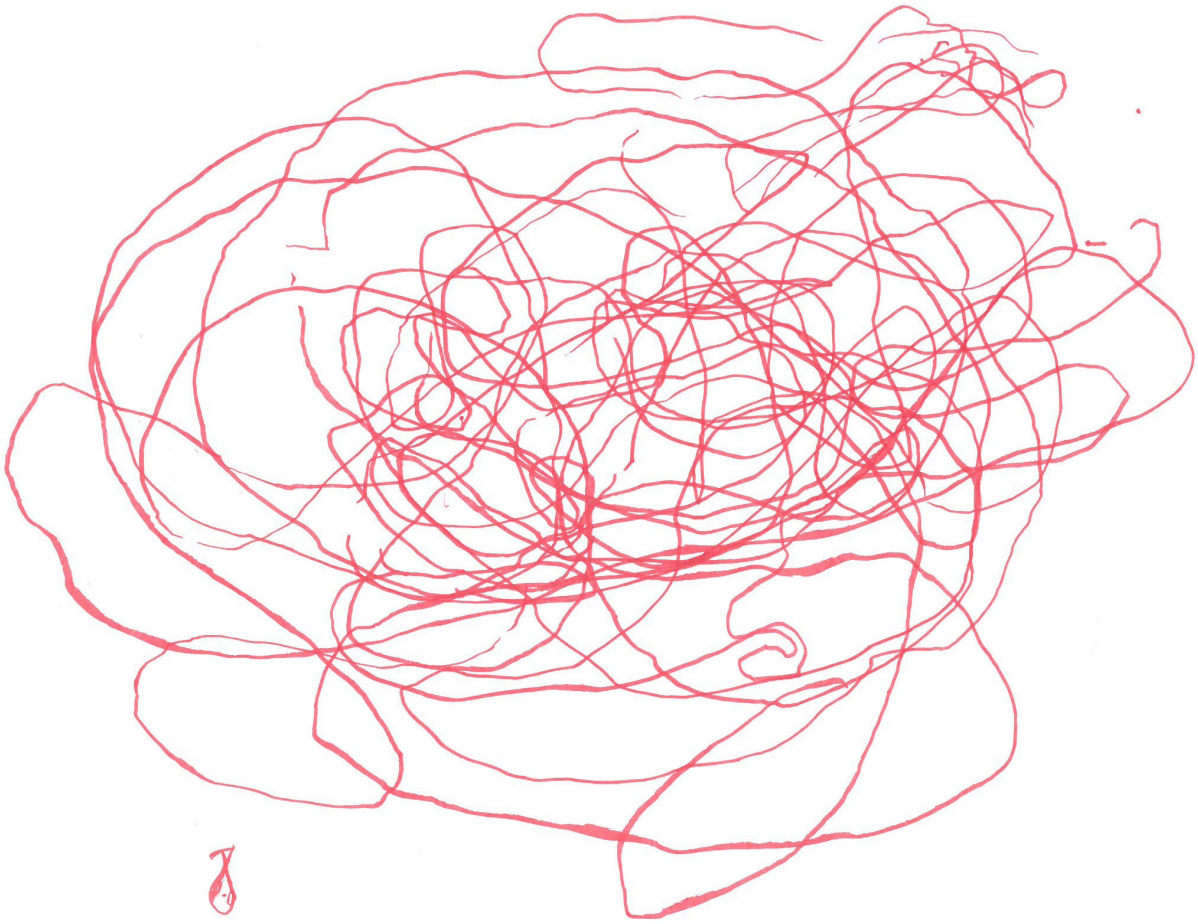

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