

EXPANDING DANCE: A RADICALLY TENDER APPROACH TO BODILY
MOVEMENT, AUTHORSHIP, AND STAGING.

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EXPANDING DANCE: A RADICALLY TENDER APPROACH TO BODILY MOVEMENT,
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Synopsis

Driven by the urgency to find radically tender ways of relating to myself, to others and to the world, I propose an understanding of dance practice that seeks to expand its prescriptive and disciplinary conditions to open spaces for ethical enjoyment. Three robust terrains are presented to identify the particularities of these prescriptions and reflect on the strategies that both I and others have taken in trying to expand them: training, the creative process, and the final outcome. Bound to the regime of singularity in contemporary dance—a labor regime that privileges notions of individuality (dancer), authorship (choreographer) and autonomy (pieces)—this study examines the fundamental values of this regime, by briefly outlining its political implications, and presents the strategies used throughout my research to position myself as a dissident within each field. This work concludes by opening questions about the relevance and power of dance as a force for political dissent—to be answered perhaps later on beyond my master studies—by establishing a fundamental starting point: an ethics of joy.

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A fundamental part of the process of this research was a series of *correspondances* with others. Many images have made their way into this investigation but this one —corresponding and dancing—, both terms as expanded as possible, has its place here, in the acknowledgments. From writing to photography to dancing, these dialogues took place and together wove what is the extended and porous universe of this research. As my final act of *correspondancing* with you, a thank you:

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I, Fernanda Gonzalez Morales, hereby certify that I had personally carried out the work depicted in the thesis entitled, “expanding dance: a radically tender approach to bodily movement, authorship, and staging.” with the mentorship and guidance of Joao da Silva and Maria Gabriella Iasparra

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

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INTRODUCTION

The pursuit to expand dance prescriptions came first from a personal conflict with the professional world of Western dance. Inhabiting a Latinx¹ body and incorporating disciplinary norms—performative and aesthetic—of a canon such as classical ballet caused a shock that broke, literally and metaphorically, my body. The constant tension between my identity, my joy, the expectations that were imposed from this canon, and the emancipatory power of the practice of dance, led me to this investigation. Along the way I resonated with other people. Nevertheless, one image is worth presenting as the beacon for both hope and rage that drives this research: *Ternura Radical* (radical tenderness). *Ternura Radical* is a term often used in the pedagogical work of performing artists Dani d’Emilia and Daniel Chávez; they use it as a shorthand for how to critically and carefully engage with others. In many ways, their manifesto² followed me throughout this research as a reminder that I was not alone in trying to deconstruct myself and the systems of belief around me. More than a concrete method, d’Emilia and Chávez’s injunction for ethical connection appeared as a shared intuition, one that carried with it an acute feeling of pain caused by systemic conditions of oppression that was met head-on with rebel sentiments of companionship and care.

As part of a practice-based artistic research, I conducted this investigation in diverse settings of artistic practice and used self-reflective strategies in order to develop this project in its greatest depth. This thesis, more than a document that seeks to answer a set-forth question, is a

¹ The use of the letter 'x' in the Latinx word is used to express a dissenting position within established gender regulations.

² A Complete version of the manifesto is available at <https://danidemilia.com/2015/08/12/manifiesto-de-la-ternura-radical/>.

reflection, a tentative statement rather than a definitive one. The thesis will follow a format that includes the framing of the research problem, the literary sources used, and the description of each experimental context in which the research was conducted.

Although this research references broader questions, it does so only on the condition of clearly establishing the guidelines for its actions. I have narrowed this research down to a specific problem: the regime of singularity in the world of contemporary dance. This regime identified explicitly in Rudi Laermans' sociological essay "*Moving Together: Theorizing and Making Contemporary Dance*" establishes that 'artworks are unique products made by singular individuals' (Laermans, 2015, 252). Mapping the notion of singularity through the practice of contemporary dance signifies a relationship of singularity premised on notions of individuality, authorship and autonomy—values propelled by modernist thought—which, more generally, frames the conditions of production and reception of a contemporary dance production³. The regime of singularity is “a system of appreciation, based on the ethics of rarity which tends to privilege the subject, the individual, the private; it opposes diametrically to the ‘regime of community’” (252). This system reflects the political and economic condition of our late-capitalist globalized world that simultaneously exalts the individual, while it isolates her from political action that limits her relational capacity.

Throughout this thesis, I describe my particular encounter with this regime in three areas: training, authorship, and staging, and present the strategies I took in order to challenge this regime. Although these three areas demand particular theoretical considerations that could be theses in themselves, my own artistic practice involved constantly cycling through each

³ Laermans' research clearly states that the identification of this regimes serves as a heuristic device. Facing the “impossibility of an encompassing theory of contemporary dance because of its internal heterogeneity” (26) Laermans proposes this regime as a device to theorize common tendencies within the contemporary Western tradition of dance-making.

identified domain. Therefore, I employ the three areas to give an overview of this research journey and render explicit some of the concrete findings of this study. These three findings map onto the material and intellectual infrastructure of dance: 1) In movement practice I sought to use dance to explore relational capacities versus individual competitiveness; 2) At the creative stage, I and my co-collaborators used collaboration to problematize the notion of authorship; and 3) In staging we explored expanded choreography to problematize the idea of an artwork as a product. In each section, I present a review of the relevant literature, contextualize the contributions of my study within the relevant research, and present concrete strategies of my method in a case study for each section. At the end of the sections, I present a critical reflection of the research in which I suggest future avenues of research.

In the first chapter I briefly discuss my methodological strategies and expand on the relevance of artistic research in the field of contemporary knowledge production. Drawing on the reflections of Hannula, Suoranta, and Vadén (2005), I argue that self-reflexivity and a pluralist approach to methodological strategies pursued by such a practice fosters a critical engagement between a subject and her world. This approach privileges an open practice: one that is situated, contextual, transparent in its decision-making, contingent on the needs of each situation and that embraces the uncertain. A humble, yielding and porous approach to research was, indeed, a needed beginning in the quest for expanding dance.

In the second chapter, I reflect on current training trends for contemporary dancers that position the dancer's body as a neutral and entirely malleable instrument. This approach to bodily comportment in modern dance, I argue, signifies that a dancer's body is a replaceable or disposable body. I present the current model of training dance based on the dancer's ability to handle various techniques and bodily capacities simultaneously. More specifically, I argue that the current model produces a vision of the dancer's body in line with the regime of singularity

proposed by Laermans. Following the critical reflections of João da Silva and Chrysa Parkinson on the values of dance improvisation and notions of plasticity, I propose a necessary shift in dance training away from a ‘training mentality’ towards a practice that privileges the relational capacities of the body. The case study I present follows the collaboration I had with the “Tough Titties Revolution” (TTR) group. In working with the group, I established ways to approach bodily movement that moved away from an emphasis on individuality and competitiveness to explore collaborative, nurturing practices of improvisation and play. By the end of this chapter, I raise the question on how to inhabit the different roles that collaboration brings. Moreover, I link the following discussion on using collaboration as a strategy for choreographic process to give tentative answers to the question raised.

In the third chapter, I carry out a reflection on the figure of the choreographer, a figure that is often recognized as the singular author of the works that bear her name. Further, I present a model of work that Laermans currently recognizes as prominent in the field of contemporary Western dance. Laermans focuses on the semi-directed work model, in which dancers have greater creative agency within the choreographic process through improvisational tactics and group discussions about work. This model is in marked contrast to previous models —such as ballet— where hierarchies are clearly set between dancers and creative directors. Nevertheless, as Laermans argues hierarchies between choreographers and dancers still manifest in the semi-directed model the hierarchy, though in much more precarious conditions. Inspired by the work of Mary O’Donnell of *Open-Form Composition*, I present a case study with the *+31/20 Dance Collective* where I carried out a proposal that sought to shift responsibility and creative agency in a horizontal manner while simultaneously making explicit our working conditions. Although the role that I officially inhabited was that of the choreographer, in the ways I approached the process and presented the final result, I sought to destabilize the predominance and privilege of

this figure in favor of facilitating spaces for research that prized democratic and collective creation. I conclude this chapter by presenting the problems I faced and analyzing my results.

In the fourth chapter, I reflect on the idea of the autonomy of dance works which presupposes that each work must be carried out and presented in a reproducible and modular fashion regardless of the context or the participants. This vision, which symbolizes the epitome of the singularity regime proposed by Laerman, maintains a vision of artistic work, I argue, that is isolated from its context of production and reception. This vision, more importantly, almost completely nullifies the potential power of political and ethical reflection that is inherent to artistic processes. The case study that I present is of special importance. In the midst of the COVID19 pandemic and as a final example of my research work, I inaugurated and presented the work of a long-distance dance company: “*La Compañía de la Ternura Radical*.” I began this gesture of establishing a life-long distance operating company—something that I viewed as of the utmost importance in the current climate of this crisis—as part of a process of opening possibilities for reconfiguring and rethinking our notions of belonging and community. Beyond establishing rigid forms, this presentation sought to erase the forceful limits of these forms. It did so by blurring a number of professional and personal lines. I presented the piece from the privacy of my home; I gave an exhibition of the work process prior to the final presentation of the piece; and, finally, we privileged the participation of the audience who, in turn, were members of this company.

Throughout this research, I found a fruitful dialogue between the image of radical tenderness and the notion of ethics as conceived by Spinoza. Both ideas privilege the particularity of each encounter and recognize the larger context in which encounters are embedded. Spinoza’s philosophical orientation attempts to provide an alternative conception of ethics without resorting to a universalizing morality. Beyond static preconceptions of ‘good’ or

'bad' "Spinoza composed his ethics from a physics of bodies in a state of perpetual encounter" (Roberts, 2019,1). Similarly, radical tenderness, as proposed by d'Emilia and Chávez calls us to "tune in with, not just empathize with" (2019, 2) others. Their call brings the potential of relational perspectives to the fore of dance practice. More broadly, this study is concerned with the capacity of the relational perspective within dance practice in creating useful strategies of dissent and expansion - or following Spinoza, to foster joy.

CHAPTER 1: ARTISTIC RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This work is situated in the field of artistic research (AR) which, despite being a fairly new academic field, has raised fundamental questions around the politics of knowledge production and distribution. Artistic research is located at the intersection of ‘thinking’ and ‘doing.’ Furthermore, by locating itself in said interaction, it calls into question the division, between theoretical and experiential, that has long separated fields of knowledge. In artistic research thinking and doing are interdependent and complementary manifestations of the same creative capacity.

The methods of AR are plural and interdependent; at its core it privileges experimentation, qualitative research, documentation and dissemination. These methods are in constant dialogue with each other, but more importantly, they seek to open communication between the researcher/artist and the public (specialized and non-specialized). Artistic research participates in the development of new theoretical orientations by proposing specific methods for particular cases while enriching the practical dimension of its field by providing interdisciplinary criticism. One of the principles of AR is that it is tied to an ethical disposition. On the one hand, it seeks to contextualize the study problem. On the other hand, it proposes practical approaches to broach theoretical and ethical impasses. Research methodology then actively participates in the formation of discourses and practices within its relevant field.

Particularly for this case, the fact that the question began from an engagement with my embodied experience and, in turn, found expression through my body—an affective experience that implicated both my identity and my political positioning within the field—made the exploration of the question a fertile area. In addition to an investigation of the relevant literature, I carried out collaborative experiments that involved a critical self-reflection process. These

contingent, partial experimentations within my investigation were constitutive of the results. However, the fundamental element of any investigation is the capacity of a researcher to explicitly state the problem, name it, identify it and make the reasoning underscoring how one goes about studying a phenomenon transparent. This thesis constitutes my effort to do so.

Contextualizing my research based on the sociological analysis of Laermans anchored my investigation. Positioning myself as a dancer/researcher was relevant to the study since this position allowed me to carry out experiments based on trial and error, accepting failure as an opening to new possibilities rather foreclosing possibilities, and rehearsal as a strategy. As Hannula et. al (2005) persuasively argue “There is no reason to present rigid and methodical guidelines, but rather one should strive for openness and encourage daring experimentation” (14). Finally, I seek to map my process not as the solution to a problem but as the cartography of my strategies and contingent understandings. By centering the affective dimension of my research practice, I further the ethical-political argument that embodied practice expands an awareness of multiplicity and plurality that opens horizons and traces the rhizomes that are woven in the world. As Hannula et. al make clear

“We see it as a tool because pluralism and polyphony, as methodological goals, increase our possibilities for understanding and experiencing the world. In turn, we see it as a goal because true diversity is, in our opinion, a necessary starting point for ethics” (17).

Elaborating on this, I used diverse methods depending on how much those methods allowed me to further problematize my discoveries. Moreover, I privileged an open-ended research that served as a map that continually opened onto new questions, areas for investigation and insights. In this study, I did not focus solely on presenting solutions to a problem, both understood as given, but rather, on presenting the complexities of a problem such as the regime of singularity. By focusing on the different strategies, I employed in responding to this system, I found avenues for dissent.

CHAPTER 2: EXPANDING THE SELF, FROM TRAINING TO PRACTICE

In the book *Moving Together* Laermans does not directly reference the regime of singularity in relation to dance practitioners' training. Although the omission of dancer in the sociology of art is common, which tend to focus on the figure of the choreographer as the author of an artwork as aesthetic object, Laermans sociological reflections are useful in considering the role of the dancer within this labor model. Laermans begins his analysis by arguing that artwork is increasingly seen as a fetish. Laermans argues that "artistic fetishism [is] the negation of the labor presupposed by the hailed singularity of the artwork and its concomitant transformation in a reified artefact" (257). The reification of the finished dance piece (labor) in which dancers'

labor is obscured brings to the fore two important considerations: first, by privileging the finished choreography the role of the dancer disappears (her authorship, agency, and creative input) and second, the dancer's body becomes solely an instrument ready to adapt to whatever is required by current trends. In effect, dancers become objectified and effaced in the creative process. What is lost in this reification of the finished product over the creative and embodied labor of dancers is the particularity of dancers' bodies, their history, their culture and most importantly their labor. Moreover, institutional discourses from leading training programs frame the dancer's body as an ever adaptable and anonymous instrument.

In the last twenty-five years, there has been a growing interest in unlearning hegemonic dance practices as reflected in the increase in the number of practices within dance training that offer methods to unlearn patterns, improve the instinctive response of the body, find efficiency in movement, or nurture body intelligence.⁴ These practices can be grouped within the field of somatic movement but also in the various modes of functional training. We can assume that this is, on the one hand, a critical response to traditional forms of training—training that emphasizes learning and perfecting movement vocabularies and technical skills established through a canon, or mimesis⁵—and, on the other hand, a response to the growing demand for versatility and adaptability for dancers within their work context. What might appear to be a more democratic and critical approach to dance training, paradoxically brings with it a pressure to accommodate capitalist demands for ever more innovation, cheap labor, efficiency, and disposability. Chrysa Parkinson in *Liminal Animates* (2020) reflects on the words adaptability, versatility and

⁴ For more on this go to Bales, M. and Netti-Fiol, R., 2008. *The Body Eclectic*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

⁵ Further discussion on art in relation to mimesis and self-expression can be found at Plato.stanford.edu. 2020. *Feminist Aesthetics (Stanford Encyclopedia Of Philosophy)*. [online] Available at: <<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-aesthetics/>> [Accessed 22 June 2020].

flexibility, commonly used today in contemporary dance schools and in the professional field of performing arts. For Parkinson, “many dance training practices in the last thirty years have focused on teaching students to be functioning members of an economic culture that demands temporariness: the adaptability, versatility, and flexibility expected of a Neo-liberal worker. At its worst, this is a training in disposability” (Parkinson, 2020).

Neutrality, a technical term in dance training, betrays an ideological position that emphasizes dancers’ pliability. Neutrality in the everyday vocabulary of dance practice refers predominantly to an approach in bodily movement that focuses on alignment that instrumentalizes the body as a supple and pliable object. Nevertheless, as acutely observed by decolonial and queer theorists, the idea of neutral bodies is dangerously close to normative ideas of behavior, capacity and performativity⁶. Although Parkinson does not make this explicit, I associate her insights on adaptability to neutrality as a dance practice because both presuppose bodies capable of being unmarked ‘white canvases.’ The orientation towards neutrality runs counter to the body as a territory of political becoming that feminist theory emphasizes⁷. Neutral bodies are unscripted and de-localized. To expand on this subject, I turn to the reflections of João da Silva.

João da Silva in his book *Reflections On Improvisation, Choreography and Risk-Taking In Advanced Capitalism* (2017) takes a decolonial perspective that critiques the danger of looking at the tendency to focus on practices of unlearning in a naive way that is blind to the normative and possibly neo-colonizing practices of these new tendencies to “liberate” the body from its conventional bonds. Further, he writes,

⁶ A further exploration of the idea of neutrality in dance uses the terms in current debates of feminist and identity politics. A departure point on this topic is provided by the work of João da Silva cited in the text.

⁷ For further discussion on this topic see Jaggar, A. and Bordo, S., 1992. *Gender/Body/Knowledge*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, offers a rich compilation on this subject and reflects on the intersection between feminism, textuality, performativity and knowledge.

“in this context, improvisation and the somatic training strongly accompanying it became labor by means of which [one] should ‘undo’ [oneself] to become another self, supposedly better, freer and as such also more capable of creativity that would produce novelty”(14).

Da Silva writes from his experience as a Brazilian dancer learning improvisational techniques in Western Europe, where he recognized that choreographers and dance teachers emphasized neutrality as the desired quality in a dancer’s performativity. The danger, Da Silva noticed, was the creation of a new ideal that, disguised as neutrality, privileged Western bodies and styles of movement while devaluing non-Western cultures and body compartments.

I wanted to move away from notions of adaptability and neutrality in my dance practice and move closer instead to relationality. I was inspired by the work of dancers from Judson Dance and their conception of improvisation as composition. My methods closely followed theirs, which included group improvisation, task-based exercises, and play as the main premises for exploring movement. I took this decision with Da Silva and Parkinson’s insights in mind. I also incorporated exercises inspired by the thoughts of artists like Meg Stuart and Jonathan Burrows with the aim to bring situated decision-making and critical plasticity of the body into the work.

Parkinson posits that the word plasticity has an ethical and political advantage over adaptability, versatility or flexibility since “plastic materials are buoyant, resilient and resistant. Even as it has the potential to modify its form it doesn't lose the form entirely” (2020). What this metaphor calls to is the nature of making choices, choices that are situated in particular circumstances. What determines that a body can be—in Parkinson's words—a body that is plastic and rather than adaptable-- is the ability to read the situation in which one finds oneself and in turn respond ethically. The relationship between a circumstance and a body, the

conditions that inform this relationship, and the affect this relationship will produce were parameters that had to be taken into consideration throughout the research process.

Plasticity, in this sense, was approached from an imaginative stance of playfulness. I followed coordination exercises that pushed my body to be alert to the changing conditions of a situation. The aim of these exercises was to allow myself to get closer to the unknown, to shed my preconceptions and expectations of a given situation. The focus was, then, not on the improvement of single bodily capacities but rather on the encounter, on how to nurture this encounter with another-- reading with her, playing with her, supporting her, being surprised with her.

It was crucial that I used dance improvisation as a tool to explore decision-making and responsibility. Moving away from conceptions of improvisation that privilege self-expression, spontaneity, and ‘freedom’⁸ of an individual engaging with this practice, I understood improvisation as a series of decisions contingent on the specificity of current circumstances. As Jonathan Burrows (2013) describes choreography in his *Choreographer’s Handbook*: “If choreography is about making decisions (...) then improvised performance is as much of a choreographic act as any other approach, the decisions are just made faster” (27). By presenting improvisation as a process of decision-making, he foregrounds the necessity of ‘reading’ a situation as a practice. Burrows’ positions share much in common with Joao da Silva’s reflections on the role of uncertainty and ‘encounters’ in improvisational dance practice. In *Reflections on Improvisation, Choreography and Risk-Taking in Advanced Capitalism* (2017) Da

⁸ In the text “O’Donnell’s ‘Open-Form Composition’ (‘OFC’) A Possible Stance to Abridge the Divide Improvisation-Composition in Dance?” (2010) Joao da Silva explores the way discourses around ideas of improvisation and composition have contributed to the understanding of them in oppositional, dichotomic ways. In this reflection he presents the linguistic and ideological connections between this point of view and a dichotomic understanding of cognitive process that follows a Cartesian logic of mind as separate from body.

Silva suggests that “(...)an encounter with the new or unknown necessitate, rather, a rigorous, non-naïve and speculative mode of thinking inside the box, a thinking-feeling-bodying that insists on its own presence or condition” (da Silva, 2017, 29). Only when we are able to understand the conditions under which we exercise our agency, will we be able to “rehearse the adjustment of these conditions according to one’s own terms, in turn enabling the imagination or speculation of logic beyond that of ‘performance’” (29).

I turn now to my first case study: my involvement with the group “Tough Titties Revolution.” I turn to narrative ethnographic description to foreground our motives, hopes and fears in doing this project to highlight the experiences we shared as a group as well as the ethics and politics of our collaboration.

Case study: Tough Titties Revolution: A Shared Space for Movement

Research

Duration: One year, twice a week (sessions of 2-3 hours each)

Participants: Ymke Fros (NL), Mayke van Veldhuizen (NL) Rosanna ter Staage
(NL/ID) Anna Riley Shepard (US) Fernanda González (MX)

Further documentation of our work can be accessed at
<https://fernandagonzalezmorales.squarespace.com/tough-titties>

Safe Space. Not safe as in comfortable, but safe as in a place to try failure.

We met as strangers, five women from diverse geopolitical backgrounds, who came together by an impulse to share bodily movement with each other. In the beginning, our encounters always took place in studio space. We shared our money, our time, and our bodies in this space with the intention to help one another. Our conversations took place in English because it was the language we had in common. We considered each member's socio-economic status in making decisions on how resources would be shared and how expenses would be handled. In our first sessions, we were eager to get to know each other, to build trusts amongst each other in order to know how and when to challenge one another. We called this process 'the shedding'; emotionally speaking, we strove to strip the layer of defensiveness and ego that we recognized present in our bodies. We took time to listen to each other's stories and dreams, even if that meant that we used the study solely to talk. We also took time to touch each other and to attend caringly to one another's physical needs, which may have meant a caress, a massage, a dedicated song, or just taking the time to hold each other. We needed to set strong foundations of trust in order to create an experimental space in which dancers could reveal their vulnerabilities, experiment with failure, play with risk, and expose fears.

Working as a group, interdependency.

Slowly we developed a practice that involved mainly two parts: strengthening exercises that included resistance (cardio), coordination, and memory (creating long sequences of movement) and task-based improvisation with a focus on sensitivity, softness and awareness. We believed, despite all the pressures to ‘do’ more and to ‘claim our space’ loudly and authoritatively, that we were training in order to become softer, to yield in the encounter with each other, to listen, to care. In our improvisation setting, we privileged tasks that enabled us to explore the transformation within a movement—long-duration repetition of a specific movement—or the relationship between trust and fear in guiding each other’s movement— for example, by allowing someone else to move us around with our eyes closed.

Not to hide when I feel seen. Strategies to become my fullest.

We began opening spaces for each other to explore what each thought she needed. For some sessions, we would share the study space to do different embodied practices, but we, nevertheless, remained available for each other. Other times, we would conduct sessions dedicated entirely to the researching one of us, as it happened several times with the research for this master’s project or Anna’s neurological research⁹. We recognized that the diversity and variety of interests within our group meant that our practice was richer, albeit more challenging to see clear development within it.

How do we create? What if we don’t rehearse?

⁹ Anna Riley-Shepard is conducting an interdisciplinary project using neuroscience and communication theories to help companies develop concrete actions to tackle climate change. In our sessions, this research manifested with having experiments on types of attention (covert and overt) and testing them in different scenarios.

Rehearsing as a concept was something we explored constantly. We moved from utilizing this concept as a repetitive tool to ‘perfect’ one movement to the curation of a series of circumstances that elucidate how and where to move. By reconfiguring our conditions, we became aware of a wider space of action: the relation between our singular perspectives and the particular conditions of the situations we acted in. Testing this in public performances was fundamental to this critical practice. By including the audience, we had completely new information that we sought to incorporate. Our performances became about the relationship that was being established through dance between performers and participants/audience. Some decisions were made beforehand like duration, possible modes of interaction, and overall intention but what happened each time was different, contingent to the encounter of each performance.

*What the f*ck just happened?*

Now in retrospective I can say that shifting my approach from an individualistic mindset of ‘training’ to a collaborative ‘practice of research’ contributed to a realization of the potential of dance practice to make change happen. Quoting a colleague of mine, I echo her sentiments: “I just needed to get out of my own head and realize there are more important things to do.” Unfortunately, the TTR group drifted apart, ‘life’ got in the way, the precarious reality caught up with us. Thinking back about the reasons why this gradual drifting away might have occurred, I think back again of collaboration as a practice. It became apparent that by sharing our knowledge we were able to develop our questions further, but by not having a clear aim of action we were not able to develop these questions into practical decisions as a group. One of the questions that came out of this experience was how to use collaboration in ways that are useful for the research while remaining critical towards its unstated premises. In the following chapter I develop these questions further.

CHAPTER 3: EXPANDING AUTHORSHIP. CRITICAL COLLABORATIONS

The figure of the choreographer as artist-author is the second category that Laermans identifies in terms of how the singularity regime manifests in the case of contemporary dance. By making a comparison between the choreographer and the idea of artist/genius-creator, Laermans exposes how this authoritative position is validated via two simultaneous presumptions. First, the choreographer's authoritative position is justified in relation to the attribution of superior knowledge. "The renowned choreographer acts as a consecrated second-order observer who knowledgeably corrects the blind spots in the dancer's first observations" (2017, 303). Secondly, choreographers are understood as singular geniuses, unique in their expressiveness:

"This individual maker resembles a God-like figure: he or she is truly autonomous and finds the ultimate grounds for creating art in him-or herself. This is a clearly liberal belief that simultaneously points to the widely valued cultural ideal of genuine self-expression" (33).

The figure of the choreographer acquires a singular role. It is she who has a unique and omniscient point of view. The choreographer sits atop the dance hierarchy because of the superior knowledge and expressive capacity attributed to her. Being recognized as more knowledgeable is not necessarily a problem at first sight. One can expect that authority figures have more experience and the capacity to facilitate the work of others. However, when these categories are established as absolute truths, the situation shifts from authoritative to

authoritarian. A level of skepticism and critique are healthy. Similarly, the idea of expressive individuality is not necessarily a danger—one’s identity position can serve as a source of resistance¹⁰— however, when the artist is assumed to be an autonomous, ‘free’ subject, with no ethical responsibilities, no grounding in relation to others, artistic practice can become self-indulgent and elitist¹¹.

Both expressive individualism—based on an uncritical stance towards autonomy— and the ultimate privilege of power via the assumption of being an absolute knowing subject, undergird concepts of authorship. To expose the working mechanisms of this hierarchizing regime, Laermans turns to two models of the choreographing process-- the classical and the contemporary. Laermans introduces a distinction between the classical dance working model, in which the hierarchies between dancers and choreographers are explicit, and “semi-directed” practice, the most popular working model in contemporary Western dance (295). The latter reflects current economic conditions and strengthens the division between the author (choreographer) and ‘workforce’ (dancers). While instantiating a pronounced hierarchy between choreographer and dancer, ‘semi-directed’ practice, nevertheless, underscores the shared precarity of both parties within the political economy of contemporary dance. As Laermans notes “the former are considered to be genuine artists with particular talents: the latter may perform their jobs (...), yet they are replaceable” (2017, 260).

This semi-directed working model is popular in contemporary dance productions. In this model, the choreographer is the author of the collective work, but dancers have a greater role in

¹⁰ For relevant discussions of this topic see Muñoz, J., 2019. *Cruising Utopia; The Then And There Of Queer Futurity*. New York University Press.

¹¹ A further debate on the relation of autonomy and neoliberalism for the case of dance is needed. Laermans mentions (2017: 263-271) the connection of expressive individualism and ideas of originality, authenticity, or ‘freedom’ with neoliberal conditions; nevertheless, this discussion would benefit from an intersectional and decolonial perspective.

the creative process through the use of collaborative strategies. Moreover, pieces are produced in an abbreviated time period of intensive work – a typical production would involve three months of daily ten-hour workdays. This results in a final piece that is presented recurrently in various venues for the following years. These projects depend on production houses, theatres, and both private and government funds. A project needs to be commercially viable, even though it is realized in economically precarious conditions, as well as artistically provocative.

This model, although it reproduces hierarchies, presents an important alternative to the ballet model in that it recognizes the creativity and agency of the dancer in the production of a finished piece. This departure from the norm, although small in the socioeconomic sense, is fundamental at an ideological level. The dancer's role fundamentally changes from a passive being that reproduces someone else's text to a co-author in the creative process. Beyond recognition in individual authorship, this model fosters cooperation and ethical responsibility between parties; it recognizes that we are all part of the creative process.

However, I want to stress that if socioeconomic and material conditions remain the same, no real change is taking place. Reflecting on the material conditions of semi-directed practice Bojana Cvejic in the text *How to Collaborate* (2016) asserts that "collaboration has proven to be the mode of production characterizing post-Fordism, based on a horizontal, fragmented, re-skilled division of labour" (98). She warns that this working model reproduces neoliberal tendencies that outsources co-operations based on specialized parties as a type of collaboration that depends on exploiting parts located in different positions — economic, social and sometimes even geographical — to produce artistic commodities.

“Collaboration then becomes a form of self-exploitation, where 'teamwork' covers up existing power hierarchies and dependencies that are subtle and non-transparent in nature because within the collaborative framework the boss, the actual authority in the production process, is not always clearly appointed as such.” (2016, 100).

The conditions for this type of exploitative collaboration are clear: collaboration must continue to privilege some at the expense of others through relations of labor that remain opaque. In other words, within this vision, collaboration is de-contextualized and non-transparent.

This presents a complex picture to tackle on a pragmatic level. On the one hand, this semi-directed work model presents the opportunity to re-locate responsibility and creative agency in less hierarchical ways. On the other hand, it risks reproducing exploitative structures. Given the insights I gleaned from the work with TTR about the importance of bringing the personal to the surface and to attend critically and carefully with our working habits, I was eager to test out whether or not I could apply this knowledge to a more conventional work setting. I was inspired by the work of Mary O'Donnell, particularly by her concept of *responsible anarchy*. In a letter drafted to Johannes Odenthal, O'Donnell writes about the concept thus:

“Faust by Pessoa became the real expose of the idea “Responsible Anarchy” (...) because of this personal attachment to what I call the “Space of Unknowing” where the fact of bewilderment causes one to focus peripherally and centrally at the same moment.”
(O'Donnell, n/d)

Case Study Two: ‘Ternura Radical’ a choreographic process with D. C.

+31/20

Amsterdam, NL: November 2019

Duration: 2 weeks (8 sessions of 3 hours each)

Participants: Rachele Chinellato, Gea Ristori, Roberta Maimone, Alessandra Gigli, Giulia d'Antiga, Ixchel Altamirano, Melina Chrisanthopolou, Jort Faber, Rachele Cresppi, Doke Pauwels, Fernanda.

Organizers: Alexander Negron partnered and sponsored (partly) by Henny Jurriens Foundation (HJS)¹²

This collective is a self-organized group that was partly supported by HJS, an organization that provides professional training for the freelance dance community. The organizers contacted me personally with the awareness that I was involved in an artistic research program and invited me to be the choreographer of one of their modules. At the time, the collective had a steady group of fifteen dancers, all of whom were freelancers and almost all international—predominately Italian. There was no explicit discussion for how we would be paid. But in speaking to the other dancers, I found that we were all promised payment after the performance occurred. In the end, we received no payment for this work.

As the recognized choreographer, I was asked to attend a rehearsal of a previous process and provide my opinion as an ‘outside expert.’ Simultaneously, I was also told I could use this time to watch the dancers in a different work process and select who I was interested in working with. Recognizing a traditional (and normative) approach to power hierarchies, I saw this as problematic so my first decision was to ask instead if I could join as a dancer in the warm-up of the other process and that afterwards I would help with the documentation of the process. I wrote some impressions, made some videos and wrote down minutes of the conversations that took place between the dancers and the choreographer after rehearsal, all of which I shared with the people in the room. After doing so, I offered a counter proposal to the organizer by saying that I would rather prepare an initial suggestion for the process, with references and literature, and send it to all of the members of the collective. I added that whoever was interested in the topic could

¹² Henny Jurriens Foundation: International Training Center for Dance Professionals: <https://hjs.amsterdam/>

join. My intentions were to destabilize the authoritative role of the choreographer that is based on structures of traditional power. It was important for me, especially since I was inhabiting this role in an official manner, to embrace the role in a fundamentally distinct manner¹³.

After receiving some positive responses from the invitation, we met the first day in the studio. I was again introduced by the organizer whom I felt wanted to reinforce his own authoritative role in the process. I felt the weight of expectation from the dancers and I recognized from this first moment that the actions that followed would determine our entire collaboration. So, before any words could frame our work I proposed that we begin with a collaborative warm-up that focused on activating the body through touch. I inaugurated this process by leading this warm up and reading d'Emilia and Chavez's *Radical Tenderness Manifesto* to the group.

As framed in the invitation, the research would engage the topics of 'knowing' and 'self' with the intent to expand our understanding of those topics. However, in approaching such broad notions and having so little time to work together, I had to provide clear reference points in order to anchor our process. Departing from some of the principles developed in the collaborative research with the TTR, I used task-based improvisation exercises and the repetition of a single movement to nourish the creative process. This was then followed by group discussions. My interest in keeping open choreographic structures and situating the focus on the process of the research, rather than the finished product, had to do with enabling multimodal awareness of the ever-actualizing circumstances.

Traditional approaches to choreography and movement in dance—where the dancer has to learn and perform movement vocabulary previously set—had, in my opinion, caused the

¹³ A copy of the invitation to the process is available at <https://fernandagonzalezmorales.squarespace.com/radical-correspondence>

performer to objectify herself instead of focusing on the actual events taking place in the performance of the piece. By shifting towards a work model that was situational, collective and inter-subjective, the participants engaged in a process-based approach that emphasized a committed engagement in the creative process. In emphasizing the research process and not the final finished product, we developed a different approach that saw us, instead of working towards the creation of an end product—the ‘what’— focus on the process—the ‘how.’ This meant paying attention to what the movement exploration brought to each dancer in relation to each other. We began from a place of collective discovery rather than an emphasis of mastery in individual technical skills.

During our time together, participants would often ask me what I wanted the work to look like. After some discussion with my research mentor, I proceeded to provide directions in a way that would shift the responsibility to the dancer while at the same time I gave her concrete suggestions. My intent was to provide evocative suggestions that would not function as prescriptions but rather as openings for each dancer to take responsibility and have agency in decision-making within the creative process. Part of my strategies in this sense was to alternate the roles in the process. Sometimes I would be a dancer inside the piece and let another dancer take the lead as an ‘outside eye’.

We started working from the idea of *Open-Form Composition*, a work dynamic established in the late eighties by Mary O’Donnell. In an autobiographical reflection, O’Donnell mentions that “composition then meant for [her] the creation of structures to allow real-time decision making on several compositional levels, through the overlapping processes and formal

structures within performances”¹⁴. The possibility of making decisions in real-time in the choreographic composition raises questions about responsibility and agency. By having a set structure that enables and propels decision-making from the performers we were researching our movement in relation to each other and the circumstances.

Finally for our public showing we set the principles for our Open-Form Composition: 1) The duration of the piece was of thirty minutes and it was provided by a soundtrack that included songs and texts suggested by participants; 2) We began with a clear departure point of collectively engaging in the repetition of a single movement which slowly would dissolve into duets and trios of dance improvisation; 3) We set partners to develop the improvisation dance; and 4) We came to a collective recognition of an ‘end’.

Overall this process provided key insights for my research. Retrospectively I can say that my findings were: First, it is necessary to critically interrogate the privilege inherent in inhabiting a position of power, and; moreover, it is my responsibility to expose this privilege and use it to benefit the common and not solely myself. Secondly, by paying attention to the conditions of the work—the context of our collaboration, the people involved, their concerns, hopes, and fears, and the expectations imposed by the organization—and being both transparent and careful, it was possible to foster a space for collective creativity in which hierarchies were not a relevant factor. Third, a choreographic process should reflect respect and dignity for all and foster a critical awareness of the political potential of the research. By establishing a caring and

¹⁴ A full account of her journals of this topic can be found on Timeless-records.com. 2020. *MARY O’DONNELL FULKERSON - RELEASEDANCE*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.timeless-records.com/releasedance/ReleaseDance/ARTICLES.html>> [Accessed 19 June 2020]. The specific PDF used in this thesis is MOD: Open Form to Responsible Anarchy: Autobiographical Thoughts

trustworthy workspace environment that acknowledges the creative capacity of each person, we were able to expand our affective capacities.

Having said this, by the end of our collaboration, the structural conditions of our work had not changed much. In public presentations, I was credited for the work as the sole choreographer. Moreover, the precariousness of our labor conditions was underscored by the fact that we did not receive the payment we were promised. Reflecting about my intentions to destabilize the figure of the author I can say that within the process this aim was accomplished. However, the processual nature of our collaboration was obscured in promotional materials for the show. Although our collaboration may have been significant for those involved with the project, the work was, nevertheless, received as a single-author piece. The work itself as a cultural manifestation did not manage to disrupt the working mechanisms of the regime Laermans cites. This reflection was fundamental for the last sphere of action of the research—the reception and political implications of the circulation of a work of art.

CHAPTER 3: EXPANDING THE ARTWORK, WORK-IN-PROGRESS

Throughout this thesis, various terms have functioned as starting points for understanding the ideological configuration of what is called ‘contemporary dance’ in the West today. Terms such as ‘freedom’, ‘individual expression’, ‘authorship’, ‘genius’, etc., gloss over

the relations of power embedded in what Laermans identifies as the regime of singularity. The second chapter critically looked at the role of the body in dance training. The penultimate chapter tackled the idea of the author and the distribution of creative responsibility. This last chapter focuses on the idea of the artwork as a product. These categories are not fixed; they are suffused with their own ambivalence as simultaneous disciplinary tools and subversive potencies. This last sphere of reflection is perhaps the most complexly ambivalent of all.

Until now, this analysis has also shown how an uncritical use of the word *autonomy* hides the codes of regulation that function in an artistic practice such as dance. For example, when speaking of an author as a creative genius, the factors that determine her 'genius-ness' may be overlooked, such as social status, gender, or educational privileges. The case of the artwork is no different. Laermans reflects on the unmarked status of genius through a discussion of the fetish. He writes that "artistic fetishism [is] the negation of the labor presupposed by the hailed singularity of the artwork and its concomitant transformation in a reified artefact that speaks for itself through itself" (257). The case of dance is particularly interesting since it is a performative event. The work within a piece is obscured from the audience as a simulation. We take on an act of simulation: the dancers pretend that they are not tired or that they have not rehearsed these movements for months. Other aspects of the performative event are further obscured from the audience. For example, technicians and their labor goes unnoticed. This then results in the public experiencing the event as an isolated and self-contained universe. In sum, all the labor surrounding the creation of the artwork is obscured in service of a fetishistic vision of 'art' as a commodity.

Laermans acknowledges that this separation also occurs on a discursive level. He writes:

“Many literary scholars, (...) still tend to focus on the *internal* or formal qualities of (...) compositions, thus assuming that artworks are genuine autonomous aesthetic artefacts. On the contrary, sociologists (...) excel in a thorough de-centering of art-related practices and products” (2017, 268).

The division between ways of approaching the object of study of the artwork in many ways obscures the constitutive relationship between them. Laermans exposes how the dichotomous approach to the analysis of art works, especially the ‘internalist’ perspective contributes to the perpetuation of a privileged vision of art as autonomous. This vision is constructed in dialogue between the ‘talking’ about dance (discursive) and ‘making’ dance (praxis). A key word to consider from this quote might be *products*. Artworks are already conceived of as packaged, finished commodities. In reference to the perspective of artists who produce work, Laermans (2017, 273) states that “most artists stick to the notion that a finished, publicly shown artwork stand on its own and should be discussed as an autonomous aesthetic reality”. The danger of calling an artistic practice ‘autonomous’ —without specifically referring with respect to what and how—is the failure to recognize the systems of belief it stems from and participates in reproducing. By referring to bodies as ‘neutral’, talking about dance improvisation as ‘free’ movement, or referring to an author as ‘genius’, we participate in the construction of a vision of dance that privileges specific types of discourses and bodies over others.¹⁵

What constitutes the world of ‘contemporary dance’ is a series of discursive tendencies that frame and validate certain practices as legitimate manifestations of this practice. “A dance

¹⁵ An important contribution that furthers this discussion is the work of Alicia Mullikin “RECOGNIZING SYSTEMIC RACISM IN DANCE” Available at: <http://seattledances.com/2020/06/recognizing-systemic-racism-in-dance/?fbclid=IwAR3WYDShB3mkRbEQsN2wbstETI6H06wy6q3HEbXLeTH3fFoszZoBRvWtpU4>

culture reframes this general medium into a socio-cultural one through technical and aesthetic conventions that actively shape movement possibilities” (Laermans, 2017, 57). We, as active members of the dance culture (audience, technicians, dancers, choreographers, programmers, critics, etc.) participate in the creation, perpetuation and transformation of these conventions. By positioning ourselves and the practice we make in a way that either exposes, alters, disrupts or challenges the normative reference we can make use of this ambivalence to subvert normative discourses. We can see a good example of how this potency has been addressed and channeled in the last twenty years by artists through what is now known as *expanded choreography*.

Expanded choreography is a term that began to gain relevance in the 1990s when some well-regarded choreographers in Western Europe, like Jérôme Bel and performance artist Xavier Le Roy, created ‘choreographic pieces’ that disrupted the implicit contract between choreography and dance. The contract implied that choreography was the *notation* of dance and dance was the technical *mastery* of a specific style of bodily movement. When Jérôme Bel presented “Jérôme Bel” in 1995 he effectively targeted this disruption. In an interview he reflects, with an ironic tone that “a dance performance requires three elements: bodies, music, and light. The idea was taking everything away” (Bel, 2005). “Jérôme Bel” did not dispose of bodies or music or light but he presented them in such a fashion that exposed the conventional expectations in contemporary dance. Critics referred to this as ‘not-dance’ or later as ‘conceptual-dance.’ But if something was clear it was the fact that Bel used existing codes to subvert and expose the mechanism behind them.

There are other artists who go beyond normative understandings of ‘choreography’ or ‘dance’ to pose problems. Take the work of Mette Ingvartsen: “21 Pornographies” (2017)— it is a choreographic performance that engages pornography as a cultural production specific to the

West. Her performance dialectically engages with “expressions of cruelty, clinical precision, violence and pain of mainstream pornography thus acting as a critique” (Ingvarsen 2017). The choreography in Ingvarsen’s work functions in a differential manner; she identifies her practice as choreographic but instead of approaching the choreographic as the set of prescriptions of bodily movement she, instead, uses it as a frame to construct a problem. This *expanded* vision of choreography relates nominally to the field—by identifying with it— and historically in as much as it uses it in a differential manner. Bojana Cvejić’s reflections on *Choreographing Problems* (2015) poses a *problem* as “a method of creation by posing questions that differentiate terms and conditions under which the creation of a material object—such as, in the cases examined here, the composition of a bodily movement—unfolds” (Cvejić, 2015, 2). The possibility being to use the choreographic as a concrete frame that ‘opens’ problems. This is similar to ideas undergirding task-based improvisation or *Open-Form Composition* that allowed my research to develop further.

This understanding of the choreographic allowed me to think outside the conventions of dance and use this method as a way to devise new problems, confront precarious conditions and destabilize expectations. I turn now to my last case study to better reflect on how I applied ideas of *expanded* choreography to my research.

Case Study: “La Compañía de la Ternura Radical”

The virtual: January 2020 until forever

Participants: Open.

After almost two years of research, it had become clear to me that working from a relational perspective was essential. Starting from an embodied position, I assumed that my being was in a constant state of openness and affection—porous, leaking, intersected and with memory. Later, I approached the practice of artistic creation as a relational exercise that could be affected through collaboration and facilitation. But there was still something that I couldn't contest-- the idea of a work of art as a product with clear limits, in the case of a dance with a beginning and an end, with the audience as passive spectators and performers as avid movers. I wondered about the possibility of disrupting this sphere, to allow its leakages to drip.

In my personal movement research, it became increasingly necessary to work with models that presented a concrete formal structure that was simultaneously open. The idea of scores as a working tool was very useful for this. In a recent conference on AR, Janne-Camilla Lyster (2020) explores the role of scores as intersections between scriptural work and movement practice such as dance. She distinguishes between two types of scores: the *conservative* ones in which the objective is to preserve the totality of an original form and, the *generative* ones that evoke new forms and invite new interpretations. Lyster discusses the origins of the second type of score—*generative*—as an interdisciplinary method of exploration that refers both to the formal dimension (grammatical, symbolic, and figurative) of a notation to its artistic interpretation, in this case from dance. The difference that Lyster locates as fundamental between these two ways of notation is that the first seeks to contain a form, to maintain its rigidity, and the second seeks to expand it. In this sense, Lyster's research gave me an important reference on how to use concrete structures—scores—to approach movement not only for my body but in re-conceptualizing the work process in general.

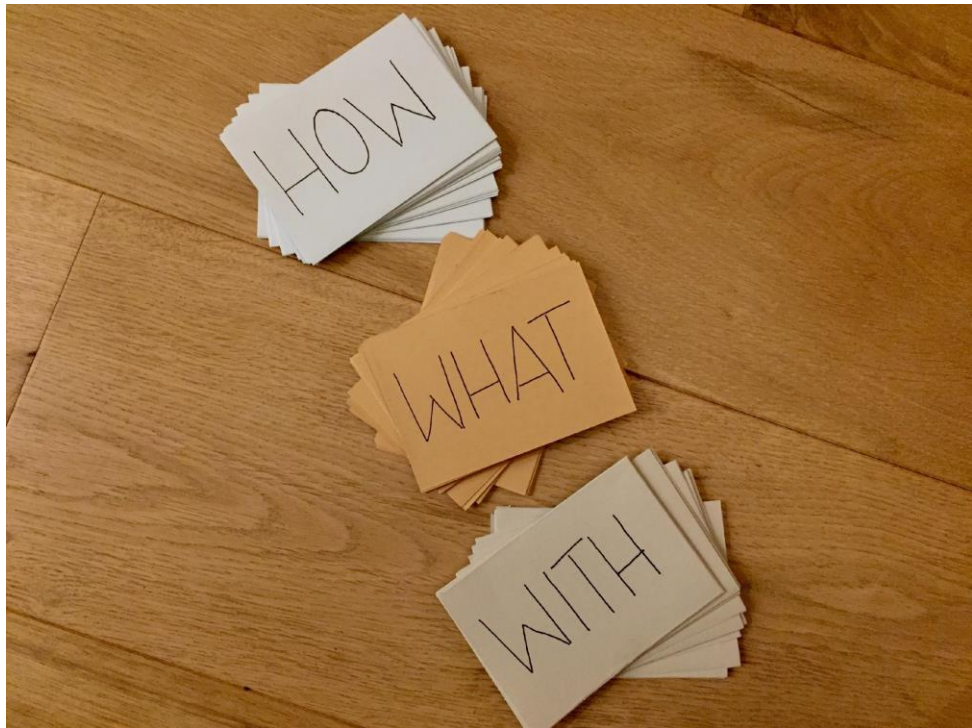


Fig. 1: Gonzalez Morales, F., 2020. *Prototype Scores for Ternura Radical*. (paper)

I constructed a score model made up of three groups of words. Each category belonged to the categories of verbs, adjectives, or subjects. The selection of the words belonging to each category was informed by the intent to problematize the instrumental ways we act in relation to the world. In this sense, I focused on looking for words that, on the one hand, would evoke the poetic power of dance towards the realm of grammar and secondly, that would move the ideal model of the human body from its central place in dance.¹⁶ I began researching movement by using this scoring system as prompts.

¹⁶ An online generator of this model is available at:
<https://fernandagonzalezmorales.squarespace.com/compania>

Fig. 2 Gonzalez Morales, F., 2020. *Online Generator: Scores For Ternura Radical*. [image] Available at: <<https://fernandagonzalezmorales.squarespace.com/compania>> [Accessed 25 June 2020].

RISKFULLY

FLOAT

GAZE

Throughout this research after our first collaboration in the TTR group, Anna and I had carried out a series of experiments together. We went to residencies together, we practiced together and of course we became very close friends. Her presence in my research, besides being extremely nourishing, allowed me to pursue the collaborative effort outside of productive spheres. Our collaboration, best described as a friendship, allowed me to perceive the potential of the work in creating alternative structures of companionship and belonging.

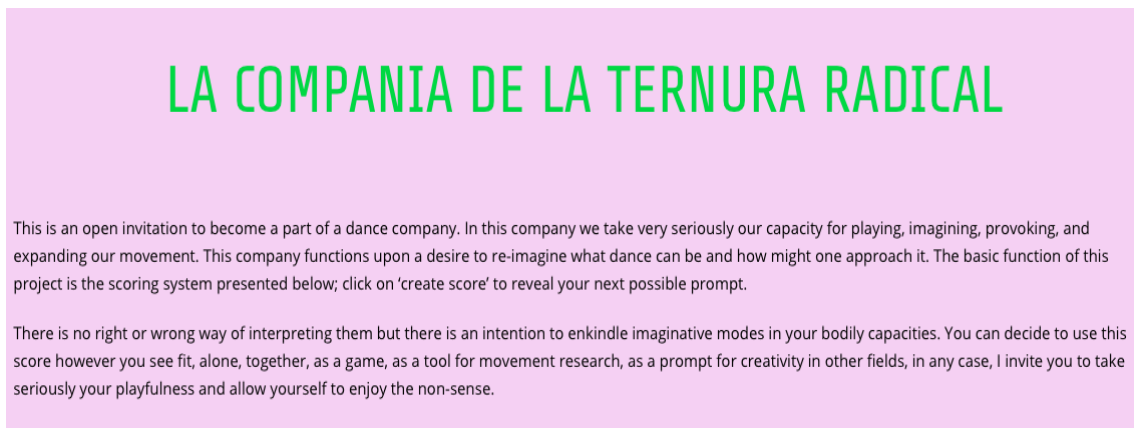
In the beginning of the year (2020) I had read a compilation of texts called *Rehearsing Collectivities: Choreography Beyond Dance* (2012). Inside this compilation there was a text about a project that presented an expanded vision of a dance company: The San Dance Company. This project made me think about the possibilities of making use of such a concept as ‘a dance company’ to use the idea of a dance company as a space to re-imagine feelings of belonging.

I inaugurated a dance company: “*La Compañía de la Ternura Radical*”. Together with a set of cards (or the link to the online generator) and an invitation, I opened this company as a gesture. I wanted to open the space for others to expand their own conceptions of dance. I wanted to establish a symbolic space of gathering that did not depend on schedules, or hierarchies, or aims, or products. The invitation (still open) reads:

Fig. 3 Gonzalez Morales, F., 2020. *Invitation: La Compañia de la Ternura Radical*. [image] Available at: <<https://fernandagonzalezmorales.squarespace.com/compania>> [Accessed 25 June 2020].

The response was great, I received a lot of documents from people trying out the scores: videos, texts, and audios. The scores had prompted different manifestations according to the people who activated them.

Anna and I continued working together and decided for my last evaluation to present something related to this company. We were researching both in movement and in composition the use of these scores when the COVID19 pandemic began. I lost my job(s), moved homes. All



studios
were
closed,
and we
would
no
longer
be able

to present this research on school facilities or have live audiences for our performances.

Thinking about these conditions and how my research could make use of them in a creative manner, Anna and I reconfigured our presentation to present an artwork that stood as an open process. We decided to gather all the audio-visual material we had received from the invitation of the company to research how we could best incorporate this material into our performance. Following the idea of a work-in-progress we decided to host a public virtual event where we would build the audiovisual installation in my house—with the material of the

participants— and presented our performative research. The event lasted almost two days and within the presentation the majority of the time was spent constructing the space. The intention to show the labor of setting up—actually building the space— and the preparation, that included open sessions of movement practice and conversations with the audience, was to effectively challenge the vision of an artwork as finished and autonomous in relation to the space and the labor necessary to realize it. In my opinion, the fact that we focused mostly on this construction of our space signaled a shift in what was considered to be dance. The inclusion of the labor of building such a space was intended to frame such a practice as a significant part of the dance-work. We framed it as a whole as a dance performance.

CONCLUSION: INTERWOVEN RESEARCH

This research departed from the desire to expand the practice of dance as I had encountered it in my professional experience. This thesis was an effort to carry out a mapping of the research process; to open up the internal logic of this process, expose it, and dissect it. Linking conceptual categories such as Laermans' 'regime of singularity' with practices of dissent and tenderness, such as my proposal inspired by the work of Dani d'Emilia or Mary O'Donnell, symbolized a starting point to understand the capacity of artistic research to interfere in the world: it is by linking critically artistic practice to wider problems that we might be able to use the potential of art to effectively make a difference. This investigation located both symbolically and practically notions such as individuality, authorship, collaboration, autonomy, and dissent and in doing so illustrated larger issues at play like the co-joined and ghostly cooperation between advanced capitalism and neo-colonizing practices.

Through this research I shed light on the type of involvement to dance that in my opinion could foster spaces for ethical enjoyment, to expand our collective capacities to better relate to

the world. To have, firstly, a plasticity in the body capable of morphing in order to attend to different situations of care, risk, playfulness, cooperation, and revolt. But most importantly to understand that our experiences are from the start interdependent, we co-exist.

Second, the implications of the relational and its strong link with the ethical present a juncture to think about the political power of dance. Collaborative exercises carried out in a critical way present the opportunity to re-imagine what the political exercise of a gathering can enable. Learning to locate my affective positionality; recognizing my privileges as well as my disadvantages; and knowing how to find the key moments to influence situations to continue as steps on this path to learning. My future person will continue finding ways to establish spaces of trust that enable risks that enhance the common good.

Thirdly, using an expanded understanding of choreography provides an effective framework to think about complex problem; expanded choreography considers movement in relation to its surroundings. My efforts in bringing the porous and the leaking of each relation, situation, problem, or question reflect the richness of this way of approaching a research problem. In this sense, I recognize the largest area of opportunity to improve in this area. In order to present a problem so complex as for example how dance can manifest simultaneously capitalistic, modern, and colonial values, one not only needs to research it intersectionally, but also present an interdisciplinary approach. In my future practice, I believe working more concretely with historical archives, making direct references to public discourses about dance, and creating spaces of alternative gatherings, will be a fruitful intersectional path.

I believe that in this research I managed to lay the foundations for my future practice. After this process, it is clear to me that I have a need to carry out processes whose organization — concrete and clear — work as an opening to greater problems. Taking up Lyster and Cvejic, from this process I now understand research as a way of framing and generating problems, not

on condition of solving and ending them, but with an intention of revealing the conditions of their existence and problematizing those things that over the years have settled as true.

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Appendices

- General website / Online portfolio: <https://fernandagonzalezmorales.squarespace.com>
- Documentation of work: <https://fernandagonzalezmorales.squarespace.com/staging-work>
- Documentation about research: <https://fernandagonzalezmorales.squarespace.com/about-tender>

