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GUSTAVO TOMÉ GARCIA

THE ARTIST IS TIRED:

**HOW PARTYING FAILS THE
AFFECTS FROM
BURNOUT SOCIETY**



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THE ARTIST IS TIRED:

**HOW PARTYING FAILS THE AFFECTS
FROM BURNOUT SOCIETY**

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MA PERFORMANCE PRACTICES

A Thesis presented by Gustavo Tomé Garcia to Master Performance Practices,
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PRACTICES**


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SYNOPSIS

This artistic research does not aim to approach tiredness(es) by putting the responsibility on the individual to find their own time to rest, work out, eat well and meditate. It aims to approach it as what it is: a series of capitalistic methodologies and regulations that are causing exhaustion, depression, anxiety, tiredness(es), exploitation, isolation and more. I claim tiredness(es) as a sociological urgency. This thesis aims to problematize those methodologies and regulations that are causing physical-mental damage, by exposing their operations and giving suggestions on how to subvert them.

In order to do that, I argue the necessity of having an intersectional approach to tiredness(es). As an entry point to it, I asked myself how race, class, gender, autoethnography and neural-disabilities influence one's experience of tiredness(es) and its roles in performing one's identities. That said, what I want to suggest in my practice, is a collective effort in trying to fail burnout society; by allowing collective ways of being/performing in the world through joy, humor, lightness, silliness and failure. I do not deny anxiety and exploitation, but they are not the main affects of this practice. In this current thesis *The artist is tired: how partying fails the affects from burnout society*, I expose those possibilities and use philosophers, sociologists, Disney movies, songs, memes, personal experiments in order to celebrate the uncelebrated and question the unquestioned.

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A special thanks to Burnety 2000 who appeared to remove my guilt and to show that my laziness is, indeed, something political.

All the 47 ADHD pills I had to take in order to keep going in this process. Without this chemistry in my body nothing of this would be possible.

To conclude, I want to celebrate myself for having this artistic research as an outcome; knowing that this was the best I could do with what I could offer.

DECLARATION

I, Gustavo Tome Garcia, hereby certify that I have personally carried out the work depicted in the thesis entitled, *The artist is tired: how partying fails the affects from burnout society*.

No part of the thesis has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma prior to this date.

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INTRODUCTION

The first question I aim to answer in my practice is: which system benefits from our solitary tiredness(es)? This question became relevant once I noticed that the debates regarding experiences of tiredness(es) and burnout are mostly putting on the individual the responsibility of its effects and causes. Contrary to this, I argue the necessity of reshaping (collectively) the sociological and historical structure of burnout instead. The frame of my argument is the approach of the achievement-subject (of Byung Chul Han) as a political project, that throughout history defined and shaped the way bodies should perform productivity and identities. The operations that facilitate tiredness(es) and burnout are extensive, however, in this thesis, I focus on: individualization of responsibility, toxic positivity and success.

During the two years of artistic research at the Home of Performance Practices masters program, I used as references theories from Byung Chul Han, Jack Halberstam, Michel Foucault, Sara Ahmed, Donna Haraway, Adrienne Maree Brown, Aílton Krenak, Léa Freitas, Marielys Siqueira and others. They are the references I use to sustain my own artistic hypothesis, having as a central contribution two statements: necessity of creating celebrated-resistance against tiredness. And after, partying as a collective form of

co-creating temporary pleasure. If productivity and success consists of repetitions, and if those repetitions are causing mental and physical damage; what would happen to this subject if we start to be aware of those repetitions? If we start to perform them differently? My research, then, claims the necessity of failing the achievement-subject by performing pleasurable affects. In order to counter-argue achievement-subject, I propose the concepts of failure, performing the unknown, pleasure, partying and recognising tiredness(es) as alternatives in which we as a collective are the ones who benefit from them.

As an extension of my artistic practice, this thesis aims to allow unknown possibilities of performing knowledge, bridging theoretical and academic content with pop and cultural elements and humor. This thesis is designed in four chapters. The first chapter is a historical and sociological contextualization of what is the achievement-subject of Byung Chul Han, using the movie "High School Musical"(2006) to challenge Han's proposition by exposing the roles of institutions in shaping identities and affects. In chapter two, I claim the necessity to fail the concept of burnout and expose its relationship with parameters of race, class, gender, auto-ethnography and neural-disabilities. In addition, I develop my hypothesis in offering the concept of Partying as a celebrated resistance against tiredness(es). In the end of the second chapter, I expose how I staged my party in my experiment-

performance called If they tell me I am wrong, I don't wanna be right! (2022). The third chapter discusses the process until arriving in my methodologies and the meanings of humor, persona (Burnety 2000) and thesis structure in the mediation between disciplinary affects and celebration. To conclude, chapter four is a problematization of my own proposition and a desperate call for a collective act of hope.

CHAPTER 1

1. FAILING THE ACHIEVEMENT-SUBJECT.

My artistic practice has as context the analysis of Byung Chul Han in *Burnout Society* (2015), more specifically, what he calls an achievement-subject. In order to sustain his arguments, he compares the millennial¹ generation with the Disciplinary Society of Foucault. According to Han's analysis, the disciplinary society is "is a society of negativity. It is defined by the negativity of prohibition. The negative modal verb that shapes it is *may not* (2015, 8). According to Foucault, this negative imperative force was emerging from external forces, such as laws and rules; and they were being performed by institutions of control (schools, prisons, governments etc). On the other hand, in Han's proposition, he argues that we are no longer the disciplinary society, but instead the achievement society. The "achievement society, more and more, is in the process of discarding negativity. Increasing deregulation is abolishing it" (2015, 8). If there are no "external forces" doing those negative regulations, I question who is doing it now. According to him, the modal verb is no longer the "may not" but the "can". The "Yes, we can epitomize society's positive orientation" (2015, 8) and it informs to the achievement-subject that there is no longer external negative boundaries

¹ Anyone born between 1981 and 2000.

to stop them, contrary, it reveals that the control of their achievements are actually, in their own hands, creating the false feeling of being the “entrepreneurs of themselves” (2015, 8). The negativity was replaced by the excess of positivity (yes, they can). If the disciplinary society was once producing “madmen and criminals” the achievement society is now creating “depressives and losers” (2015, 9).

My aim with failing the achievement-subject is a provocation to the political project called Burnout Society. Two main relevant concepts to start it are individualization of responsibility and success. As Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim argue in *Individualization Institutionalized Individualism and its Social and Political Consequences* (2001) “(...) neoliberal economics rests upon an image of the autarkic human self. It assumes that individuals alone can master the whole of their lives, that they derive and renew their capacity for action from within themselves. Talk of the ‘self-entrepreneur’ makes this clear” (2001, 21). Nowadays, the individualization of responsibility is sold through neoliberal strategies as affirmations, such as “everything depends on you”, “you choose to be happy”, “I know where I want to be and I can take action to get there” etc. Those sentences are regulations of control that places on the individual, the responsibility of its achievements. That is the way success is sold, by working hard and self-motivation to achieve it. If both are done correctly, the illusion created is that the system can not fail

with them. “Yet this ideology blatantly conflicts with everyday experience in (and sociological studies of) the worlds of work, family and local community, which show that the individual is not a monad but is self-insufficient and increasingly tied to others, including at the level of worldwide networks and institutions” (Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim, 2001, 21). The imperative of achieving, in combination with the “self-insufficient” experience, is the reason why Byung Chul Han categorizes the millennial generation (achievement society) as a society of “depressives and losers” (Han, 2015, 9). This paradox between the belief of having the ownership of their achievements and the self insufficiency of the individual, exposes and reveals something that is relevant. Millennials are conditioned to blame themselves for something that is in fact, systematic: failure. In that regard, failure is a systematic reality. By trying to succeed, we are exploiting ourselves, feeling anxiety, depression and tiredness. The way one perceives and experiences one’s identities, is not beneficial to the individual, instead, it is making people sick.

In order to fail the achievement-subject, the alternative that I aim to claim is not only recognize that the one is indeed self-insufficient, but rather expose it as results of sociological and historical processes. Both Foucault’s and Han’s analysis demarks sociological and historical factors that ended up shaping those generations and identities. The losers, depressives, criminals and madmen were regulated by

specific institutions, in a specific time-place in history. Anne Helen Petersen, in *Can't Even: How Millennials Became the Burnout Generation* (2020) supports that "many millennials end up defining themselves exclusively by their ability to work hard, and succeed and play it safe-instead of their actual personal tastes, or their willingness to take risks, or experiment and even fail" (2020, 43). My goal with that is to challenge the achievement-subject collectively, by rethinking and reshaping those paradigms.

I then focus and cite my research in the experience of tiredness and its effects in their bodies and identities. To sustain my argument, I use the theory developed by Sarah Ahmed in her book *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004). In the book, she argues that affects can not be perceived as an object of the human psyche, but rather, as a sociological and cultural performative event. Taking the Achievement Society as reference, it is possible to identify that most diseases that mark this society (anxiety, depression, burnout, ADHD etc) have mainly negative effects in the millennials bodies (anxiety, self-exploitation, panic attacks, individualization of responsibility and guilt). If they perceive their identities through the amount of the achievements they have and in the exhausted effort in trying to achieve they feel anxiety, exploited, burnout and tiredness; they start to normalize those affects as not only the rule but as the role of being and becoming. In the *The Queer Art of Failure* (2011), Jack Halberstam questions:

So what is the alternative? This simple question announces a political project, begs for a grammar of possibility (here expressed in gerunds and the passive voice, among other grammars of pronouncement), and expresses a basic desire to live life otherwise. Academics, activists, artists, and cartoon characters have long been on a quest to articulate an alternative vision of life, love, and labor and to put such a vision into practice. (Halberstam, 2011, 2)

My alternative is similar, it is also the recognition that our tiredness(es) and the achievement-subject are nothing more than political and neoliberalist projects; that targets to benefit from it by putting the responsibility of its contradictions on the individual. In that regard, when we claim a political project as what it is, we are delimiting its effects as the only way of being, only way of performing identity, labor and "vision of life". It is crucial to let this project fail in order to sustain, collectively, ways of being that benefit us, that potentialize each other.

2. PLEASURE: PERFORMING THE UNKNOWN.

The way I propose, in my artistic practice, as one possibility of failing the achievement-subject is performing pleasurable affects. Pleasure, in my personal point of view, is a feeling that brings sensations of lightness, joy, desire, humor, playfulness, silliness and others. As Adrienne Maree Brown describes in *Pleasure Activism* (2018)

When my body feels good, my life feels good, and I want to keep going, and fight for my right to exist and love and grow and evolve. This is true whether it is in the context of a meeting, or a relationship, or a night of lovemaking. That doesn't mean absence of discomfort or awkwardness or hard conversations or learning. But the majority of experience should be presence- being fully alive. And I think that comes from experiencing ease, pleasure, connection. (2018, 89)

I do not deny any kind of discomfort, emptiness, melancholia, anxiety and exploitation. However, in my artistic practice, I do not assume those negative effects as the main sources of experiencing and being in the world. The reason why pleasure is important to my practice, and the name of the book *Pleasure Activism* goes directly to the point, is because the neoliberal projects are causing physical and mental damage to our bodies. "Feeling good" is a response (and also methodology) to the punishment mechanisms that shape the burnout society.

The activist side of considering pleasure becomes more clear when the relationship between pleasure and productivity is analyzed. Pleasure is normally perceived as a marginalized affect, and one of the reasons for that is its relationship with productivity. It is not uncommon to hear from parents and at school that in order to have fun, one needs firstly to be productive (finishing homework first, for example). In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004) by Sara Ahmed, she argues "pleasure becomes an imperative only as an incentive and reward for good conduct, or as an 'appropriate outlet' for bodies that are busy being productive (work hard play hard)" (2004, 163). The Happy Hour strategy is a good example for it. It already starts with the name, which indicates that the way productivity has been performed does not allow happiness. Happiness, then, exists only outside of the work environment. The structure of the happy hour is designed by institutions to,

in fact, increase productivity. In many cases the happy hour occurs on Thursdays as a way of giving a "boost" to Friday's productivity. Léa Freitas defends in *Leisure and festivity: in the ground epistemic question of western modernity* (2009) that

In our regime of truth, work and leisure promotes a relationship/hierarchy in which the first term assumes domestic prominence, that is, evaluative (read moral) in relation to the term leisure, thus being positively figured. At the base of the hierarchy, leisure is subordinated to work.² (2009, 6)

On one hand, work is the highest and most fetishized activity, which has been performed in western society by self exploitation and high productivity. On the other hand, we have leisure (time of pleasure and happiness) that exists only to compensate for the effects produced by labor on the body, and as a reward for damaging oneself in the name of productivity. It shows that some consequences exist to be subordinated to the damage that productivity causes in the body. Pleasure does not have value per se. The strategy of buying fried food and drinking alcoholic drinks appears as an effective strategy to anesthetize the tired and exhausted body. It also shows that the way of decompensating from work is through consumption.

² Free translation by the author. Original text "No nosso regime de verdade, trabalho e lazer acionam uma relação/hierarquia na qual o primeiro termo assume proeminência doméstica, ou seja, valorativa (leia-se moral), em relação ao termo lazer, sendo assim positivamente figurado. No pólo inferior da hierarquia, e subordinado ao trabalho está o lazer. (Freitas, 2009, 6)

That said, what I aim within my practice is to offer pleasure not as a reward, but as a way of performing labor. A practice that does not need to be compensated with pleasure, but rather a practice that anyone can benefit from. In that sense, if the achievement-subject perceives its identity through the amount of its achievements and by trying to achieve they need to exploit themselves, what pleasure can be offered for this identity?

As a way of replying to this last question, I introduce the concept of performing the unknown. As a reference to this topic, I use the teenage USA singer Olivia Rodrigo. In the music Brutal (2021) she sings “and I’m so tired that I might. Quit my job, start a new life. And they’d all be so disappointed ‘Cause who am I, if not exploited?” (Rodrigo, 2021). It is possible to recognize her tiredness (and in this sense, tiredness is close to exhaustion and burnout, not the one which is possible to be tired with/ for someone) and how she perceives herself through her own failures. She continues “And I hate every song I write. And I’m not cool and I’m not smart. And I can’t even parallel park. All I did was try my best. This the kind of thanks I get? Unrelentlessly upset” (Rodrigo, 2021). Besides the fact that one of the things that bothers a white rich girl living in the USA the most, is the fact she can not parallel park, exposes the disability of achieving, or the failure in trying to succeed. The question “who am I if not exploited?” is the synthesis of the effort in achieving and her

perception of her identity through exploitation. There is no Olivia Rodrigo without exploitation. However, what becomes relevant to my practice is not only the brutal effects of it, but her question. It is clear that becoming demands exploitation (achievements in order to be a subject), but by questioning, she creates different imaginariums for what seems to shape burnout society. If exploitation shapes us, what happens when we remove this affect from our identities, allowing different ones to shape us too? Jack Halberstam in *The Queer Art of Failure* (2011) argues

We will wander, improvise, fall short, and move in circles. We will lose our way, our cars, our agenda, and possibly our minds, but in losing we will find another way of making meaning in which, to return to the battered VW van of Little Miss Sunshine, no one gets left behind (2011, 25).

I propose the term performing the unknown. The unknown is a modal verb I aim to practice as a methodology. The fear of trying new things, improvising new agendas and failing what we were made to believe that consist of ourselves, can not be bigger than the desire for the unknown. It is in the unknown, the possibility of finding new meanings, failing political projects, and discovering new pleasurable ways of shaping identities.

3. INSTITUTIONS AND PRODUCTIVITY: CAN THE INDIVIDUAL FAIL BY ITSELF?

So far, the thesis has discussed the necessity of failing the neoliberal project called Burnout Society, also discussed how

exploitation is shaping identities and the role of pleasure in performing the unknown. However, politics and new ways of performing can not only exist in a paper. The practicalities of it must be considered. In this section, I reflect on practical examples in which the achievement-subject is conditioned to perform, and the roles of the institutions in maintaining its regulations of control. In that sense, how institutions operate in order to keep one tired and exhausted. As an example, I use one passage of the movie High School Musical 1 (2006):

[MARTHA]

Look at me and what do you see?

Intelligence beyond compare

But, inside, I am stirring, something strange is occurring

It's a secret I need to share

[ENSEMBLE]

Open up, dig way down deep

[MARTHA, spoken]

Hip hop is my passion! I love to pop and lock and jam and
break

[BRAINIAC, spoken]

Is that even legal?

[ENSEMBLE]

Not another peep!

[MARTHA, spoken]

It's just dancing! Sometimes, I think it's cooler than
homework

[ENSEMBLE]

No, no, no, no

No, no, no

Stick to the stuff you know

It is better by far to keep things as they are

Don't mess with the flow, no, no

Stick to the status quo.³

Martha is a character who is perceived by the school as a smart, intelligent and a successful academic student. In the movie, she wears formal clothes (pink polo shirt, a black skirt - not short, her hair is tied and she wears no makeup) - classic aestheticization that Disney movies portray the work-hard/nerd characters. In the same scene, her friend group (consisting of characters of the same categorization) is wearing similar clothes. When Martha shares with her group her passions, she immediately receives rejection, which relates to the neoliberal methodology of separating winners

³ (Ortega, 2006).

and losers. Jack Halberstam in *The Queer Art of Failure* (2011) argues that

*(...) a market economy must have winners and losers, gamblers and risk takers, con men and dupes; capitalism, as Scott Sandage argues in his book *Born Losers: A History of Failure in America* (2005), requires that everyone live in a system that equates success with profit and links failure to the inability to accumulate wealth (...)(A History of Failure in America 2005, cited in *The Queer Art of Failure* 2011, 88)*

The rejection Martha received is a result of the neoliberal methodology of separating society between winners and losers. For her group, the time used for Martha's passions is a waste, which she could be using for studying, being productive. The sequence of this scene brings two other characters: Zeke Baylor (basketball player) and a skater (whose name is not even said). Zeke Baylor is the classic basketball player who is popular, always mainly with his team mates. In the scene, he also reveals his passion for cooking, saying he wants to make the best Crème brûlée. However, his group also rejects the idea, blaming him for his passions. It is a different group context but with similar outcomes. For the basketball group, their actions should facilitate their achievements as a basketball player. Cooking does not add anything to basketball. The skater also brings a relevant thought: the same pressure also applies for the losers. In the movie, this group is represented by loose clothes, messy hair, slow way of talking. When one of the skaters expresses his desire to play cello, he is also rejected. For them the idea of success is different and the possibility of one of them desiring to play a

classical and formal music instrument is absurd. All of them (Martha, Zeke and skater) when expressing what makes them feel good, received social pressure followed by a series of "no" and "stick to the status quo". It represents not just ways of performing labor and work, but also how they should behave and be. In fact, the whole *High School Musical 1* (2006) movie is about the conflict between performing pleasurable affects and what it does to the achievement-subject.

Another evidence of this pressure is the central drama of the movie in which Troy Bolton (main character) has to choose between basketball and musical theater. His father, who is also the basketball team coach of the school, was a famous basketball player. Troy grew up consuming this ideal of success. For a long time, Troy also thought that basketball was also his dream. However, during his winter break, he was invited to sing karaoke (with who would become his partner in the movie, Gabriela). After this moment, he understood that singing and performing was something that he appreciates. When he comes back to school, he applies for the theater auditions and is approved. The most popular guy from the school, known as the captain of the basketball team now is acting. This simple attitude generates a lot of internal and external conflicts. To start with his father, a figure who since the beginning is against the idea of Troy being a musical theater actor, once this choice causes less time for basketball training (because of the theater rehearsals). Another argument of his

father is that Troy needs to practice basketball because it will allow him to receive good university scholarships, and theater would not do it. Two movies later, in *High School Musical 3*, Troy is still dealing with the same questions that are expressed in the song called *Scream* (2008). Some relevant passages of it are "I don't know where to go, what's the right team? I want my own thing, so bad I'm gonna scream! I can't choose, so confused! What's it all mean? I want my own dream, so bad I'm gonna scream!" (Ortega, 2008). It represents precisely the achievement-subject. Basketball represents the possibility of achieving something in life, and in that sense, also social and internal acceptance. The sport would also give him the opportunity of receiving scholarship; and some analysis of social class already started to appear. Musical Theater, on the other hand, benefits only Troy and his own desires. In theater, he does not receive the pressure of succeeding, he does it because he likes it. He continues "I'm pushin', crashin', I'm gonna. Fight to find myself. Me and no one else! Which way I can't tell. I'm searchin', searchin', can't find" (Ortega, 2008). This is the moment in which he wants to perform the unknown, even though he can not tell in which way. The moment he wants to reshape his identity. Those conflicts exposed me to the role of the individual in this effort of trying, and how other people and institutions also play a fundamental role in regulating it.

Moving away from the Disney environment, it is possible to

discuss the tangibility of the achievement-subject failing by itself in a structure that operates through punishment. Jack Halberstam in *The Queer Art of Failure* (2011) reflects about those regulations and uses Foucault to claim that "disciplines qualify and disqualify, legitimate and delegitimate, reward and punish; most important, they statically reproduce themselves and inhibit dissent. As Foucault writes, "Disciplines will define not a code of law, but a code of normalization" (*Society must be Defended* 2003, 38, cited in *The Queer Art of Failure* 2011, 88). In Byung Chul Han's proposition, the code of normalization is to achieve (in order to become), and its disciplination and regulation do not come from external influences anymore (institutions). He adds that even the Foucault's modal verb of disciplinary society "you may not" changed, in the achievement society, to "yes, we can". He claims in *Burnout Society* (2015) that "the society of laboring and achievement is not a free society. It generates new constraints. Ultimately, the dialectic of master and slave does not yield a society where everyone is free and capable of leisure, too. Rather, it leads to a society of work in which the master himself has become a laboring slave". And continues "one is simultaneously prisoner and guard, victim and perpetrator. One exploits oneself. It means that exploitation is possible even without domination" (2015, 19). For me, what is more relevant in his proposition, is the passage of the external regulations of control to internal self-punishment. However, the question of external influences seems to be left

behind in Han's proposition. If one ended up being able to regulate themselves by self-exploitation, one would embody the institutions of control. And the dialectic of regulating (actively) and being regulated (passively) is happening also between us. Yet, Foucault's institutions did not disappear, they are still present, and they are still exploiting, controlling and punishing. As Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim argue in *Individualization Institutionalized Individualism and its Social and Political Consequences* (2001):

(...) in modern societies new demands, controls and constraints are being imposed on individuals. Through the job market, the welfare state and institutions, people are tied into a network of regulations, conditions, provisos. From pension rights to insurance protection, from educational grants to tax rates: all these are institutional reference points marking out the horizon within which modern thinking, planning and action must take place. (2001, 22)

To reflect upon the experience of tiredness(es) and how its consequences shape us, sociological factors must be taken into consideration. We are living consequences of past methodologies that valued accumulation and wealth, power and control, productivity and work, success and exploitation. If related to the High School Musical context, where institutions offer scholarships for those who can benefit their ideal of success, those parameters are already contaminated by traces of performance and productivity. Basketball gives the institutions money, fame and sponsors. As a counterpart, institutions are "generous" in recognizing the athletes talent and offer them opportunities (scholarships). Another example can be the educational system in Brazil, where several schools

that print outdoors with the name of those who were able to be approved in certain universities at the end of the last high school senior year. The student's effort and exploitation becomes numbers that profits their institution, showing that if you study there, you will be able to achieve it as they did. In that sense, it is not possible to separate the individual from institutions (that are still actively present), nor separate the individual from its historical and sociological processes. To approach the experience of tiredness(es), and how the achievement-subject is performing its identities; it is fundamental to analyze how the society structured itself. The discussion of the roles of race, class, gender, autoethnography and neural-disabilities; in relation to effects of pleasure and exploitation, success and failure, need to be addressed. My proposition to this, is the concept of recognizing tiredness(es) and partying.

CHAPTER 2: PARTY

1. RECOGNIZING TIREDNESS(ES)

I want to first expose the reason for using the term recognizing tiredness(es) instead of burnout. And here it is the point in which Byung Chul Han reference of being at the same time master and slave can go further. To claim that one has a Burnout, and to be able to name it, is already a privileged possibility that results from historical heritages. In order to have a Burnout, one needs, even if small, some power control. Even now, there are so many people, groups, communities and countries that are still in Foucault's society. The sentence "exploitation is possible even without domination" (2015, 19) seems to generalize one specific experience and globalize it. What seems to be the case of the Burnout is that privileged people that once were benefiting from others' exploitation, now are also being exploited. However, for those who have always been exploited this is not a new thing. Hortense Spillers, in *Mama's Baby Papa's Maybe* (1987) does an accurate provocation when she distincts the concept of "body" from the concept of "flesh". She argues "before the body there is the flesh, that zero degree of social conceptualization that does not escape concealment under the brush of discourse, or the reflexes of iconography" (1987, 67). Taking her way of approaching it, Burnout (concept) would be for the body; and the ones outside of this privileged experience would

be the flesh. The debate regarding tiredness(es) nowadays is mainly focused on the Burnout group. The flesh group has its own experiences historically marginalized, not being even considered as a site of conceptualization and debate. Going back to the affect theory of Sara Ahmed, and how affects are presented in society as a series of historical repetitions, we can say that the exclusion of one's experience in the debate is not a coincidence, but rather a political project.

On that premise, my proposition to this political project called burnout is the recognition that due to those historical processes of domination and control, in addition with the roles of the institutions and its regulations of punishment via affects, the experience of tiredness(es) can not be universalised.

2. PARTYING

As a hypothesis to my artistic research, I arrived in two statements. The first is the political necessity of creating celebrated-resistance against tiredness(es), and the second is the choice of partying as a collective form of co-creating temporary pleasure.

In order to discuss the necessity of creating celebrated-resistances against tiredness, I aim to elaborate what tiredness(es) does to the achievement-subject. Byung Chul Han argues in *Burnout Society* that "tiredness in achievement society is solitary tiredness; it has a separating and isolating

effect" (2015, 31). He continues and uses Peter Handke to identify two different types of tiredness. The first one would be the tiredness that does not inspire, with the lack of collectivity, lack of negativity and excess of toxic positivity. It is one that does not engage; maintaining the individual in its own exhaustion. In fact, this is just another way that neoliberal methodologies found to create social disengagement. And here is where I start to develop my first hypothesis, claiming the political necessity of creating celebrated-resistance against solitary tiredness(es).

We have already seen, in the previous chapter, that we are not the ones receiving anything from it. It also was shown that now even the privileged people seem to be going through it, even though in different effects scales. None of us seems to benefit from it. Moving forward, the other type of tiredness (borrowed from Peter Handke in *Essay on Tiredness* 1989), instead, would be the one that recognises the tiredness from the other, with the goal of engaging. As Sara Ahmed argues "to say that feelings are crucial to the forming of surfaces and borders is to suggest that what 'makes' those borders also unmakes them. In other words, what separates us from others also connects us to others" (2004, 24). In that sense, by recognising our differences, I do not intend to categorize it even more, leading again to a more specific solitariness. Yet, I want to be aware of its intersectional effects, not only to understand the differences but also to find its similarities. And this transition between excluding through differences,

moving to a collectivity through similarities, is responsible for failing the solitary tiredness(es). The reason for that is because “in a solidary coexistence, in different ways of being and living, men create, imagine and invent ways to sustain the human in the social, the identity in the impersonal” (Han, 2008, 52). Taking Sarah Ahmed’s proposition of emotions being performative, resulting from past histories, and how affects are generated by the encounter between individuals and institutions; the way of failing solitary-tiredness(es) and its effects on our bodies should come from the contact between people. And since those effects are causing depression, exploitation, anxiety, tiredness(es) etc, there is also a necessity of co-creating effects that we can benefit from. My way of doing it is by partying as a collective form of co-creating temporary pleasure is also a way of sustaining the human in the social.

So, why partying? Léa Freitas Perez in *Leisure and festivity: in the ground epistemic question of western modernity* (2009) that “festive excesses and transgressions, such as drinking until you can’t, dancing until exhaustion, eating until indigestion, sexual licentiousness, are not just the inversion of the “order of needs”, the temporary suspension of the rules that it establishes the famous upside down world (...)” (13). In that sense, and I agree with Lea Freitas, it is not just the inversion of the “order of needs” but rather the expression of desires and pleasurable effects in a system that is built to exploit you and benefit from it. By performing pleasure, we are denying

pain, exploitation and anxiety as the main reverberations.

In addition, I see in partying the place in which society can practice and imagine sociological and historical changes. One analogy that can help my argument is the one used by Sara Ahmed, in the beginning of her text *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004) in which she describes the methodology of her writing and its relationships with the reader. She says

I do not simply interweave the personal and the public, the individual and the social, but show the ways in which they take shape through each other, or even how they shape each other. So it is not that ‘my feelings’ are in the writing, even though my writing is littered with stories of how I am shaped by my contact with others (2004, 14).

In that sense, when I remove the reality of a sociological event (party) and place it in a performative context (theater); I intend to also blur the effect of what happened in this event (new ways of being in collectivity) and bridge it to reality. Both reality and performance start to inform each other, and then, reshape themselves. According to Marielys Siqueira in *Lazer, Festa e Festejar* (2008):

It is precisely in this sense that we see the important social role of parties that, in the words of Balandier (1985), open spaces within society and it would not only be a spectacle where reality and imagination are played, but also offer the possibility of an active participation where moments are created for physical release and promoting the participation of conviviality and collaboration⁴ (Le détour, pouvoir e modernité 1958, cited in Lazer, Festa e Festejar 2008, 51).

⁴ Free translation of the author. Original text “É justamente nesse sentido que vemos o papel social importante das festas que no dizer de Balandier (1985) abrem espaços no interior da sociedade e ela não seria apenas um espetáculo onde se joga com a realidade e com o imaginário, mas, igualmente, oferece a possibilidade para uma participação ativa onde se criam momentos para a libertação física e psíquica propiciando a vivência da convivialidade e solidariedade” (2008, 51).

This active participation is precisely the core of open spaces within society. Removing the reality of an event and performing it on stage reveals that the audience is not just an audience, but also performers, aiming to be together, to fail together by discovering pleasurable ways of being. As Sarah Ahmed says in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004) "Indeed, the publicness of pleasure can function as a form of aggression; as a declaration of 'We are here'" (164). This declaration of space uses the system to change itself, and what once was the methodology of social dominance through exploitation can, now, become the tool of social transformation.

3. MY PARTY: IF THEY TELL ME I AM WRONG, I DON'T WANNA BE RIGHT.

My party performance entitled *If they tell me I am wrong, I don't wanna be right* (2022) seeks to explore the sociological urgency of the experiences of tiredness(es), by playing with the roles of structures and institutions and its sequels on the individual. The three fields in which my performance contributes are: doing the act of conscious waiving, empowering people and allowing communal exchange.

ACT OF CONSCIOUS WAISING.

One of the challenges of approaching the experiences of tiredness(es) is the difficulty of naming its causes. Normally, when we say we are tired the main questions we receive back are "did you work a lot?", "didn't you sleep well enough?",

"did you exercise yesterday?" etc. Through the flyer of the performance (see figure 1) I wanted to invite people to reflect on what are the other causes of their experiences of tiredness(es). I wanted to offer a different vocabulary that could facilitate the awareness of systematic methodologies.

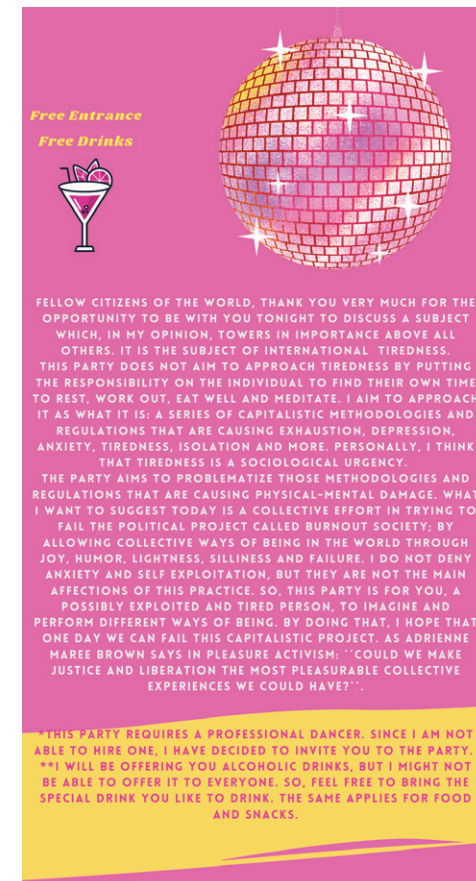


Figure 1. Invitation Flyer (Personal Digital documentation of the flyer from "If you tell me I am wrong, I don't wanna be right!").

Another moment in which the act of conscious waiving appeared was when I started the performance splitting my audience into a failure audience and a successful audience. This separation happened when the security guard asked them if they identify themselves as failures or successfulls. Depending on their answer, they had a different door entrance. The failures were in a VIP area, in the uplevel of the theater, with a better view. The successful ones entered through the regular theater door, leading them to the empty stage. I was receiving the VIP members one by one. After giving them my whole attention and hospitality, I went downstairs to the successful group and started to question (see figure 2) their parameters used to classify them as successful. I then start to put this classification in proof and ask them to share their high amount of skills and knowledge with us. Some of the actions were: asking them to bring beers to the VIP's, asking questions about silly movies, if they knew how to separate chips bags through colors, etc.



Figure 2. Interview (Photo Fenia Kotsopoulou).

EMPOWERING.

After the entrance, I said to the audience I would reproduce our first achievement, one that is common to all of us: winning the sperm race (see figure 3). Normally what is said is that each human being alive won the sperm race, starting life already by succeeding, being the "champion". I then decided to stage this race as a way of reflecting on this ideal of success. When I finished my sperm race and finally achieved life, one sentence appeared in a projection saying "25 years later... Where is this champion?" followed by daily actions of failure and silliness, where I exposed private moments. Some of the sentences were "once I took a shower wearing a covid mask. I only realized it when I could not breathe really well (because it was wet)", "I spent almost 2 hours trying to

figure out how to turn on an INDUCTION stove. None of the Youtube tutorials helped me. I realized I needed special pans for it the next day. That night I ended up eating bread and cheese” and “once I failed the easiest school module. I was the first in the school to achieve that. One of the feedbacks I got was to stop using emojis in academic texts” (see figure 4). In combinations with sentences like “I have to take ADHD pills in order to be productive. Sometimes my heart beats way faster because of the chemicals and I think I will have a heart attack” and “The worst part is that I rather prefer to take them than feeling guilty for not being productive”. This is the contrast between the imperative of succeeding and the daily experience of failing it.

The empowerment aspect of it appears when I stage and perform the transition from blaming individuals to sociological awareness. On stage I was lip syncing a song called “Empty cup” that exposes the struggles of this pressure and how they are affecting our bodies, leading us to a feeling of exhaustion. Or as the song says “we can not pour from this empty cup no more”. This moment is interrupted by a sound system failure and in the middle of it I start to question myself. This sound failure starts to increase and transform itself in a song, followed by projections with all the books and authors who influenced me (Maree Brown, Karl Marx, Byung Chul Han, Sara Ahmed, Jack Halberstam, Aliton Krenak, etc). During this moment I am undressing the sperm costume and becoming Burnety 2000. It is the theatricalization of moving

Figure 3. Sperm race (Photo Fenia Kotsopoulou).





Figure 4. Emoji (Photo Fenia Kotsopoulou).

from individualization of responsibility to assuming failure as a statement, as a way of being.

COMMUNAL EXCHANGE.

In the performance I made available some installations called “stations”. In each of them, one specific topic was being approached. The stations were: beer pong, unhappy hour, who am I if not exploited, do nothing: because doing nothing is doing something and sharing time. Even with its small differences, all of them requested from the audience-performers a participation of at least one more person. The sharing time, for example, was designed in the right side of the theater, in between theater curtains (see figure 5). Three tables (each separated by the curtains) with different amounts of chairs bringing people together to share. They were invited to talk about (see figure 6):



Figure 5. Sharing Station (Personal Digital documentation of the flyer from “If you tell me I am wrong, I don’t wanna be right!”).



Figure 6. Sharing time flyer (Personal Digital documentation of the flyer from “If you tell me I am wrong, I don’t wanna be right!”).

This score of always being necessary to have someone in order to the station works has as an objective to fail the solitary tiredness. In addition, the sharing also facilitates them to discover what are their differences regarding their own experience of tiredness(es) and also where they intersect.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGIES

1. CELEBRATING THE UNCELEBRATED

When everything is going wrong
in your life but you're used to it



Figure 7. Meme (When everything is going wrong in your life but you're used to it, 2022).

This meme is a good entry point to the methodology of celebrating the uncelebrated. Since the beginning, I knew that I wanted my audience to feel good about themselves, to feel engaged. On the other hand, my research transits through the topics of tiredness(es), exhaustion, anxiety, depression, exploitation, race, class, gender, autoethnography, neuro-

disability etc. It created a paradox in my mind once I wanted to produce specific effects/reactions in the audience, but my topic does not facilitate it. To cite an example for that, I did one experiment in one of our residential periods in which I wanted to explore the concepts of self-exploitation and productive time. The score of the performance was simple: sing a song, read a text, read a manifesto and try to fit my whole body in a tiny backpack. The execution was singing the Lazy Song (2011) by Bruno Mars, read the same lyrics as a text and then read the same text-lyrics as a manifesto. After that, I said "this backpack represents productivity. I will force myself to fit in this time, no matter what" (Garcia, n.d.). When I finished the action, I asked my peers to give me feedback regarding what they felt during the experiment. Most of them said that they felt sad, hopelessness, disengagement, etc. At the end of the day I was feeling completely frustrated, I was not able to arrive at the results I was expecting.

After this episode I had the desire to explore the opposite, an experiment in which people could have fun, feel engaged. One week later, I proposed a 15 minutes experiment in which I displayed some materials in one studio, put on some pop music, bought beers, snacks and let people engage with them. The materials around the room were: trampolim, piano, nail polish, massage cream, pens to write on paper, a big poof (to allow them to do nothing too) and some balloons. In order to give some "frame" to the experiment, I put golden balloons

on the wall, creating the word Burnout; and in front of the entrance door I wrote the question "which system benefits from our tiredness?" (Garcia, n.d.). After this experience, I noticed that the feedback was totally different. Most of them said that they felt more motivated, engaged, some even said "less tired".

In both examples the presence of the content was there, but the way of delivering it was different. Even though in my mind the idea of trying to use my body to fit in a backpack was absurd, and because of its absurdity humor would appear, that was not what the audience experienced. I am aware that in the second experiment the audience was also performers, and in addition, the objects around the studio also performed an important role in their motivation and engagement. However, what I aim to focus here, as a method, is something else. The Lazy Song experiment, even with its absurdities, was still playing with the expected effects. Trying to fit in a time that does not belong to me, and putting real effort in this action, is in fact, what we do. The action (trying to fit in the productive time) is the same absurdity of this reality. The last experiment, on the other hand, took the experience of tiredness and twisted it. Instead, it took the absurdity of reality and literally played with its rules/roles.

In order to sustain this argument, I introduce the propositions of Henri Bergson in *O riso: ensaio sobre a significação*

do cômico (1983). The author claims his argumentations by thinking about the reason why we laugh. He gives an example of a person walking on the streets and that ended up randomly falling on the floor, and because of that, people around this person start laughing. What he says is that they do not laugh because of the person falling per se, once they can not really know if the person actually wanted to go to the floor or not. They laugh because they were not expecting the person to go to the floor. He says

It is not, therefore, the sudden change of attitude that causes laughter, but what is involuntary in the change is the awkwardness. Maybe there was a rock in the way. It was necessary to change the way or to circumvent the obstacle. But for lack of agility, for deviation or switch of the body, for a certain effect of rigidity or of acquired speed, the muscles continued performing the same movement, when circumstances demanded something different⁵ (Bergson, 1983, 9).

Going back to the content of the experience of tiredness(es), in which the achievement-subject is obligated to perform specific affects that are causing exploitation, anxiety, depression and solitary-tiredness(es); and bridging with the Lazy Song experiment, we can analyze, through Bergson proposition, there was not an element of awkwardness. Seeing a person suffering to fit it is, unfortunately, far from being involuntary. Contrary, the second experiment is precisely the

⁵ Free translation of the author. Original text: "Não é, pois, a mudança brusca de atitude o que causa riso, mas o que há de involuntário na mudança, é o desajeitamento. Talvez houvesse uma pedra no caminho. Era preciso mudar o passo ou contornar o obstáculo. Mas por falta de agilidade, por desvio ou obstinação do corpo, por certo efeito de rigidez ou de velocidade adquiridas, os músculos continuaram realizando o mesmo movimento, quando as circunstâncias exigiam coisa diferente" (Bergson, 1983, 9).

change of the way, the switch of the body. And that is the moment in which the meme helps to explain my practice. To do a party, to allow people to celebrate their similarities, to dance, eat, drink and perform the unknown is not alienation of what reality is, but rather is an involuntary and collective reaction of being able to question its rigidities. As Marielys Siqueira Bueno argues in *Lazer, Festa e Festejar* (2008)

(...) party is, according to the context, capable of celebrating, ironizing, sacralizing the social and also personal experience. It is also capable of resolving, at least on a symbolic level, contradictions in social life, pointing to its powerful role as a mediator between economic structures⁶ (...) (2008, 52)

When the old man in the meme is able to laugh about the chaotic scenario behind him, when he can laugh even though "everything is wrong", the involuntary event becomes not the firing car, but the man's new affects. The laugh indicates the capacity of being able to celebrate and ironize his own personal experience. This is the reason why celebrating the uncelebrated is the method. In the achievement society there is nothing to celebrate. Neoliberalist projects are still exploiting people and nations in order to benefit from it. And that is precisely the reason why we should celebrate, because by doing it, finding our ways of being, performing labor and identities; we are the ones laughing, producing new effects that benefit us.

⁶ Free translation of the author. Original text: "(...) festa é, conforme o contexto, capaz de celebrar, ironizar, sacralizar a experiência social e, também, pessoal. É capaz, ainda, de resolver, pelo menos no plano simbólico, contradições da vida social, apontando assim, para seu poderoso papel de mediador entre as estruturas econômicas(...)" (2008, 52).

2. CELEBRATING THE UNKNOWN: BURNETY 2000

The idea of creating a persona to approach the topic of tiredness(es) appeared way before I applied for the Home of Performance Practices Master Program. In the beginning, I had no idea of the role of this persona in this specific context, and what it would add to my artistic research. But I felt the urge to become someone else.

I remember that in the first moment we needed to do something practical, I recorded some videos-experiments in which I was improvising some of the concepts of the book *Burnout Society* (2015), by Byung Chul Han. One of them was "multitasking", in which I recorded myself pooping and playing with the necessity of doing everything at the same time, never losing time. I began the video pooping, and then layers of actions started to increase. First I was reading the book *Burnout Society* (while in the pooping action), then added drinking tea, eating, checking emails on my cell phone, watering my plants (that I brought to the toilet with me), doing pilates exercise with a big pilates ball, etc. The other video was the creation of a youtuber. Here it is important to highlight that I was wearing a neutral mask, a suit, a pink wig and big sunglasses (also pink). I was not performing myself. Even the voice of the persona was modified to a pitchy and robotic voice. In the persona youtube video tutorial, they were making commentaries about the concept of excess of positivity and claiming the sociological perspective of it. A

reverse affirmation speech was made, in which, for example, they took the affirmation sentence " I can absolutely do anything I put my mind to" and said "no!!!!!! It is not gonna happen. Don't pretend, ok? You don't have the time, you don't have the energy, you don't have money. You are miserable" (Garcia, n.d.).

Some modules later, I did one elective called Technologies of Digital Performance in which the assignment proposition was to explore our artistic research through a digital performance. Having the last youtube tutorial as reference, I saw in this new module the possibility of going further in this media investigation. Furthermore, I also saw the opportunity of exploring even more my content, once I got in contact with different theories that brought more layers to my artistic research. When I had to do the digital performance, I thought it was natural to work again with the youtube tutorials frame. My choice was to use a real motivational speech, with a persona, and do a parody of it. The video consists in a strong male voice saying phrases like

You got a problem with your life? You got a problem with your environment? Do something about it. If you want it. Go get it. Recognise the excuses are not valid. They're conjured up. They're fabricated. They are lies. And how do you stop the lies? You stop the lies with the truth. And the truth is... You have time (Scott. 2018)

In the real video, images of boxing fighters, people waking up early in the morning, people exercising, expensive hotels and cars, etc. My proposition was to take the same voice and

the same discourse and do failed actions. This time I also developed a bit better the persona and the camp theories influenced me on that. First, the persona got a name, Burnety 2000, reference to burnout + society = burnety, and the 2000 as a reference to the millennials. The costume also changed. Pink wig and neutral mask continued, but now a blue crochet t-shirt, yellow shorts with tropical trees printed on it, orange legging, green beanie made of crochet, red high heels, yellow socks with the figure of a tiger appeared in the composition. The actions were climbing a font, filling a bucket with water and throwing the same water in a river, a running race against pigeons and playing with a clock in a playground. Just to name a few. For quite some time I thought that in both experiments (youtube tutorial and parody) what triggered me to keep with the persona was the medium (video). However, what became clear to me along the time is that actually, it was not the video (as vehicle) that was making Burnety2000 appear, but rather what Burnety 2000 was doing in the videos. In both scenarios they were doing commentaries (even with its differences regarding verbal and non verbal discourse). Those commentaries were not just a reaction to some mainstream propagandas, but a statement, a new proposition.

This background is relevant to read the performance I can't wait (2018) by Jibz Cameron and the use of her persona called Dynasty Handbag. In the video performance, she creates

a "to do list". In the list "get back to nature", "learn tai chi", "get in shape!!", "communicate with animals", "learn classical piano" and "find the man of my life" (Cameron, 2018) are the things that she wants to achieve. However, Dynasty Handbag fails in doing the actions. In "get in shape", for example, she runs after a person who is exercising on the beach, instead of doing the "normal" exercise of running, to get in shape. José Esteban Muñoz in *Cruising Utopia* (2009) analyzed Cameron's persona and argues "because of the mimetic performance of a person, a spoiled subjectivity, who is considered a loser, or rubbish, who refuses to live by an outside rule, a system of categorization that celebrates the normal, and instead insists on her own value as a countercultural heroine" (2009, 174). Dynasty Handbag, in the effort of undoing the "to do list" by doing it without its achievements results, is refusing the dominant power imperative (achieving in order to become) when celebrating failure.

Taking those contexts as reference, I started to understand why I had the "urge to become someone", expressed in the beginning of this section. This urge came in order to do what I, Gustavo Tome Garcia, could not: embrace failure and claim it as a way of being. Burnety 2000 became my heroine, the personification of everything that I wanted to say and feel, but because of the same methodologies mentioned above I could not. I feel extremely tired, having to take ADHD pills in order to fit in a productive time that does not belong to my



**HOME OF
PERFORMANCE
PRACTICES**

Figure 8. Burnety 2000 (Photo Fenia Kotsopoulou).

biological time, I feel guilty when trying to rest, I feel anxious when I see the amount of achievements I have when thinking about my age, etc. I needed to embody someone else, someone in which the identity is unknown (neutral mask) in order to say what I claim in this paper, in my performance and in my life (see figure 6).

By celebrating the unknown I aim to do what Jack Halberstam claims when talking about failure. He says "(...) failure turns on the impossible, the improbable, the unlikely, and the unremarkable. It quietly loses, and in losing it imagines other goals for life, for love, for art, and for being" (2011, 11). This is precisely what I wanted to do with myself. I wanted to escape from what I perceive of me, in order to discover new ways of experiencing the world, in order to feel different affects, reshape what once was imposed on me and about me.

1. CELEBRATING WRITING

The question of how to write this thesis emerged after reading my theoretical references. Bringing the uncelebrated topic as reference, in addition with the affects theories of Sara Ahmed, the question became: in which way of writing will I be facilitating new effects that will benefit me, my reader and my content?

It has been exposed in this thesis already how the achievement-subject is obligated to perform, in which only a specific

system benefits from it. This system operates by performing methodologies (individualization of responsibility, toxic positivity and success) that results in social rigidities. Unfortunately, this rigid effect is presented in the mainstream way of performing writing and knowledge. As Jack Halberstam argues in *The Queer Art of Failure* (2011) "(...) indeed terms like serious and rigorous tend to be code words, in academia as well as other contexts, for disciplinary correctness; they signal a form of training and learning that confirms what is already known according to approved methods of knowing (...)" (2011, 6). To write a thesis in which the structure of seriousness and rigorousness is not challenged, would not benefit me, the reader and the content. The reason for that is because disciplinary ways of training and learning are not apart from sociological and historical correctness. To perform it would be the reproduction of structural methodologies that aim to categorize us as successful and failures, blaming the ones who could not achieve it (losers) and validating people who could achieve it (winners).

In my practice, the presence of humor is necessary in order to mediate the power structures between the achievement-subject and performing the unknown; success and failure, productivity and pleasure. By celebrating the writing I aim to turn this writing as an extension of my artistic practice. In the performance *If you tell me I am wrong I don't wanna be right!* (2022), for example, my content was approached by pop-

culture references. Lip Syncs, pop songs, personification, use of emojis, colorful props (balloons, cups, table cloths etc), outfits, wigs etc were fundamental in order to celebrate failure and claim it as a way of being. My thesis could not be different. I choose to also bring those elements in my writing; appearing as memes, Disney movies, YouTube videos and pop songs to facilitate the celebration of failure, performing the unknown, pleasure, partying and recognising tiredness(es). It is also a statement that faces productivity and expected rigidities as a performative event.

CHAPTER 4: A CALL FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

One finding that became relevant to me is that as much as party is the place that can allow so many possibilities of unbecoming, subverting, celebrating the uncelebrated and opening people to people; party does, and will always do, what it tries to subvert: exclusion. Donna Haraway in *Cyborg Manifesto* (1991) argues

There are several consequences to taking seriously the imagery of cyborgs as other than our enemies. Our bodies, ourselves; bodies are maps of power and identity. Cyborgs are no exception. A cyborg body is not innocent; it was not born in a garden; it does not seek unitary identity and so generate antagonistic dualisms without end (or until the world ends); it takes irony for granted (1991, 65).

It was shown, in the previous chapter, how pain connects each other, and how pleasure can do the same. However, intersection, by definition, is one or more common points of a whole. There are still a lot of points in which they do not match too. The ideal of a party that can embrace tiredness(es) will be always excluding experiences. There is no total theory, total celebration. We are maps of power and identity. My last party performance, for example, was far from bringing debate regarding effects affects of tiredness(es) within scales of race, class, gender, autoethnography, neural-disability etc. I was in a theater, with a huge majority of white audience, inside a privileged university, in the Netherlands, in Europe. This is already a big historical and sociological frame that

comes with specific affects, and then, ways of being and experiencing.

In addition, how many people exploited themselves and were not able to be in the party to benefit from it? The people who constructed the ArtEZ building, who works in industries packing all the snacks we ate, the women who clean the theater space every day, the technicians who helped me with the lighting, people who made the clothes we were wearing, people whose exploitation killed in order to create successful nations, that until today benefit from it etc. All the parties and all the celebrations must also recognize its failures. A celebration that does not hold its contradictions, is nothing more than sustaining dominant affects and ways of being.

This brutal “absence” reality must be felt, specifically in places like the ones I presented the performance. During those two years of artistic research the question of “with whom I want to party” intrigued me a lot. In many moments I saw myself over problematizing it, not finding the way in which I could engage, reach more. And in many moments it froze me, I could not see a way out. And then I understood that the fear of acting is dangerous, perverse and also a political project. Donna Haraway also brings a suggestion to it in *Cyborg Manifesto* (1991) when she says “Cyborg writing is about the power to survive, not on the basis of original innocence, but on the basis of seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them

as other” (1991, 55). It is necessary to have political actions, politics capable of causing effects that impulses the human in the social, politics that are not innocent, that assumes its contradictions with the aim of trying to hold it, collectively, even if it fails. Ailton Krenak in *A vida Nao é util* (2020) says

When we think about the possibility of a time beyond this, we are dreaming of a world where we humans will have to be reshaped in order to circulate. We will have to produce other bodies, other affections, dream other dreams in order to be welcomed by this world and live in it. If we look at it that way, what we are experiencing today will not just be a crisis, but a fantastic promising hope. (2020, 21)

We need to improvise hope, utopias, different ways of creating identities and different ways of being in collectivity in order to circulate. It is true that the meaning of intersection consists in one or more common points, but the idea of focusing on this common point, even if sometimes tinier, sometimes bigger, is what allows the political action of failing projects in order to experience the unknown. Because it seems to be a far utopia, but in fact, throughout the history of what today consists of the world, those who were under constant attack, always found their way to dance, love, sing, eat, drink and celebrate. Our history also has joyful resistances.

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