Affective Facilitation:
applied theatre and (de)humanization

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Abstract

Affective Facilitation: applied theatre and (de)humanization

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This dissertation rethinks applied theatre facilitation from a hemispheric perspective, to revalue its impact. I argue that affective transformation is a central aspect of applied theatre that is too often overlooked, when the focus is placed *only* on social change, which is not liberatory when instrumentalized within neoliberal institutional agendas that promote self-development rather than addressing systemic inequality. I propose that an *affective* approach to facilitation can provide frames for liberatory transformations by making space for the emergence of counterhegemonic, life-affirming relationalities, rather than producing measurable results, particularly in Latin American spaces of (de)humanization. There has been much interest in theater as a public sphere for human rights claims, emphasizing the ways representational performances intervene in hegemonic discourses. This framework, however, remains trapped within socially constructed concepts of individual identity and largely ignores how applied theatre also moves us towards a more collective experience of being. I argue that face-to-face creative encounters call attention to our *response-ability* as relational, sentient, embodied beings, which extends beyond that which can be understood subjectively or represented in symbolic and narrative terms.

A motivation for this research is the sparse dissemination of contemporary approaches to applied theatre coming from Latin America. Most of the existing texts in English are products of the Global North and inadvertently reproduce (neo)colonial epistemologies; a more decolonial framework is needed, from the perspective of the Global South, to allow a focus on experiential knowledge *from below*. I therefore look at case studies of my own and others' practices in diverse Latin American contexts of (de)humanization, from immigrant detention centers to victims' groups, from displacement, disappearance and deportation to privileged detachment, in Colombia, Chile and California. Each case study generates distinct insights about negotiating complicity and resistance within violent state/institutional processes of isolation and confinement (understood here as dehumanizing enclosures). There is a common need to reassert the humanity of all those involved in a decolonial sense (by presencing our implication in vital networks of care, as response-able to and interconnected with other lives). This offers an alternative perspective to the large body of existing research that focuses on representation and social

integration, moving the conversation from individual self-development towards *feeling-with* and *being-with.*

The chapters track how different approaches to affective facilitation emerge in each context. Chapter 2 explains how the concepts *afecto* and *cuidado* emerge from my practice-as-research with (im)migrant women incarcerated in Chile and Central American youth detained in California. Chapter 3 examines three Colombian facilitators' projects that engage female victims/survivors of the armed conflict, exploring how narrative representation and embodied copresence entwine to facilitate healing. Chapter 4 reveals how audiences can be moved by recorded testimonial performance to feel viscerally response-able to histories of violence, through an analysis of my practice-as-research *moving-with* digital stories of deportation to Mexico and the embodied testimonies of female victims/survivors of Colombia's armed conflict. Overall, I show how engaging bodies in kinesthetic expression and witnessing in relation to narrative, each other and the context, can facilitate *afecto* (a connection of care and solidarity), in diverse ways, allowing all those present to attune to love-for-vitality. My main argument is, essentially, that the impact of applied theatre is not only the effect on our ideas and (inter)actions, as in social change, but also a widened sense of what is possible in terms of ways of being and becoming in/with the world.

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Chapter 1

Introduction: theories and practices towards affective facilitation

Background

As I have practiced, researched and taught theatre facilitation over the past 15 years in different countries,[1] I have become aware of certain applied theatre projects' failures to account for the ethical problems of working within neoliberal institutions and colonial/capitalist/ patriarchal/modern frames of representation.[2] As a recent college graduate devising verbatim theatre in New York, the issues around how participants were engaged or not troubled me, which motivated me to seek out training in community-based and socially-engaged theatre practices. Working as an actor-teacher facilitating educational theatre in public schools, I then began to wonder about methods for creating performance *with* participants, rather than attempting to represent their reality *to them*. This led me to complete an MA in the UK, where concerns came up about putting vulnerable youth in the spotlight to tell their stories for peer audiences; as a result, I was part of a team of adult facilitators who performed narratives gathered from a co-led youth group as a school intervention, in an effort to amplify unheard voices, yet it was still not possible to facilitate an 'equal' exchange. Moreover, institutionally funded projects (like many I have worked on in the Global North) can inadvertently *responsibilize* communities to solve systemic problems (like racism or inequality) as 'personal' issues, rather than holding neoliberal institutions accountable. I was eventually drawn to working in Latin America in part to get away from Eurocentric ideals of facile equality.

[1] Facilitation aims to be more horizontal than directing or teaching, by offering frames for collaboration that generate liberatory transformations.
[2] Latin American decolonial feminists view modernity, patriarchy, coloniality and capitalism as intertwined matrices of oppression.

The most widely recognized foundations for applied theatre are the influential works of Brazilian contemporaries Paulo Freire (Pedagogy of the Oppressed) and Augusto Boal (Theatre of the Oppressed), which emerged as part of leftist movements in resistance to authoritarian governments during the 1960s in the Southern Cone.[3] Like other Latin American revolutionary thinkers, both Freire and Boal were exiled to the Global North and adapted their methods to new contexts. In Europe in the 1980s, Boal created Rainbow of Desire, which was meant to be more appropriate than Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) for the kinds of internal oppression seen there, as opposed to the class struggles and terror regimes of South America. Nonetheless, TO is largely used across the globe today, while Rainbow of Desire is less known, even though the oppressor/oppressed binary of TO falls short of reflecting the complex power dynamics and relational struggles of a neoliberal, globalized world. The countries where Boal developed TO (Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Peru) for the most part transitioned to neoliberal democracies by the 1990s; applying TO in the region today requires finding new approaches.

North American applied theatre scholar/practitioner Jan Cohen-Cruz points out that adapting TO is truer to Boal's underlying principles of analyzing the situation and assessing available assets than importing his exercises directly (2010). However, this has led to adapting TO for educational contexts in order to encourage young people to engage in dialogue rather than 'acting out' and to help them gain skills applicable to the labor market. This idea of liberation entrenches a positivist frame of 'good' behavior and a belief in meritocracy, while the structure of the neoliberal world requires inequality, so that the global majority may not accumulate capital, but their labor may benefit the privileged minority. The *how* and *why* of applied theatre thus centers on ethical questions that demand the interrogation of colonial

[3] Applied theatre includes a range of theatre-based practices applied in social contexts, from educational theater to Theatre of the Oppressed to drama therapy.

relations within applied theatre practice and theory.[4] Keeping alive the spirit of resistance to institutionalized (and internalized) oppression that Boal invoked involves looking to other Latin American applied theatre methods that have not become as globalized.

A lessor known history of applied theatre in the Southern Cone, specifically in Chile during and after Pinochet's military regime, was Teatro de Base. Chilean theatre scholar Carlos Ochsenius identified its three main emphases as educational (to learn something new about ourselves), communicational (to articulate a shared vision for ourselves), and animative (to express and animate a collective desire) (1988). Like TO, Teatro de Base centered on "collective resignification of the space and social interactions" so that the público [audience/participants] "brought together there would engage, express themselves, participate, dialogue, act and reflect" (Ochsenius 1988, 146 – *my translation*). Teatro de Base refers to theatrical experiences for/by community groups rather than professional theatre companies. It created the role of the animator, whose function was to facilitate reflection and debate about a community's concerns (similar to Boal's joker), who could be someone from the community or an 'outsider'. Rather than a text-based artform, Teatro de Base was an "occasion-event through which a group or community acted upon itself," with a less formalized structure than TO (129 – *my translation).*

Curiously, Teatro de Base diminished as democracy returned to Chile. Performances of resistance did not stop, but they took on new forms; as things opened up, attention was turned to reclaiming public spaces with protest performances (rather than community theatre workshops

[4] In her book *Theatre of Good Intentions,* Dani Snyder-Young states that wealthy nations (of North America, Europe, and Australia) "are the places from which the most scholars can *afford* to write and distribute [applied theatre] discourse globally" and "this is a continuing problem of the applied theatre field" because "these wealthy nations are not the only ones in which these debates are located" (2013, 14). While this is very true, I would add that the term 'applied theatre' has not taken hold in Latin America in the same way it has in the English-speaking world. Only in the past 10 years has it made its way into Latin American academia. Yet while there are very few publications on 'teatro aplicado', there is a great deal of Spanish-language research published on theatre and memory and theatre and sociopolitical change, as well as some on theatre and community, all of which English-centric academia largely ignores.

behind closed doors). Teatro de Base disappeared and was never formalized as a technique nor taught as part of Chile's theatre history. Ochsenius identified its main antagonist as the "elitist theatre" of consumable products - scripts written by 'great' artists that did not reflect the knowledge of the pueblo [people] (1988). Teatro de Base's basis in voluntary community engagement and self-determination became unsustainable under the pressure of market capitalism, which began to permeate all aspects of life in Chile, so that the focus of most theatre became the production of a marketable obra [play] or script. The same pressures trouble applied theatre today worldwide, together with the need to produce measurable impacts that are considered 'useful' (particularly by funders). With my current practice-as-research,[5] thanks to being enrolled in a PhD program, I have been able to temporarily evade the demands of the applied theatre market and explore other ways of valuing the *how* and *why* of the work, from a more hemispheric and decolonial perspective,[6] which reflects the communitarian, non-formulaic spirit of Teatro de Base.

The question remains, why has Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed endured and shaped applied theatre practice, theory and facilitator training worldwide? This brings us to the issue of institutionalization. Not only did Boal and Freire publish books in English, but when each of them returned to Brazil, both held positions in government and institutionalized their ideas; they became agents of a neoliberal power structure, pushing for social change from within. We might ask whether reforming an institution based on inequality can really liberate the oppressed or whether the entire system needs to be dismantled. Moreover, like other leaders of revolutionary

[5] Robin Nelson explains that practice-as-research involves "a research project in which practice is a key method of inquiry and where, in respect of the arts, a practice (creative writing, dance, musical score/performance, theatre/performance, visual exhibition, film or other cultural practice) is submitted as substantial evidence of a research inquiry" (2012, 8-9).
[6] Rather than the traditional objective gaze of Latin American Studies, which comes from the North and sees the South as its object of study (outward, not inward looking), a hemispheric approach offers a vision of North and South America as enmeshed in shared histories of migration and colonization (Taylor 2015).

movements in arts and culture, Boal and Freire were male, bourgeoise intellectuals, who, despite their liberal politics, reproduced colonial/patriarchal epistemologies in their work. Of course, the premise of TO is that the work must not impose a predetermined vision of the world and the action should be critiqued and changed by the audience/participants. Boal learned through trial and error that bourgeois actor/facilitators could not tell working class people what to think. How, then, can we go farther to *think with* the many diverse experiences of colonization/patriarchy, and so doing, transform Freireian and Boalian methods *from below*?

I arrived in Chile in 2012, interested in exploring dialogue as a process-based aesthetic practice (Kester 2004). By facilitating workshops in Chilean prisons, I placed myself within the total institution (Goffman 1961) where equality was impossible, to see what we *could* transform through (and about) applied theatre. In order to make a living as a facilitator, though, there was a need to articulate my work according to institutional agendas, which required having 'something to show'. I was coerced to act in complicity with the national project of producing self-disciplining citizens with 'useful' skills and legible stories. When participants in the workshops I facilitated expressed their motivations for taking part, it was usually about a desire to improve themselves, to learn to perform, to become 'better' people, or to redeem themselves of guilt. Alongside this tidy institutionalized discourse, however, there was *something else* happening that was more difficult to articulate. There was another reason participants wanted to join in that did not have to do with becoming good participatory citizens but, rather, a change in how we felt in relation to one another during the workshop. To offer an alternative to results-based agendas and

limiting representations,[7] my more recent work has focused on unpacking this *something else*, which I now understand as the emergence of alternative relational possibilities.

A Cautionary Example

One of the spaces where this new understanding began to emerge was in the project *Relatos Paralelos* [*Parallel Accounts*],[8] a radio theatre workshop I facilitated at the Talca Prison's Centro de Educación y Trabajo (CET) in the Maule Region of Chile.[9] Looking back on this project eight years later, I am critical of the ways in which my own articulation of its intentions fell into neoliberal tropes. I embraced the goals of 'rehabilitation' for social reinsertion that CET promoted.[10] Radio theatre became a way for participants to publicly demonstrate their 'reformed' behavior. Facilitating 'positive' representations of incarcerated people in this way was not only instrumentalizing in terms of showcasing their willing participation in becoming 'good' citizens (without critiquing economic inequality and the criminalization of the poor),[11] but also because it was a demonstration of my own 'success'. Those of us recognized and paid for facilitating the integration into society of those most oppressed by its institutions are not in fact agents of their liberation, as we might like to believe.[12] Yet even while *Relatos Paralelos*

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[7] As Cristiana Giordano notes, representation within state discourses often involves the translation of difference into "identity categories that the state can know, manage and, to some extent, protect" and this can result in reducing difference into what is familiar and understandable (2014, 10). Applied theatre projects often reproduce this limiting kind of representation.

[8] *Relatos Paralelos* was part of *IntegrArte,* a 'participatory citizenship' program I coordinated with the Teatro Regional del Maule, with the aim of enhancing social integration via artistic expression in vulnerable contexts.

[9] CET is a semi-open unit that promotes self-discipline; there are no bars or barbed wire and the 'users' can leave the center to work and study each day; nonetheless, they are in the process of completing long prison sentences, and when offered the opportunity to transfer from a higher security prison to CET, generally because of 'good' behavior, they must agree to meet the program's exigent norms and expectations—including participation in extracurricular activities, like our workshop, in addition to long days of underpaid work and night school.

[10] According to Paul Heritage, "the concentration on rehabilitation that informs so much contemporary work in theatre in prisons is contingent on ideologies that hide collective responsibilities and limit the possibility of change to the individual agent" (1998, 237).

[11] This approach has been critiqued for creating "submissive citizens who respect authority" without questioning the structural conditions of inequality, following the neoliberal ideal of 'participatory citizenship' to make people more self-sufficient and less dependent (Bishop 2012, 14).

[12] Although "a principal purpose of prison theatre, to many facilitators, is to create a space of agency and freedom", applied theatre often (inadvertently) reaffirms hegemonic modes of representation (Snyder-Young 2013, 63).

intended to make society hear carceral trauma survivors' testimonies of self-improvement, it also facilitated, in fleeting and unexpected ways, experiences of affective attunement (not a feeling-of, but *feeling-with* (Manning 2012)) that pointed past 'giving voice' or performing participatory citizenship towards valuing the ways all those present were changed by experiences of expression/witnessing, expanding our sense of 'self' to become more relational.[13]

The methodology I proposed for *Relatos Paralelos* employed collective storytelling to create radio plays inspired by the participants' lives. For our first performance, we devised scenes based on the story of a fictional main character that all of the participants could relate to, allowing for the possibility of contributing personal experiences, but also granting creative license to invent and dream. For our second performance, the group decided that we should focus on the future; they did not want to revisit past traumas, but envision potential enterprises, romances and the joys and challenges of reuniting with their families. They saw the performance as a chance to show audiences (both inside and outside prison) that they were more than 'criminals'. I ended up reaffirming their desire to be publicly seen and heard as 'fully human', yet the kind of agency that could have really challenged the available forms of participation in the neoliberal system and its modes of representation would have involved eluding prescribed identities and slowing down productive temporalities (Papadopoulos et al. 2008).[14] Although important affective transformations occurred through our work, I did not initially value them as a key impact.

[13] As Freebody and Goodwin state, being seen and heard can "give recognition, and therefore legitimacy to specific identity groups," but often in applied theatre, the idea of voice becomes a gift "given by outsiders to participants," thus conceptualizing marginalized groups as not already having a voice of their own (2018, 66). Moreover, they add, "[i]f the program 'gives voice' to participants, for example then the program, rather than the participants, is positioned as powerful and active" (72).

[14] Freebody and Goodwin point out that "when participants are engaging in agentive behavior", it has the potential to be either empowering or disempowering, because in neoliberal logic, agency is equated with individual liberties and not necessarily the "common good" (2018, 67).

I now believe that the quality of our script was not what mattered as much as the feeling it inspired - of getting on that bus home, sitting down in a self-owned restaurant, and the promise of love to come - which participants enacted physically as well as verbally. For our second piece, we used a shadow screen to provide a sense of anonymity and a cinematic quality, acting in silhouette, moving in time with prerecorded dialogues. This offered a diffuse approach to performing testimony that was relational and full of possibility, enacted through disembodied voices, silhouetted (faceless) bodies, and the real copresence of narrators and witnesses. In our first piece, it was similarly the participants' copresence with the audience, each other and their recorded voices that demonstrated a relational sense of self. Sitting in a semicircle on stage, looking back at each other and the audience while listening to their radio play, they ceremonially sipped from a matera [traditional mate cup] that they passed around. Their bodies and the matera played an important role on stage *as* text - as transmitters of not only meaning, but memory, emotion, and much more that could not be named or narrated (Taylor 2015).

One participant described our work as *una experiencia grata al compartir historias. El soñar y poder hacer real una comedia, un viaje. El sentir que tu vida e intereses han cambiado. Compartir experiencias de vida con personas diferentes que están pasando por situaciones semejantes…¡inolvidable! [A pleasant experience of sharing stories. Dreaming and being able to make a comedy or a journey come true. Feeling that your life and interests have changed. Sharing life experiences with different people who are going through similar situations…unforgettable!]* Another said simply, *buena experiencia, buena vibra. [Good experience, good vibe].* Their references to dreaming, feeling one's life changed, and an unforgettable good vibe indicate the sense of entering into a different experience of self in relation to others, of being in co-transformation, spilling over the established boundaries of

existence. More such moments of affective attunement (to use Manning's term (2012)) occurred within the intimate space of the workshop than on stage, but they were always difficult to maintain. The participants and I were often made to feel uncomfortable by others in the group, due to patriarchal attitudes that predominate within CET. Since I did not understand the prison dialect, *coa*, I missed much of what was said, generating laughter at my obliviousness to cheeky jokes, which contributed to a loss of focus and made the workshops seem less important than the performances. Although the final product was certainly important, the focus we placed on it overshadowed the affective impact of the creative process. For instance, listening to recordings of their voices week after week during workshops generated a collective sense of affirmation that was not appreciated as a project outcome.

Figure 1: publicity image for *Relatos Paralelos* used on Teatro Regional del Maule's website.

Photo credit Teatro Regional del Maule

What I now suggest we value is that despite varying forms of complicity in structures of confinement,[15] throughout the creative process we felt ourselves leaning towards a more interconnected way of being, moving *alongside* the discourses within which we articulated the

[15]Nina Billone Prieur identifies an "institutional turn" in prison theatre, signaling a "movement away from cultural rebellion and towards social maintenance, away from fighting against the system and toward working within it" (2010, 14). She sees this institutional turn as framed by the neoliberal historical moment (2010). When I lived and worked in Chile I was, by default, a representative of the North American neoliberal model that brought on Chile's 'development', at great cost to the majority working-class population. While *IntegrArte* intended to benefit participants, it succumbed to the neoliberal tendency to take a deficit approach, assuming there was something wrong with participants, that they needed something provided to them by collaborating institutions (which profited from this 'need' by improving their own image) and artists (who gained employment).

aims and message of our work.[16] Rather than focusing on the final product, I believe we can view the intimate encounters within the workshop (however fleeting or fraught) as central to the transformative impact of the project. I am not referring to impacts such as individual rehabilitation, quantifiable skills, or reformed behavior, as "these goals are not radical and they reinforce existing systems of power," though they may be useful to those navigating such systems (Snyder-Young 2013, 77). A truly radical impact of prison theatre is challenging the ways bodies are individually responsibilized and disciplined by facilitating an embodied experience of coming together as part of something *more-than* individual (Manning 2012), fomenting the care networks of those most harmed by inhumane carceral practices,[17] in addition to facilitating moments of connection for/with outside audiences (and facilitators).

Figure 2: Recording our radio play.

Photo credit Sarah Ashford Hart

Figure 3: Our second performance at CET.

Photo credit Francisca Burgos

When feeling fully human is systematically denied, having a space to connect, play and create can transform the affect among a group of people in prison, allowing more hopeful

[16] In her discussion of ethics and aesthetics, Lynette Hunter, ruminates that certain kinds of performance operate "alongside" hegemonic systems (2014, 9).

[17] One aim of prison is to cut off the incarcerated from the rest of society. This has detrimental impacts on vital webs of relations (depriving children of their caregivers, for instance) and perpetuates precarity in affected communities, continuing the cycle of criminalization. However, as I learned in Chile, alternative care networks form inside prisons and their affective strength can be felt all the more viscerally because of the imposed enclosures.

relational possibilities to flourish. This is not about prison reform or prison abolition, nor is it about social change or personal growth. It is about feeling better, more alive, by being together differently. Still, for prison theatre facilitators, there is a need to collaborate with carceral institutions in order to gain access and permission for the creative work to take place, which involves a complicated negotiation with authority. Prison theater scholar Nina Billone Prieur describes this negotiation process as "developing creative ways of moving within systems of power" as opposed to "resisting authority from a presumed position outside of power"; it involves engaging *interdependencies* "between prison and society, aesthetics and politics, individuals and institutions" (2010, 3-7). I would add that interdependency *overflows* institutional, subjective and social constraints. A vital connection with other lives can be felt in moments of *embodied copresence* in applied theatre;[18] facilitating attunement to this expansive sense of interdependence can help repair damaged relations.

Still, with *Relatos Paralelos*, the only long-term change I can be certain happened is the one I felt in me, my practice, and my thinking. The project's 'failures' were ripe with possibility for learning. As British applied theatre practitioner/scholar Sheila Preston points out, "dilemmatic spaces experienced, felt and struggled within, are contributed to by the organizational tensions and contradictions of neoliberal economies" (2016, 1023–1031). A method must adapt to the changing needs of the dilemmatic world. Challenges offer facilitators opportunities for rethinking our practices. What would a more adaptive and contextually conscious facilitation approach have looked like on my part? Certainly, more openness to *not-*

[18] What I mean by *embodied copresence* is a physical feeling of connection with (rather than separateness from) each other and the world. Goffman (1966) used the term *copresence* to describe social situations where people "sense that they are close enough to be perceived in whatever they are doing, including their experiencing of others, and close enough to be perceived in this sensing of being perceived" (17). I am interested in a *more-than* social, somatic sense of copresence.

knowing and less of a focus on set outcomes.[19] We could have sat with moments of discomfort as a key part of the process. Discomfort can be generative; it allows us to see/feel *what else* is going on that we have not considered yet (Preston 2016). I could have placed less emphasis on narrative and paid closer somatic attention to the way affects among bodies in the space shifted. But I still needed to learn how to enact an 'affective' approach to facilitation,[20] a journey that will play out through the rest of this dissertation. The main takeaway from *Relatos Paralelos* as a starting place is that this work cannot be assessed *only* for rewriting (or reinscribing) established narratives; its impact *also* involves relational transformations that are felt on an affective, embodied register, expanding our 'selves'.

A More Affective Approach

This dissertation offers an alternative perspective to the large body of existing research in the field of applied theatre that focuses on representation and public visibility and/or skills development and social (re)integration. While there has been an 'affective turn' in applied theatre theory over the past decade, which has resulted in rethinking many of the productivity-

[19] I borrow the term *not-knowing* from a number of contemporary theorists (de la Cadena 2021; Hunter 2019; Preston 2016; Foster 2016; Giordano 2014) in order to apply it affectively to theatre facilitation. For Cristiana Giordano, not knowing involves "embracing uncertainty" rather than trying to know or understand "the other" through "already established categories" that limit possibilities of life and create boundaries (2014, 10). For Marisol de la Cadena, in a similar vein, not knowing means that "what you know (or might eventually know) might be exceeded by that which what you know (or might eventually know) cannot contain" indicating an excess that exists "beyond the limits of modern epistemological knowledge and its requirement of representation" (2021, 254, 249). In Lynette Hunter's terms, specifically in relation to performance, engagement with what is not-known can "bring together performer and audience participants across disunity" so that the affect of "not-knowing can temporarily be shared even if the knowledge can't" and this has a somatic impact on the bodies present, whereby "[t]he self has changed so I can recognize something that was not possible to recognize before" as not-known to me (2019, 73, 85, 89). Victoria Foster poses not-knowing as method for collaborative arts-based research, in order move past keeping knowledge in the domain of the powerful, arguing that an "epistemological humility" is needed—an acceptance that "knowing requires not-knowing: a state of being lost in order to find" (2016, 117). Finally, Sheila Preston brings not-knowing to the practice of applied theatre facilitation, such that "feeling at a loss" rather than relying on a preestablished method is a responsive facilitation approach that takes into account the needs of participants in "dilemmatic contexts" (2016, 264). For me, *not-knowing* has thus become a mode of approaching creative (ex)changes – it is a practical-theoretical intentionality.

[20] I hone my understanding the elusive term 'affect' throughout the dissertation, following Brian Massumi's (1995) and Erin Manning's (2012) notions of affect as a pre-subjective, pre-individual intensity of feeling or force of becoming, as well as, to a lesser degree, Sara Ahmed's (2010) and Lauren Berlant's (2011) studies of affect as the somatization of intensities that impact social relations.

based, institutionalized frames for evaluating practice, there is still an overwhelming tendency to emphasize social change as the work's overall impact.[21] My contribution is to focus on the ways embodied expression and witnessing can generate change from a more somatic perspective. I look at examples of my own and others' facilitation practices in diverse contexts, from immigrant detention centers to victims' groups, from displacement, disappearance and deportation to privileged detachment, between 2012 and 2021 in Colombia, Chile and the US, in order to explore how applied theatre can *affectively* combat dehumanization. Each case study generates distinct insights about negotiating complicity and resistance within institutionalized processes of isolation and confinement. I argue that we should not measure impact in terms of success/failure to achieve set outcomes but instead revalue sensations of connectivity that are central to applied theatre, though are often not identified as the main aim.

This research reveals that in Latin American spaces where the devaluing of othered lives effectively dehumanizes *everyone* involved, applied theatre can foment affective transformations that feel humanizing — understood here in a decolonial sense, as becoming aware of our interdependent connection with all life (Bautista 2017). It shows how intimate creative encounters call attention to our *response-ability* - the responsibility and ability to respond - as relational beings (a notion from feminist science studies). I propose facilitation can be understood as potentiating affective attunement, moving us towards a collective experience of being. What I term 'affective facilitation' involves providing open-ended frames for affective attunement, instead of making pre-planned interventions, so that the situatedness of each group process (re)shapes the approach, which can be liberating. I do not outline a set methodological framework but consider exemplary moments of failure, learning and potential, to shape an

[21] See for instance Thompson (2009; 2015), Preston (2013; 2016), Freebody, Balfour, Finneran & Anderson Eds. (2018), Snyder Young (2013), Kuftinec (2009), and Cohen, Gutierrez & Walker (2011).

evolving understanding of the work. This requires tuning into embodied knowledge-making in the *here and now* of each creative encounter.

There has been much interest in theater as a *public sphere* for human rights claims,[22] emphasizing the ways representational performances intervene in hegemonic discourses by visibilizing and redefining identities that have been subjugated. This framework, however, remains trapped within concepts of socially-constructed subject positions, largely ignoring how theatre also facilitates *being-with* - a sense of being beyond subjectivity, as part of a collective body. Although many scholars forefront subjectivity when analyzing human experience and its creative expressions, we must also consider the importance of *affect*—pre-personal somatic intensity, which becomes sensation when felt by a body, and when given a name, becomes emotion (Manning 2012; Ahmed 2010). Affects can be commodified, coerced and ascribed to certain identities, but there is always an excess of "affective life*"* that escapes limitations (Anderson 2012). A key aspect of applied theatre is copresencing elements of affective life that cannot be fully articulated, moving alongside hegemonic discourses to create space for thinking/feeling/being *otherwise*.[23]

While experiences of difference and power imbalances are very real, especially in dehumanizing contexts of state violence and institutional enclosure, I have grown more and more interested in how we are also always *more-than* socially-constructed, self-contained identities.[24]

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[22] In Habermas' terms, a critical *public sphere* is articulated "in relation to a specific set of agents, agencies, institutions, or social structures—often, but not necessarily, a sovereign state—whose actions, measures, laws or *causal* impacts are criticized within it" (Becker et al. 2013, 5).

[23] Latin American decolonial theorists advocate thinking from the borders of coloniality, from the diversity of experiences of subalternization, affirming and proliferating ways of being and thinking *otherwise.* This is important for understanding applied theatre in Latin American contexts, as it points towards valuing emergent knowledge as situated and embodied.

[24] My use of *more-than* builds on Erin Manning's (2012) notion that bodies are "more than the forms they inhabit"; she explains, "[a] body is always more than one: it is a processual field of relation and the limit at which that field expresses itself as such" (17). This is distinct from Maria Lugones' use of "more than one", based in identities and interlocking oppressions (2003). Lugones writes, "I understand each person as many. In giving up the unified self, I am guided by the experiences of bicultural people," particularly those who are "outside the mainstream" and experience ethnocentric racism (58-60). While I recognize how encounters are colored by unequal positionalities and matrices of oppression, I am increasingly interested in understanding how embodiment *overflows* identity categories – i.e., the *more-than* social, *more-than* subjective aspects of experience.

Our experience, as embodied, sentient beings, goes beyond that which can be understood subjectively or represented in symbolic and narrative terms. While most applied theatre intends to impact sociopolitical realities, my current work attempts to revalue affective transformations that can exceed the subjective, the social and the political (while also being partly caught up in discourses and power structures). What has inspired this dissertation is, essentially, that feeling in a workshop when the energy between bodies in a space has changed - that sense that we are not the same as we were when we began the encounter, that we feel more 'connected', more 'free', or more 'human' (as participants often say). In my experience, that feeling is a *visceral* awareness of how we are response-able to one another in ways that go beyond understanding who we are and the story we want to tell. We might need to start from there (the story or the identity) as a shared language that allows us to begin an affective (ex)change, but then, our sense of 'self' in relation to 'others' may shift and soften, along with our sense of what we are doing/being together and *why*.

Most theoretical texts on applied theatre come from the Global North and inadvertently reproduce neoliberal, neocolonial logics, although the work itself is often about collective liberation. A more decolonial framework is needed for understanding our work as facilitators from the perspective of the Global South, specifically from the experience of the subjugated, making space for sharing 'other' knowledges (including embodied knowledge) traditionally devalued in academic thought. Understanding theatre facilitation *from the body* requires a new language that goes beyond ideas of self-development and visibilization to recognize inarticulable sensations of interconnectivity with other lives, unsettling the neoliberal frame of individual, rather than collective, responsibility to care and be cared for. I propose a different understanding of the work in which facilitating alternative experiences of being together is itself an impactful

arts practice. Institutionalized applied theatre often upholds neoliberal aims of forming self-sufficient, 'well-behaved' subjects, but whatever the stated aims of a project, we can still value the affective transformations that happen within the group creative process, even in an institutional setting, by focusing on our capacity to affect and be affected *somatically,*[25] and thus feel how we are enmeshed in vital webs of shifting relations that need care.

This work demands a critical wariness of the impacts of the facilitator/researcher's presence on creative encounters. I think of it as a process of *listening-with,* which means listening with the entire body, presencing embodied responses (one's own and others'). Similarly, dialogical empathy in the theatre is not a mere projection onto the 'other', but a dynamic exchange, where the audience perceives the emotions of the actors and reacts, generating a response in the actors, and so on (Cummings 2016). In this sense, we can think of any live experience of listening as a dialogue, as the speaker is impacted by the listeners' reactions and vice versa. Much of what is ex(changed) is not actually said aloud; it is felt. When I recall an experience of facilitating a workshop or attending a performance, I remember the words *and* the movements (mine and others') - how they felt in my body, how I was impacted and how my responses seemed to impact others and the space. *Listening-with* is not about empathy exactly but is similar to affective attunement, in that it involves tuning in to affects that move among people in a space, allowing the body to respond and for that response to affect the encounter. However, it does not necessarily lead to a shared vibration or energetic resonance

[25] The somatic focus of my work is indebted to theorists such as Thomas Csordas and Lynette Hunter. Csordas defines "somatic modes of attention" as "culturally elaborated ways of attending to and with one's body in surroundings that include the embodied presence of others" (1993, 138). He also points out that "although our bodies are always present, we do not always attend to and with them" (139). Meanwhile, Hunter (2019) proposes that alongside the "sociocultural", there is a "sociosituated" approach to understanding the somatic complexity of the self, whereby somatic affects generated via embodied experiences of performance do not exactly change people's minds but change their "entire somatic complexity," and this kind of change has a longer-term impact than the sociocultural effects of radical performances (27, 90). By attending more intentionally to the somatic affects of applied theatre, I believe we can see past sociocultural meanings to value sentient implications.

among bodies, as affective attunement does. *Listening-with* may even lead to the bodies involved leaving the encounter on very different wavelengths. Because I have been able to experience the work I study live, I approach it through my body, paying attention to the affective impact of the work on 'me' as part of a shared, interactive experience. I cannot know what other body-minds feel, but that does not mean their feelings do not affect mine and vice versa. The affective impact is not always positive and, of course, I am not a neutral presence.

I undertake this project, in part, because, as a privileged 'reverse' migrant (or expat), I find myself in a strategic position to facilitate dialogue and listening between contexts, languages, and countries. I can endeavor to make connections between spaces and create spaces for making connections, as a bilingual researcher/practitioner with roots in both North and South America. I am generally able to move across national borders and in and out of prisons and universities; my practice/research thus requires that I negotiate my positionally in relation to collaborators in more restricted, rooted, and/or vulnerable positions. In Chile and Colombia, I am seen as a 'Gringa', which means not only North American, but also White (part of my heritage being Venezuelan makes no difference). When working with incarcerated migrant women in Santiago, this double privilege is blurred by the shared status of 'foreigner' and 'female', creating a (limited) space of identification. In the US, I am a citizen, and my privilege is even more pronounced in relation to asylum seekers, creating a greater distance between my perceived identity and that of Central American and Mexican young men detained in Northern California. My role as a White woman makes me both attractive and vulnerable in that context. In Colombia, my status as a PhD candidate from a U.S. university plays a part in how warmly I am received by a group of female victims/survivors-turned-activists/artists. Although I have never faced violence nor lost loved ones the way they have, the fact that I live in Bogotá and have a

Colombian family creates a sense of familiarity, even though our collaboration is virtual. (The pandemic most notably marks this final case study, as all other fieldwork was done pre-pandemic). In a world that is ever more isolating, it seems the least I can do, from my unique position, is *try* to make connections, to reach across apparent divides, with care, knowing I may fail, but that failure leads to new directions for this work.

I now approach theatre facilitation as holding space for relations to care-fully shift, via affective attunement. Applied theatre practitioner/scholar Sonja Kuftinec argues that "theatrical facilitations are vital not because of the answers provided, but because the questions enabled can enact our very being through the presence of others" (2009, 180). Because of questions emergent from my practice over time, the focus of my work has moved from facilitating social dialogue to facilitating *feeling/being-with.* Social change is still very much a part of this work but is not considered the main impact. Affective transformations can potentiate social impacts *as well as* a different sense of being in relation to the world. It can be easier to talk about discursive interventions, since words cannot fully encompass creative experiences that move us to feel our inherent interdependence. As I will explain (though words may fall short), physically being present and moving in relation to other bodies as part of an applied theatre process potentiates a somatic connection that can feel humanizing (in the decolonial sense). The face-to-faceness of these intimate encounters makes an ethical call on all those present to cultivate more reciprocally life-affirming relations. Affective facilitation involves crafting an environment where this can happen. Still, as facilitators, we *cannot know* what will happen in a performance or workshop. Affective facilitation requires openness to the unknown and, at the same time, a commitment to fomenting a sense of visceral connectedness and response-ability to other lives.

Key Facilitation Problems

I would like to reflect for a moment on how applied theatre has become 'useful' to institutions and the issues this raises for facilitators. Preston argues that the challenge of working within institutional structures, including outcome-oriented funding schemes, content-based pedagogies and contracts that require the facilitator to supply a service to an end, can pose a generative challenge, demanding negotiation and innovation, in order to rethink our practices (2016). In English-speaking academia, the term 'applied theatre' has been questioned for these very reasons. Scholar have "wondered whether the term 'applied' traps the work 'through a primary focus on usefulness,'" while, "in neoliberal times, 'usefulness' is not necessarily a value free or ideologically suitable focus" (Freebody, Balfour, Finneran, & Anderson 2018, 4). The question at hand is whether applied theatre has forsaken its radical roots and become a neoliberal tool.[26] The work centers on the promise of change, but *change on whose terms?* Preston posits that while the aim of social justice may be difficult to reconcile with material limitations, we must keep trying (2016). To this end, practitioners and scholars of applied theatre have continued to search for (and sometimes find) new forms of radicality.

Meanwhile, the instrumentalization of applied theatre (particularly in the Global North) builds the value of institutions and their employees, rather than sharing the wealth among the communities they 'serve'. As US-based applied theatre practitioner/scholar Dani Snyder-Young points out, "status, job security, profile in the field, grant money…are *real* things artists *get*...They do not benefit project participants and do not help make the world more just" (2013, 27). To this argument, Canadian applied theatre practitioner/scholar Nikki Shaffeeullah adds that

[26] As Freebody et al. point out "the connection between the intention behind the work, the funding of the work, and the 'proof' of transformation worries some in the field" because outcome-based agendas do not "align comfortably with the philosophy of applied theatre work" (2018, 4).

"instead of uncritically working to expand and professionalize the sector, funders and training spaces should focus capacity-building initiatives on better enabling and supporting people from identified priority groups to lead work" because "ultimately, institutionalized community arts organizations are not well positioned to disrupt the status quo," since "the non-profit industrial complex (NPIC) wouldn't exist without a lot of people in desperate straits" (2020, 30-31). She posits that the NPIC "enables those who do the work to feel good about what we do and about our ability to help individuals survive the system" but "if we did something to really rock the boat and address the roots of the problems" we might lose our funding (30). While facilitators often need to work with institutions in order for applied theatre to exist, whether as grassroots or top-down projects, even when it is not possible to facilitate total equality, it *is* possible to use our privilege to create much-needed space for human connection, with the aim of that space becoming self-determined by participants.

When the "material conditions" of the work require us to "engage productively with institutional authority" (Snyder-Young 2013, 78), we must return to the key question, *change on whose terms?* Snyder-Young pointedly adds:

> When we say we want *change*, how radical a change do theatre artists want, embedded as we are in systems of power, intertwined with institutions, enjoying our privileges? With change, somebody loses. It can be easier and safer to do things that *feel* like intervention, mobilization, and action but, in reality, provide more catharsis for those participating than *actual change in the real world.* (135)

This is the point in the applied theatre debate on change where my research/practice makes a contribution by showing how a *change in feeling* is, in fact, *actual change in the real world.* I argue that affective transformation *does something* - to participants, facilitators and audiences – *somatically*, impacting our relational possibilities. What's more, affective transformation is necessary for discursive intervention to have any real hold. This dissertation shows how creating

spaces for liberation from discursive scripts within institutional enclosures, cultures of violence, and systems of carcerality and displacement is a vitally important aspect of applied theatre. What's more, one of the institutions facilitators must constantly negotiate with is 'applied theatre' itself - the notion of using theatre as a tool for 'fixing problems'.

Because applied theatre is essentially problem-based, it can produce a "deficit perspective of participants," reducing their identities to a 'problem', (i.e. 'criminals', 'migrants', 'victims', etc.), creating the apparent need for applied theatre to 'empower' them, as a "self-perpetuating profession" that proposes to "ameliorate the situation" without really altering the problem (Freebody et al. 2018, 6-11). Applied theatre facilitators could be seen as "turning problems into currency" and "using the circumstances of the precariat to gain and keep employment"; yet at the same time, "applied theatre has emerged from a radical tradition, one concerned almost absolutely with understanding and fighting oppression" (11). Can we fight oppression as a sustainable livelihood without reinscribing it?

The answer may lie in *not-knowing*. Preston points out that instrumentalization often results in engaging participants in a predetermined set of activities to acquire a particular outcome (2016). This approach, which Preston calls "basic" facilitation, does not allow the group to re-define the terms of its collaboration (2016). Meanwhile, "deep" facilitation develops the group's capacity to continue the process on its own, reinventing the *why* and *how* of the work along the way (Preston 2016). Deep facilitation requires *not-knowing* at every step, demanding a heightened sensitivity to the potency of the moment in order to gain clarity about what to do next (Preston 2016). Through my own (practice-as) research, I have found that *not-knowing* requires attuning to the affective resonances of the *here and now;* this affective approach can circumvent

the institutional tendency to turn structural injustice into 'personal problems' that 'need fixing' and potentiate a sense of shared response-ability.

What I call affective attunement, Preston calls "flow".[27] She says, "we have the flow feeling when we are absorbed in a task, a game or an activity that we are doing in a particular moment in time" and adds that flow produces motivation, enjoyment and wellbeing (2016, 670). It involves letting the group guide the process and using intuition to make spur of the moment decisions as facilitator, which Preston describes as an emotive-then-rational trajectory; she refers to emotional labor rather than affect (2016). This is where "flow" differs from affective attunement. Emotion is caught up in discourse, while affect can be felt as a sensation without being named. Affective attunement is a feeling that is difficult to rationalize – it is a sense of opening up to the affects resonating in a space. Preston's "flow" is shared among *individuals*, while affective attunement extends beyond the individual body-mind; it is a sense of connection that expands time and space and the limits of the skin as a container. It allows existence to be felt as both social and *more-than* (following Manning (2012)). Facilitators need the rational, social framework Preston poses, but we also need to value inarticulable sensations of *feeling/being-with*. Affective facilitation can address social issues and also enhance awareness of the vital hum of connectivity that is always there but often ignored. This requires a semi-set structure that can be reconfigured, to hold a space to become vulnerable together. It requires being able to facilitate an activity with a stated point while paying attention to affective shifts that fall outside the activity's logic, letting ourselves lose track of where we are going, feeling our way.

[27] Preston emphasizes a different kind of attunement, which has to do with "how responses to participants in the moment are influenced by an understanding of the objectives of the work, whether the focus is therapeutic, or concerned with community activism, social or political outcomes" (2016, 179). She stresses that "without awareness and attunement, the participatory aspects can become a trick or routine where drama and theatre work may be customized, but is not truly responsive" (179). *Affective* attunement also allows facilitation to be spontaneous and reflexive, but on a more embodied level. It can lead to rational decisions, but it is less about a group objective and more about discovering in the moment what is happening.

The Aesthetics/ethics Question

As art historian Grant Kester posits, both the facilitator and community participants can have their existing perceptions changed through a collaborative, creative process (2004). He cautions, however, that "relationships can be quite difficult to negotiate equitably, as the artist [or facilitator] often operates as an outsider, occupying a position of perceived cultural authority," which can be seen as providing a platform of greater visibility for groups whose perspectives are excluded from dominant discourses (140). Herein lies the potential for a dangerously imbalanced exchange based on giving voice to the voiceless. Kester outlines a more ethical approach, in which dialogue itself is understood as an aesthetic practice: "a dialogical aesthetic requires that we strive to acknowledge the specific identity of our interlocutors and conceive of them not simply as subjects on whose behalf we might act, but as co-participants in the transformation of both self and society" (78-79). While this proposal is helpful with regards to enacting social change, it does not account for how embodied encounters can move us towards *being-with* (beyond identities). Rather than focusing on the performative re-invention of identity roles,[28] as Kester's ethical approach does, my aim is to consider affective (ex)change as an aesthetic practice in which our sense of self becomes more porous, though listening *from the body* to how we affect and are affected by experiences of expression/witnessing.

Performance studies scholar Dwight Conquergood offers another ethical approach to facilitating dialogical performance, centering on "the principle that we are all part of a larger whole and are therefore radically responsible to each other for all of our individual selves" (in

[28] As Soyini Madison explains, "we may understand performativity as citationality, but we may also understand performativity as having the capability of resistance…subversive performativity can disrupt the very citations that hegemonic performativity enacts **(**2005, 166).

Madison 2005, 177). I am interested in how this whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Relationality is *more-than* individual selves coming together; it is a life-force that becomes us and extends beyond us (Manning 2012; Escobar 2014). Still, social inequalities shape parts of our lives; to work in solidarity (rather than charity) facilitators must be able to share our own situated background with participants and not presume to be neutral. One of the main ethical pitfalls of applied theatre is limiting the definition of the community engaged to a "group of people identified with each other by a set of common concerns or backgrounds, who are collectively oppressed by the dominant culture", and with whom outside artists "seek to establish a collaborative relationship," without acknowledging *our own stories* and how *we too* are changed by the work (Kwon 2002, 145). There is also the potential for the term 'community' to be "responsibilizing rather than empowering" when the "responsibility for, for example, poverty, inequality and disadvantage" is transferred to "communities, who are encouraged 'to help themselves'" (Freebody & Goodwin 2018, 68-69). This is known as "governing through community", a neoliberal form of governance associated with participatory citizenship (Rose in Freebody & Goodwin 2018, 69). I believe that new kinds of communities can be formed through creative processes that allow our sense of 'self vs. other' to soften. This involves a care-full negotiation between coming together and maintaining a safe distance.

Overthinking the ethical concerns of applied theatre can result in a paralyzing effect that is unhelpful. Openness to not-knowing and learning from failure are key to letting go of a positivist notion of facilitation that seeks a best practice to be applied indiscriminately. There is much to facilitation that requires making it up as we go. We must attend to how each context we engage with shapes and is shaped by our embodied encounters, producing unique affective impacts. British art historian Claire Bishop critiques overly ethical approaches to facilitation,

arguing for a reconsideration of the affective potential of aesthetic experiences that are not just about "feeling good" nor "doing good" (2012); while I agree that negative affects may be as much a part of applied theatre as positive ones,[29] I fear that removing the ethical focus from theatre facilitation altogether can give too much power to the facilitator and perpetuate the colonization of representations and bodies. I do find helpful Bishop's influential warning that projects funded by institutions often espouse ideas of participation that revolve around creating cooperative citizens, rather than allowing for political dissent (2012).

A shortcoming of Bishop's analysis is the application of a singular terminology for critiquing good and bad participatory arts practices throughout the world; participation does not have the same neoliberal connotations everywhere. In Colombia, for instance, collectivity is culturally valued over individual productivity and many aspects of life are more participatory than in the US, but this is not the result of a top-down approach to governing through community; it is a mode of survival and resilience in the face of violence and the lack of protections from the state. Bishop creates hierarchies by valuing "'highly-authored' projects over a consensual collaboration, missing the chance to question formally the individual author's social role," as performance studies scholar Shannon Jackson points out (2011, 55-56). Jackson adds that we must consider how we are always caught up in relations of the market economy, even when our work is primarily aesthetic (74). I posit that we must recognize the structures of privilege and suffering that shape socioeconomic realities, locally and globally, in order to try to move alongside them. Creative experiences that take us out of the day-to-day norm of existence can offer ways to re-imagine social structures,[30] as well as opportunities to *feel out* ways of being

[29] Bishop encourages facilitators to challenge social structures more directly, through artistic visions that intend to *disrupt* participants' view of society, producing discomfort and even frustration (2012).
[30] Soyini Madison explains that in dialogical, ethnographic performance, "life's flow of uneventfulness is interrupted by a peak moment that breaks through the ordinariness, and we think and consider what has just happened to us. We give feeling, reason, and language to what has been lifted from the inconsequential day-to-day. We bring experience to it" (2005, 151).

differently together. An ethical approach to facilitation must consider affective impacts, not only social change.

Applied theatre scholar/practitioner James Thompson makes a key point about how the affective, embodied aspects of applied theatre can influence future actions politically (2009). He says the witness (facilitator, participant, and/or audience member) is implicated as "a person who is open to an ethical call to action," as "relationships created through an intense personal encounter," such as a workshop or performance, become "a vital place through which political commitment can be generated" (165; 7-10). Thompson further explains:

> When the body is called upon to do something, there is immediately a challenge to a sense of individual autonomy. We are no longer the self-organizing, rational and independent being…[This] counters the belief that political action is motivated by the realisation of an individual sense of personal freedom, with an alternative view that it is our interrelations, our dependence on others, that is most important. It is the limits of our autonomy, and thus our *limitless* responsibility to others, that I believe should be at the heart of an ethical practice of applied theatre and the starting point for its politics. (153)

This response-ability, the basis for an ethics of radical care, is evoked in moments of embodied copresence. It can potentiate an affective shift, from separation towards interdependence, from pain or numbness towards pleasure, from the world as we know it towards feeling/thinking a better world into existence. After a moving face-to-face encounter, the feeling of connection may fade, but it is like a bridge that can be rebuilt more easily in the future.

Expressing/witnessing Trauma: narrative vs. affect

There has been a resurgence in recent decades of testimonial performance as a means of making human rights violations public, particularly in societies recovering from large-scale national trauma. Many human rights scholars see making rights claims through theatre as telling a strategic story in a format that audiences will understand (Gündogdu 2015; Brysk 2013; Arendt

1979; Becker et al. 2013). I do not deny the importance of testimonial performance, as it allows the trauma of those whose humanity has been disregarded to be expressed and witnessed, functioning as a way to demand justice and reparations; human rights is often the only available language through which to advocate for life, dignity and wellbeing in Latin American contexts of dehumanization.[31] However, theatre facilitators or arts institutions 'giving voice' to victims to make rights claims reinforces the problematic practice of human rights being 'given' or 'denied' to individuals and groups, affirming or negating their humanity.[32] I am interested in why and how people are moved to care for other lives and our own as inherently interdependent. Human rights scholar Alison Brysk says that "by caring, we learn to be human, recognizing our own identity, connecting to community and practicing interdependence" (2013, 23). As I will explain, this line of thinking can be taken a step further to revendicate not only colonial/modern 'humanness' but our shared response-ability to all life.

Most testimonial performance is based on the idea that traumatic experience can be communicated as a kind of truth-telling *from below*, in resistance to the dominant 'truths' told by the winners of the battles of history. However, the truth of trauma is its incomprehensibility. Performance studies scholar Soyini Madison proposes that testimonial performances, particularly of contested identities, can challenge the audience to face "degrees of tension and incongruity between the subject's life-world and those processes and systems that challenge and undermine the world" so that "something more and new is learned about how power works" (2005, 177). Testimonial performance generally begins from the need to address oppression and requires

[31] A human rights claim is understood to be warranted when someone is impacted by an individual or institution, combined with the judgement that this impact affects them adversely, and the assumption that adverse effects of power are only *right* if backed by reasons that are accepted by the individual and others similar to them in society (Becker et al. 2013).
[32] While human rights are supposedly inalienable and universal, in practice, human rights frameworks impose a modern/colonial notion of the 'human' based on excluding the global majority; it is a top-down structure, through which Global North institutions determine who has rights or not (Louidor 2017).

attention to power dynamics, as Madison posits; at the same time, participants, facilitators and audiences affect and are affected by each other's presence in somatic and not always fully cognizant ways. As sentient beings, we hear, see and feel theatre performances as affective, embodied, relational experiences. Participatory arts practitioner/scholar Erin Manning writes, "emergent selves are co-constituted in a field of experience"; paying attention to how a relational sense of self that overflows the skin as container emerges through the affective experience of expressing and witnessing trauma can enhance awareness of our entwined positionalities in ways that exceed and compliment the discursive impacts of narrative testimony (2012, 11).

Testimonial performance often reaches beyond that which can be explained, touching us in unexpected ways - there is a communal aspect of the shared experience in the *here and now,* which allows us to feel we are part of something bigger than ourselves. We may enter into the encounter as discrete individuals, but bodies in a theatre space come to copresence sensations symbiotically. Meanwhile, narrative can *inhibit* our ability to feel experience as non-sensical, which is the nature of traumatic memory. Thompson argues that when applied theatre relies on narrative to express traumatic experiences, understanding can be presumed in reductive ways (2009). Trauma theorist Dori Laub adds that the secret to truly hearing trauma survivors is feeling what is *unsaid* (1992). Thompson thus proposes, "it is more often how the deliberate attention to affect within forms of cultural expression can position people in relation to their wider social and sensory context that is important. These *performance affects*…can be vital for combatting the negative *effects* of the worlds in which people live" (2009, 8). Attuning to how we are somatically affected by expressing/witnessing traumatic memory can take us beyond the limits of language, to be more present in the act of working through it, relationally.

Witnessing and trauma theorist Thomas Trezise points out that assumptions listeners make about the community whose experience is narrated, as well as the desire to appropriate their trauma or aestheticize it, can become a barrier to really hearing them and being unsettled, which is necessary for traumatic events to not to be repeated (2013). I agree that the inability of listeners to really hear trauma survivors is a key issue, especially in testimonial performance, and I suggest that this can be addressed by listening *from the body.* To explain this (initially in Chapter 3 and more in depth in Chapter 4), I build on memory scholar Michael Rothberg's concept of *implicated subjects* (2017), developing the premise that witnesses of testimonial performance can become *implicated* on an embodied register. I also take onboard Chela Sandoval's proposal that an essential aspect of witnessing is the exchange of feelings, which means tuning in to our embodied responses to words, ideas and actions, as a way of liberating the body-mind from received scripts (in Alvarez 2014). I argue that indifference to (or commodification of) others' traumatic experiences is impossible when we (privileged audiences) become aware of how witnessing affects us (or not) on a somatic level, and how our response (or lack thereof) affects others, as part of ongoing histories of violence that sustain unequal distributions of privilege and suffering. This awareness can inspire an ethics of radical care, which is not a "moralistic feel-good attitude," but rather a "vital politics in interdependent worlds" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 2-5). Through affective facilitation, the meaning of care can be "unpacked and reenacted in an implicated way" (5-10).

My approach to facilitation revolves around affect and care (as I explain in Chapter 2). It has emerged from my experience facilitating applied theatre and participatory performance in Latin American contexts of dehumanization (engaging detained (im)migrants, deported people, and the survivors of those murdered and disappeared, as well as audiences). I embrace cultural

theorist Lauren Berlant's proposal that, in order to counter ideals of neoliberal productivity, a shift in affective atmosphere offers a way to escape the never-ending feeling of being trapped in the capitalist hamster wheel - to live more fully in the present, rather than awaiting the promise of a better future (2011). This proposal takes on new meaning in the contexts where I have worked, because discursively imposed categories of being restrict the capacity for feeling connected with others, yet happiness in these contexts is not based on individual self-realization (as it generally is in North America), but on cultivating care networks, and it is precisely these care networks that are damaged by institutionally sanctioned violence and the trauma it perpetuates.

While neoliberal productivity permeates the hemisphere as an ideal (fiercely imposed from above), living in the present moment, rather than living for future dreams, is more common in Colombia than in California, because the future is not as easily pre-planned, due to constantly changing circumstances. Chile is somewhere in-between. It was in Chile where I began to realize how the Spanish term *afecto* was central to my research/practice. In colloquial use, *afecto* often refers to care felt for those held dear – close relationships that are caught up in and also resist state and global structures of containment and separation. This dissertation explores how and why theatre facilitation can generate *afecto* in context-specific ways.

Afecto is a specific kind of affect. It cultivates relations that affirm life as interdependent, not relations that produce excessive death. To use cultural-political geographer Ben Anderson's terms, it is the excess of affective life that escapes structures of control by adapting in surprising ways, even as technologies for making life productive or disposable within the capitalist frame continue to generate new entrapments (2012). We can think of affective facilitation as a call to value affective life in all its excess, not only its co-opted articulations. *Afecto,* as a theory

emergent from practice, offers a lens for seeing the potential of applied theatre to enhance how biopower from below (the constitutive power of life, the power to act, the power of freedom) opens up the chance of something new (Negri in Anderson 2012). The unknown potential of *afecto* can be restricted in commercial or product-oriented theatre spaces; community-based, participatory, and applied theater better potentiate it because of the more processual approach. To allow *afecto* to resonate, we must approach facilitation from a place of not-knowing (an attitude towards an encounter*,* rather than a set method). As Preston points out, "we cannot always 'know' what will happen next in the moment of working with real people in real contexts. The education of facilitators might therefore consider preparing for the reality of this unpredictability and uncertainty" (2016, 269). How we enter a room, the mood we bring, affects the space and other bodies in it and the events that occur there. What I call a "space of *afecto"* (Hart 2019) can be facilitated by entering a creative encounter with an openness to sharing positive feelings as well as moments of discomfort and readjustment, making it possible for all those present to be vulnerable together and be mutually moved by the experience.

Affect Theatre

Amidst growing conversations around affect and theatre beyond the field of applied theatre (Dolan 2006; Hurley Ed. 2014; Kondo 2018; Fragkou 2019; Giordano and Pierotti 2020; Hartnell 2020), my research/practice is particularly indebted to Cristiana Giordano's and Greg Pierotti's work on Affect Theatre, because I participated in collaborative explorations they co-facilitated. This work has influenced my thinking about theatre facilitation as well as my writing practice, with regard to the notion that "affect as a research and writing modality" offers something more than representation, with respect to lived experience, in the sense that affect

provides “a mode of presence and experiencing the worlds around us” that reveals how not everything can be explained away (Giordano and Pierotti 2020, 92). As Giordano and Pierotti put it, Affect Theatre “does not necessarily lead to storytelling, meaning-making or knowledge. It produces – or reproduces – an affect” in such a way that the impact of creative exchanges is not always fully, rationally clear to those involved but can still be felt (102). This approach has helped me appreciate the affective residue and potential of theatre facilitation. I must therefore take a moment to explain how my work aligns and diverges. Affect Theatre “emphasizes a mode of perception that is not necessarily subject-based nor narrative driven” (Giordano and Pierotti 2020, 103) and thus lets us value the *more-than* subjective, inarticulable aspects of experience, a notion I explore throughout this dissertation in relation to applied theatre.

Giordano and Pierotti’s emphasis on employing forms of communication beyond narrative representation resonates with my practice/research, but the results are distinct. Affect Theatre is “a new practice for engaging the empirical, creating knowledge, and sharing our research findings in less linear presentations” (Giordano and Pierotti 2020, 91), while affective facilitation is an approach to applied theatre in dehumanizing, Latin American contexts; it incorporates testimonial performance but not precisely ethnographic performance – it engages with the real, lived experiences of participants in such a way that *they themselves* are performers and witnesses (and there may or may not be outside actors or audiences). While the contexts where I conduct my (practice-as) research are also sites of performance, with Affect Theatre the site of performance is an academic context, as the aim is to re-present empirical material gathered from a distinct site and explore its relationality with bodies, ideas, objects, and narratives that emerge through a collective, creative process with a group of artist/scholars. This approach resonates most clearly with my work on *moving-with* prerecorded testimonial

performances as a way to implicate witnesses (discussed in Chapter 4), since I engage university students as co-researcher/participants. As I move forward with this work, I could explore how Affect Theatre might offer a less linear approach to sharing our research findings. Affect Theatre is a method of thinking and writing that involves theatrical devising in relation to ethnographic research; it is not an applied theatre praxis. Affective facilitation is thus methodologically aligned with Affect Theatre but has a different intention – to enhance the sense of human connectivity.

The intention of Affect Theatre "is to trouble storytelling, to explore different pathways that are slower, more inclusive of the contradictions of 'the real'" (104-5). The aim of affective facilitation is not to trouble storytelling and assumptions about 'the real', although this is the aim of much testimonial performance, but to move alongside representation in order to value *something else* – specifically, *afecto*. The trajectory of my thinking about facilitation in this dissertation begins from emphasizing affective attunement *instead of* narrative representation and moves to appreciating how the two are enmeshed, and how embodied copresence can enhance expressing/witnessing in such a way that a story resonates through bodies more impactfully. With each chapter, my argument grows more centered on embodied movement as a necessary supplement to narrative in applied theatre. Meanwhile, "[i]n Affect Theatre, the body is one of many elements that moves through and connects with other elements" (Giordano and Pierotti 2020, 98). I do not pay equal attention to these other elements (light, sound, and architecture) as Giordano and Pierotti do, because of my focus on experiences of (de)humanization in contexts of institutional enclosure and state violence. Although the notion of the 'human' body as an element always relational to other kinds of more-than-human bodies/materials is not the central focus of

this dissertation, it is implicit in my understanding of decolonial humanization, indicating potential new directions for future research (addressed in the conclusion).

Key Terms

- **(De)humanization**

When I refer to decolonial humanization, what I mean is affective attunement to *afecto,* which potentiates love-for-vitality (a feeling of radical love inspired by a sense of interdependence that foments life-affirming relations). Applied theatre participants often describe this as feeling 'more connected'. This feeling counters the colonial/modern category of the 'human' subject, which is actually dehumanizing when seen from the perspective of Latin American decolonial thought, where dehumanization is the negation of the interdependence of all life. It is experienced as isolation, confinement, disconnection, and individuation that neoliberal and (neo)colonial logics promote, exploiting lives deemed 'non-human' (or 'less human') for the accumulation of capital that benefits those considered 'human' (in the colonial sense). However, humanization (in the decolonial sense) does not depend on institutions or legal rights. It is an innate capacity for feeling connected with and response-able to other lives. This cannot ever be fully denied, although it can be harmed or forgotten; I therefore refer to working in *(de)humanizing* spaces. I aim to disentangle 'humanization' from the logic of the modern/ colonial individually autonomous 'human', resignifying it with the decolonial notion that all beings are animated by a shared life-force that connects us to each other and the earth.

I am aware that hanging on to the term 'humanization' may seem contradictory to my entire proposal. The thing is, people in nearly all the workshops and creative projects I have facilitated in contexts of state violence and institutional enclosure across the Americas have used

the terms ‘humanizing’ or ‘feeling more human’ to describe our creative process and its value to them and their communities, which has sparked my interest in unpacking and amplifying what *they* mean. They are not referring to gaining access to an exclusive category of liberal subjecthood that is used to justify the privileging of an elite few via the death and suffering of the global majority.[33] They are referring to something more akin to Buen Vivir or Vincularidad - a respect for their own inclusion in the vital interdependence of all living beings. This kind of relationality is about “building community in solidarity across various identity formations to struggle together, without neglecting the ways that oppression, too, is relational” (Winget 2019, 8).

The modern/patriarchal/capitalist/colonial paradigm is founded on “underlying logics of racism, nationalism, and groupism” that “create conditions in which it is acceptable to treat other human beings in a dehumanizing and violent manner” (Jones 2016, 14). Geographer Reece Jones explains that “the exclusion of others from resources and opportunity is based on the idea that the in-group should be protected no matter what, with little regard for what effect it might have on the other and without questioning why there is a distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’ in the first place,” but rather, emphasis is placed on “the threat posed by others who are not members of the group” (167-169). Groupism can occur within spaces of (de)humanization, but the *afecto* fomented by applied theatre can unsettle rather than reinforce it, enhancing a relational, porous sense of self that exceeds socially inscribed categories of being. The group-building process of this work is ideally not exclusionary nor marginalizing and can help move bodies towards a more symbiotic experience of coexistence in/with the world.

[33]I refer here to how being ‘human’ is understood under neoliberalism/(neo)colonialism as being productive in economic terms, so that that swaths of people living in poverty throughout the world are considered ‘non-human’ (or ‘less-human’) and ‘deserving’ of exclusion, imprisonment or death on biological and social levels (Wynter 2003). This is the present continuous of the colonial/modern invention of the ‘human’ as a category defined in opposition to the ‘non-human’ (historically, people of color and women), seen as naturally inferior, initially in biological terms and now for economic reasons (Wynter 2003).

Decolonial humanization is not about individual autonomy, but the shared responsibility to sustain vital life webs. It is a sensation that exists between and through bodies and that potentiates alternatives to hegemonic relations. Decolonial theorist Boaventura de Sousa Santos explains that, according to the epistemologies of the south,[34] humanization is attained by obeying *"*nature as alive, active, and self-determining, rather than passive and available for exploitation at the service of humans" (2015, 15 - *my translation).* In this view, "the autonomy of the subject is not individual nor is it primordially constructed upon the negation of nature; on the contrary, subjective autonomy is not possible nor sustainable without collective and communitarian autonomy, which is constructed as part of nature, not in opposition to it" (15 - *my translation*). Decolonial humanization is an innate capacity to feel a connection with all other lives, not just those deemed human. Feeling more connected in this way does not diminish difference nor erase how differences have been constructed to cause harm.

Distinct experiences of being, shaped by places, discourses, affects, and interactions, color encounters. For me, the ocean, the forests, the rocks, the boats, the wood houses, wood stoves, squirrels and wind of Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia are a part of my becoming with the world, and when I encounter another, I bring those energies, as part of our (ex)change. This does not mean 'I' am separate from 'others' who bring the energy of buildings, cars, streets, pigeons, dogs, and sun. We can resonate polyphonically, feeling distinct energies as part of the shared life-force that connects us with everything else. Applied theatre can enhance this capacity.

- **Decoloniality**

[34] For de Sousa Santos, "the Global South is not a geographical concept, although the majority of oppressed populations live in territories of the Southern Hemisphere. It is, rather, a metaphor of human suffering caused by capitalism and colonialism on a global scale as well as the struggle to resist and overcome" (2015, 13 - *my translation*). He adds that there is also a Global North within the Southern Hemisphere, constituted by local elites who benefit from the production and reproduction of capitalism and colonialism (2015).

While I do not claim to be a decolonial theorist, I situate my research in alignment with certain ideas that are part of decolonial conversations in Latin America,[35] specifically those emergent from Andean indigenous practices of caring for the interdependence of all life. In my research, decoloniality is related to transforming violent relations into life-affirming relations. The violence of coloniality/capitalism/patriarchy/modernity separates and individuates bodies in a hierarchical manner. Internal colonization is one aspect of the discursive construction of individually autonomous subjects (de Sousa Santos 2011). Decolonizing the self begins from cultivating a certain kind of relationality, which involves caring for (rather than destroying) life webs. Decolonial thinker Rafael Bautista explains this in terms of *crianza* [nurturing], which "establishes not only a relation of respect but also of *afecto* [affection]. *Criar* means to *nurture with cariño* [love]" (2017, 218– *my translation).* Decolonizing the self requires *afecto* – to not feel self-contained but reciprocally relational with and responsible for nurturing all life.[36] Theatre facilitation that creates conditions in which *this* kind of affective connection can be sustained enhances the sense of Vincularidad [connectedness] that is needed to feel fully alive.

National histories of postcolonial societies are constructed to legitimize the dominant perspective as that which moves in the direction of "development", leaving behind that which is considered "uncivilized" (de Sousa Santos 2011). Relations become objectifying and the extermination of whatever is considered "savage" becomes synonymous with (modern/colonial) human nature, together with a cynicism about the value of life, negating the need for "the

[35] There are different ways the term 'decoloniality' can be invoked. In the US, it can be used to talk about resisting racism and economic oppression, without questioning ideals of modernity, such as the autonomous individual of capitalist development. Latin American decolonial theorists understand coloniality/modernity as a paradigm that encompasses the control of knowledge as well as subjectivity and the economy (Mignolo 2010). As Arturo Escobar explains, modernity/coloniality is a particular (Eurocentric) local history that has produced global designs that subalternize other local histories and designs (2010).

[36] Bautista explains, "to *nurture* life, we have to let ourselves be *nurtured by* life. The *subject* is not only *subjected,* but a conscious re-connection is produced with all life…*I live if You live* is the originating affirmation of being-for-life*"*; In this reconceptualization, *subjects* "are subjected to life - not *our own* life, but all life" (2017, 180-189 – *my translation*).

affirmation of the other's life as conditional for the affirmation of my life", as part of a community of life (Bautista 2017, 180 – *my translation*). The Andean indigenous notion of Buen Vivir offers a more sustainable alternative to development by valuing reciprocity as key to building community and nurturing relations between different ways of knowing and being.[37] Central to my research/practice is the idea that applied theatre can facilitate the (ex)change of perspectives and sensations of the subaltern and their allies*;* recognizing "the incomplete character of all knowledge" (de Sousa Santos 2011, 37–*my translation*) in *somatic* ways can open us up to respecting and caring for what we *do not know* and recognizing how our Vincularidad extends beyond modern/colonial subjectivities.

The coloniality of gender offers another lens through which to understand decoloniality. Latin American decolonial conversations have been largely dominated by men,[38] whose thinking has often remained trapped within gender binaries, undermining their project for a world where many worlds are possible. Decolonial feminist thinker Maria Lugones critiques the male-domination of Latin American decolonial thought by showing how gender and race have intersected in the discourses and processes that produce women's subjectivities, establishing a conversation between feminist thinking and the seminal concept of the "coloniality of power" developed by Anibal Quijano. Her concept of the "coloniality of gender" critiques the "coloniality of power" (which is the basis for much Latin American decolonial theory) as a patriarchal and heterosexual comprehension of the struggles for the control of sex, resources, and products, in which women become a territory for domination (Cabrera and Vargas 2014;

[37]The idea of Buen Vivir*,* as framed by Bolivian decolonial thinkers engaging with Aymara cosmovision, such as Bautista, Rivera Cusicanqui and Paredes, has to do with establishing a harmonious way of living through community-based practices for environmental and social justice, working to envision a world different to the colonial/modern paradigm that can offer more possibilities for sustaining life.

[38] As Arturo Escobar himself notes, "whereas the discourse of the (mostly male still) MC [modernity/coloniality] group is illuminating and radical in so many ways, and as such taken seriously by feminists*, it largely excludes women and women's theoretical and political concerns*" (2010, 47).

Mignolo 2010). However, even within feminist Latin American decolonial thought, there is other thinking.[39] While Lugones sees patriarchy, racism, coloniality and capitalism as transversal axes of power, the communitarian feminists of Bolivia, whose thinking is based in Aymara indigenous community practices, as articulated by Julieta Paredes, view patriarchy as the basis for colonial, racist and capitalist forms of domination. They also question Lugones' key idea that colonization introduced the patriarchal system.

Philosophers Nataly Guzmán and Diana Triana explain:

> The communitarian feminists propose avoiding the idealization of pre-Hispanic cultures, with respect to machismo and the naturalization of recent elements of patriarchy as if they were not a sedimented product of history. Paredes considers how, through colonization, an alliance was consolidated with pre-Hispanic patriarchy, which she conceptualizes as the *patriarchal junction* (2019, 24 – *my translation*).

The communitarian feminists use gender as a critical lens to reveal power imbalances within indigenous communities and the larger neoliberal world. Paredes clarifies:

> Gender is not a descriptive or attributive category, nor is it a determinist essence. That is, it is not that gender only describes what women do and what men do, nor does it only attribute or naturalize roles for men and women…Gender, in our theoretical conceptualization, is a relational category of denunciation, naming an unjust, oppressive, exploitative relation that men establish with women for the benefit of the system of oppressions that is the patriarchy - at present, the colonial-neoliberal patriarchy (2013, 4 – *my translation*).

Paredes argues that to establish truly communitarian relations, women's contributions to sustaining life must be valued and gender roles must be reimagined as more flexible and more harmonious. This perspective has become central to my overall argument about the need to facilitate more life-affirming relations.

As I am interested in cultivating dialogue between decolonial theory and theories of embodiment and affect, U.S. Third World Feminist Chela Sandoval's perspective has also

[39] According to Catherine Walsh, other thinking is "an unlearning of what the dominant society has inculcated and a relearning of past and present ancestral knowledge" (2010, 85).

become central to my thinking, because it offers "processes and procedures for decolonizing the imagination," body, mind and spirit, via an "ethics of love" (in Alvarez 2014, 217).[40] Sandoval proposes that *con-movernos* [to be moved] is a path to decolonizing ourselves (2012). In particular, the power *con-movedora* [power to move] of the subaltern – the desire for body-mind liberation – enables a "differential consciousness" that allows for a crossover to elsewhere, beyond the limits of subjectivity (Sandoval 2012). I believe this path to decolonization (laid by the subaltern) is one that others (in positions of privilege) can follow, in order to build coalitions for collective liberation across difference. As Sandoval argues, decolonizing the self requires shapeshifting and border-crossing between worlds within and beyond the self.[41] We can acknowledge how we are enclosed within social roles, while at the same time feeling the desire for a transcendental connectedness via love (for-vitality) - a de-individualizing process that can heal communities that have been broken and separated (Sandoval 2012). Art, Sandoval says, is one way to enhance differential consciousness (2012). Although this dissertation may fall short of enacting self-decolonization, the aim is to create a space to do/think/feel otherwise ways of coexisting alongside the enclosures of modernity/patriarchy/capitalism/coloniality, through theatre facilitation.

- **Enclosure, Displacement and Mobility Control**

[40] Sandoval's Spoken Wor(l)d Art Performance Activism offers an approach to pedagogy that allows students to *think/feel-with* the world and heal in the process, asking participants to pay attention to the embodied reactions that reading and writing create in them, making room for multiple selves and recognizing their fears, dreams, traumas and desires (Alvarez 2014).
[41] Sandoval references Gloria Anzaldúa's notion of *la mestiza* as an inhabitant of multiple cultures at once, who must bridge the gap between them within herself, in an exhausting act of translation (Anzaldúa 1987). *La mestiza's* strength is found in her ability to shape shift without being trapped in any one of her multiple identities (Anzaldúa 1987). The structures that marginalize the identity of *la mestiza* are also internalized as part of her othered self, so she is left with the task of transcending hegemonic definitions, by creating a *new mestiza consciousness* (Anzaldúa 1987, 102), similar to Sandoval's "differential consciousness" (2012).

I use the term enclosure to signify a range of structures – material and discursive – used for confining life via separation and surveillance, including borders, prisons, identity labels, and us/them divisions. An enclosure can also be a walled paradise or exclusive utopia, built to keep the 'good' in and the 'bad' out, like so many elite gated communities built relatively near to slums in Latin American cities, or the disproportionate wealth of San Diego in relation to Tijuana just across the border wall. Yet there is another vision of utopia that is not an enclosure but rather an expansive hopefulness for a better world, felt as the affective potential for an alternative way of coexisting. Making a home in a new place can be a kind of movement towards this utopia. But displaced and (im)migrant people face many kinds of enclosures - around the place of origin that cannot be returned to (or has become unfamiliar) as well as the new places they arrive but cannot fully belong. Displacement - a term central to Chapter 3 - is a kind of forced mobility that occurs when a place or way of living is damaged or destroyed and relocating is the only way of surviving and escaping the threat of violence and suffering.[42] Across the hemisphere, displacing and confining lives deemed disposable in the name of development is justified by a neoliberal façade of economic freedom, which requires enclosures between and within states (marking certain bodies as less deserving of rights), as part of the global mobility regime.

Chapters 2 and 4 are concerned with how the institutional control of mobility determines who has the right to move freely and who does not - whose (im)mobility can be forced (the global majority) in order for others' movement to be freer (the privileged minority). This is central to globalization, which is "concerned with the prevention of movement and the blocking of access" through "processes of closure, entrapment, and containment" (Shamir 2005, 199). The

[42] In Colombia, where there is a large internally displaced population, conservative politicians have proposed the term 'internal migrants' to try to invisibilize the violence of displacement. However, the term 'displaced' people [desplazados] is still used in humanitarian discourses to signal the need for reparations for experiences of massacre, torture, and disappearance that are tied to the loss of land, homes and livelihoods.

global mobility regime is predicated on "the classification of individuals and groups according to principles of perceived threats and risks"; those who are seen to not belong to a place are marked by images of criminality, poverty, and exclusion, becoming suspicious to the state (Shamir 2005; Calavita 2005). The idea of being 'desirable' or 'belonging' is racialized; Whiteness is correlated with innocence, productivity, and citizenship.[43] As geographers Jenna Loyd, Matt Mitchelson, and Andrew Burridge argue, "racism reflects and shapes who gets what, who calls the shots. Mobility between countries - who has it and who does not - is one the most striking worldwide manifestations of these inequalities" (2012, 28). And as we shall see in Chapters 3 and 4, sociopolitical mobility within a society is similarly controlled.

- **Borders & Prisons**

One tenet of neoliberal discourse is that borders and prisons create security, but in fact the opposite is true: "instead, they are being used to naturalize the abandonment of increasing numbers of people who have been placed into categories of 'illegal' and 'criminal'" (Loyd et al. 2012, 14). Loyd et al. point out that "while the United States is not alone in its reliance on prisons and border walls, it continues to be the world's largest purveyor of state violence, both militarily and in the scale of its prison system" (15). The US's current approach to fortifying prisons and borders has been exported to other countries, such as Colombia, in terms of prison reform, and Chile, in terms of immigration policies. The systematic criminalization, punishment and abandonment of (im)migrants, people of color and the poor (especially women) has become a normalized form of state violence employed to manage "wealth, social inequalities and

[43] In Colombia, Chile and other South American countries, *mestizo* national identity formation has been based on an idea of Whitening or 'civilizing' urban populations in cultural more than racial terms; Whiteness is not a skin color but a lifestyle that erases the indigenous histories present in the genetic and cultural mix of *mestizaje* and marginalizes indigenous ethnic groups.

opposition to the harms created by capitalism" on a global scale (Loyd et al. 2012, 13). Wealthier states detain and deport (im)migrants from poorer countries and neoliberal nations incarcerate their most marginalized citizens in order to separate those deemed undesirable from society, by controlling their mobility, their labor, and their relations. This produces the spaces of (de)humanization in which the applied theatre practices I study take place.

Case studies analyzed in Chapters 2 and 4 address how prisons, borders, and, more specifically, immigrant detention facilities limit the ways those detained can interact with others - on physical, social, emotional and economic levels - making care networks more crucial, more vulnerable, and more resilient. Challenging the ways immigrant detention, prisons and borders dehumanize people and how this has become normalized - as the work studied here does - is "a central dimension in struggles against colonialism, capitalism, white supremacy and heteropatriarchy within and beyond the United States" (Loyd et al. 2012, 18). These kinds of institutional/state enclosures form "an efficient system for maintaining political control of an area through agreements and documents that are backed up with the threat of violence" (Jones 2016, 117). Meanwhile, Colombia's internal armed conflict, which shapes case studies in Chapters 3 and 4, is a more complex, but not unrelated, system for maintaining territorial control through violence. Seeing how these "seemingly disconnected institutions of state violence are interconnected" and "produce and police social difference" is key to an abolitionist vision (Loyd et al. 2012, 14). While this dissertation does not align completely with abolitionist agendas, it puts some of the same ethics into practice within Latin American contexts of (de)humanization, revealing how creative expression/witnessing can reaffirm the (decolonial) human capacity to connect, to feel a better world is possible, particularly when the affect in a space shifts towards *afecto.*

- **Latin American (Applied) Theatre**

In Latin America,[44] theatre has become a means for confronting authoritarian regimes, social inequality, violence, and imperialism. Although it may not be called 'applied theatre', a term originating from the Global North, the work often fits the definition: processes of collective creation, playbuilding or devising that do not happen within the realm of traditional (elite) theatre but emerge from community practices as a means of advocating for social justice. However, Latin American practitioner/scholars whose work focuses on theatre in community and social contexts generally see it as professional and/or political rather than applied. Because violence and resistance to it have become a way of life, traumatic memory is an undercurrent connecting diverse theatre facilitation practices across the region. After five-hundred years of continual colonization, it is difficult to tell whether trauma is experienced individually, as the memory of a horrific event, or if it is continually, collectively embodied, passed on from generation to generation (Taylor 2015). Latin American performance scholar Diana Taylor argues that theatre inspired by traumatic memory can help us examine the public causes of trauma and appreciate how personal pain becomes a catalyst for social and cultural change (4076). To this I add that applied theatre (whether it is called that or not) can enact alternative modes of coexistence in public, social and cultural *as well as* intimate, affective and embodied terms.

Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation explores how different applied theatre projects across the hemisphere (my own and others') respond to dehumanizing processes. A commonality I've encountered is that this work reasserts participants', audiences', and facilitators' humanity (in a decolonial

[44]Latin America contains multiple heterogenous worlds, including spaces within the Global North; Latin America is thus "a perspective that can be practiced from many spaces, if it is done from counter-hegemonic perspectives that challenge the very assumption of Latin America as a fully constituted object of study" (Escobar 2010, 44).

sense) by *viscerally* highlighting our role in vital networks of care (or lack thereof). I began this (practice-as) research with the question: *how can applied theatre facilitate a transformation in the affect of a group of people and help them feel an embodied copresence?* I've found that affective facilitation, as I now call it, requires a context-specific, open-ended approach, in order to potentiate much-needed experiences of human connection. Dehumanization is carried out from the U.S. to Chile via strategies of containment and isolation, the control of mobility, criminalization, the orchestration of premature death, the construction of limiting identity labels, and the fortification of us/them divisions that enhance the sense of disconnection from others to benefit those already in positions of power. Each of the contexts addressed here presents unique strategies of dehumanization and tactics of collective resistance and thus generates a distinct approach to facilitating affective (ex)changes that can feel humanizing. While most theatre facilitators value the transformative power of affect, its centrality to this work should be more clearly emphasized in theoretical conversations. Rather than focusing on having something to show in a predetermined format to prove our work is productive within institutional frames, I propose we focus on how moments of embodied copresence can foment a sense of *being-with* that stays with us long after the workshop or performance ends.

With each chapter, I track how my praxis as a facilitator has evolved. The through-line is my own learning, via creative encounters with others in Latin American settings where I have lived and/or worked. It would not be feasible to include work happening everywhere in Latin America, or even every place I've worked/lived, so I focus on the places where I have spent enough time to engage in practical/theoretical conversations: Santiago, Chile; Bogotá, Colombia; and the Greater Sacramento area of California, USA. Each setting generates a slightly different way of approaching facilitation, and while there are certain factors that translate from one

situation to another, such as neoliberalism, (neo)colonialism, and struggles for human rights, memory and dignity, there is always local specificity. Each case study offers a distinct way to look at the problems and possibilities of theatre facilitation in relation to (de)humanization, specifically regarding situations of immigrant detention, deportation, internal displacement, forced disappearance and assassination. The established practices of applied theatre facilitation in each setting vary greatly. The connective tissue of this research is really my own experience. I am not from any of these places; I have become part of them through immersion (2 to 5 years living in each place, 2 months to 2 years facilitating projects in specific contexts). My aim has been to remain open to my ways of *doing-thinking* this work transforming, paying attention to how relations change and affect contexts, bodies and ideas.[45]

The chapters of this dissertation are based around case studies in order to show how different approaches to affective facilitation emerge in distinct Latin American spaces of (de)humanization. Each chapter either address nuanced approaches to facilitation in comparable contexts (Chapters 2 and 3) or one facilitation approach applied in different contexts to reveal new insights (Chapter 4). Chapter 2 "Affect and Care: a non-method" and Chapter 4 "*Moving-With*: a path to implicated witnessing" develop my theory of facilitation through my own practice-as-research, while Chapter 3 "Facilitating Feminine Relationality in Resistance to Violence" engages external case studies to test my ideas. I employ slightly different modes of writing in each chapter, reflecting the specific creative processes and encounters as well as the resulting changes in my thinking. Chapter 2 is introspective, passionate and captures important initial revelations. Chapter 3 is anecdotal as well as analytical, considering the conversations and experiences that were part of my ethnographic fieldwork on others' facilitation practices.

[45] Robin Nelson defines "doing-thinking" - the basis of practice-as-research in the arts - as "pausing, standing back and thinking about what you are doing", thus "rendering porous the firm institutional binary between theory and practice" (2012, 44, 19).

Chapter 4 documents my most recent practice-as-research and retains a somewhat idealistic stance towards the work since the time needed for a more critical perspective has not yet passed. In all three body chapters, I document impactful moments from workshops and performances, describing embodied processes in detail (from my perspective as a witness, participant or facilitator), in an effort to allow the practice to generate the theory.

Chapter 2 "Affect and Care: a non-method" explains how the concepts *afecto* and *cuidado* emerged from my practice-as-research projects "Performing Migration", with 'migrant' women incarcerated in Chile, and "Yolo Teatro", with Central American youth detained in California. It introduces key theories of affect and care and shows how my approach to facilitation shifted in the context of immigrant detention, becoming a non-method. Paying attention to the power dynamics of gender that (de)construct bodies, this chapter asks how affects played out differently in these two workshops and how the possibilities and limitations of care become visceral. I consider the ways (im)migrants' identities, bodies and mobility are criminalized, racialized and dehumanized in Chile and the US, as well as how I am situated in relation to the participants and how my positionality affected our exchanges. In the case of Performing Migration (2017), I tried to open myself up to not-knowing by asking the participants what the intention of our workshop should be. This refusal of instrumentalization was a first step towards a more affective approach. Participants told me they felt "good" being in the workshop, that they appreciated having fun, forgetting about their daily struggles, and connecting with one another. The 'point' was not the content of the workshop; it was the feeling of *afecto,* which they said was much needed. A year later in 2018, I facilitated Yolo Teatro and learned that positive affects are not the *only* version of success. Feelings of pain, anger, rejection, or even apathy, may also resonate in the workshop space, and this is not necessarily a failure, but a possibility for

something else to emerge. I began to approach the work with more *cuidado* - care as well as caution. This required being receptive to all the different affects that resonated in the space. Chapter 2 explores the importance and the complexity of facilitating affective attunement in these contexts, to potentiate human connection despite the confines of detention.

Chapter 3, "Facilitating Feminine Relationality in Resistance to Violence" examines three Colombian projects that engage female victims/survivors of the internal armed conflict, asking what role affect and embodiment play in their work. I compare the way Patricia Ariza uses collective creation to stage professional productions engaging community participants with the way Carlos Satizábal uses Greek tragedy and object work with trained actresses and real victims to retell stories of the violence to which Colombian society has become numb. I contrast their work with Gaviota Conde's more processual approach, which begins from embodied reflection rather than representational narrative and focusses on healing transformations rather than public spectacle. Drawing from my experience of witnessing their work as well as interviews with each facilitator in 2019, I conclude that their projects are necessarily narrative *and* affective, to varying degrees, since claiming recognition in the peace discourses for those most harmed is tied to feeling the possibility of living free from violence. In different ways, their work potentiates *relaciones afectivas* [care networks], as a strategy of collective survival emergent from the experiences of female victims. Each project shows distinctly how women's bodies are the site of violence and resistance and how female victims offer an example others can follow, transforming violent relations into life-affirming relations. To contextualize their work, I incorporate Latin American thinking on decoloniality and feminism as well as embodiment and violence, in conversation with theories of applied theatre and affect. I also consider the role *implicated witnesses* play in these case studies, including myself. I find that moments of

embodied copresence allow all those present to feel more connected, as part of the problem and the solution. Humanization takes on new meaning in this context, tied to feminine relationality as a form of resistance to the patriarchal violence of the armed conflict.

Chapter 4 "*Moving-With*: a path to implicated witnessing" explores how audiences can, quite literally, 'be moved' by recorded testimonial performances. It incorporates reflections from my collaborators along with theories of witnessing, embodiment, trauma, human rights, migration, and conflict transformation. I analyze how my methodology for *moving-with* took shape across two phases of practice-as-research. The first phase consisted of process-based workshops, *moving-with* digital stories of deportation to Mexico, through contact improvisation, engaging audiences in Northern California during 2018. I find that *moving-with* one particular story from the Humanizing Deportation archive offered a way of not only disseminating the testimony of a woman living in Tijuana, but also exploring how her voice resonated with different body-minds on the 'other side' of the border. Amplifying both the speaker's and listeners' human capacity to affect and be affected in this way demonstrated how audiences could *feel-with* an individual narrative as a collective experience. The second research phase is a return to moving-with that came about in 2021, when disseminating a performance/video of the testimonies of female victims/survivors of Colombia's armed conflict. I analyze the process of facilitating a Zoom theatre workshop with the group Anastasis during pandemic (2020) and subsequently moving-with their testimonies, using improvisational scores (on Zoom) to facilitate active ways for Bogota audiences (not 'victims' themselves) to listen, engage and respond. This second phase of research extends my analysis of implicated witnessing from the workshop process to the performance experience, revealing how participants, facilitators and audiences feel connections that resonate across divides. Chapter 4 shows how moving together while listening

allows for embodied copresence, even when we are not physically in the same place, moving audiences beyond passive spectatorship to feel viscerally response-able to the histories of violence that are narrated.

The conclusion uses a final case study to expand on some of my central concepts. *Colectivo Sustento,* facilitated by Penny Glass in Santiago, Chile since 2012, presents a unique approach to affective facilitation, in that the idea of cultivating sustainability moves from a prison theatre workshop into the facilitator's back yard, in the form of a community garden, where formerly incarcerated and non-incarcerated collaborators grow vegetables—a space for exploring alternative ways of *living-with*. This offers a strategy of collective resistance to the pervasive disconnection, inequality and carcerality of (neo)colonial neoliberalism. I briefly recall the affective impact of visiting *Colectivo Sustento's* garden in 2012 and consider how their work demonstrates the ways affective attunement (discussed in Chapter 2) and implicated witnessing (discussed in Chapter 4) may reach beyond the human towards a sense of more-than-human connection and response-ability. I attend to how *Colectivo Sustento* foments the creative capacity to survive oppression by practicing relaciones afectivas (discussed in Chapter 3) with the earth, which indicates the need for a broader vision of decolonial humanization - as reciprocal, care-full relationality with more-than-human worlds, involving interspecies interdependencies. This points beyond the scope of this dissertation towards compelling new directions for future research. In addition to summarizing how and why affective facilitation plays out differently in the distinct Latin American contexts of (de)humanization studied here, maintaining the overall importance of potentiating *afecto*, the conclusion signals emergent questions and potential conversations that could expand my arguments about why the epistemology applied theatre scholars have used to understand our work has traditionally fallen short of recognizing its important affective impacts,

especially considering how a feeling of connection among *all kind* of bodies and their environment can counter processes of dehumanization.

The three locations of my fieldwork - the Greater Sacramento area of California; Santiago, Chile; and Bogotá, Colombia - correspond to three distinct grades of neoliberalism, coloniality, and latinidad. The contexts where the work is generated (with detained (im)migrants, displaced and deported communities, female victims' groups and 'detached bystanders') involve different kinds of institutional enclosure and state violence, as well as different practices and histories of creative resistance. California is part of the Global North but is also Latin American in many ways. It is at the heart of the neoliberal regime of mobility control (with the prison boom and enhanced border/immigration enforcement), but it is also a birthplace of fertile resistance movements (the Chicanx movement, prison/detention abolition, prison theatre, and protest theatre). Chile is a neoliberal laboratory, with a history of human rights abuses condoned by the state (and supported by the US). It is also rich with legacies of creative resistance.[46] Despite its 'development', Chile does not have the same for-reaching imperialist influence as the U.S. and is more part of the Global South. It is a destination country for South-South migrants whose access to the Global North is restricted. While Chile can still be seen as a 'strong' state, Colombia is a 'weak' state. There are many different actors causing violence and displacement in Colombia; the government is not the only violator of human rights but fails to ensure its population protection from other victimizers. The past-present history of armed conflict has produced internal migrants as well as emigrants. Colombia is one of the most neoliberal nations in Latin America (along with Chile and Mexico),[47] but like everything in Colombia, it is a

[46] When I lived and worked in Chile, from 2012 to 2016, there was less direct public resistance to neoliberal inequality than there has been more recently, with the 2019 protests and drafting of a new constitution.
[47] The 2022 inauguration of the country's first elected liberal president has now moved Colombia (along with Chile) into the rising tide of leftist governments across Latin America.

complex, fragmented kind of neoliberalism. There is a long history of community theatre in resistance to oppression, which has not been interrupted by a dictatorship, like in Chile, or instrumentalized within neoliberal institutions, like in the US, but undertaking this work is a much more precarious endeavor in Colombia.

In terms of methodology, my fieldwork in these sites is neither proper ethnography nor proper participatory action research.[48] It is ethnography in the sense that I immersed myself, affectively and temporarily, in the contexts of the applied theatre practices that I facilitated and those that I engaged with as a witness, in order to listen-with emergent ideas and sensations. It is participatory action research in that I've aimed to combine my skills with the knowledge of grass-roots groups and my research questions have been reshaped by our exchanges. I use practice-as-research (for Chapters 2 and 4) because practice was necessarily "the core method of engaging with [my] research hunches or questions" and "it would not be possible to engage in the research unless [I undertook] practice" (Mackey 2016, 480). Interestingly, applied theatre practice-as-research rarely focuses on the facilitator's experience nor their facilitation skills, but usually on the participants and their experience of the work (Mackey 2016, 482). However, the focus of this dissertation is precisely the practice of theatre facilitation, based on my own experience as facilitator, participant or witness in relation to others and specific contexts. The explanation of how I came to (re)do/think/feel theatre facilitation as affective attunement unfolds through key moments of learning in which relational shifts can be presenced, as opposed to narrative arcs of case studies. Placing these chapters alongside one another reveals overlapping approaches to affective facilitation, allowing the points of intersection and divergence to reframe the terms used for valuing this work.

[48] Participatory action research prioritizes "learning for and with—not only about—people who might otherwise be only the objects of study" (Lewin in Fields 2016, 32).

Chapter 2

Affect and Care: a non-method

Introduction

In the previous chapter I proposed that theatre facilitators can learn from our failures in order to redefine what success means, drawing on my own experience facilitating prison theatre. In this chapter, I further explore how failure offers possibilities for transformation, examining case studies of my more recent work in contexts of immigrant detention, which have led me to reconsider concepts of affect and care. As I have argued, the way success is usually framed (based on results, like public visibility, or social impacts, such as rehabilitation) becomes problematic when it means theatre facilitation is instrumentalized in the service of institutional aims. Neoliberal agendas of participatory citizenship make social issues into individual problems, encouraging self-sufficiency rather than structural change (Balfour Ed. 2004; Bishop 2012; Preston 2016; Freebody et al. Eds. 2018). Considering my previous work in Chile, I have noted how instrumentalization is especially of concern in prison theatre, due to heightened power imbalances. This led me to a departure from earlier ideas about building communication skills and self-esteem, towards taking responsibility for my own implication in the global system of Carceral Capitalism and mobility control (which I will discuss in more detail).[49]

This chapter deepens and complicates my initial proposal that shifting the affect in a space of enclosure (like prison or immigrant detention) can potentiate alternative relationalities,[50]

[49] Jackie Wang coined the term Carceral Capitalism, drawing attention "to the ways in which the carceral techniques of the state are shaped by—and work in tandem with—the imperatives of global capitalism" (2018, 69).
[50] Among the many definitions of affect, I appreciate Berlant's idea that it is the pre-personal "somatization of an intensity" which "remits the biopolitical capacity of bodies to affect and be affected by one another" (in Peluffo 2016, 21-22–*my translation*).

which in turn can feel humanizing.[51] As explained in Chapter 1, I aim to re-signify humanization beyond individual subjectivity, towards a sense of life-affirming relationality (Bautista 2017), which does not mean limiting humanity to the exclusive category of the 'human' (versus 'non-human') as it has been understood in Western, colonial epistemologies.[52] This decolonial perspective attempts to combat the idea of development as a linear progression from uncivilized to civilized, which requires inequality and the confinement or death of many, including the planet itself (Bautista 2017). Structures of carceral migration (Kurwa & Gurusami 2022) are central to settler colonial state formations, based on the containment and displacement of indigenous peoples from Africa and the Americas, to uphold a Eurocentric imaginary of the nation in which a self-proclaimed White-(*mestizo*) national ethnos (Appadurai 2006) reserves the right to govern over so-called others—justified first religiously, then scientifically, and now economically, with neoliberal policies. What can applied theatre facilitators do to resist rather than participate in this paradigm? We must value the affective impacts of our work and attend to the delicate, vital webs of relations in which we are all inherently intertwined. Applied theatre can thus feel humanizing,[53] when it potentiates forms of collective, embodied resistance to systems of dehumanization that intend to isolate and criminalize certain bodies.[54]

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[51] I propose we think humanization from a decolonial perspective, as outlined by Rafael Bautista (2017); our relationships and the work we do can produce death (dehumanization) or reaffirm life (humanization)—of ourselves and all life in the word as inherently relational.

[52] The rise of Europe and its construction of the "world civilization" along with African enslavement, the Latin American conquest and Asian subjugation were all empirical effects of the inscription of "non-human" and "less-human" categories onto Black, Brown, and Indigenous bodies - a biopolitical strategy of colonization (Wynter 2003, 263).

[53] When I say that theatre facilitation can be humanizing, I do not refer to the humanization only of people in spaces of enclosure, but of everyone involved in the creative encounter.

[54] The likeliness of being subjected to imprisonment has less to do with committing crimes than belonging to a community that has been criminalized. For instance, racialization drives the "massive system of incarceration in the United States", which "naturalizes punishment," so that "the disproportionate application of incarceration to black and Latino men makes it easier for Americans to accept the fact that there are more than two million people behind bars" and, accordingly, in immigration detention, nearly all of the over 40,000 (im)migrant detainees on a given day are nonwhite (Golash-Boza 2015**,** 217). Like prison, immigrant detention is a form of socioeconomic control; laws change according to who 'needs' to be controlled at a given time, criminalizing their actions (Gilmore 2007). Loyd et al explain that "the process of outlawing previously legal activities is backed by the militarization of national boundaries and policing practices…[that] legally consign entire groups of people to precarious futures and premature death" (2012, 15). It is important, then, to recognize criminalization as a political tool, so as not to naturalize the state violence that underwrites the status quo of carcerality.

In this chapter, I explore how *afecto* and *cuidado* (concepts based in their Spanish definitions, which allow us to rethink their English translations: affect and care) can work against dehumanization, via embodied experiences of connection. I further examine, in contexts of immigrant detention specifically, how carceral strategies of dehumanization attempt to deny affective relations and thus negate inherent interconnectivity with the world;[55] yet while relations may be damaged or interrupted, it is still not possible to completely dehumanize anyone.[56] The approach to facilitation I propose is affective precisely because our vital interdependence with all life can always be felt, though it is often overshadowed by discursive structures that control and contain subjectivities. Affective facilitation is not about seeking one certain affective impact but fomenting the *potential* for affective attunement to create a space of *afecto.* This potential is always present but may be enhanced by maintaining an intentional openness to all kinds of affects. I have found that in responding to participants' needs, interests, and feelings in relation to the facilitator's (in this case, my own), the aim of a public performance, or any product, may fall away, shifting to a focus on the here and now, opening up to falling apart, not-knowing and a transformation in our very sense of being—changing our bodies, the space and the meaning of interactions there. This addresses the problem (mentioned in Chapter 1) of applying a set method to a certain end and allows for a more context-specific approach. In what follows, I explain how my facilitation practice evolved into a non-method.

[55] As Loyd et al. point out, "were it not for the efforts of loved ones and friends, prisons and detention facilities could become a void where people are forgotten and where collective denial masks the bodily and social harms of systemic dehumanization" (2012, 14). This is precisely where the power of human connection and care comes into play, as a vial form of resistance.
[56] For Giorgio Agamben, the "camp" (a category that has been extended from concentration camps to immigrant detention) is a place where existence becomes non-existence; detainees are considered dead by society, since they do not have political life (*bios*) (1995). However, while detainees may not be recognized by society as worthy lives, I argue that all beings have the capacity to feel a connection with and a response-ability to others, which evidences a shared vitality that does not depend on political life but a reciprocal sensitivity to affecting and being affected, moving and being moved.

Five years ago, I began a practice-as-research project with the aim of honing a participatory methodology for facilitating the self-expression of experiences of mobility and enclosure. The two workshops I discuss here are Performing Migration,[57] an artistic expression workshop over six weeks in 2017 with women from Bolivia, Peru and Colombia incarcerated in Santiago, Chile, and Yolo Teatro, a twelve-week theatre workshop with young men between 13 and 17 years old from Central America, detained in Yolo County, California during 2018.[58] Given my previous experience, I hoped that unlike prison theatre that becomes instrumentalized by the carceral system when applied as part of a rehabilitation agenda, serving to further the aim of "socializing legal citizens into behaving morally" (Balfour 2004), this work could foment strategies of survival and networks of care, in resistance to the isolating, dehumanizing conditions of incarceration. To achieve this, I attempted to allow group goals to emerge as part of a reflexive praxis, considering participants' interests and expertise. This openness complicated my initial aim of honing a methodology. I found that what was needed was not a set method but an open-ended process of trying out invitations to potentiate new relational possibilities specific to each context.

By exploring a range of performance techniques, including writing, drawing, singing, movement, body-mapping, mask-making and improvisation, we discovered forms of expression that the groups wanted to engage with. For Performing Migration, we intended for the group (which ranged from five to fifteen women) to become the co-facilitators of a self-defined, shared creative space within the prison, where they could connect, express themselves and value their

[57] For an earlier discission of Performing Migration in Spanish see: Hart, S. (2019) "Movilidad y encierro 'Sur-Sur': reflexiones sobre la práctica de performance participativa como investigación en la penitenciaria femenina de Santiago, Chile." *Revista corpo-grafías: Estudios críticos de y desde los cuerpos* 6 (6): 214-226. https://revistas.udistrital.edu.co/ojs/index.php/CORPO/article/view/14242

[58] From 2008 to 2020 the Yolo County juvenile detention facility housed up to 24 unaccompanied minors detained by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, usually having been apprehended by the Border Patrol upon crossing the border from Mexico.

different experiences.[59] In California, I aimed for us to create original performance material from participants' skills and interests, while encouraging teamwork, communication, trust and respect among the young men (who were divided into two groups of up to eight participants).[60] These aims were transformed by the reality of each context and unexpected outcomes emerged. Not only did I need to re-evaluate my approach at every step, but it became a collective doing-thinking (Nelson 2012) with the group and the space-time of the workshop. As I will continue to explain, this research has come to center on that shift in feeling during a theatre workshop, when participants say something changed*,* when we feel more connected, more in the moment. Is this even possible to talk about? How can we theorize facilitation from an affective lens (rather than focusing on products)? Throughout this dissertation, I attempt to write, without pinning down, experiences of *being-with* and *feeling-with* that are inarticulable within discourse, not with the intent of understanding completely, but pointing towards an essential aspect of applied theatre work that is often under-valued, precisely because of its elusiveness. With this chapter, I do this by incorporating excerpts from my field notes (*italicized*), reflecting the affective impact of the work (on myself in relation to the context and the group) via vivid examples.

I think/feel through this practice-as-research in hindsight, as a means of collective knowledge-creation, in dialogue with collaborators, participants and theorists (which are interchangeable roles). As a performance of *doing/thinking/feeling-with*, this reflection on my experience as facilitator employs different temporalities and affective modes. The first section, Research Questions and First Lessons, discusses how I learned to facilitate creative exchanges that potentiated different relational possibilities in spaces of immigrant detention in Chile and

[59] Apart from myself, our facilitation team included two recent graduates from the programs in Applied Theatre and Educational Theatre at the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile.
[60] I volunteered with the Yolo Interfaith Immigration Network's group visitation program at the juvenile detention center, but facilitated the theatre workshops separately, without co-facilitators.

California, highlighting moments of failure and possibility. The following section, Participatory Performance (Practice) as (Action) Research addresses the ethics of a critical, participatory research approach to validating knowledge traditionally excluded from the academy. In the next two sections, From What They Said to What I Felt and From Method to Non-Method, I track changes in my approach to facilitation, exploring ways to re-theorize this work, so that a transformed sense of time, space and being in relation to one another and the world might be seen as the 'artistic practice' itself. The sections on Mobility Control and Other Thinking consider the control of mobility and the carceral as defining facets of neoliberal globalization, while recognizing the need for other thinking, as the colonial/capitalist/patriarchal/modern/ paradigm is not the only possible way of knowing and being. The final sections, Affective Facilitation and Rearticulating an Approach, conclude the chapter with an argument for centralizing affect in discussions on facilitation. Overall, I am interested in what we can(not) understand about embodied experiences of (de)humanization through this work.

Research Questions & First Lessons

In Chile, my initial research question was: *how can participatory performance offer alternative frames for (inter)action that fissure discourses of the stratified global mobility regime, by presencing time, space and relationality differently?*[61] I found that since embodied knowledge can be inarticulable and unknowable within the terms of hegemonic discourse, moving past scripts to a sense of *being-with* can enable us to create a space of *afecto* (a connection of love or affection, generated through mutual support, solidarity and care),[62] as

[61] While the terms applied theatre and participatory performance are generally interchangeable, a distinction can be made in that participatory performance is more interdisciplinary than applied theatre, drawing from diverse techniques, including theatre, dance and movement, writing, visual arts, media arts, and not necessarily acting nor *playbuilding* (Prendergast and Saxton 2009).
[62] *Afecto* generally refers to a feeling of tenderness, partiality to someone, or a warm quality of interaction. The definition of *afecto*, according to the Real Academia Española has two parts: 1) "inclinado a alguien o algo*"* [inclined towards someone or

discussed in *Movilidad y encierro "Sur-Sur"* (Hart 2019). While affect can be understood as the "push of life" (Anderson 2012), or the embodied capability to affect and be affected (Berlant in Peluffo 2016), or, in my terms, a connection with the very vitality of being alive in relation to the world, it does not indicate a particular kind of relation. Affect in this sense is neutral. As mentioned earlier, when affects are felt in bodies they become sensations, and when given names they become emotions, so they can then be valued socially.[63] *Afecto,* in this sense, could be seen as a 'positive' emotion, but I understand *afecto* as a kind of affect (a pre-subjective intensity, not an emotion) that requires the cultivation of life-affirming relations, via vital connections, which are non-innocent, vulnerable, and entangled in complicated ways. I am referring specifically to relations that value life as interdependent and collective, not relations that produce excessive death (Bautista 2017). *Afecto,* like affect, offers a way of talking about our interrelatedness and its interruptions, as well as the negotiation of subjectivity in relation to the body (which may be felt as *more-than* the self via the extended sensorium (Gregg and Seigworth 2010)), but it also implies a kind of radical love-for-vitality that does not accept forms of human valuing.[64]

For Erin Manning, affect is a collective force of attunement, a coming together as part of something pre-individual, a creative advance towards new possibilities of life (2012). Affect is *more-than* individual; it is an excess that continually moves us towards *more-than-ness* (Manning 2012). It spills outside the limits of language and the knowable, but discourse finds ever more creative ways of incorporating, targeting and articulating aspects of affective life within biopolitical regimes of control (Anderson 2012).[65] As I hope to have made clear, affects

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something]; 2) "cada una de las pasiones del ánimo, como la ira, el amor, el odio, etc., y especialmente el amor o el cariño" [each and every mood or passion, like ire, love, hatred, etc., and especially love or care] (Real Academia Española, s.v. "Afecto").

[63] Emotional capitalism disciplines affect, commodifying sentimentality; for instance, sadness is medicalized, love is fetishized (Peluffo 2016).

[64] By human valuing I mean the categorization of some people as 'human' and others as 'less-' or 'non-human'.

[65] Affective life can be thought of as "both the inassimilable that must be reduced if it is to be acted on, and the unattributable that escapes attempts to name, know, target and sort life" (Negri in Anderson 2012, 9).

can be appropriated and commodified, but not all - there is always an excess of affective life that escapes technologies of control. Bodies can be coerced and disciplined, but the body is also a site of collective resistance. I therefore think of *afecto* as the excess "push of life" that escapes limitations – it is always present but can be potentiated. It exists alongside the violence of incarceration, the control of mobility and discursive forms of subjectification. Although our workshop in Santiago may not have been able to change the circumstances of immigrant detention, we could make room for reflecting on how experiences of mobility and enclosure influence subjectivities and find other ways to be ourselves, alongside oppressive labels, such as 'criminal' and 'migrant' (or 'extranjera'). We did this not only by re-inventing identities on our own terms, but by creating a space of *afecto* to explore multiple possible relationalities, copresencing our existence as physical sensation, connection, and transformation, as *being-with* the world.[66] Performing Migration thus opened up new questions around self as *more-than* individual and humanization as a response-ability,[67] not through understanding each other but a felt sense of connection to our inherent, fragile interdependence, which requires care.

From the first day, I noted, *there was a sense among the group that it made 'sense' to come together as 'extranjeras' [foreign women], to share experiences, get to know one another and reflect on their interests and concerns.* They recognized the importance of creating a space just for them, which had not existed before. For many, this was their first opportunity to meet one another, since they were not housed in the same blocks, thus relieving, momentarily, feelings

[66] I think of *being-with* as a sense of existence that goes beyond identities or scripts, overflowing individuality towards becoming *more-than-one*. While we are bound up by identity labels, they are not all we are. Positionalities produce certain affects in relation to others, but affect is also *more-than* the social. I am interested here in the *more-than* aspect of existence that can be felt at the same time as the social. This does not diminish the need for social change, but it is another aspect of applied theatre facilitation that is also very impactful, because it can change how we feel out our delicate relationalities in/with the world. *Being-with* is manifested in moments when we feel physically connected and present in the here and now.

[67] I think of response-ability in the sense that, in face-to-face encounters, we become aware of our ability *and* our responsibility to respond to the need to care for the fragile life webs that sustain our communities (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 116).

of isolation and oppression as a small minority among the Chilean women. Our workshop created the opportunity to build bonds of solidarity, care and affection, which participants described as the *afecto* that was lacking for them in the prison. Our interactions entailed an awareness of cultural barriers and the patience to learn from one another. This was, in part because I, as facilitator, was also an extranjera (albeit the only 'Gringa'), and thus did not represent the country that held them captive (marking them as 'less-human'). Our encounter began from a sense of identification, but it took us somewhere else. When I asked what they would like to do in the workshop, the group expressed an interest in singing and dancing, but since they were from different countries, regions and generations, their musical requests were diverse; we created a playlist in order to sing and dance to our favorite songs from the cultures we each knew—teaching each other Cueca, Marinera, Salsa, and Merengue gave a sense of cohesion to our heterogeneous group.

Yet beyond individual or group identities, we discovered new relationalities that centered on sensorial connection and embodied response-ability. For instance, participants said our dance circle *cambió el ánimo y la energía en la sala* [*changed the feeling and energy in the room*]. Dancing together was a way of *being-with,* in the here and now. I wrote in my fieldnotes: *there was something in the air, in the music, in our breath, our exhaustion—our feet in rhythm said more than the lyrics, or the narrative of a journey, a life story, or a legal process could.* While familiar steps sometimes led to nostalgia or the desire for a (lost) sense of community, there was a visceral letting go of self-consciousness, as we immersed ourselves in what we could do together, rather than what we couldn't, at least for a moment. The point was not mastering a particular step or genre but sharing a feeling of connection with a rhythm, sound and movement

that became contagious. Beginning our workshop with these musical warm-ups produced a visceral sense that creating a space of *afecto* was in fact the crux of our exchange.

Music also played an important role in Yolo Teatro, but in a different way, related to participants' desires (to hear and sing and dance to certain songs or kinds of music), which were only partially fulfilled, due to censorship of their choices, by the institution and by me. Unlike in Santiago, in Yolo there were rules about what kinds of songs I could bring in (prohibiting lyrics glorifying gangs, violence or misogyny) and all materials for the workshop had to be approved; this deterred me from trying to bring in many of the songs the youth requested. In one case, I found an alternative to a requested song, by the same hip-hop artist, critiquing inequality and corruption in Mexico, which I thought would be approved by the institution and the youth. However, it happened that there were different participants in the workshop that day and the song caused a negative reaction from two of them, who identified the singer as being from their rival gang. *I was shaken by their anger and rejection of something I thought they would 'like'. My misdirected desire to give them what they wanted resulted in a moment of so much tension that the workshop could not continue. They got up and stormed out. I let the moment unfold with all its potential charge, rather than trying to control what happened. I did not hide the sadness I felt; the guard and the one participant who stayed behind consoled me. Ironically, I became the one 'needing care'.* Discovering how music could be a catalyst of repression, joy, rage or rebellion taught me that unexpected and unpleasant affects were an important part of our exchange. I also learned that trying to care, or asking others to, could be dangerous or rewarding, thus shifting relations.

My initial research question in Yolo was: *how can we create a space of afecto through performance workshops that offer a momentary place of respite for strengthening affiliations?*

However, participants' interests did not always lead to teamwork and often brought out conflicts; our workshop became a place for renegotiating relationships. What I learned about facilitation had more to do with feeling agency and its limits, through (inter)actions and affective connections, however precarious. I realized that asking what participants wanted to do together (or apart), could not entail having expectations for a particular kind of engagement. This change in my approach came from the recognition that relationships were constantly fluctuating from violent to caring and back again, without a clear progression in one direction or another. I found that moments of harmony in a workshop are valuable, but so too are moments of failure to harmonize, as part of a process of learning how to potentiate ways of *being-with,* by opening up to *feeling-with.*[68] My experience as facilitator in the Yolo juvenile detention center was, overall, more challenging than in the women's prison of Santiago because the creative process defied my expectations and posed questions in more unsettling and troubling ways.

For instance, new questions emerged about how to facilitate creative play, which was vital in this context. Our initial interactions were based around boardgames, as part of a weekly volunteer visitation program run by a community organization (YIIN), which provided an outlet for friendly interaction with people from the 'outside' world unavailable to most (im)migrants in detention. After my initial visit as part of this program, I reflected: *there was an intensity of focused investment, all leaning in around the Jenga tower*. *Something to care about. That shared experience in the moment brought us together.* Surprisingly (to me), in the theatre workshops that I began to facilitate a few months after having gotten to know the youth through games as a visitor, it was not always easy to get back to that space of play. *It can be harder to get there*

[68] *Feeling-with* refers to affective attunement (Manning 2012), which for me means tuning into to affects that move among people in a space, achieving a kind of resonance along the same vibration, allowing our bodies to affect and be affected by the intensity of the encounter and its atmosphere.

when it is the objective itself. When I became the theatre teacher, our relationship took on a new tone; even when I asked what the group wanted to do, there was an expectation, when we entered the classroom, for me to offer options (that they would accept or not). Rather than choosing a boardgame from the cart of known options, they needed me to sell them each theatre activity, to be convinced it was worth it. The right to choose meant there was always the risk of rejection, including of one another's choices. When we did manage to lose ourselves in a moment of theatrical play, it usually involved a game structure—a clear goal and agreed rules (even if we made them up). In this context, *afecto,* rather than a shared vision for the space we wanted to create, was fleeting and playful and involved breaking and remaking the rules of the game as we went, demanding constant *cuidado* [carefulness].

The workshop in Yolo resonated with feminist, science and technology theorist María Puig de la Bellacasa's relational way of "thinking with care", which requires recognition of situated contingencies and "acknowledgement of always more-than-one interdependencies" (2017, 77)—in this case between the participants, other detainees, prison staff, myself, and the environment we were in, with its limited array of objects and imposing walls, doors, and locks. What interests me here is how to understand our creative process as creating a space of *afecto*—which I now see is not inherently innocent or good, but a potential connection in solidarity. In Yolo, *afecto* involved caring and being careful. The Spanish term *cuidado* better incorporates these complexities, as it implies not only to care for or about, but also to take care and to be cautious. It encapsulates the need for attention to the potential danger that is part of caring and thus indicates the possibility of cultivating life-affirming relations as well as moments of discomfort and readjustment. I found that it was not necessarily the goal in creating a space of *afecto* to always feel happy or free, but to create the potential for those affects and feelings to

emerge, along with others, including the desire to connect (or not) in multiple ways, whether via a love-for-vitality or,[69] for instance, the erotic, which I will explain further. Overall, the emergence of alternative possible relationalities (and new ideas about what we were doing together) in Yolo came about through a discordant group experience that was both challenging and rejuvenating.

On the first day of the workshop, we worked with themes that the youth chose: justice, injustice, love and hate. *We talked about how justice for some can be injustice for others. The idea that there can be different kinds of love also came up, since love is all around us, but can get mixed up with hate. The scene we created as a result was of a businessman walking past a woman living on the street, begging for food. In the first variation, he gave her a loaf of bread he was carrying (a tissue box we found), and she was thankful. This was 'love'. In the second variation, he walked right by and called her a drug addict. This was 'hate'. Then, in a third variation, intended to show the complex relationship between love and hate, he walked by with money in his hand (pieces of colored paper I brought) and didn't stop when she asked for help, so she called him "odioso" [hateful]. Then, in a surprising twist, he bought the loaf of bread and came back to give it to her. The deeper complexity of the characters in this last version reflected how initial appearances are not the only truth of a situation, how justice and injustice are not clear-cut opposites, and how love can look like hate.* I continued to learn from the youth about love's many manifestations, contradictions and absences.

While Performing Migration was essentially about *afecto*, unification in difference, embodied knowledge, creative liberation and (unsustainable) collaboration, Yolo Teatro was more about *cuidado,* gendered power, the control of bodies and the erotic, negation as resistance,

[69] I understand love-for-vitality as a radical kind of love that foments life-affirming relations, and which requires careful maintenance work.

failure as success, and the right to play, make-believing it up as we went. Both projects dealt with the need for connectivity as essential to life and potentiated, in different ways, a love-for-vitality, which could be felt in certain (fleeting) moments as a humanizing copresence. This vitality is pervasive and adaptable but is also vulnerable and requires care. It is dependent on and produced from relationships, which can cultivate or destroy it. We might call it love, but it is always *more-than* (just as we are *more-than* 'ourselves'). The scenes described above showed how the youth in Yolo recognized that alternative versions and transformations of identities and relations could be possible. They could, for a moment, become someone else, who also had multiple possible manifestations. In this sense, the pursuit of emancipation from dominant narratives of the 'self' can be seen as self-transformation, which, since any 'I' is interdependent with relational life webs and not fully self-contained, translates to world-transformation.[70] An emergent question, then, which would require further exploration, is how love, desire, hope and imagining a different self in relation to a transformed world can offer ways of resisting dehumanizing enclosures.

My initial desire was to facilitate a joyful interaction in Yolo, but many conflicting desires were produced from our (ex)change, as I will explain. Our relations were situated quite differently than in Santiago, since in this context I was an adult female U.S. citizen (cast in a more teacher-like role) working with 'immigrant' young men.[71] They were all in fact 'unaccompanied minors' (UACs) detained by the Office of Refugee Resettlement,[72] who had

[70] The notion of transformation stressed in this work is not a specific outcome but the fleeting feeling that being differently together is possible - a capacity to attune to *afecto* that lingers among bodies as an affective potential.
[71] I use the term 'immigrant' here to refer to the way participants were named by the carceral institution; it is a constructed category of being in nation-state discourse, which I aim to call into question. As someone who has been an 'immigrant' in many places, I am aware of the relativity, ambiguity and violence of the term and that migration is multidirectional movement, not a fixed identity.
[72] According to the Homeland Security Act of 2002, "A UAC is 'a child who (A) has no lawful immigration status in the United States; (B) has not attained eighteen years of age; and (C) with respect to whom – (i) there is no parent or legal guardian in the United States; or (ii) no parent or legal guardian in the United States is available to provide care and physical custody'" (in Hing 2019, 184). However, also according to the DHS, "[m]ore than 80% of the migrating and asylum-seeking children taken into U.S.

fled violent, traumatizing experiences in their home countries to seek asylum in the U.S.. However, they were treated more harshly by the guards than the local youth in the facility; 9 out of the 19 ORR detainees there in 2018 attempted to commit suicide after arriving at Yolo.[73] Their families did not visit them because they were far away, or they were afraid to come forward due to their own immigration status. This also made it difficult for the youth to be released to family members in the U.S.. Their average time of detention at Yolo was 77 days but could range anywhere from 1 day to 419 days;[74] they were kept inside (without sunlight) 22 hours per day, with a strict routine: 5 hours of school, 2 hours of outdoor recreation, and 3 hours of free time - which included TV, phone calls, and creative workshops (Becerra 2019). Despite these carceral conditions, the local community protested ending Yolo's contract with ORR in 2018; activists believed that the youth had more support in Yolo than they might have if transferred somewhere else with worse conditions. The contract was renewed in 2018, but the board voted not to renew it in 2020, thanks to increased advocacy for relocating the ORR detainees to less restrictive settings.

At Yolo, the constant policing of their bodies in the patriarchal space of authoritarian violence within which these young men struggled to prove their masculinity also resulted in the sexualization of my body and demanded recognition of my own complicity in the prison system, as an embodied representation of the U.S. and state structures of biopolitical control, into which I had aimed to intervene. This meant an opening up to falling apart—teetering on the brink of

custody and initiating immigration cases in the USA already have family members residing in the USA" and "in more than 40% of cases, those children's family members in the USA are their parents or legal guardians" (stated as of August 20, 2022, on Amnesty International's website), which means most UACs' family members in the U.S. are made 'unavailable' by the legal requirements for custody

[73] A 2019 California DOJ review of immigrant detention facilities found that the Yolo facility was failing to deal with the needs of traumatized ORR detainees, responding instead with excessive use of physical force, inadequate training in cultural competence for staff, and insufficient healthcare services (Becerra 2019).

[74] It was unlikely for them to be transferred quickly to a less restrictive ORR setting (like a shelter) once detained at Yolo, since they needed to sustain 'good behavior' for 30 days and the facility's discipline system involved writing them up for every small incident (Becerra 2019).

failure and possibility. The challenge was changing my own mindset as facilitator—from a productivist model to allow for *something else*. I learned to embrace open-endedness and not-knowing (along with the ethical responsibility to be critically wary of the unknown impacts of our interactions). *How do you prepare the body-mind for crossing the boundary into the prison space? You can't. You immerse yourself in the moment, tune into the reality you encounter there…and you may not be glad you went in. You may feel it was important for you to make human contact in that space, or you may not. You may wonder if it only made things worse.* Every day was different. I learned to let relations transform without set expectations, maintaining an awareness of how we affected each other (for better or worse). My practice-as-research ended up raising complex questions around the desires produced by my presence in the detention center, an institution designed to control our interactions, which generated a range of affects, from joy to discomfort.

Participatory Performance (Practice) as (Action) Research

When Jessica Fields describes her queer feminist approach to participatory action research with incarcerated women of color at San Francisco County Jail, she proposes understanding relationality through the erotic, by focusing on her own experience as a researcher, with an openness to learning from the moments when her method fails (2016).[75] She grapples with an unequal yet collaborative encounter as a process of self-making, in relation to others, and raises relevant issues about the unknown impact of her work on the communities engaged, which has ethical consequences. I take inspiration from Fields' attention to erotic

[75] Participatory action research is an approach that generally focuses on participant/co-researchers' strengths and resources in a power sharing process that attends to social inequalities, through co-learning and capacity building, seeking a balance between knowledge generation and mutual benefit (Israel et al. 2005).

entanglements of visceral sensations and desires, based on Audre Lord's concept of *erotica* as creative power, harmony and love in all its aspects,[76] rather than presuming a neutral role or eliding questions about myself and others as objects of and actors with desire in settings marked by inequality. My writing about these participatory processes carries "the traces of the racialized, gendered, sexualized desires brought to and generated in the encounter" (Fields 2016, 46).

In Santiago, I noted: *the female prisoners were seen by the male prison psychologist as transgressive, insufficiently submissive or not chaste enough.* As feminist, abolitionist activist/scholar Angela Davis explains, women who are "publicly punished by the state for their misbehavior" are considered "more aberrant and far more threatening to society than their numerous male counterparts" (2003, 66). Their 'crimes' were associated with the necessity of providing for their children and upon being incarcerated, they were thought to have failed in their role as mothers. Yet, *the extranjeras were seen as more timid and respectful than the 'chilenas' [Chileans]—in other words, more feminine.* Labeled as mujeres [women], indígenas [indigenous], and pobres [poor], the participants in our workshop were triply trapped within a racist, classist, patriarchal society, and criminalized as 'unwanted migrants'.[77] Their femininity was constructed as less-than-desirable. Meanwhile, I was perceived, in the male gaze of prison staff, as a desirable immigrant from a developed, White country, gendering me as more feminine. The colonization of gender underwrites subject positions via the intersection of race and class, while naturalizing the idea of a biological gender duality (Lugones 2010); but there is still space

[76] For Lorde, *erotica* connects the spiritual and the political, via physical, emotional and psychic expressions of what is deepest and strongest within each of us (1984). The misnaming of the erotic as obscenity obscures the human need for sharing joy and making connections (as a basis for understanding what is not shared) (Lorde 1984).

[77] In Chile, 'migrante' [migrant] typically means Black or Brown working class immigrant from a country such as Colombia, Bolivia, Perú, Haiti, or Venezuela who comes to work (often informally) and send remittances to their family in their home country. Migrantes, like 'immigrants' in the US, are often construed as *being* illegal in anti-immigration rhetoric, conflating a lack of access to legal immigration status due to exclusionary, racist policies with inherent criminality. Meanwhile 'inmigrantes' [immigrants] from Europe – arriving after the first or second World War or more recently – and North America have been welcomed to Chile with open arms by a government keen to modernize, 'develop' and continue colonization.

for resistance. One participant said, *no vale la opinión de un oficial ni nadie más, sino que nosotras mismas tenemos que saber quiénes somos [an officer's opinion, or anyone else's, doesn't matter; we have to know who we are for ourselves].* We created a space for reimagining not only representations, but our sense of ourselves in the world, upholding a desire for mutual vitality, alongside technologies of control.

We used Augusto Boal's Image Theatre technique to stage scenarios of oppression participants had experienced, inviting them to become *spect-actors* working in solidarity, as the protagonists of their story, in order to reflect critically on the structures that confined them and consider how they could overcome certain obstacles.[78] In one exercise, the 'problem image' participants created was of two women in prison, tristes [feeling sad] because they had not been able to talk with their families. The 'ideal image' the group suggested as the solution was of the two women reunited with their daughters, in a profoundly moving embrace. The 'transition image' represented the need to call their families in their home countries, in order to tell them where they were and ask them to visit. We explored how they could get the prison to reactivate the international calling service (which had been discontinued) by creating an image in which one of the participants (Mileidy) spoke with the prison director, played by another participant (Xiomara). In the scene, the prison director refused the request. We then tried the strategy of all the extranjeras going as a group to talk with him, but that did not succeed either. As we could not find a realistic solution, the participants asked me if I could just go and talk to the prison director myself, in real life, since he was never going to listen to them.

[78] One main principle of Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed is that "all human beings are actors (they act!) and spectators (they observe!)", so the audience becomes *spect-actors,* or active spectators, who are able to not only give their opinions, but actually step onto the stage, replace the actors, and change the course of the play's action, as a rehearsal for life (2002, 15).

They saw me as an ally and asked me to step out of the Boalian joker (facilitator) role, to acknowledge and use my privilege and power. In a way, this was a moment of failure, because I was not willing to fulfill their desire for me to solve this problem the way they suggested; I felt sure that talking with the prison director would have jeopardized our workshop.[79] I realized it was necessary to alter Boal's concept of 'theatre as rehearsal for life', where *spect-actors* practice concrete actions to overcome oppression, because this approach, within the rigid power structures of a prison, could be not only depressingly unrealistic ("there is nothing we can really do!"), but potentially very dangerous (what if they had confronted the prison director and were punished?). Rui Frati, who directs the prison theatre program of the *Théâtre de l'Oprimé* of Paris, asks a key question to this regard:

> ¿Como crear un <<espacio de libertad>> dentro de las cárceles, trabajando sobre la base de los conflictos que viven los detenidos/actores, prestando atención a que el trabajo no desencadene situaciones aún más agresivas en su cotidianidad? [How can we create a "space of freedom" in prison, working from the conflicts that the detainees/actors experience, while taking care that the work does not trigger even more aggressive situations in their day-to-day reality?] (CoArtRe 2013, 53 - *my translation*).

While the oppressive structures of incarceration are extremely difficult to transform (and may possibly only be changed via direct activism, which comes with consequences) and being asked (by a visiting facilitator) about how you are oppressed as an inmate may not in fact help at all, there was still something validating for the group in the process of identifying a shared problem and acknowledging their desire for better alternatives.

[79]I was aware we needed to comply with the restrictions of the prison system in order to continue the workshops. My confronting the prison director directly about the participants' needs could have positioned the workshop as a space of resistance in his eyes. Avoiding this of course meant a certain complicity with the institution's technologies of control, in order to be allowed to continue our work. I wanted to ask the participants about their needs and desires, without implying that I would 'solve' them, but this proved challenging, and I was left with doubts about how to not make unkeepable promises and also not forgo hopefulness. Moreover, responding to all of the participants' needs was not feasible in the one-month workshop period and the particular issue of international calls needed to be addressed long term by liaising with the prison staff and outside allies in a manner that would not be perceived as threatening. After the workshop ended, we eventually sought outside guidance, bringing onboard law students as external advisors to help research relevant policies and inform participants on their rights.

They said, as extranjeras, they were subjected to racism, prejudice and aggression from the Chilean inmates and the guards. When I asked if they would like to express their critiques of the prison in a performance for an audience they said, "no, porque ya todos piensan que las extranjeras reclaman demasiado" ["no, because everyone already thinks that the extranjeras complain too much"] (Hart 2019). It was not necessary to show this work, but just experience it for ourselves. The new relations formed in the workshop (and between sessions) offered ways of valuing and practicing solidarity, love, intimacy, and friendship (as well as hierarchy) alternatively to the norms imposed by the prison or the world outside. As often happens in women's prison, the participants became one another's kinship networks, in the absence of contact with their families, assuming multiple roles across gendered lines, from companion to oppressor. Our Image Theatre work allowed further exploration of possible ways of *being-with,* in relation to themselves, one another, and the world, not with the aim of self-betterment, but a collective desire to live beyond socially constructed limitations. We may not have found a Boalian solution to specific problems of their incarceration, but in the process of trying we discovered a sense of connectivity—in a moment of embrace or the spark of an idea—making us viscerally aware of a powerful, shared life-force that cannot be denied nor confined, even in prison.

In Yolo, my subject position as a White, female, academic and U.S. citizen, fluent in Spanish, secured my easy access to the detention center as someone attractive to the institution and in a different way to participants. *"How old are you, are you married, why don't you have kids?" That's what the young men want to know. I am amazed at how I feel disempowered in this context, as a woman.* While I was interested in exploring less-normative relationalities, readings of my body as 'desirable' went from being a resource to becoming an obstacle. I became keenly

aware of how the patriarchal atmosphere violently gendered our relations, making the erotic subtexts feel uncomfortably scripted. *I am conscious of what I am wearing. I have tried to look unattractive, casual and respectable at the same time.* I initially thought (or hoped) the erotic would dissipate—*the fetishized attraction fades when the desire to complete an artwork gives us something else to do and be together*—but it always came back. Juvenile detention sexualizes and vulnerates all bodies subjected to its surveillance; relations become enmeshed in a power play underscored by erotic desire that is forbidden by 'no touching' rules and therefore all the more palpable. The only physical contact allowed was a handshake or fist bump; the youth were only allowed to stand up if they asked permission and only two people could stand up at a time. I wanted to encourage them to use their bodies in different ways and break the regime of control over their physicality, but they actually taught me more about modes of resistance.

The newer ones are more receptive to whatever it is I am offering; the others begin to become submerged in a mire of damaging relations determined by the rules of the space, which I find happens to me as well the more time I spend there…He wanted to high-five me and I almost did, but then I switched to the prescribed fist bump, which he accepted…Should I position myself as being against the system morally but in practice limited by it? I vacillated continually between complicity and resistance in the systems of control. My first impression of the Yolo detention center was *dead, trapped, stifled…chilling.* As the initial shock wore off, I began to see it more as *a school, with doors that locked and tiny windows.* As I became more comfortable in the carceral space, interactions there felt more casual. *The sterile-looking hallway lined with security doors that leads to the 'pods' feels friendlier today. I don't feel the sinking sensation I felt the first time I passed through. As we walk into the ORR pod, I hardly remember that we are in jail. The young men I met last week from El Salvador and Honduras wave to me and call me over to*

their table. It is only the fact that they are not allowed to stand up that reminds me where we are. The inability to greet them in the customary way when speaking Spanish, with a kiss on the cheek, added to the affective austerity of the environment. The permitted handshake felt overly formal, for Latin American cultural codes, but the young men gave new meaning to the routine forms of contact, as a way of attending to their need for human touch within this isolating, alienating, Gringo institution.

Everything about the context—the behavior the youth needed to sustain in order to survive there—inhibited openness to connecting outside gender roles. I even found myself going along with machista scripts as a way towards friendship. *Today they each wanted to shake my hand, scratching my palm as a secret sign that they wanted to have sex. I just laughed it off*. I tried to create a free creative space where there were no limits, but the participants would push to find the limit, until someone (myself or the guards) set one. I wanted to support these young men detained under inhumane conditions, but I grew concerned about protecting myself emotionally. When one participant wanted to dance reggaeton with me, rather than as a group exercise, as a way of declining I evoked the no-contact rule, which I had initially found appalling. At the same time, I came to appreciate their youthful creativity in the continual unsettling of expectations. While it was challenging to come up with theatre activities that did not involve moving, standing, or touching, and we operated more or less within the accepted modes of physicality for the detention center, there were certain added liberties the youth themselves took, like play fighting during improvised scenes. The guards often seemed confused about how to react, but generally accepted this as part of the theatrical play, sometimes joining in rather than intervening. The youth saw the guards as both aggressors and caretakers. The facility 'cared' for

them by over-programming and surveilling every minute of their time**.** What was missing was the tactile, emotional, intimate side of care.

My first impression of the Santiago women's prison was a *dark, damp, cavernous, labyrinth. The doors were heavy iron bars that clanked. There was a cage in a hallway where women were held individually for punishment, adding to the dungeon-like atmosphere. There was no heating, even in rainy winter. But through windows you could hear noises from the streets below.* There was a visceral link with the outside that did not exist in the Yolo facility. The Santiago prison was less hermetic, less high-tech. It attempted to dehumanize in a different way, not through complete isolation from the world, but the degradation of dignity. Yet, as opposed to Yolo, the possibility for physical contact—a kiss in greeting, an embrace of solidarity—allowed for human connection that could fill the cavernous space with life, for an instant. Still, there remains an unanswered question about how to face the undeniable reality that our workshop, and our space of *afecto*, had to come to an end. Even at the end of each session, participants and facilitators had to leave that 'safe' space and go back to the dangers of our daily lives. Our collaborations were not sustainable in chronological time. In this sense, both workshops could be seen as unsuccessful, as they essentially ended when I left; any desires to continue our work could not be fulfilled, in part due to my role as outsider and in part due to the context of immigrant detention.

In Yolo, I had planned to finish the workshop with an evaluation, which would determine where the participants wished to take the work from there, but the evaluation session turned out to be much more short-sighted. Participants reflected on the most recent activities we had done, as momentary experiences, and not as part of a process that could lead somewhere. This was largely due to the reality of immigrant detention as a state of limbo, since no-one knew how long

they would be there.[80] Their likes and dislikes operated on a day-to-day basis and the 'workshop' as a program with a cumulative arc did not seem to exist for them. It was an imagined container for our interaction on my part. Perhaps the workshop format framed our interaction in a way that set us up for failure. Another challenge was my inability, or unwillingness, to sustain long-term the affective labor required of me as facilitator; I wondered if bringing my body into that particular context was actually more harmful than helpful. *Maybe others, with different positionalities, would have fewer challenges maintaining a space of afecto.* Still, my work in Yolo resulted in an important discovery about *cuidado* that could have only come out of that experience. *Affect moves in cycles. From enthusiasm to play to negation to play to enthusiasm. From excited to nervous to upset to relaxed.* A change in affect right before leaving was typical. *At the end of the visit, everyone wants to 'get more out of it'.* This was true even on the last day, when the group's enthusiasm for the creative space suddenly became more visceral.

In Santiago, we sought to foster the longevity of the project and hoped to initiate a sustainable collaboration that did not depend solely on me, or any one individual, by cultivating a dynamic leadership network. After I left, the workshop continued for a few more months with my co-facilitators, but as there was no financial support and most of the original participants were released soon afterwards, it was in fact not sustainable long-term. In a sense, and despite efforts otherwise, this could be construed as "helicopter research".[81] A formerly incarcerated colleague in Chile explained, *the guards want the prisoners to think that the people who come into the prison to 'support' them will eventually abandon them because no one really cares. It's a way to rob them of their hope and keep them submissive*. Perhaps my leaving when the

[80] Immigrant detention puts detainees (and those close to them) in a state of limbo – of not knowing which home they will return to or when. Legal procedures are often unclear to detainees and can be (intentionally) unpredictable. Immigrant detention can also be a place of holding out, resisting the system while trapped within it, fighting to prove the right to choose one's home.
[81] This term is derived from the practice of researchers "flying into and out of First Nations [Native Canadian] communities—arriving with surveys, taking data, and giving little, if anything, back" (Flickr et al. 2007, 479).

workshops ended re-inscribed damaging relations within the dehumanizing apparatus, but maybe intervening, even slightly, in the normalized relations of carcerality, creating a space for *something else* to emerge, emitted an affective ripple that continues to resonate as the potential for being/thinking otherwise. To evaluate the impact of this work, rather than focusing on outcomes, I have found it more fruitful to consider how the dynamics of my engagement with both contexts - each demanding a different mode of being*(-with*) - were constantly re-negotiated through complex, changing relations that were the site of knowledge-generation, via affective transformations.

From What They Said to What I Felt

Afecto offers a lens for understanding how these workshops (partially) subverted biopolitical enclosures, as a way of exploring the potential of participatory performance to highlight how the biopower of affective life opens up the chance of "something new" (Negri in Anderson 2012). As Anderson says, the affective life of individuals and collectives is simultaneously the "condition for" as well as the "object-target" of biopolitics (ways of "making life live" and "letting die") and is thus both capitalized on and is creative excess (13). I understand the creative excess of affective life (or excess "push of life") as the animating life-force preceding self/other individuation, experienced as a visceral, shared vitality that demands care. *Afecto* is a manifestation of this, felt between bodies in a space when relations become loving. The kind of love I refer to is Sandoval's idea of love as radical resistance (2012), which we can also think of as a love-for-vitality that foments life-affirming relations, along with a sense of fragile interdependence, despite violent technologies of control that attempt to kill, disconnect, individuate and/or contain people within exploitable identities, under systems of inequality

and/or behind border or prison walls. While love is an emotion that can be capitalized on via products and images that create feelings of self-value, loyalty to brands or identities, sexual desire or even violence, love-for-vitality is an embodied, felt presence of interconnection with the world, via a particular, situated space-time. It requires careful maintenance work and *cuidado*, in order for multiple life-worlds to flourish without causing harm, without one's freedom requiring another's death or incarceration. Love of the nation is used to justify murder but love for another enables us to do and become the impossible (Sandoval 2012). What remains to consider here is how our workshops stimulated non-representational (i.e., non-commodifiable) aspects of affective life and potentiated relationalities of *afecto* and *cuidado* that exceeded the enclosures attempting to control and contain us.

In Chile, my initial aim was to challenge the othering of incarcerated (im)migrant women, through the self-representation of their life experiences. This shifted to valuing embodied knowledge alongside discursive frames of representation. Creating images offered ways of moving beyond the confines of language and past present circumstances, to imagine what else could be. Movement allowed us to feel the body as a site of both individualizing discipline and collective resistance. There was a physical connectivity between our bodies when we engaged in creative activities, a copresence that is difficult to describe; it was the physical manifestation of *afecto,* a felt connection with each other and the environment, with our very vitality, which extends beyond the singular body to a collective force of life-affirming relationality (a concept I develop further in Chapter 3). It did not make up for the isolation of imprisonment but changed the sense of being from individual or subjective to *more-than*, creating a liminal space for other possible relationalities—solidarity rather than isolation.

Participants said the prison lacked *afecto* and our workshop generated it. Creative expression thus potentiated this kind of affective connection–a shared love-for-vitality.

Today we created a circle of reactions, where everyone made a sound and gesture at the same time, in reaction to different printed images I placed in the center of the circle. This was easier for some images than for others. For instance, the flag of another country (not one's own) did not generate much reaction. The flag of one's own country generally generated a positive reaction. An image of the border generated anxiety and discomfort. Reactions to landscapes generally generated a sigh of relief. An unusual theme developed in relation to national flags, not as symbols that represent nation-states, but a reminder of participants' own specific memories, tied to places, people and customs they were familiar with. We learned that for many, the flag of their country of origin became a symbol they identified with (and resignified) only after crossing the border, because in Chile they did not have access to the same citizenship rights (neither social, civil nor political rights).[82] Before migrating, *querían salir, para conocer otro lugar, y amaban a Chile por la posibilidad del trabajo [they wanted to leave, to see another place, and they set their hearts on Chile for the possibility of finding work there*], because *el dinero de Chile vale más [the money in Chile is worth more]*, but upon being incarcerated, far from their homes, their image of Chile became negative, most of all because *pierden momentos con la familia [they lost time with their families].* These feelings were what stimulated the positive sound and gesture in reaction to the national flag, more than its nationalistic meaning. The shapes created by bodies in relation to one another in the space, the voices resonating in unison, were not representations meant to be interpreted, but expressions of feelings that

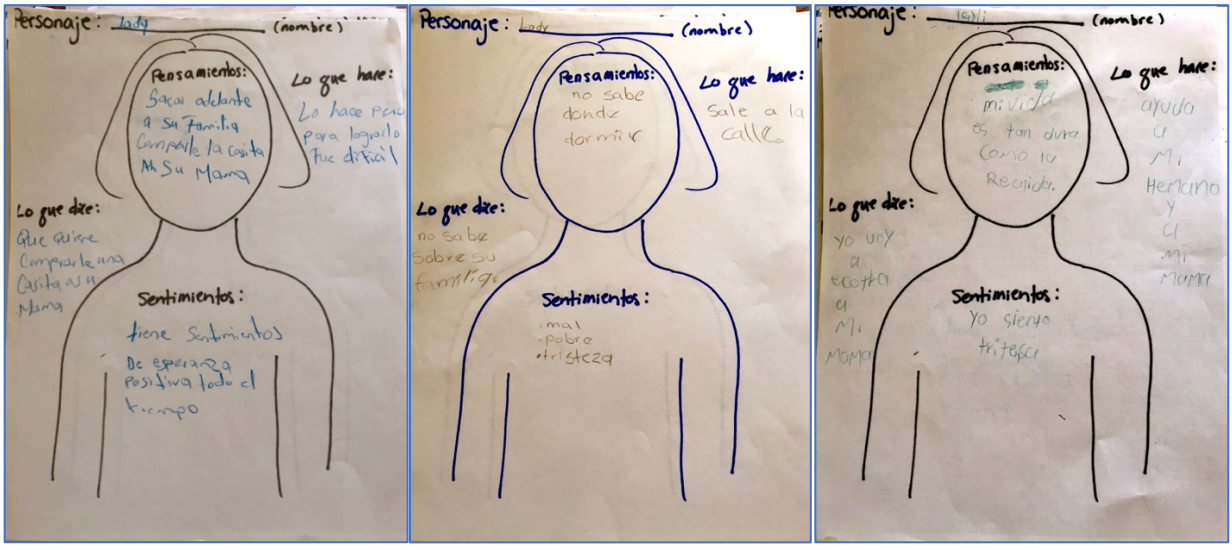
[82]As Ana María Sanjuán explains, according to the ideal (not necessarily the practice) of Latin American democracies, generally "citizenship has been divided into three distinct rights: civil rights (those necessary to ensure individual liberty), political rights (rights of direct or indirect participation in political power), and social rights (the right to well-being, education, health, minimum salary, and social services in general)" (2002, 1073).

emerged then and there, not in isolation, but via attunement to transformations in the affect emanating from, through, between and around us.

In California, while I thought we could analyze the masks we wear in society as scripts, participants found their own ways to tell their stories, which became a background for connections. They wanted to be heard, in part because I could speak Spanish, which many of the guards and other adults they interacted with did not, allowing for a different affective resonance that felt more familiar. Our workshop was not so much about creating a shared space but potentiating fleeting moments of affective attunement, which could be both dangerous and caring. At one point, the participants employed a tactic of negation—"no activities!"—in protest of the total control of their time/space by the institution. They just wanted to watch their favorite telenovela [soap opera] but this was not allowed during the workshop time slot; as soon as I arrived, the TV was abruptly turned off by a guard. The affect in the space became one of refusal in response the imposed idea of having fun in a workshop (which limited their choice of how to spend their free time). Rather than cancelling altogether, which would have foreclosed the opportunity for anyone who might want to participate on a different day, I left, and came back the next week with the proposal to use telenovelas as our inspiration. I brought in a cardboard TV for us to act inside and showed clips of the shows they watched to improvise from. Rather than a point of conflict, the TV became a shared resource and motivation. We may have wound up within representational structures, without fully problematizing them, but by listening to what they valued, I let go of my fear of failure and my idea of success.

While the participants' isolation as 'foreign' women in the prison in Santiago generated the need to find ways to care for and support one another, in Yolo the participants were held with the same small group day and night in an area just for 'immigrants'; there was a visceral need to

protect themselves from becoming too vulnerable in relation to one another—*cuidado*! Asking them to go into the small classroom and work together in even closer proximity to one another aggravated their sense of entrapment. When my approach to facilitation enabled them to feel in control rather than vulnerable, succeed by their own rules, rather than take risks, there was less danger of reinforcing the emotionally combative status quo of the carceral space. The uncertainty of open invitations ("what do you want to do?") seemed less safe than a structure ("let's try this") they could grasp and control; their willingness to participate came in response to a level of flexibility within that structure. *They tend to 'get' the idea of an activity after resisting it at first, and then take the lead, so all I have to do is play along. When I'm no longer in charge, the defiant novelty of being able to cast me in a love scene wears off and I become the spectator as they direct each other in a 'drug bust'. I never know how long the creative flow will last, when it will trickle out or become a forceful current. Sometimes when I am ready to stop, they are just getting started. When someone gets up and walks out, the others become more focused. When a guard gets involved in the scene, they enjoy it more.* Facilitating this structured flexibility meant opening up to affective connections and their limits, to the tough love side of love-for-vitality, via attunement to a whole spectrum of possible affects, from harmful to hopeful.



Figures 4-6: Images of a soap opera character exercise done by Yolo Teatro participants. Photo Credit Sarah Ashford Hart

In Yolo, caring implied *cuidado.* As Puig de la Bellacasa reminds us, care can include oppressive burden, joy or boredom, "too much caring can be consuming…and care can also smother the subtleties of attention to the different needs of an 'other' required for careful relationality" (2017, 85). Though I aimed to enhance the participants' opportunities for self-determination through creative expression, I failed to achieve this as often as I succeeded. Sensitivity to what made the workshop meaningful to the group became more important. I developed an approach that embraced negation as playful—a kind of 'yes and'—offering a non-structure for participants to push against and transform. My method became allowing the point of what we were doing to change, moment-to-moment. For instance, some sessions with only one participant expanded my understanding of the workshop to include one-on-one interactions, which offered the clearest moments of copresence for me; since my role became less teacherly, I had to let go of any plan, and our exchange was more driven by their desires and ideas, keeping us in the moment. On a day when just one person came to the workshop*, he told me he was writing a script for a documentary with a filmmaker who had already made a short film about his life. In the script, he empathized with the prison guards. When I asked why, he said they were "good" people with a hard job and rules to follow—"Just like you. You can't hug us when we act out our scenes; they have even more rules. They're different on the outside than they are on the inside. They work long hours to feed their children and they never get to see them."* He facilitated my learning about my positionality, his and the guards'. He saw himself as already an artist, rapper, actor, and writer. This raised questions about my desire to break out of narrative structures—whether narrative was important to participants could not be predetermined. In fact, narrative was often what allowed for affective attunement.

From Method to Non-method

Figure 7: body maps created by Performing Migration participants. Photo Credit Sarah Ashford Hart

In Chile, we developed a body-mapping technique, adapting an approach used by Gastaldo et al., creating visual, embodied and imagined images of self in relation to place. However, we did not collect any data or attempt to interpret the participants' drawings as representations of their identities. Instead of mapping the "physical journey they have made and their reasons for migrating" (Gastaldo et al. 2012, 28), as per the original methodology, we invited participants to express how they felt about and/or in their places of origin, and how moving from one place to another can be a transformative experience over time (Hart 2019). Rather than ending the "migration journey" with "where they are now" (i.e., prison), we asked where/how participants imagined themselves in the future (Gastaldo et al. 2012). They chose where to locate past, present, and future experiences on their body maps (in their hands, head, heart, stomach, etc.) and drew connections between these symbols in the form of pathways—a

metaphor for their personal trajectories (a winding, straight, or dotted line, movement by foot, by plane or by bus, etc.). On our first day of body-mapping, one participant said it was a way to *liberar cargas que traían [release the weight they carried]* (Hart 2019). We approached the map not as a visual, spatial view of the world but an experiential perspective, (trans)formed by intersections with others' trajectories. We recognized that unknown areas exist off the map and did not presume to understand the symbols they created. When a participant placed a flower in her stomach as her strength, or a tree on her chest as her place of origin, or a stone for the challenges she faced in the area around her body, or her children and home as a future destination overhead, there was a complex story that only each one knew for herself, and which we all could acknowledge.

We decided, among the facilitators, that we were not going to ask them about where they were from or how long they had been here [in prison], but rather let these things come up through the exercises. By allowing anecdotes about people's lives to emerge naturally while working on the body maps, we managed to move beyond superficial identity labels to deeper questions about their motivations, concerns and values. We reflected on how the body maps could bring out the multiple roles that each of us plays in life and allow us to show but not tell our mutable senses of self, formed through personal experiences of mobility and enclosure. We then developed movement exercises based on the body maps, which allowed us to explore expressions alongside words, focusing on the felt sensations of ideas, memories, and experiences. Participants translated their life worlds into symbols, reacted to those symbols through movement, and then gave words to how that physical expression was felt and perceived. Responding to their body maps in this way, participants said they felt *despejadas [clearer]* because *podían mostrar lo que sentían [they could show what they felt],* but also experienced

mucha nostalgia [a lot of nostalgia] associated with sense memories, like *el olor a la comida [the smell of food]* and *el calor de su país [the heat of their country]* (Hart 2019). Images of their families became painful, because *no los podían tocar [they couldn't touch them*] (Hart 2019). After embodying the postures and gestures represented in their maps, they said *se sentían conectadas [they felt connected]* (Hart 2019). I noted, *they care about their families and want to be with them but are unable to. The one thing within their control here is passing the time by doing something meaningful. They say the workshop helps them clear their minds, escape the day-to-day reality of the prison, and connect in a deeper way.* Symbolic representations could never evoke the feeling of really being at home, yet the felt connection between us in the space offered a sense of refuge (Hart 2019).

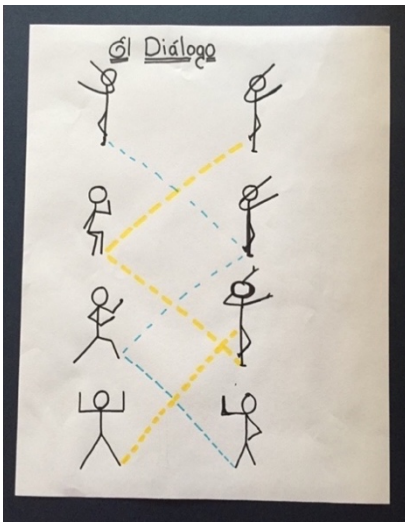


Figure 8: image of movement score created by Performing Migration Participants.

Photo Credit Sarah Ashford Hart

The first technique I introduced in California was mask theatre, which can liberate the imagination and allow participants to embody a character different than themselves. There was more interest in making than in using the masks, however. We started by sculpting clay molds, which we then covered with papier-mâché. I focused more on the building technique than the creative vision, which meant that the youth made any kind of mask they desired—from abstract to Rastafarian, devils to warriors. *On the first day, there were a number of clay penis sculptures. I did not want to censor them and saw this as their way of challenging my challenge to express themselves. I asked them, jovially (or was it flirtatiously?), if they wanted to wear this as a mask or make something else.* We were exploring our relationality as a creative process in a limited

space-time; possibilities emerged for affecting and being affected in ways that could release (or enhance) tension, spill out of (or reinforce) structures. *By the end of the first day, they all had made clay mask molds of faces that they seemed proud of, but as we were putting them away, I turned to see E. smash C.'s mask. I raced over and said "no" empathetically. Without thinking, I put my arm around C. He seemed confused by this since we are not allowed to touch. I told them that the idea is not to ruin the masks and asked if they wanted to continue next week. They said yes, and that they hadn't ruined them. I felt trapped, frustrated, and confused. Who am I to come in here and tell them they have to make a mask, enjoy it, and not ruin it? If this is about creative expression, they should be allowed to ruin their masks. But does that make it fair for one to smash another's work? If I intervene, am I just another voice telling them what not to do?*

My momentary frustration dissipated as they enthusiastically said goodbye to me, seemingly glad for my visit. I realized that the creative product (the mask) was not the point. I had initially thought *being-with* was enhanced by creating something together—*there is meaning in the valuing of creative energy, the capacity of expression, in doing something together, even for a short time—,* but on days when our encounters seemed pointless, I could still feel that something was changing (between) us. *When I brought in drawing supplies, everyone began to work on something different (pictures of jokers, calaveras, graffiti letters), except for H., who played with a charcoal pencil unenthusiastically. He was more interested in showing me his family pictures. I drew a rendition of his baby picture, which prompted a portrait session with the others. We didn't talk much, except that H. told us a bit about his family in San José. Drawing served as both a distraction and a purpose for being there, together in the same space-time. It was about feeling needed by one another (which also implies the possibility of getting hurt!), rather than a creative product.* Doing a task together, like mask-making, could be seen as

product-driven, but what it meant in this context was sharing a *creative space* (i.e., making the space rather than the product). Finishing and wearing their masks was less the focus than the hands-on process of engagement with the materials, which did not necessarily mean engagement with each other, but there was a potential for *being-with* the activity—paint, glue, paper, clay—the way it took shape and shaped 'us*'*. Instances of copresence in a vital creative space can thus create (fleeting) moments of affective attunement that happen alongside aesthetic structures, where the individual becomes *more-than*, towards a collective experience of being, which I call humanization (and will consider further in Chapter 4).

Figures 9-17: Images of papier mâché masks made by Yolo Teatro participants. Photo Credit Sarah Ashford Hart

When we explored improvisation techniques, it felt like playing make-believe. One memorable moment was part of an image story we created to the song "El inmigrante" by Calibre 50, where two brothers migrate from Mexico to the US, are exploited by an employer, and when they confront him, are detained. In spite of (or perhaps because of) the closeness of the story we devised to the performers' own experiences, it became a laugh-out-loud comedy. In one scene, the protagonists called home from immigrant detention to tell their family they were getting deported. One particularly talented actor in the group cast himself as the father, entering the scene spontaneously to take the phone from the mother (me), who had been consoling the boys, and he began to berate them. In a stroke of creative genius, he passed the phone (now his sandal) around the audience (the rest of the youth and the guards, who had all come in to watch this effervescent improvisation) so that the others, each becoming a different family member, could all scold them. Comedic self-recognition inspired by familiar situations, with added embellishment and irony in relation to the identities of the actors and audience in this context, created a visceral comradery (with the guards as well!); yet there was still inherent censorship and power struggle in relation to desires.[83] This performance was one of the successful highlights of the workshop, because everyone joined in, yet it also created a fear for the main actors (who enjoyed having a larger audience than usual) that we would not be able to achieve the same level of engagement from the others again, and their joy might give way to future disappointment.

This fear of let-down also generated a tendency towards cut-off endings. At the end of an improvised performance, the performers would often walk right out of the workshop, making a

[83] Like Luis Valdez's work with the Teatro Campesino and more commercial Chicanx theatre, "[t]he act of acting in this space and the audience's role in witnessing this incarnation allow a shared moment of community, one grounded in a spiritual power that reflects everyday lived practice of contemporary Chicano life" (Rossini 2008, 71). In Yolo Teatro, the witnessing audience was comprised of the workshop participants, guards, and other detainees (all potential participants), and the contemporary practices reflected were of Central American and Mexican (im)migrant youth, in relation to family, borders, prisons and police, but the spiritual power of expression/witnessing was similarly tangible "as a mode of human liberation indispensable to the larger social struggle," and I might add, the struggle to resist dehumanization (Broyles-González in Rossini 2008, 70).

real exit, not even sticking around for applause, let alone a cooldown activity. It was as if the formality of closing the workshop would somehow take away from the high of the performance being an end in itself. The materiality of the space was also an important actor—familiar objects in the prison classroom transformed into anything we needed them to be. A need to not let this space go back to its usual state at the end of a session was another proponent for their intentionally leaving the highly charged creative space hanging in the air. *Today we created an improvisation inspired by the word 'family'. C. came up with the title: "¿Porque nunca me ha llevado bien con mi familia*?" *["Why have I never gotten along with my family?"]. I played the mother. C. and a guard played brothers. They were fighting and their mother scolded them. C.'s character complained that she always blamed him, when it was his brother who was in a gang. Upset, he left home on his own for the U.S.. He jumped the border wall (a chair) and the border patrol (the guard) caught him at gun point (pantomimed). He put his hands up, surrendering. Then (following the audience's directions) the border patrol took his belongings (imaginary), including his shoelaces. He was put in the 'hielera' [freezer] (underneath the whiteboard), huddled on the floor with the others. The hielera guard (played by the Yolo guard) brought in (imaginary) food and C.'s character shouted that it was "mierda" [shit] and he wouldn't eat it. The guard's character said he was going to send him to a shelter (since he was a minor seeking asylum), but then drove him (in one of the desks) to detention in Yolo (where we were).* As soon as the performance ended, everyone promptly left the room. I realized that letting things hang in the air, not coming back to reality (even when their skit brought us *here*) and making the end of the performance the end of our interaction, allowed us to stay *there*, in that creative space.

The story enacted was a dramatization of the youths' real-life experiences, but being the actors, writers and directors all at once, and telling the guard how to play his part (although he

was still a guard), generated a sense of group autonomy that was more linked to the pleasure of play than the desire to work through trauma. The 'high' was more about enjoying the moments of dynamic stage presence and the creative transformation of the space (and the things in it) than effectively representing real life. The 'gracias' [trick] was being able to make it up as we went along. My approach became having enough kindling to start a spark—sharing an idea for a creative activity and giving over the reins to the participants. There had to be enough flexibility to lose track of where we were going. By the end of the workshop, I realized that my methodology was in fact a non-methodology. That is to say, I was open to trying whatever seemed to work. They needed to define creativity on their own terms. Going along with their vision of entertainment, even playing stereotypical character roles (i.e., letting a participant cast me as his girlfriend in a scene about drug dealers), potentiated new relationalities in the moment of play, alongside our positionalities of facilitator, woman or Gringa in relation to Latino 'immigrant' youth participant. Facilitation in this context was like wrangling energy or holding a space for different affects to ricochet until they settled (momentarily) into something shared here and now. It was about what moves between and through bodies, and the potential for (it all to) change.

Mobility Control

History has created enclosures that oppress many lives and ways of being that are devalued by Western, colonial (modern/capitalist/patriarchal) paradigms;[84] subverting these enclosures through creative acts is one aspect of applied theatre, which can become a collective praxis of contesting the official stories that attempt to erase and commodify existences that will

[84] Mignolo explains that "modernity, capitalism and coloniality are aspects of the same package of control of economy and authority, of gender and sexuality of knowledge and subjectivity" (2010, 9).

not 'fit.' The workshops I discuss in this chapter explore approaches to intervening in contexts of immigrant detention, a carceral technology of colonial oppression and biopolitical control that has become part and parcel of neoliberal policies, which decrease market regulation and welfare benefits by preemptively thwarting protest against inequality via the enhanced policing of potentially threatening populations, deeming them accountable for actions caused by systemically enforced precarity, and perpetuating their premature death. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, the militarization of borders and the bolstering of immigrant detention and deportation are justified, from the U.S. to Chile, by racializing and criminalizing certain bodies precisely because their exploitability and disposability is necessary to maintaining inequality, so that the few in power may benefit from more freedoms by suppressing the many upon whose labor and (social or biological) death the nation's development depends. The selectivity of borders and legal immigration processes preserves "privilege and opportunity for some by restricting access to resources and movement for others" (Jones 2012, 5). However, (im)migrants still move autonomously, "becoming imperceptible" as a way to oppose "individualising, quantifying, policing and representational pressures" (Papadopoulos et al. 2008, 217).

While wealthier nations increasingly "erect physical and bureaucratic barriers against the movement of people from poorer regions of the world" (Loyd et al. 2012, 13), (im)migrants subvert the mobility regime, making its limits porous, causing it to develop new strategies of enclosure (Papadopoulos et al. 2008). Hateful affects are written onto the body of those deemed unwanted immigrants or migrants (marked as not having the right to fully exist within the nation),[85] conceived of as culturally deficient, disabled in terms of citizenship, a container into

[85] In Agamben's view, when a state determines a life is not valuable, it is reduced to "bare life" and does not legally exist (1995). Without citizenship or "political life" within a nation-state, one's rights are essentially unenforceable (Agamben 1995). For instance, refugees' rights are often not upheld by nations; NGOs fill the responsibility gap left by neoliberal states, but they still rely on the logic of bare life to call for humanitarian aid for refugees, seen primarily in their role of dying (Agamben 1995).

which national anxieties are displaced (Haritawarn 2016). Such "risky subjects" are quarantined in order for the nation to globalize without losing its imagined ethnic identity (Shamir 2011). Their detention and deportation bolsters nationalistic sentiments that blame (im)migrants for economic precarity and crime, rather than blaming neoliberal policies that *rely on* insecurity. In the US, intensified immigration policing does not intend to remove all 'illegal' immigrants but instill fear to render their labor more submissive,[86] while deportation creates 'cheap' labor pools of English-speakers abroad for transnational corporations. Chicanx studies scholar Marta Escobar adds, "rather than exclude (im)igrants, the state endeavors to differently include them within conditions of vulnerability" in order to create exploitable workers without benefits (2016, 7). The prison and the border work in tandem to produce capital, desire, and violence, as well as inadvertently producing creative tactics of subversion, survival, and transformation.

Today we tried Boal's 'status' game, placing playing cards on our foreheads, so that we didn't know what number we had but could see each other's' and guessed our own based on how others treated us. I explained that the numbers we used (10, 5 and 3) represented high, medium, or low social status. E. and D. were keen to try interacting in this way, but J. said it was racist, because it caused us to treat each other differently, when we should treat each other equally. I replied that it was an acting game about social status, to learn to play different characters. We tried a few interactions, between E., J. and D., but they all insisted on treating each other equally, independent of their numbers. They also all looked at their numbers when they weren't 'supposed to'. The exercise generated resistance and confusion, creating an opportunity for critical reflection. I acknowledged that they were right, that it was better not to treat each other differently based on social status. J. added that they could learn to play characters in other

[86] Golash-Boza explains that the "neoliberal cycle of migration and deportation" is created by "stark inequality, social and border control, and economic shifts" that keep large portions of the population vulnerable to rights violations (2015, 20-21).

ways. An exercise that usually reveals the mechanics of social oppression, introduced in the context of youth immigrant detention in California, seemed to just reiterate social oppression. The youth wanted to be treated equally, even as 'characters', because they were already all too aware of how inequality shaped their lives. They did not even want to play the role of oppressor as it would only perpetuate the familiar feeling of being oppressed for their peers. This attests to the power of affective attunement (and its potential harmfulness), in that one's feelings could not be isolated from others'. There was a need for *cuidado* in order to maintain a space of *afecto*, which made participants assert their autonomy to guide the workshop, subverting extant structures that impose oppressive affects, transforming relations to affirm life, through care-full copresence – i.e. high fiving rather than bowing down or looking down at one another. It was not just a game.

Chile, like the US, constructs itself as heteropatriarchal and White through mobility control. With a higher income per capita than neighboring countries, Chile (the most unequal country of the OEDC at the time of writing) is now a destination for economic migrants who previously looked Northward (Galiván 2016). Recently, more women from Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia are filling the demand for care labor. But migration cannot only be understood in economic or linear terms. Affective connections also influence migration, which is multi-cited and multidirectional. Chile's imagined White national ethnos erases and alienates the relationship of indigenous peoples to ancestral Andean territories and South-South migration patterns. The women we worked with were not exactly immigrants, because they planned to return home. They created alternative care networks that circumvented technologies of control, but their mobility and capacity to care for themselves and their kin were *slowed down* by detention. One of the costs of being detained is *lost time* - with family and friends and for work.

However, even during detention the possibility for making plans is still never fully thwarted and detainees remain an (inter)active part of the world, not only via legal processes, but affective residues and potentials that escape enclosures.

It was more difficult to create the workshop space in Santiago than in Yolo. It was always possible that we would not be allowed into the prison in Santiago if something had gone wrong with our paperwork or any security issues arose unexpectedly (*would they be on lockdown, would our entry permit be lost, would they have kept the women up all night searching their cells?).* Time together was what the participants and facilitators wanted more of, in order to do the affective work we had discovered together, but it was limited by the institution. This ongoing tension was never resolved; when I tried to push the limits of time, it created repercussions for all of us. In contrast to the participant-driven cut-off endings in Yolo, in Santiago being cut off was imposed by institutional constraints and left us feeling vulnerable. *We were going to finish with an activity called 'the web', with a ball of yarn passed between us across the circle, each person saying what another does well, but we were interrupted by the call for the count. The workshop had run long. There was a sense in the space of a desire to forget about the regimented structuring of time in the prison, a push to make this moment last. But at the sound of the bell, the participants ran off, alarmed. Janidet [the activities coordinator] came to tell me that I couldn't make them late again because they would get in trouble. I felt responsible for the potential reprimands they faced and for not having prepared us all to return to 'reality' with a proper cooldown.* Finishing on time was a challenge because the space of *afecto* we created was one we all wanted to stay in. Claiming the time/space we needed was a battle we couldn't win, but in trying, we momentarily undermined the regime of carceral power that attempted to constrain every aspect of the participants' lives, largely through the control of their time. Our

workshop reinforced the women's daily practice of caring for life webs—between themselves, one another, and their loved ones (from a distance)—a timeless maintenance work that could be interrupted or slowed down but not completely cut off or regulated.

Meanwhile, In Yolo, the youth's activities schedule was enforced vehemently by the facility. Things were more systematized than in Santiago, and any problem was quickly resolved, unnervingly so. *In the hallway, the activities coordinator asks us if we have taken a red pencil out of the pod. One has gone missing. There is a shared sense of dread among the visitation volunteers. Red is a gang color. Will they let us bring in drawing supplies again? The guards search all the youth and find nothing. They eventually let us back in. We continue to draw and play cards, while one boy who is locked in his cell screams and another bangs on his door. I feel unable to focus on the conversation I am having with the boys at my table. They seem to be trying to ignore the noise by making jokes.* Joking was a way of regaining a sense of control of their time/space, since most of the adults present (guards, volunteer visitors, other facilitators and teachers) did not understand Spanish, except for me. When the youth made offensive jokes about the activities coordinator, for instance, I practiced my usual tactic of not hearing them and not translating. Later, when they directed provocative, erotic commentary at me, I grappled with my desire to connect and the potential for injury. *Today I feel amarga [bitter]. Harta. [Fed up]. Something about the sexual jokes made me see them as predators, as possible rapists, which made me not like my own thoughts—the wall that went up between us energetically, the mistrust and guilt for feeling that way. I don't want to judge them. They must feel desperate, restless, suffocated and detached, being incarcerated. Maybe getting a reaction out of me is a way of feeling a connection. Testing its realness. "Pinch me. Am I alive?"* In effect, their virility was the one thing that could not be 'programmed' by the institution.

The young men I worked with in Yolo were labeled as 'flight risks' or 'dangers to society' and detained in a juvenile prison rather than a shelter for minors seeking asylum. Carceral studies scholar Jacky Wang explains that "in order for the social body to defeat the perceived infection of the 'juvenile superpredator', the undesirable element must first be incorporated into the body of the law…law performs the immune function" (2018, 213). Youth seeking asylum from Central America are often labeled as 'gang members', 'rapists', 'thieves' and 'murderers' based on suspicion.[87] The participants in Yolo Teatro were in the process of having their cases heard in immigration court; their criminalization could result in the denial of asylum and deportation to dangerous contexts.[88] The majority were from the Northern Triangle (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador), where, as immigration law scholar Bill Ong Hing explains, "the growing influence of youth gangs and drug cartels, plus targeting of youth by gangs and police" has created conditions of extreme violence—caused by "a legacy of the [U.S.-backed] civil wars of the 1980s, subsequent migrations to the United States, and the deportation of gang members back to their home countries in the 1990s"—compelling hundreds of thousands of young people to seek asylum in the U.S. (2019, 20). It is not my aim to prove their innocence, as that approach "suggests that another set of people are the *real* criminals and thus deserve to be caged" and "does not successfully confront the process of criminalization; it naturalizes it" (Loyd et al. 2012, 19). The point is that they find autonomous ways to (partly) escape the control

[87] Most unaccompanied minors (UACs) who enter the U.S. seeking asylum are housed in shelters and group homes run by ORR. Those identified as being 'dangerous' to themselves and others, or who are accused of a crime, gang affiliation or being a flight risk, are transferred to a restricted facility (the Yolo facility is one of two such facilities in the U.S.) (Becerra 2019). Lawsuits have been filed by detainees and their families due to the arbitrariness of such accusations; 22 detained youth were released in 2017 when a judge found that the government's allegations of 'gang affiliation' were unsubstantiated (Becerra 2019).

[88] Since 2016 there has been an increase in the number of asylum seekers from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala entering the U.S., including a surge of UACs, creating a backlog in asylum proceedings. Since asylum seekers in the U.S. are not guaranteed legal counsel, "the majority of those children forced to represent themselves are unsuccessful and are soon scheduled for deportation" (as stated on The National Immigration Forum's website as of August 20, 2022). Hing further explains, "in order to qualify for asylum, an applicant must show that he or she suffered past persecution or has a well-founded fear of future persecution because of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group" and with many cases of UACs fleeing gang violence in Central America, "the judges hold that the fear is not based on one of the five protected grounds," so the majority of their asylum claims are denied (2019, 154, 180-182).

of their mobility and assert their (decolonial) humanity, even as subjugating discourses, legal and physical barriers, and state-sanctioned violence harm their bodies.[89]

Other Thinking

Their stories of violence have not made them victims (or predators). As they acted them out, there was a sense of taking upon themselves the responsibility of their own fate, navigating the world. Rather than resentment or defeat, there were moments of hope and regret. Their characterization of life as they know it was not about an audience feeling sorry for them but laughing with them. As we have seen, dehumanization is a colonial/patriarchal/capitalist/modern strategy used to mark the limits of belonging within a nation, but migration, the push to live, relations across difference and their affective reverberations cannot be fully contained by nationalistic ideologies. Participatory performance can help to move us (all those involved, including anyone reading these reflections) alongside hegemonic order and reason towards *feeling-with* multiple, connected, and situated experiences of colonization and resistance, which have been socially (and academically) devalued. As decolonial, intercultural scholar Catherine Walsh explains, Western epistemologies fail to "bring forward and relate histories, struggles, experiences, and knowledges lived and constructed within and marked by the context of colonialism and its processes of subalternization and racialization;" if we can learn to listen-with our bodies to what Walsh calls "other thinking" from the borders of "colonial-racist structures,

[89] The legal system imposes frames against which Latinx (im)migrants (and citizens) negotiate their identities; Jon D. Rossini has described this as a "slippery chain of signification in which 'Mexican' is transformed into criminal" and signified with specific markers (like the supposed use of gang colors by Central American youth) (2008, 65-74). However, as Rossini points out "the space of the theatre makes the assertion of an essential self a near impossibility, as is clearly evidenced by the power and presence of socially constructed identities" (2008, 68). While the construction of social identities was not fully questioned in Yolo Teatro, the participants repeatedly reframed their sense of self as sometimes aligned with and sometimes *more-than* 'criminal' identity markers (like superpredator), referencing often their affective affiliations as brothers, sons, boyfriends, and in some cases fathers, as a motivation for their migration - seeking safety from their family, with their family, or for their family, all too often because someone close to them had been murdered.

systems, and institutions of society," a "collective praxis" might emerge as a "strategical tool in the struggle to confront non-existence, dominated existence and dehumanization" (2010, 85-86). The workshops discussed here (and in the following chapters) highlight how this work can affectively circumvent systems of dehumanization. Singing, dancing, drawing, telling stories, and playing games can change our experience of being in a space together (alongside any other outcomes), if we can lose ourselves in the moment while paying attention to how we feel more connected (or disconnected), vulnerable and response-able.

Through these workshops in contexts of immigrant detention in California and Chile—spaces apt for potentiating anti-hegemonic ways of being, precisely because, in these spaces, the felt aspects of co-existence could not be ignored—an affective collective practice emerged. This has humanizing potential, not in the sense of fitting into or broadening identity categories, but in terms of attending to our connectivity – our capacity to affect and be affected – via transforming relations, potentiating *being-with*. Coloniality/capitalism/patriarchy/modernity shapes our body-minds on a cultural as well as a spiritual level; to move alongside this paradigm to a world where many worlds fit, we must try to decolonize ourselves. How? As I argue throughout this dissertation, we can think/feel humanization from a decolonial perspective. To rephrase Bautista, our relationships—whether fomenting or destroying life—humanize or dehumanize us*;* humanization is the mutual revindication of all life*,* which creates community (2017, 189). The prison abolition movement, like decolonial humanization, is also about commitment to community, challenging structures of inequality and disconnection, violent relationships, and ideological cages, such as racism and colonialism, that sustain the prison (Lamble 2011); it asks us to imagine a world without prisons or immigrant detention*,* to believe something we have never seen might be possible.

Society takes prison and immigrant detention for granted as a fate reserved for others—'criminals' and 'evildoers' (people of color and (im)migrants)—because "this is the ideological work that prison performs" by reassuring *us* (the privileged minority) of our *own* rights and liberties (Davis 2003, 16). However, like prison, immigrant detention sets up relations that undermine rather than stabilize all life. The proliferation of immigrant detention on a global scale is a response to the way (im)migrants continue to escape the control of their movement by becoming imperceptible (by being undocumented, for instance) (Papadopoulos et al. 2008). Detention makes (im)migrants more legible to the state through differential inclusion (Papadopoulos et al. 2008). It provides employment opportunities for guards and business for service providers (i.e., food, uniforms, equipment, and management).[90] It demonstrates the colonial/patriarchal/capitalist/modern logic of the nation-state: those deemed unworthy of inclusion in the political life of the nation are put into this threshold space (Agamben 1995),[91] where they are made 'productive'. Perhaps, "prison abolition is a clear extension of radical commitments to the freedom of movement" since "mass incarceration [like detention] is a form of 'coercive mobility'" that hinders life-world-making (Loyd et al. 2012, 20).

I posit that affective facilitation in contexts of immigrant detention can take a decolonial and abolitionist approach, by asking what a world in which one's freedom does not require another's confinement *feels like*. A post-carceral, post-national, or even post-human world is difficult to imagine, but feeling our way there might be the only way to move alongside the enclosures of dehumanization and the devastation colonial/modern 'humanity' has inflicted on all life. Community based in love of the other and respect for nature is indispensable to

[90] Immigrant detention is part of the Border Industrial Complex, a network of governmental and commercial institutions that benefit from border security practices based on the exclusion and containment of (im)migrants (Pérez, Irwin and Guzmán 2020).
[91] Immigrant detention is also a space of exception that evades the normal laws of incarceration; detained (im)migrants can be subjected to arbitrary forms of treatment that would be unacceptable in the case of incarcerated citizens, such as being denied due process, being held indefinitely, and the lack of legal representation and translation services.

sustaining life (Bautista 2017). Prison abolition requires community-building programs to support rather than punish vulnerable lives (Lamble 2011). I have found that participatory performance can amplify spaces for feeling out experiences of community that challenge the Western human/nonhuman hierarchy, particularly within total institutions (Goffman 1961). I hope that by *thinking/feeling-with* the workshops I facilitated in contexts of immigrant detention, we can begin to imagine better possible futures and alternative presents that already exist, where revendicating life becomes a shared response-ability and freedom starts from nurturing our interdependence with all other lives (not only those deemed human by the nation).

Affective Facilitation

Accounting for the positionality of the facilitator is central to any discussion of participatory performance practice-as-research.[92] I now understand my positionality as having the potential to both unsettle and re-affirm colonial (modern/capitalist/patriarchal) power structures. The fact that that the participants did not ask for these workshops, that my ability to propose the project came from my privileged position in North American academia and that I could leave when the workshops finished, while participants remained detained, could be seen as reinforcing my mobility and their enclosure. Yet at times we managed to destabilize divisions such as free/incarcerated or teacher/student—connecting over a cup of tea, eye-to-eye, in an embrace, or in laughter…not-knowing but feeling, a care-full attentiveness. I began to see the affective aspect of facilitation as having the potential to transform relations towards *being-with,* towards feeling our existence as *more-than* socially constructed identities. That is not to say we

[92] Madison explains that accounting for "positionality requires that we direct our attention beyond our individual or *subjective* selves. Instead, we [must] attend to how our subjectivity *in relation to the Other* informs and is informed by our engagement and representation of the Other" (2005, 9).

should disregard the very real experiences of privilege and oppression that come with different identities, but it means attending to the difference between a passive "moral intention" to "care about" and the maintenance work to "care for" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 5-10). Affective facilitation, in this sense, is not only about a moral attention to inequality, but also caring-for connections and working towards relational transformation alongside social structures, not necessarily in the service of social change, but an awareness of *being/feeling-with* that offers a simultaneous experience of existence as *more-than* social and *more-than* individual.

As I have explained, socially-engaged performance projects are often instrumentalized by neoliberal institutions with political aims that ignore the importance of affect, focusing on 'useful' effects. Though facilitators and participants may know there is much more to our work, what is usually documented are outcomes tied to institutional aims of solving social problems. Thompson cautions against the typical "eagerness to apply performance *at the service* of the various institutional, social and discursive regimes that surround and contain the communities in which the practice takes place" (2009, 160). He adds that the "*affective register* of participatory arts…should not be accidental or peripheral," but needs to be "central to the purpose and thinking about the work" so that "what has reached us through the senses becomes foundational to the practice and crucially *politics* of applied theatre," too often measured by "identifiable social outcomes, messages or impacts" (116). Yolo Teatro and Performing Migration taught me to heed this call by valuing affective life in all its excess; I learned we can (sometimes) potentiate moments of love-for-vitality (when relations affirm life) by facilitating creative processes with an attention to *afecto* and *cuidado.*

The affective life of applied theatre and participatory performance is shaped by and also shapes biopolitical technologies. Institutional funding frameworks quickly commodify the newly

emerging affective registers of arts practices, for instance, promoting the use of testimonial narrative to heal trauma, via public visibility and recognition (for 'victims' as well as facilitators and funders). Critiques of such practices include having to tell one's story in discursive terms that re-inscribe the 'victim' identity, artists and institution profiting from the suffering of others and promoting an ethic of neoliberal self-discipline. Thompson contends that applied theatre cannot just focus on expressing suffering and proposes that creating joyful affects can be a way of imagining another possible future, which is particularly significant in contexts of extreme violence, as a form not only of survival, but resistance to normalized ways of being (2009). I would also stress that we must accept contradiction—creating joy can also mean recreating pain. Even when institutionalized, this work is never only about making experiences legible to the state nor forming self-sufficient citizens but is also always about expressing and witnessing all kinds of feelings and affects, as a visceral connection (or lack thereof) to oneself and others, in community, which strengthens the possibilities (and highlights the limitations) of caring and being cared for.

The transformative political potential of participatory performance and applied theatre is being "faced with someone" (or *more-than-one*) and "urged to recognize their presence as a call to respect their humanity" (Thompson 2009, 172). An encounter does not necessarily produce a particular effect, but affective attunement can take on a range of tones at once, from pain and despair to joy and pleasure. Embodied encounters call attention to our response-ability as inherently relational beings, opening us up to feeling how affective life is simultaneously the object-target of, outside to and a condition for biopolitical control (Anderson 2012, 13). Alongside emotional capitalism, there is a slippery affective excess that overflows articulation, offering the possibility of something more. *When I asked the women why they chose the song*

"Ya Te Olvide" ["I Already Forgot You"], they said, because a woman sings it to a man who hurt her and says she has forgotten him. They too wanted to forget the hurtful men who they associated with their path to detention. Singing was a way to 'desahogarse' [let it all out]. Their voices combined in a polyphonic cacophony, casting off pain—"Ya te olvideeeeee"—; the sense of shared relief gave way to unison. The vibration of sound through our bodies and the space attuned us to a connection of *afecto* - the mutual affirmation of life, despite violence.

Prison theatre projects that attempt to represent identities as knowable or rehabilitable make limiting presumptions about the body-minds involved. As Heritage says, "the notion of individual change" cannot be the prime focus, but rather, "how the presence of this drama work changes the institution and how new relationships come about as a result of the project" (2004, 201). The workshops discussed in this chapter (momentarily) transformed relations, bodies, and the very meaning (or feeling) of life from something 'personal' to something reciprocal. As with the case studies in the following chapters (in different ways), a collective body, a process of becoming *more-than-one*, could be felt alongside societal classifications (at times), while we were also expressing/witnessing experiences of being isolated, confined, racialized, and/or criminalized. In Manning's terms, the experience of being/becoming human is relational; it is the reaching beyond 'self' towards affective attunement that animates all life as bodily relation, not located within the self-contained body, nor outside it, but "in what surpasses it while accompanying it" (2012, 4-17). Thus, my work as facilitator has become about shifting the affect among bodies in a space of enclosure towards attunement – potentially to *afecto* –, as a collective experience of interconnection. *They were all in different emotional states, having parallel interactions with each other. It was my job to try to get us into one shared affective space…for a moment*. There is no set method, no universal guideline; there is only the affective potential and

residue of our experience of *being-with,* and perhaps a heightened capacity for *feeling-with*, which is, in itself, political.

Rearticulating an Approach

What started out as facilitating the expression of experiences of mobility and enclosure turned into *being/feeling-with.* In Santiago, we made time and space for *afecto* as a form of resistance to the state's attempted dehumanization of 'migrant' women's bodies. In Yolo, the affective registers in our workshop showed the many sides of care, which can be uncomfortable as well as comforting. In both workshops, participants reaffirmed their human capacity to cultivate networks of care, or as I prefer to call it, *cuidado,* which is not only about "pleasant affection" but "*everything* that we do to maintain, continue and repair 'our world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our 'selves', and our environment, *all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web*" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 2-5). When "neoliberal governance has made of caring for *the self* a pervasive order of individualized biopolitical morality," it can be helpful to think of care as *cuidado*, or as Puig de la Bellacasa puts it, a "noninnocent but necessary ethos of always situated implications" (24, 9). And, as I have learned, this is central to affective facilitation.

With this practice-as-research, I encountered tensions between giving care, needing care, being careful, wanting not to care, and caring more than I or others wanted. I affected the contexts and was affected by them. Bodies came into being differently, (re)making the space of our (inter)action. Immigrant detention is a limbo of coming and going without knowing when, which keeps affects and relations in flux. As a visitor, there was more that I could *not know* than I could know about these contexts, so feeling through interactions was the only way to approach

this work. There was always the sense that anything could happen and the potential to come apart, rather than together. Facilitation became mediating energy that was unpredictable and unsustainable. It was not necessarily a feel-good experience, nor a pointed one. Thompson urges that we not let ourselves be overwhelmed by the 'pointlessness' of applied theatre (or participatory performance) that may reach only a few people and fail to solve structural social injustices; he asks us instead to consider the ethical and political significance of valuing human interdependence, which can be felt through embodied encounters that implicate our shared response-ability to (all) other lives (2009).

By creating time and space to explore different ways to *be-with*, alongside the status quo, we were able to feel ourselves not as isolated individuals but as inherently relational, requiring radical care (a premise further developed in the following chapters). In Santiago, we learned that it is possible to cultivate moments of freedom within confinement. Participants associated freedom with the capability of affiliation,[93] which is precisely what immigrant detention attempts to deny. One participant explained, *estando con los míos, para mí, eso es libertad verdadera. La libertad no es salir a la calle para hacer lo que uno quiere, sino estar con la familia. [Being with my people, for me, that's true freedom. Freedom isn't getting out of here to do what I want in the streets; it's being with my family]* (Hart 2019). Our workshop was a space-time where women could cultivate tactics for surviving immigrant detention by creating alternative webs of affective relations, in which I too became entangled. The workshop ended when I left, but did we cease to affect one another? I continue to remember the women we worked with and feel their familiar joy in greeting, sadness in parting; this fragile reverberation continues care-fully enmeshing our

[93] Nussbaum considers human rights in relation to "the capabilities of human beings," which nation-states and the international community should insure are not repressed; one of these capabilities is affiliation–"being able to live for and in relation to others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction" (in Garrett 2008).

worlds (Hart 2019). *We ended with a group embrace to give each other strength in knowing we were all cared for—a moment of mutual support, to be able to face the world anew.* We did not escape from hegemonic discourses that establish these women as prisoners and 'migrants', but we explored relationalities otherwise (by being together differently), creating a place of temporary refuge in the midst of a violent environment, where our bodies could become more humanized—*more harmonious, more connected, through a hug or a song.*

What was most important to the group was maintaining a space of mutual support where they could freely express themselves, though the limits of this space were not rigid, but porous. They did not want to perform for an external audience, but they each invited a friend to attend on my last day there, with the hopes that they could continue the workshop and incorporate new members after I left. Opening the space up to newcomers changed the affect, letting in the tensions of surviving the violent reality of the prison outside the workshop. *They wanted to encourage other extranjeras to join our space of afecto, but this turned out to be difficult. Doubling the size of the group resulted in a more chaotic encounter. The space felt less harmonious with so many new energies. Some of the guests tried to disrupt the planned activities or refused to participate. They seemed not to understand or care that this was a sacred space their friends wanted to protect and share. They also seemed to see me as an authority figure to be challenged. Thankfully, the participants aided the facilitation, showing their guests how our warm-ups could be fun and liberating. Still, they seemed more concerned than usual with looking good in front of the others.* The moment of standing in front of their body maps, which were put on display, each reading a message she had written, while we all performed the gesture depicted, was a small but significant ceremony that gave closure to our work and was amplified by their friends being there. Mileidy's message was: *libertad es libre expresión, el poder expresar*

libremente lo que sentimos y lo que pensamos, sin causar daño alguno. [Freedom is freedom of expression, to be able to freely express what we feel and think, without causing any harm] (Hart 2019). Though the overall aim of the workshop was more tied to process than product, the sharing of our work visibly moved our guests, and this 'closure' was actually about opening up new, potentially vital relationalities.

In Yolo, I learned to *be-with* whatever kind of relationality or affect emerged, rather than trying to change it in one direction or another. I found that my own body needed to perform affective labor. My work was feeling, processing and responding to intensities, interactions, absences and desires, and only a tiny portion of these energies could be channeled or transformed through creative expression. Most of them became affective residue and potential, which I continue to feel. Only on the last day of the workshop could I facilitate from a place where success in harmony became the happy, unexpected affect at/in play. *Today I think we all experienced a connection through the creative act that transformed how we felt, in this place, becoming more-than bodies, becoming inbetweenness—lingering feelings...There was something magical about running out of time and having to push to make it expand…testing the limit of impossibility…and feeling different at the end than the beginning…more present…*

An important aid in facilitating this final moment of harmony was the snack food Takis, which acted as a kind of treaty between us. Throughout the workshop I had struggled with how to respond to the participants' requests to bring them things that were often not allowed. I teetered on the brink of allyship and becoming another gatekeeper. Takis seemed to solve this problem. *When I showed up with the snack they had asked for, they were clearly appreciative, seeing me as being 'on their side' now. The Takis were one desire that could actually be fulfilled. When I opened my bag, they all started to grab for them; worried they wouldn't share fairly, I*

said that in order to get their Takis, we all had to clap together. Why had I never thought of this beofore? It worked magically. There was motivation, commitment and even active listening. They immediately embraced the idea that the group clap needed to be spontaneous, not planned; we tried multiple times without giving up, until we got it. There was a focused, palpable intensity, all aiming for the same thing—connection. From there, we were able to effortlessly improvise telenovela scenes with full participation in humourous performances and thoughtfull character analyses. What we achieved, in our last session (with the help of Takis), rather than a result was a way of agreeing to work together, to hold a creative space, based on validating their desires, their ideas, their talent, and their right to play. It was the ultimate cut-off ending, a non-closure, an inconclusive openness*,* possible only then and there*,* becoming-with that day's atmosphere—bodies, objects, affects, and their space of (ex)change.

My intervention into (or presence within) (de)humanizing contexts of immigrant detention taught me about my own human weaknesses, sensitivities and sources of creative strength. I learned to appreciate the many simultaneous entanglements influencing affective attunement. Our creative encounters generated transformations that transcended and at the same time were colored by the social structures that cast me in the role of 'freely mobile' facilitator and participants as 'detained (im)migrants'. To move towards alternative relational possibilities, we had to work from within and alongside socially constructed layers of identity. Whether dancing, drawing, mask-making, improvising, narrating painful experiences, or imagining a better future, we could *feel-with* being then and there. Those moments when experience spills outside self-containment can reaffirm all life as interdependent, fomenting affective (ex)change. Beyond words, which categorize bodies as male/female, teacher/student, citizen/foreigner, White/Brown, we became, for a moment, laughter, or eye contact. *Feeling-seeing*, *I am hearing*

the story told to me, but at the same time, I am more than the role of listener, and he is more than the role of narrator, we are more-than 'ourselves'. We are feeling the relationality of looking as an emergent possibility of interdependence. In a moment of laughter, we can feel-laughing. Laughter is its own occurrence, beyond the event of identification that provoked it. Laughter itself is vitality, an intensity that moves through our body-minds towards the unknown. We can co-presence our relationality as more-and—what is created by, beyond and between us. Alongside discourses that construct subjectivities, our experience of connection here and now expands time and space.

Conclusion

Imagining a world without prisons, borders, racism or coloniality may seem impossible, but the first step is cultivating spaces for doing-thinking otherwise. Engaging participants in a creative (non)structure that changes the affective space enclosing them/us may or may not shift relationalities towards embodied co-presence and response-ability to the fragile interdependence of all life. If change happens, it may be fleeting, but it can be felt across time and space—as a bridge to the unknown that can be rebuilt. With this work, I've hoped to counter nationalistic, (neo)colonial ideas of self/other, human/non-human, and biopolitics that destroy life to protect an exclusive idea of society. We can create community beyond the neoliberal state, I believe, by *feeling/being-with*. This may take many forms. Through my practice-as-research in contexts of immigrant detention in Santiago, Chile and Yolo County, California I learned that facilitating affective attunement requires a distinct approach in each context and starts from not-knowing where we are going or how, but a commitment to finding out together. To decolonize our field, we must continue to hone the affective terms of facilitation. Here emerges a new theoretical

frame of *afecto* and *cuidado,* situated between an attention to pre-personal intensities reverberating through body-minds and an ethical call to cultivate love-for-vitality*,* which requires care-full maintenance work to keep the fragile webs of relations sustaining our communities alive. This points us beyond the 'human' in a colonial sense, towards interconnection as the crux of a liberatory participatory performance praxis.

Chapter 3

Facilitating Feminine Relationality in Resistance to Violence

Introduction

> The warrior, the conqueror, seeks to destroy the home, because like fire and memory, the home is the space of all humanization, of all autonomy. The home, memory and fire are pillars of all creative acts, of all humanizing events on earth…Women walk with the home in their bodies. So home is not only fire and memory, it is the womb, the egg and the song, the first voice that anchors us to the earth that is flesh, river, tree; it anchors us, makes us belong to the earth as the deepest human affiliation. (Vélez 2003*,* 64 – *my translation*)

In Colombia, the violence of the internal armed conflict is carried out on women's bodies through practices of displacement,[94] linked to genocide, misogyny and territorial occupation. In this chapter, I listen-with theatre facilitation practices engaging 'female victims' that transform violent relations, potentiating life-affirming relationalities based in an ethics of radical care. Given the wide range of contemporary artistic work on violence in Colombia, I have selected three projects that demonstrate both affective and narrative approaches, addressing in different ways how women's bodies are the site of violence and resistance; placing them in dialogue with my own ideas about affective facilitation can inform new ways of theorizing theatre facilitation. This fieldwork, conducted in 2019 within the context of Colombia's peace and reparations process, requires a different frame of reference than the previous chapter. Here I am an outside witness, aware of my positionality, while careful not to impose a Global North perspective – an

[94] Colombian theatre director Carlos Satizábal makes the point that the word displacement is a euphemism used by authorities to mask the violence suffered by the 7 million Colombians forced to flee their homes as part of a continued colonial strategy of accumulating power by appropriating territory through robbery, genocide, and horror (the real cause of the internal armed conflict); he suggests that the term exile ('despojo' in Spanish) is much a more accurate term (2015). To this, late Colombian sociologist Alfredo Molano adds that to displace oneself is to simply change locations, while exile is 'desentierre', or a brutal uprooting, that disconnects people from their past and their very sense of who they are, where they come from and where they are going (2003, 79). With this in mind, I understand displacement as forced relocation that occurs when territorially based livelihoods are damaged or destroyed. I continue to use the term mainly because, despite its problems, it is still widely used by the artists and communities whose work I study here.

active listener, present and implicated. The projects addressed here help to further expand my thinking beyond a dualistic conceptualization of narrative and affect, discourse and embodiment, because they are invested in affective transformation for expressly political reasons; words and feelings become inseparable in the struggle to live violence-free.

Patricia Ariza, director of the Corporación Colombiana de Teatro,[95] works with displaced people as well as other marginalized groups (usually women**)** to collaboratively create theatre productions about their experiences (sometimes with professional performers). Carlos Satizábal, who writes and directs plays with Tramaluna Teatro, an offshoot of the Corporación Colombiana de Teatro, works in close proximity to Ariza and brings a particular nuance to her well-established approach by drawing a dramaturgical connection with classical Greek tragedy and casting real belongings of the deceased in a performative role. Meanwhile, Gaviota Conde, who is a PhD Candidate in Education at the Universidad Nacional de Mar de Plata,[96] is developing a more process-based methodology for 'reparations from the body' with female victims of the armed conflict, via participatory workshops. Respectively, these projects allow me to think through the ways affect and narrative are necessarily intertwined, how feminine relationality viscerally implicates witnesses, and how the female body is the 'first territory' of subjugation and resistance.

Their distinct methods reflect generational differences. Patricia Ariza and Carlos Satizábal have been making theatre for decades. Ariza's extensive repertoire of socially-engaged theatre and performance projects began in the 1980s and Satizábal's current production of *Antígonas Tribunal de Mujeres* has been running for over 10 years. Their approach reflects a long history of calling for justice by attaining visibility on a cultural level, staging real stories of

[95] In 2022, three years after my fieldwork, Ariza was appointed Colombia's Minister of Culture by President Gustavo Petro.
[96] Conde has since completed her PhD.

the armed conflict for fellow Colombians and the world to see and be held accountable for. Ariza ostensibly sets the precedent for political, community-based collective creation in Colombia, gaining international recognition as the director of the renowned Teatro la Candelaria (and a founding member) (Brayshaw et al. 2019; Fradinger 2015; Varley 1996); as her collaborator, Satizábal has toured his work internationally and published widely in Colombia (2015; 2016a; 2016b). They approach community engagement aesthetically and ethically, reacting against elitist theatrical ideals and displays of sensationalized suffering. A distinctly Colombian method has been established through their work, using collective creation to engage victims of the armed conflict as part of the peace process.[97]

Gaviota Conde follows Ariza and Satizábal's example more ethically than aesthetically.[98] Belonging to the next generation of facilitators, she has inherited a political commitment to working with communities affected by the armed conflict; her parents, like Ariza herself, were targets of political persecution as part of the UP (Patriotic Union party), having survived a state-endorsed genocide in the 80s. Conde has never been a direct target of armed violence (she has not had to wear a bullet-proof vest as Ariza did), and she is not an 'artist' in the way that Ariza and Satizábal present themselves. Her work is about cultivating community and individual wellbeing, starting from the body. It is part of the corporal turn, an academic trend beginning in the 2000s in Latin America, which places the focus on the body rather than (or as) text; it is also

[97] Collective creation is a method that emerged in the 1960s as part of an artistic movement for a theatre that reflected Colombian rather than European history, beginning at Teatro Experimental de Cali, led by Enrique Buenaventura, and then taken up by Teatro La Candelaria in Bogotá, directed by Santiago García (Ariza's long-term, late partner). Its application with communities is tied to the tradition of Teatro de Base in Latin America that emerged as a form of resistance to oppressive governments, particularly in the Southern Cone, as well as agitprop theatre that was used within workers unions during the 70s and 80s in Colombia.

[98] As a PhD student, like me, Conde's work reflects an international trend towards the institutionalization of expertise around creative practices. This privileged positionality is partly based on using the communities engaged for one's own professional advancement. The same could be said of Ariza and Satizábal, whose artistic careers are built on aestheticizing people's real-life struggles, in the name of sociopolitical change. As collective as their processes are, these facilitators are credited for creating 'their' approaches, which in reality could never have been created without the contributions of participants. That said, my aim here is to deepen collective knowledge around facilitation, in the hopes of enriching and also problematizing practices and theories in the field, so the focus is necessarily placed on facilitators as opposed to participants.

linked to a growing appreciation of research-creation that values hands-on approaches to embodied practices for social justice. Conde's aim is not to create a piece of political performance, but to develop a community-based restorative practice, centering the female body as the 'first territory'. Leaving behind the need for public performance, she explores processes of embodied expression/witnessing in such a way that facilitating a transformative workshop is, in itself, an impactful arts practice.

Meanwhile, Satizábal combines ancient Greek theatre with testimonial/documentary theatre (a genre that saw a revival in the 2000s, questioning the construction of 'truth' in the arena of human rights and memory). In a similar vein, Ariza combines physical theatre with testimonial theatre, complimenting community participants' embodied practices (such as folkloric dance and song) with contemporary movement and vocal scores. This mix of methods has shaped a new approach, broadening the scope of testimony to include non-verbal vocabularies that poeticize the 'real'. Conde's work prioritizes internal sensations and intimate connections over visibility, which marks a move away from focusing on narrative representation, towards valuing transformations in the embodied experience of victims first, thus opening up new ways of understanding the effects of displacement and violence on female bodies, as well as their creative capacity for collective healing.

All three facilitators forefront female victims' strategies for surviving patriarchal violence, since women are those most affected by the armed conflict as victims who *survive*. Identity labels such as 'women' and 'victims' are an important starting place for their projects, posing a point of departure from my approach to affective facilitation outlined in the previous chapter. This is because Colombia is currently in the midst of its peace and reparations process—unlike other contexts I have addressed, where the peace and reparations process happened a

generation ago (as in Chile) or there has not been a peace and reparations process at all (as in the US, with enslaved African or displaced/colonized Native American descendants, for instance)—, so recognizing and healing the scars of past-present violence is the top priority here. This is not the same as pathologizing victims' trauma as the 'problem' to be fixed; rather, it is about inclusion in the peace process for those most harmed and building a better future for all, in which violence is not the common denominator of relations. These projects affirm radical care as a key strategy for collective resilience that emerges from female victims' embodied experiences.

I initially saw this work as essentializing femininity in a problematic way, but I have learned that in this context, resisting gender binaries is not always the most pressing concern. While Ariza and Conde's work acknowledges to a greater degree than Satizábal's the damage done by oppressive gender roles and the diversity of positionalities among women, all three projects center 'womanhood' as a common standpoint. The subjugation of women is so extreme in Colombia that fighting for women's rights requires revaluing knowledge emergent from women's experiences of marginalization as central to combatting patriarchal violence. With more space to live in peace, perhaps, comes more nuance in terms of gender theory. Postmodern feminisms' critiques of the universalizing category of 'woman', in favor of more careful attention to situatedness (Haraway in Nicolás 2009), is not necessarily as useful here as in the Global North. I see these facilitators as taking a "strategic" approach to essentialism that attempts to make use of universalizing gender discourses in the fight for women's rights (Spivak in Nicolás 2009) – specifically, the right to live free from violence – by recognizing how women across diverse positionalities have experienced subjugation and dispossession in different, intersecting and related ways (Cabrera & Vargas 2014).

While the artists studied here may not see gender as solely a social construct, they certainly recognize how hyper-masculinity is built on violence against women and subaltern 'others'. Gender in Latin America has been constructed in tandem with processes of colonization in which masculinity "sin fisuras" [without cracks] has been key (Viveros et al. 2006). As Rita Segato notes, there is now a new kind of warfare playing out in regions like Colombia that centres on violence against women in unprecedented ways; rather than a geographical territory, the primary battleground has become women's bodies, inscribing them with signs of loyalty or antagonism to armed groups (2016). Of course, not *all men* perform the extreme version of masculinity constitutive of armed actors; there is a wide spectrum of violent relationalities that shape gender dynamics in Colombia. Moreover, patriarchal violence is not biologically male, just as feminine relationality is not biologically female. Victimizers are not *only* men and victims are not *only* women. The complexity of the conflict means that the line between victim and victimizer can be blurry. However, the point at hand is that patriarchal scripts are so deeply ingrained in Colombian culture that they impact people's lives in very real ways.

This is why I see these facilitators' approaches to fomenting feminine relationality as strategic. While there are other spheres where it makes more sense to pick a fight with essentialism, here I aim to honor the local conversation and the ideas contributed by specific facilitation practices. To resist imposing a Global North feminist framework, I take onboard the Bolivian Aymara communitarian feminist perspective as particularly relevant, as it reframes community in terms of *Pachamama* (reciprocal relations among humans, the earth, animals and plants, forming an organic whole), in order to construct a world that celebrates and cares for life (Guzmán & Triana 2019). This does not mean essentializing female experience as inherently maternal; it is about cultivating radical care, or "un afecto por la otredad como valor

comunitario" ["affection for alterity as a community value"] (Guzmán & Triana 2019, 38). It involves practicing nonhierarchical relations as well as decolonizing and de-neoliberalizing North-South power dynamics (Guzmán & Triana 2019). While the facilitators studied here may not completely reject liberal notions of individual subjecthood or identity politics - as communitarian feminists do -, their work demonstrates how female victims' collective embodied knowledge offers life-affirming relational alternatives.

In Ariza, Satizábal and Conde's projects, the 'female victim' identity of the participants brings them together in a process of acknowledging that they are *more-than* this identity. It becomes a place to speak and move from that is not necessarily reductive when employed as a politically affective strategy. The term 'victim' is a category used by state and activist discourses around reparations to name those whose experience of violence is 'deserving' of official recognition.[99] For the over 8 million registered victims (15% of the population), the institutionalized reparations process is a waiting game. Theatre facilitators who work with victims and victims themselves recognize that the label implies powerlessness and passivity, not strength and survival. However, the term continues to be used as a way to advocate for access to economic, political, and sociocultural capital for those to whom it has been denied. Grass roots victims' groups have reappropriated and re-defined the term, asserting themselves as active participants in the peace process.[100]

[99] Cristiana Giordano points out that the state creates recognizable identity categories through the use of terms such as 'victim' in order to domesticate difference; this affords 'victims' access to services and certain rights while at the same pathologizing them as essentially existing within the nation as subjects in need of help, reducing their experience to a narrative that can be understood (2014).

[100] Initially only victims of human rights violations committed by guerrillas and drug traffickers were officially recognized. During the peace process, however, the 'victim' category has been expanded to include victims of state crimes and political persecution, thanks to the self-advocacy of victims' groups, who have reframed the causes of the armed conflict as being "related to deep seeded inequalities, in which the government participates through its own army and illegal paramilitary violence" (Tapia 2019, 300).

The term 'survivor' is also used interchangeably by the same groups who self-identify as victims, depending on their specific aim, whether it is to be seen as having overcome trauma (which is really a social ill, not an individual problem) or in need of support to do so, as part of their demands for justice. Chela Sandoval calls this kind of transformable subjectivity a "differential consciousness" that comes from experiences of subjugation and is employed in order to call into question the status quo of (neo)colonialism (1991). It allows adopting a defined subjectivity when it is useful and also being undefinable, in order to enact love in the world, as a method of oppositional politics (Sandoval 1991). There is an important affective association with the terms victim and survivor that elicits collective care for shared harms. The strategic subjectivity employed by victims/survivors groups works in opposition to "neoliberal peace" in Colombia, where wartime strategies continue to be used to seize control of territory (largely with impunity for the 1% who own over half the land) and "Human Rights [have] become subordinated to a definition of common good in which corporate interests take priority over the interests of local communities and their resistance to the projects of neoliberal peace precipitates new cycles of displacement and disappearance" (Humphry 2018, 468). Meanwhile, victim/survivor activism and art cultivates counterhegemonic conceptualizations of human rights *from below* that recognize the simultaneous existence of different ways of being (Louidor 2017).

Most registered victims (80%) are campesinos/as [peasants] and ethnic minorities displaced during the past 30 years by the land-grabbing tactics of the military, big business, paramilitaries, guerrillas, and/or 'narcos'. Desplazados [the displaced] bring the reality of the armed conflict to the city, as it does not otherwise affect the lives of most Bogotanos. There is an urgent need for these victims, often unfairly blamed for their plight,[101] to tell *their* truth;

[101] As Ivan Montenegro explains, "peasants have been represented as being linked to drug traffickers and considered guerrilla's auxiliaries" as a way to justify state-sanctioned intervention in their territories through extractive ventures (2020, 88-89).

Satizábal argues: "[t]he narcoparamilitary melodrama on TV, viewed in the intimacy of each family's home every day, only shows the victimizers' and genocidals' version, a perspective that criminalizes victims, converting rebellion and protest into crimes, inciting the desire for death and vengeance, feeding hate and the delirium of war" (2015, 254 – *my translation).* In addition to promoting a one-sided war narrative, the state fails to fully protect victims' rights and is even an accomplice to the violence they face, which has led to the collective action of displaced and victimized populations revindicating their rights, demanding dignity and defending life itself (Hernández et al. 2015). These victims/survivors' groups collaborate with facilitators like Ariza, Satizábal and Conde to call attention to and repair damaged relations. For female victims in particular, forced to flee their territories when male loved ones are killed by armed actors, survival and healing depends on cultivating new 'relaciones afectivas' [care networks].

In urban centers like Bogotá, there is no longer a sense of community but a longing for one, along with a feeling of alienation from political processes, due to fear and the apathy it engenders; people feel there is no way to fix the national problem of violence because all institutions are involved and corrupt themselves (Rotker 2002). The normalization of violence has also meant a "moral indifference to violent death and suffering according to place of residence, age, colour, [gender] and poverty of the victims which disqualifies them for having rights" or deserving care (Humphry 2018, 468). Meanwhile, kinship networks remain the only extant element of a social contract – familiar people, 'de confianza*'* [who can be trusted], are protected and valued above all else. Relaciones afectivas are central to safety and survival. There is a tendency to mistrust anyone outside one's close circle, feeding into a "fear of the other" that is at the heart of actions that "obliterate the other" and reproduce a "culture of violence" (Chaparro 2018). Colombian philosopher Adolfo Chaparro argues that Colombia's unique history

of politically legimitated violence and the denial of rights in rural areas (deemed subversive) has led to a kind of internal colonization such that the construction of the nation has been based on war with an enemy *within* (2018). The ongoing armed conflict and its articulation within civil society and institutions has made it impossible to consolidate a common vision of the country among Colombians (Chaparro 2018). Accordingly, the facilitators in this chapter all express a desire for a more cohesive, inclusive national imaginary.

Geographically, Colombia is a patchwork territory of diverse regions that have traditionally been difficult to unify and moreover have been and continue to be cut up by processes of colonization, dispossession, and extraction. Compared to the U.S. and Chile, Colombia presents a more fragmented, patchy kind of neoliberalism that plays out differently in different regions controlled by different actors, including armed groups. The state is not the only 'oppressor' as it is not all-powerful, nor is it the only human rights violator, but rather a weak actor, unable to guarantee access to rights for all nor govern the entire national territory - even after the 2016 peace agreement, relying on partnerships with big business and armed actors (Humphrey 2018). The idea of (un)governability in Colombia is tied to the unmet need for access to public education, healthcare, political representation and safety from violence for those to whom it has been denied. The official peace process has yet to fully acknowledge the many worlds that exist within the nation. Peace processes often avoid conflict in favor of reconciliation or getting along, as in Chile, where leftist militants were never fully included, and neoliberalism became synonymous with peace and democracy. While the "violence" perpetuated by Colombia's armed conflict can be understood as harm, disconnection, and destruction that breaks life-worlds apart, "conflict" can mean coming together to deal with disputes through community-based world-making practices that proliferate rather than deaden difference (Easterling 2021).

The colonization of emotions has involved eliminating difference through hate, but grass roots victims' rights movements have fought for acknowledgement of difference among victims (not just victims of guerilla warfare, but also state-sanctioned violence) (Gomez 2016). The state's homogenization of the victim identity has had the "effect of concealing the absence of a national consensus about peace and reconciliation" apart from "getting along to put the past behind" (Humphry 2018, 457). The theatre facilitation work I engage with in this chapter does something essential for the transition to peace that the state cannot, by enacting nonviolent ways to coexist that do not erase conflict nor difference but do challenge the emotional discourses that uphold a status quo of violence.[102] By revaluing the healing capacities of female victims, they foment a feminine relationality that makes space for complex feelings and experiences, while centralizing affects that affirm life. These projects attempt to change the felt sense of what kinds of relationalities are possible in Colombia, through an ethics of radical care, inspired not by laws but by women's embodied practices, cultivating a sense not of separateness but vital interconnection, to (re)constitute a collective body with dignity (Gomez 2016). Expressing/ witnessing past wrongs as ever-present reconstructs collective memory in a way that makes living-with difference essential to upholding the promise of 'never again'.

Rather than devaluing care labor or relegating women to 'nature', these projects champion affective connections with others and the land as necessary for repairing the collective body-territory that has been dismembered by coloniality/patriarchy/capitalism/modernity. As Diana Taylor argues, women's bodies have been constructed as the national "territory" to be fought over and dominated by patriarchal movements, left and right, that have gained power by feminizing and subjugating the "other" (1997). Speaking specifically of Argentina, Taylor adds

[102] For a detailed analysis of the emotional discourses that sustain the armed conflict in Colombia, see Ingrid Bolivar (2006).

that misogyny is clearly *there*, but is not allowed to be *seen*, even in the theatre, and calls this phenomenon *percepticide* (27). The Colombian theatre projects addressed here confront the *percepticide* of gendered violence head on, aknowledging how women are those most affected as victims/survivors and how they have resisted violence by caring for life – as mothers, community leaders, and activists for justice and peace. The cultural idolization of motherhood is used strategically to expand 'motherly love' to a life-giving capacity for radical care, transformation and re-existence (strengthened by innumerable attempts to dehumanize and disposes Colombian women), which offers a path to peace *from below* that others can follow. Although these projects mobilize identity categories within the peace discourse, they also move beyond the limits of individual, liberal subjecthood by fomenting a viscerally felt responsibility to communal life. This femenine relationality is a contextually Colombian, feminist practice that revitalizes a decolonial sense of humanization, reaffirming all life as interdependent and refusing to perpetuate a paradigm of death.

Radical care is not the same as "fellow feeling" or sympathy; it is a praxis of coalition-building, mutual aid and solidarity (Hobart & Kneese 2020). To offer a counterexample, I recently attended *Historia de una oveja,* a professional production by Teatro Petra that depicts the perpetual displacement of a young Colombian girl, along with her friend - an Arab immigrant - and their pet sheep. This dark fable critiques the ongoing practices of massacre, expropriation and rights violations that victimize Colombia's rural population. The characters in the play are archetypal caricatures, representing a 'distant other' for a Bogotá audience – pitiable, but not 'one of us'. The representations of the villains (blood-thirsty paramilitaries and untrustworthy state institutions) do not illicit identification nor implicate the audience as playing a part in the story. The moralizing discourse of this production inspires paternalistic 'caring about' but does

not foment reciprocal caring-for, as the works addressed in this chapter do. By inviting audiences and participants to become more aware of our capacity for listening *to* and *from* the (individual and collective) body, Ariza, Satizábal and Conde's projects enhance our sense of connection with a shared vitality that needs *radical* care, which involves valuing "a set of vital but underappreciated strategies for enduring precarious worlds" (Hobart & Kneese 2020, 2); this offers an alternative to the neoliberal/(neo)colonial model of care as charity - a moral obligation demonstrating 'good character' – as well as self-care as individualistic self-preservation.

Channeling rage into love is a specifically feminine response to the violence of the armed conflict. Sandoval argues that love makes anything possible and is part of the creativity and survival of the subaltern (2012). I call it *afecto,* implying a love-for-vitality that foments life-affirming relations and involves *cuidado* [being careful], in order to sustain the delicate interdependence of life webs (as explained in Chapter 2). *Afecto* is transpersonal and generates responsiveness; it is enhanced by experiences of embodied copresence that push the limits of individuality. Ariza, Satizábal and Conde work with *afecto* in different ways, to heal the relational scars of violence and generate a sense of shared responsibility. They do this by creating community spaces where pain is expressed and transformed into strength, in solidarity. Their facilitation practices demonstrate how *afecto* emerges from feminine relationality in this context specifically. While Ariza and Satizábal use testimonial narrative intertwined with group movement to facilitate implicated witnessing, for Conde the focus is not testimony nor witnessing, but the female body as the 'first territory' for humanizing relations, moving towards *being-with*. Her work demonstrates why the affective aspect of life must not be overshadowed by the discursive side of reparations and peace. Greater emphasis is generally placed on the

representational qualities of socially-engaged theater in Colombia, but as I will show, more attention can be paid to the affective aspects of both process and product.

Facilitating a transformed sense of being in relation to one another is necessary for constructing more socially responsible collective memory. Sheila Preston points out that one definition of 'facilitation' is making easier that which is experienced as difficult (2016), which in this context means feeling fully integrated, cared for, connected with others, and able to live in peace. For Colombian theatre facilitators, negotiating institutionally imposed agendas is not the issue at hand (as is often the case in the Global North) (Preston 2016), since they spend a good part of their careers working pro-bono; participating in the state's peace discourse is not so much instrumentalization as survival. The theatre projects outlined in this chapter are embedded in their communities' day-to-day struggles against economic, physical and social violence, as well as partial abandonment by the state. Though they foment an ethics of coexistence, they do not necessarily espouse non-disruptive aesthetics (Bishop 2012). A central aspect is the creation of community spaces with the capacity for validating different feelings and experiences in relation to each other – but this is not always simply about "feeling good" (Bishop 2012). By listening-with these Colombian facilitaton practices, I aim to challenge a Global North-centric perspective of this work and test my concept of affective facilitation as a context-specific, open-ended relational arts practice that provides frames for liberatory transformation. The affective register of life in Colombia involves persistence and improvisation in the face of unpredictable obstacles. These projects do not resolve the conflicts that shape their communities, but reaffirm human connectivity on a visceral level, making indifference impossible. In what follows, I reflect on my conversations with Ariza, Satizábal and Conde, as well as my experiences of their work, trying to remain present and open to being changed.

An influential part of my fieldwork was being pregnant. Satizábal points out that midwives, medicine women and female dancers and singers are among those first threatened by armed groups: "they must be banished in order to destroy the cultural fabric of community life that has in them its festive and affectionate bonds [*de afecto*]" (in Satizábal & Marín Eds. 2015, 119 – *my translation*). Cultivating and celebrating life, especially that which is vulnerable, is a practice of *afecto* that has its own unstoppable momentum, pain and joy. Although this chapter draws minimally on my fieldnotes and focuses more on incorporating interviews as a way to place my voice in dialogue with other facilitators', I'll close this introductory section with a reflection from my journal: *In this moment, 5 months pregnant, I feel ever more sensitive to images of violence that I encounter in my research. Death seems more personal, an affront to life-making, which I am totally wrapped up in - creating a future life that will be part of this place. This life-force in me is not something I control - it happens almost as if on its own. I am the house, the territory for this life to take shape, but it is also more than me, coming into being in astonishing ways. The midwife helps me focus on the afecto I feel in relation to this being, to treasure it, to protect it, and not be afraid. Feeling my 'body as territory' means making the space to cultivate life in peace, without dwelling on the (smallest) threat of harm or death, while still being careful.*

Narrative and Affect, Enmeshed: Ariza's *Paz Haré La*

I am sitting in the Corporación Colombiana de Teatro, meeting with its director, Patricia Ariza. The adobe walls of the old colonial house are adorned with production photos, reflecting a long legacy of community engagement as well as a highly professional reputation. Ariza is very open, with an air of compañerismo [comradery], not celebrity as one might expect given her

fame. She is older now than in some of the photos. There is a sense of history and enduring strength about her. I ask about her work, *is there an element of personal testimony?* She replies:

> *Es muy importante que cuenten su historia tal como es, pero esa historia se va transformando - mi vida no puede solamente ser víctima. Es importante valorar todas las cosas que uno sabe hacer, no solo el dolor que tiene por una cosa que le pasó, sino darle la oportunidad de que se exprese en todo su ser. Cada persona es un ser polifónico. Esas personas hablan de muchas cosas. Son acciones polifónicas. [It is very important that they tell their story exactly as it is, yet that story is in transformation – your life cannot only be about being a victim. It's important to value everything that people know how to do, not only the pain they feel because of something that's happened to them. We need to give them the opportunity to express themselves as full beings. Each person is a polyphonic being. These people talk about a lot of things. These are polyphonic actions.]*

I realize that for Ariza, testimonial narrative is transformative; the act of telling one's story is directly related to acknowledging how that story transforms in the act of telling. Her aesthetic is not one of representing a fixed subject but a process of becoming. She does not approach the work from a deficit perspective, which entails seeing participants in terms of their 'problems', reducing them to the perceived "failure and/or lack of ability of that group of persons to be empowered or productive in their current circumstances" (Freebody et al. 2018, 6). Rather, Ariza's work is deeply participatory in Preston's terms; that is, it is co-intentional, allowing for the group to re-define its relationships with one another and the world (2016).

Ariza describes her work as *polyphonic actions*, expressing many voices of many people who themselves have many voices, not just one each. Active listening and relationality are also implicit. As anthropologist Patricia Tovar puts it, "my voice is full of echoes, my being is polyphonic; it comes from the appropriation of other discourses, other enunciations. Dialogism establishes the possibility of mutual affectation, of contact and relation" (2017, 2 – *my translation*). I propose we think of this polyphonic action in terms of re-narrating the self as

relational,[103] rather than individual. Moreover, it is not just what is said in telling one's story, but what *cannot* be said and resonates between bodies as an affective excess that allows the self to be felt as fundamentally interconnected with others. In Ariza's work, it is precisely the relation between what is said and felt (or moved in bodies) that is key. As I will explain, her collage approach to testimonial narrative is infused with choreographic moments of embodied copresence that create *afecto,*[104] potentiating a deep kind of listening via a polyphony of sensations and voices, calling on audiences to *feel* as well as understand how we affect and are affected by others.

As part of the peace process, it is important for victim's (multiple) voices to be heard, Ariza believes, and theatre offers a more poetic and multifaceted language than, say, a truth commission. There are many vocabularies at work simultaneously in her performances - physical, visual, musical, and verbal. It is not only that narrative produces affect or emotion, but the attuning of bodies to listen somatically and be moved *viscerally* allows us to hear words (and what's between them) more fully. When I saw the Escuela de Mujeres performance she directed, *Paz Haré La,* I felt that the embodied collectivity worked in juxtaposition with the verbal narrative of true personal testimonies to generate affective transformations. The piece challenges negative representations of and violence against women, with short numbers created by the performers to showcase how they want to be and be seen, as well as the ways society has limited their freedoms. Each performer shares something of her life, using music and dance not just for entertainment, but for (relational) self-actualization. Because the female body is a site of both

[103] Feminist trauma scholar Susan Brison defends a view of the self as "fundamentally relational—capable of being undone by violence and also remade in connection with others" (2002). I find her argument most compelling when she says "bearing witness to a traumatic event not only transforms traumatic memories into narratives that can then be integrated into the survivor's sense of self and the world, but it also reintegrates the survivor into a community" (xi). The community, I believe, is thus also reintegrated into the surviving self.

[104] This visceral feeling of interconnection can be fomented through performative experiences of bodies moving together in space; it enhances our sense of a shared vitality that is pre-individual and extends beyond the body to a collective life-force.

discursive and physical violence, social critique and embodied co-presence cannot be separated – they work together to change how we feel and value the capacity to care. *Paz Haré La* offers an experience of polyphonic solidarity, which moves from representations of violence to a felt sense of what living in peace might be. The work intervenes in hegemonic discourse while also bringing about somatic shifts that *loose* the self (Hunter 2019). Representation is thus intertwined with a somatic move alongside (Hunter 2019)*;* it is precisely this interplay that opens up hopeful new relational possibilities.

Paz Haré La is a feminist fashion show ('pasarela' [fashion show] is pronounced the same way in Spanish as the phrase 'paz haré la' [peace I'll make]). The women who participate come from a range of class backgrounds, different parts of the city and some are originally from different regions. The Corporación Colombiana de Teatro, located in the historic city center, is accessible from all sides of Bogotá; Ariza's Escuela de Mujeres offers a space where women unite across difference. Rebuilding relations "entre mujeres" [between women] allows for the creation of a new language that begins with care, listening and non-violence, reflecting how these relations are not instrumental nor hierarchical, but rather *creative*, in the sense of recreating themselves as well as giving life, building community, potentiating the flow of vital energy and reaffirming experiential, embodied knowledge (Gutierrez et al. 2020). What would a Colombia recreated entre mujeres look like?[105] *Somos un país muy fragmentado [We are a very fragmented country]*, Ariza tells me, *la gente no se puede mirar de cuerpo entero, entonces el arte y el relato ayudan mucho a volver a cohesionar la nación [the people cannot see their whole body reflected, so art and storytelling can help to reunite the nation].* The women in *Paz Haré La*

[105] Feminist decolonial theorists Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar, María Noel Sosa and Itandehui Reyes argue that cultivating relations "entre mujeres" can offer a form of resistance to colonial/patriarchal/capitalist/modern violence, which intends to separate women from one another by making their bodies the property of men (2020).

present folkloric traditions from different regions as a valuable connection to their roots and each other. Ariza explains, "it is a way of showing lost territories. And when I say territory, I refer to the body, the culture, and the land itself. With actions and with shared presence, a place is made in *afecto*" (in Satizábal & Marín Eds. 2015, 70 – *my translation*). *Afecto,* generated among the bodies on stage, establishes a feminine territory for peace.

Paz Haré La is a collage of solos interspersed with group movement sequences, which together achieve a felt sense of *cuerpo entero* [wholeness of body], for the women as enactors of peace and the audience as their witnesses. I pose this to Ariza: *I could see that the work is not just about discourse, text, or representation, but there's something expressive, what's felt in the body, that's not a literal representation of anything; it's the body in space that changes what we all feel somehow, through movement. I wanted to ask how you came to this embodied method.*[106] As I listen to Ariza's response, I begin to understand how displacement and violence against women are intertwined, as part of the colonial/patriarchal/capitalist/modern strategies of territorial control that perpetuate the internal armed conflict. She explains:

> *En la población vulnerada - las mujeres, todas - hay una cosa difícil. El cuerpo es para exhibirse, para mostrarse linda, o para hacer oficio en la casa, para limpiar, para lavar. Es un cuerpo agredido permanentemente. Entonces cambiar los códigos del cuerpo es muy importante. Para esas mujeres…al mirar el cuerpo y poner el cuerpo en una manera diferente, hay una liberación interesantísima. [Among the vulnerable population – women, all of them – there is something difficult. The body is to be exhibited, to look beautiful, or to do housework, to clean, to wash. It is a body that is permanently under attack. So, changing the codes of the body is very important. For these women…seeing the body and using the body in a different way, there is a very interesting liberation.]*

[106] I have in mind Hunter's idea of affect - "a material feeling that happens in the moment of performance" - as existing alongside representation, while effect is the action motivated by this feeling, which may impact representational possibilities; Hunter explains, "just as discourse relies on an effective rhetoric of articulation and representation that constitutes culture, so the alongside occurs in the affective rhetorics of presencing and embodiment that generate performativity" (2019, 13, 87).

Women find new expressions of femininity through theatre, as a shared pathway towards liberation from victimization.[107] The focus here is on redefining women's role in society, reaffirming their humanity and revaluing their strengths. This is key because the armed conflict is predicated on violence against women, as the precedent for pervasive practices of obliterating the 'other'.

Paz Haré La expresses women's need to make peace happen *themselves* by enacting an alternative relationality, based in the feminine capacity to care for life in the face of death. Ariza clarifies, "I think that by transforming a space and appearing in another way, with something unsaid, but that has some connection with people…the everyday norm is ruptured, life is interrupted for a moment for life" (in Satizábal & Marín Eds. 2015, 73 – *my translation*). She emphasizes how a momentary feeling of connection can potentiate an alternative, nonviolent way of relating that affirms life. In her work, *afecto* is politicized, in part, due to her ethical commitments as a leftist militant; her aim is to transform both representational discourse as well as affective life, in relation to territory – to live together more ethically and overcome legacies of harm. This kind of cohabitation requires acknowledging interdependence as an undeniably vulnerable aspect of life, one that we must take responsibility for, since it can be the basis for violence or peace. *Paz Haré La,* as a performance of peacemaking, encompasses both victimizing experiences and the emergent desire to live differently together, each finding her own way, all empowered to claim this right as part of a collective endeavor. The performers bravely share their secrets of survival, through self-made narratives as well as the collective embodiment of care-full coexistence.

[107] Liberation of the female body here is not necessarily liberation from being 'female'. These women do not explore, for instance, how female bodies can be masculine or play roles men play, nor do they escape gender as a container for experience, which might be thought of as liberating in other contexts. In this context, liberation from experiences of violence, for these women, requires revaluing specifically feminine capacities, including but not limited to traditional roles of care labor and making much-needed space for self-care.

Many of them have been directly affected by the armed conflict. There are ex-militants (from guerilla groups) who explain they are now fighting for peace as artists, while the 'señores de la guerra' (influential landowners, paramilitaries and the military) continue to invade the newly established zones of peace and assassinate ex-guerillas who have given up their arms as part of the 2016 peace agreement. There is also the sister of an assassinated journalist who holds up his photo demanding recognition of his disappearance. There is a campesina who explains how the armed conflict is carried out on the backs of rural women, who are displaced, their families massacred and disappeared, their land stolen, their bodies raped, but their spirit not broken. This particular story is a good example of re-narrating the self as relational, as it evokes many voices through the iconic yet singular image of a campesina dancing with a knitted shawl, in a theatre in the center of urban Bogotá, indicating her displacement from that pastoral elsewhere of the campo [countryside] and her refusal to be dispossessed. A shared responsibility to cultivate non-violence is animated through the affective attunement of different female bodies (on stage and in the audience), co-witnessing and amplifying her presence as everywoman. There are also a number of solos about femicide, associated with women's presumed domestic role as men's possessions. The performers tell the audience we must break with expectations of *that kind* of love and love ourselves, in order to find freedom from violence.

As Chela Sandoval says, "it is love that can access and guide our theoretical and political 'movidas'—revolutionary maneuvers toward a decolonized being" (in Winget 2019, 10). Decolonial theater scholar Anna Renée Winget adds, "the implication here is that love can shift one's consciousness in such a way that it opens new ways of resistance against colonial closures, including guiding and accessing new connections of which colonialism could not conceive. Above all, love is relational" (10-11). Although Ariza does not speak in terms of decolonization,

her work expresses (from below) experiences of displacement, death, and dispossession - all strategies of the paradigm of colonization/patriarchy/capitalism/modernity. She talks of raising awareness, transforming pain into strength, and building inclusive community, highlighting how caring for oneself and others, however difficult, is ethically necessary for cohabiting a shared territory. *Paz Haré La* does not promote self-love for independent, autonomous, individual selves, free from responsibility to one another, as this would only perpetuate the culture of violence, but rather a relational sense of self-love that is communitarian, vulnerable, and creative. The structure of the pasarela ties together the divergent themes raised by individual accounts of violence into the overarching need to make a stand for peace *together*. This fashion show thus fashions a new social contract based in radical love (radical in the sense of going to the *root* of the problem), through a celebration of femininity in many embodied forms and narratives that become collective.

Ariza says participants find freedom in theatrical self-expression for an audience. In one vignette, an elderly woman who tells us she is not too old to be in a fashion show, triumphantly recalls how she escaped from an old age home where her family put her, and then rebelliously sings and dances to her favorite song, accompanied by the rest of the cast. I wonder though, if for some of the women, the liberatory experience is more about being part of the group creative process than it is about being onstage. While some take the stage with captivating presence and confidence, others seem more unsure of their place in the spotlight, less confident in their performance, but it is clear they feel it is important to *be there.* Does *being there* have to mean being in the spotlight? As an audience member of *Paz Haré La*, I felt discomfort from the cast's strain to 'get it right' in performance. However, it was joyful to witness these women witnessing one another's performances - I could feel how meaningful the experience was, something shared

between them as they passed each other on the runway, exchanging looks of encouragement, each solo building on the momentum of the previous number - but this happens in rehearsal as well as performance. Is the outside audience really indispensable?[108]

I ask Ariza*, is it important to the participants to always have a public performance?* She replies:

> *Siempre hay que hacer una muestra. Puede ser para un público pequeño. Hay personas tímidas. Cuando uno tiene mucho dolor es difícil hablar. Es difícil. Es un trabajo muy delicado. Forzar a una persona hablar será otra violencia. Hay que cambiar ese dolor. [There always has to be a showing. It can be for a small audience. Some people are shy. When someone is in a lot of pain, it's difficult for them to talk. It's difficult. It's a very delicate task. Forcing someone to talk would be another kind of violence. You have to change the pain.]*

For participants who are still too close to a painful experience to be ready to talk about it, a testimonial narrative performance may be retraumatizing.[109] To transform pain into poetry, Ariza attempts to find what it is people are able and willing to express and in what way - for instance their knowledge of medicinal plants from their region, or a folkloric dance or song they know. This can be interwoven with the narratives of others. Beautiful moments can thus emerge from expressing painful experiences in solidarity; in Ariza's work, this often happens in poetic form.[110] In rehearsal, the stakes are lower; fewer people may be touched but there is also less risk of failing to touch everyone and the transformation within the performers is enough. Still, *afecto* is like a bridge that can be rebuilt. An intimate creative process can better nurture it, but its

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[108] Hunter recognizes that in rehearsal it is easier for a *loosing* of the self to occur, because of the collaborators' mutual openness to change, whereas in the audience, some people will be more open to change and others less so (2019).

[109] By narrative performance, I refer to the idea that what is expressed is articulated within a representational structure recognizable to hegemony, with the aim of visibilizing marginalized experiences and allowing them to be incorporated into collective memory. Narrative is always reductive. As applied theatre scholars Cohen at al. put it, "how can the unspeakable find expression? How can harms be acknowledged in ways that restore dignity to the injured without reinforcing their identity as victims…in order to both avoid a culture of impunity and to nourish the web of relationships necessary for a functioning communal life" (2011, 147)? The complex relations that sustain communal life go beyond state structures of representation or symbolic reparations. In Ariza's work, this excess is expressed via nonverbal vocabularies enmeshed in narrative performance.

[110] According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, *poetry* means "writing that formulates a concentrated imaginative awareness of experience in language chosen and arranged to create a specific emotional response through meaning, sound, and rhythm" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, s.v. "Poetry"). For Ariza, this language is not only verbal, but can also be physical, musical and/or visual.

residue lingers in public performance, potentially permeating the audience, and this is what Ariza values.

One of her main aims is raising awareness of society's responsibility to include (and care about) victims. Telling their real stories undoubtedly generates an emotional reaction in the audience, but it might not always be love or care. Other emergent affects can lead to closing down rather than opening up. Instead of training the women in *Paz Haré La* to control the affective aspects of their solo performances, Ariza's approach is one of heightened 'realness', where participants poeticize their lived experience in an intentionally raw (if there are tears, they are real) yet staged manner (using theatrical vocabularies). This means that *afecto* may emerge unpredictably. For me, it emerged more when the collaborative creative process was apparent. I felt affective attunement to *afecto* (which is not the same as emotion, as it is pre-subjective intensity) in the audience produced by the performers' copresence in the group movement sequences in particular. In-between the more representational solo performances, they embodied a collective *form* that potentiated a connection of care and solidarity.[111] Feminine energy, transmitted through bodies in relation to each other, moved us into an atmosphere where it felt possible to be together as *more-than* individuals. In emotional terms, we could call this feeling radical love.

For example, in one sequence, green satin flags held by each of 8 women create a sense of unity, tenderness and power. Printed on the flags is the slogan "sexual education to choose, birth control to not abort, legal abortion to not die", but it is only legible in passing. They manipulate the flags in many ways in relation to their bodies, sometimes with soft, flowing movements, other times with linear, punctuated gestures, always in unison. At the end of the

[111] Following Hunter, I take a *form* to be "a presencing of some thing that was not there before" which can generate "a loosening/loosing of self into the ecology of the moment that makes each person more porous to another" (2019, 88).

sequence, they stand in a line and turn their heads to look at the audience in rapid cannon, as if to ask if we are *with them*. This aesthetic is directly contrasted by the solo piece that follows, in which we hear an individual's story of femicide, delivered front on; it is the only moment in the performance when the 'truth' of anyone's words can be doubted, since she tells us she has been shot dead by her husband. She then sings happy birthday to an absent friend – the one whose story she has just told. The slippage here from the genre of first person testimony established in all of the other solos, towards witnessing in solidarity, speaking as *more-than-one* (Manning 2012), and the poetic rather than the literal, is facilitated by the previous movement sequence, which gradually draws the audience into another kind of listening, from the body, becoming aware that we too are present, here and now*,* in relation to the real lives not only represented but embodied on stage. So, while Ariza's work employs representation through narrative,[112] it also facilitates affective attunement through embodiment. It is precisely the interplay between narrative and affect,[113] the 'true story' and the extended sensorium, that poeticizes individual experience so that it can be felt as a relational responsibility, building strength not through individuality but interdependence.

Somatic intensity that has not yet been articulated/understood as an emotion belonging to anyone can sometimes move bodies in a space towards *afecto*, a sense of vital connection, rather than separation – care-full symbiosis rather than individuation. The audience (and performers) may then experience a *loosing* of the self that enables us to listen to narrative and view

[112] Hunter defines representation as "the enforcement of a direct relation between a made work and a referential meaning" within hegemonic discourse (2019, 26). However, the somatic complexity of relationality extends beyond representations and performances that highlight this excess can produce a sense of "agency in the face of large-scale political power that attempts to circumscribe what we know, how we know and what we can do" (Hunter 2019, 16). In *Paz Haré La,* this is embodied as a collective, femenine life-force that, in effect, gives strength to the representational interventions made by the piece.

[113] Brian Massumi explains that narrative and intensity (or pre-personal affect) do not have a logical relationship but are also not unrelated (1995). This interplay is not the affective tug at the hearstrings of a sad story meant to make us feel sorry for someone. Rather, it is characterized by "a crossing of semantic wires", allowing for example sadness to become pleasant, as "it vaguely but insistently connects what is normally indexed as separate" (Massumi 1995, 85). This accounts for how life can be affirmed in the midst of group mourning practices.

representational images from a differential state of being, to be touched not by the 'other' but by our *more-than-one-ness.* In the context of Colombia's transititon from armed conflict to peace, communities of pain can be enacted so that suffering does not lead to separation but collective bodying - an experience akin to pleasure, a celebration of life. Making a performative plea against the "agents of death" through actions (combined with words and images) that emphasize "the desire to perpetuate and give life" can "fight against impunity and oblivion" by offering an alternative, nonviolent yet defiant path to coexistence (Dieguez 2018, 51). Rather than re-inscribing relations of violence, the moments of embodied copresence in *Paz Haré La* infuse the narrative testimony with an intensity of feeling that does not make painful experiences understandable or even transmitable, but implicates the audience in a shared, radical love-for-vitality that is necessary for collective survival.

In another exemplary scene, one of the two young ex-militants speaks of her frustration with how the peace agreement has been disregarded by those in power, since the guerilla groups who gave up their arms have not been granted the protection they were promised and have instead been assassinated outright. She exclaims, *¿quieren mi vida, quieren nuestras vidas? Sepan que no estoy sola. Me acompañan las mujeres. [Do you want my life? Do you want our lives? Know that I am not alone. The women are with me.]* As she speaks these lines, all of the other women in the cast enter somberly, with a care-full militancy in their step, taking positions behind her for a lyrical group movement sequence; each of them gingerly rocks an invisible baby and then lifts her arms in a deliberate, determined flapping of wings, in intentionally imperfect unison. Then they all suddenly fall to the ground as if exhausted – in the audience, I feel how their struggle to live in peace seems endless. Background music that recalls an indigenous, Caribbean atmosphere suddenly permeates the scene and one of the women at the back stands

and begins to sing. The others become rejuvenated by the music. They seem to realize they are not alone and rise together, joining her in song.

They sing:

> Paz añorada libertad del alma dame el aliento,
> para sanar el tiempo, el tiempo y el silencio
> y quiero mirarte, voy acercarme, al paraíso infinito que hay en tus venas,
> tierra inmensa, infatigable, inmarcesible…
> [Longed for peace, freedom of the soul, give me breath,
> to heal time, time and silence,
> I want to look at you, I'm coming closer, to the infinite paradise in your veins,
> immense land, tireless, unfading…] (Cumbele 2016)

This moment embodies their hope for reimagining relations, not only with each other, but with victimizers, society at large and the territory of Colombia itself as a limitless life source. In spite of separation, subjugation, and death, normalized by coloniality/capitalism/patriarchy/modernity, they make a stand for the communitarian, nonviolent, world-making potential of conflict, opposing violence as the continual status quo. They slowly place their hands on one another's' shoulders, facing the audience, as if forming a protective shield or support system for the initial narrator, who remains front center. *Que la paz no nos cueste la vida [May peace not cost us our lives]*, she says, and is echoed by all. Their collective body enacts a feminine relationality that is vulnerable yet vital.

The intricate compilation of song, movement and text in this sequence encapsulates the affective push of *Paz Haré La* – the excess "push of life" in the face of violence, enacted from the varied, enduring position(s) of Colombian women. This mix of expressive vocabularies with the affective potential to transform politics and relations calls attention to *who* is allowed to exist in the public sphere and *how*. As anthropologist Dorinne Kondo warns, "affect may work differently for minoritarian subjects, whose access to the pleasures of fully dimensional humanity in the arts, as elsewhere, is structurally limited" and "such pleasures can be life giving,

while structural erasure and oppressive stereotypes can flatten liveliness" (2018, 15). *Paz Haré La* shows how coming together, in the spotlight, allows women to reclaim their human dignity and their creative life-force, not obliterating difference but reinforcing the ability to enact love-for-vitality, despite the war's attempt to wipe it out. The productive tension between narrative and affect here springs precisely from the interconnection between the 'female victim' positionality and the "push of life", which is not explained away, but resonates as *afecto.* While many readings of autobiographical, testimonial performances privilege narrative language, its meaning and its emotional impact on an audience, such an approach would miss the nuance of Ariza's work, as it would mean ignoring how the vital excess of affective intensity helps the narrative change us sensorially and energetically.

Philosopher Brian Massumi points out that "linguistic expression can resonate with and amplify intensity [affect] at the price of making itself functionally redundant" (1995, 86). Ariza and her collaborators work to avoid this, as I learned from watching a rehearsal of their choreographic process in relation to text, in which they tried not to reiterate the words they spoke through their movement, but rather punctuate them. When affective intensity is semiotically qualified as emotion, in the service of narrative, to move the dramatic action ahead, it becomes socially recognizable; emotion fixes an experience as subjective (Massumi 1995, 86-88). *Paz Haré La* plays with excess intensity that is not fully narrativized, but felt, as a driving force, not of the action of the play, but of life itself. I witnessed how the group movement sequences were created by generating tensions between what was said and what was moved in the space. A permeating disonance was created by this interplay between moving/doing and thinking/saying, which I tried to capture in my fieldnotes: *Many contradictory movements and voices in the space*

create a buzz, an energy that is shared. I even feel it in the audience. Someone's young daughter who is also watching can't contain her desire to get up and join in.

Meanwhile, the performance I attended transformed the raw creative energy of the rehearsal into a polished product. Frequent costume and light changes added a level of spectacle that raised the 'real life' aspect of the testimonies to a more theatrical register. At times I found myself forgetting that the performers were playing themselves, since their pasarela numbers were so well composed. This professionality is important to the group, to give their work validity, yet I felt the energy in rehearsal was higher and more engaging; there was less theatrical distance. The cast stopped and started their numbers, breaking out of 'character' when the facilitator gave them notes. I could see their relationships play out naturally between the moments of staged performance and appreciate how they encouraged one another to push through any mistakes. My experience as witness felt more intimate and the space of *afecto* felt more cohesive. In the performance, on the other hand, the moments that potentiated *afecto* occurred mainly during the group movement sequences, which asked the audience to feel rather than understand.

Figures 18 & 19: rehearsal images of *Paz Haré La.* Photo credit Sarah Ashford Hart

If Ariza's aim is for the national body to see itself as more whole, for those who have been left out of the picture to feel reflected in her work, and for the women in her Escuela de Mujeres to make this happen by taking an empowered, ebodied stance agains violence, I believe

it is achieved in *Paz Haré La* thorugh a specifically feminine kind of life-affirming relationality - a concept central in different ways to the two case studies that will follow. For Ariza, this requires both moving narrative and affective excess. A pause from listening to words allows for a more sensorial tuning in and then when we go back to listening to words, we are more primed to feel *as well as* understand. *Paz Haré La* thus creates a space for being/feeling differently together, where peacemaking means reclaiming the right to exist relationally, *loosing* ourselves within a collective body. As Massumi posits, affect "escapes confinement in the particular body whose vitality, or potential for interaction, it is" (1995, 96). When put into words, this affective escape "tends to take on positive connotations. For it is nothing less than the perception of one's own vitality, one's sense of aliveness, of changeability (often signified as 'freedom')" (Massumi 1995, 97). Affective escape, in this case *afecto*, allows bodies to become aware of themselves as *more-than* that which is already known in society, as sharing a vitality that exceeds limits.

In resistence to normalized, mysigonist violence that destroys communities, the *Paz Haré La* performers assert themseleves as inseparable from one another, their territory, and their differences. Female bodies of all ages and shapes take the stage for peace *as one,* enacting a unison that does not aim for sameness, finding strength in polyphonic action that embodies a feminist ethic of care. Importantly, the show does not end on a down note but infuses bodies with a jubilant energy, countering the pitiable, passive images of female victims in public discourse and formal peace negotiations; for the grand finale, the cast invites the audience to join them on stage and dance as a group, party style. Feeling how we can all take part in their dance of care-full solidarity shows us there is an alternative way forward for Colombia. This end/beginning brings me back to Jill Dolan's *Utopian Performatives* - fleeting moments of human connection and community with lasting effects; the residual *afecto* ripples out into the world, as present and

future possibility for a more hopeful way of relating (2005, 31-34). With this work, a bridge is bult between narrative/social and affective/embodied realms, precisely because the connections (re)generated make life more possible.

Feminine Relationality and Implicated Witnessing: Satizábal's *Antígonas*

It's raining again in the historic La Candelaria neighborhood. Carlos Satizábal opens a tall wooden door to let me in. I've been to this house before to meet with his partner, Patricia Ariza. They work together on projects like *Antígonas Tribunal de Mujeres,* which embodies feminine relationality in the public sphere, by drawing a connection between the Ancient Greek character of Antigone and the life experiences of the female victims in the cast, who continue to search for their disappeared loved ones, while the state refuses to take responsibility for their murders. Satizábal explains, *lo importante es la relación con la acción de las mujeres colombianas que son desobedientes y enfrentan el poder [the important thing is the relationship with action taken by Colombian women who are disobedient and confront power].* The piece is about female rebellion against patriarchy. Just as the classical Antigone disobeys Creon's royal order not to bury her brother, the Colombian Antigones enact rebellion not only against being confined to the house, but against the denial of burial rights for loved ones. Satizábal says that they turn the act of caring for family into a political act; they care for life beyond death by demanding the right to mourn publicly.

Ileana Dieguez, scholar of theatre, memory and violence, proposes that "turning mourning into a public event means much more than just displaying grief. It means to reclaim, to document, to testify…with tears and deeply moving words if necessary," as part of a *communitas* of pain - "a situation of encounter that is completely opposite to what the structures directly involved with law represent" - making individual pain a collective experience (2018, 51, 49). I

am interested here in how bodies being undeniably, collectively present in the theatre moves audiences to feel *implicated*, even without fully understanding the traumatic experiences expressed. This work is about healing collectively, challenging indifference and mobilizing change, to break cycles of violence. It models, in Dolan's words, "ways of communicating in a public sphere that might encourage us to take mutual responsibility for reimagining social behavior" (2005, 28). Moreover, it moves beyond critical thinking to enacting radical care (inspired by love-for-vitality), provoking a sense of connectivity that demands what I call *implicated witnessing* – a notion that emerges with Satizábal's work and is further developed in Chapter 4. This notion is inspired by Michael Rothberg's argument that the term *implication* "draws attention to how we are entwined with and folded into ("im-pli-cated in") histories and situations that suppress our agency as individual subjects;" Rothberg conceptualizes *implicated subjects* as "participants in and beneficiaries of a system that generates dispersed and uneven experiences of trauma and well-being simultaneously" (2017, 1). I posit that even though implication may not be fully represented in words, it can be *felt* as a visceral sense of relational response-ability (the ability and responsibility to respond).

Satizábal has learned through working with Ariza how feminists *han transformado la ética y la estética del cuidado de la casa en una acción política [have transformed the ethics and aesthetics of caregiving and homemaking into political action].*[114] Historically devalued and unpaid, the care labor assumed by women in domestic roles (and in recent decades outsourced from middle-class White(-*mestiza*) 'professional' women to underpaid working-class and (im)migrant/displaced women of color), is reappropriated in *Antígonas Tribunal de Mujeres* as

[114] Satizábal's feminist framework is a combination of second and fourth wave feminism (i.e., the aim of transforming patriarchy and confronting sexism as related to other forms of oppression) but does not necessarily extend to third wave feminism (i.e., postmodern perspectives). However, I do see traces of U.S. Third World Feminism (i.e., oppressed subjects seeking new ways of being in/with the world, recognizing allies across difference and creating community bonded by love) (Sandoval 1991, 15-16).

rebellious, disobedient resistance against long-standing patriarchal technologies of dominance and "unmournable death" (Dieguez 2013). Ariza explains why this creative work necessarily begins with women:

> Women are the ones who mourn, while men kill each other in war. More than 70% of the displaced population is made up of women. They are the ones who take care of the children, the sick, and the elderly. They are the ones who, with few assets and often without being able to bury their dead, must face being uprooted, which means losing everything and starting from scratch. (in "Vuelve el Teatro" 2015 – *my translation*)

Female victims' never-ending work to repair affective relations sustains life - of their own communities and others' - despite the violence of patriarchy,[115] which naturalizes while negating their vital role. By embodying a feminine relationality based in rebellious, radical care – cultivating and maintaining life-affirming relations –, these Antigones evoke the affective potential for a world where "this rich feeling of warmth, even of love, could be experienced regularly and effectively outside the theatre" (Dolan 2005, 14).

Antígonas Tribunal de Mujeres publicly reclaims a space of *afecto* denied by the state. The female victims on stage denounce the state terrorism that took their loved ones from them, as Satizábal puts it, moving their care labor from the domestic sphere into public view and demanding that *we all care* about systemic injustice and remember the disappeared (victimizers of course hope we forget, to keep their terrorism invisible and thus more powerful – i.e., it can happen any time anywhere, with no accountability). While Satizábal's work stresses the importance of caring for life (and death) as a politically rebellious act, it also naturalizes this as female labor. The role of caregiver and life-giver, emblemized in the figure of the mother or matriarch, is highly valued, even idolized, in Colombia, precisely because of the excessive

[115] As Paredes points out, patriarchy is a system of death that oppresses not only women but maintains the hierarchal order of privilege in society and ruptures the equilibrium of community by using the oppression of women as a model to oppress the rest of humanity (2014, 7).

presence of death. (I was treated with great care by everyone I met during my fieldwork because I was pregnant.) Being a mother in Colombia means respect along with pressure to fulfill the role, as well as vulnerability to loss (becoming yet another victim/survivor). Real change, however, would require *everyone* to practice radical care. If the feminine relationality exemplified on stage in Satizábal's *Antígonas* is a call for audiences to follow these Antigones' lead, surely it cannot be limited by gender; 'motherly love' needs to be felt as a more expansive practice of collective reciprocity across *all* bodies.

Satizábal himself made this clear when I asked him, *what can we learn from this idea of a feminine ethic – can it be applied to all bodies, men and women? Can it be expanded to another vision for the nation and society that is not patriarchal?* He replied:

> *Antígona es una obra que persiste y pervive, porque pervive, también, el poder patriarcal y una de sus formas más atroces de manifestarse que es la guerra, el autoritarismo y la insepultura…Al usar este mito y todas su relaciones y resonancias con los crímenes de guerra y del terrorismo de estado que vive Colombia, se produce conciencia…no produce conmiseración sobre ellas [las victimas], sino al contrario produce mucha amiración por su valor…y eso produce un cambio en el modo de pensar y en la consideración de lo que se cree es la verdad sobre la guerra colombiana.*
> *[Antigone is a play that persists and survives because patriarchal power also survives and one of its most atrocious forms of manifesting is war, authoritarianism, and the unburied dead…By using this myth and all its relationships and resonances with the crimes of war and state terrorism that Colombia is experiencing, awareness is raised…it does not produce pity [for victims] but on the contrary, it produces great admiration for their courage…and that produces a change in the way of thinking and new consideration of what is true about the Colombian war.]*

On one hand, calling for society to care about state terrorism, for Satizábal, relies on female victims' bodies. On the other hand, mythologizing these women's struggle by drawing a connection with *Antigone* does not sensationalize their suffering - i.e., depicting atrocities to evoke pity and shock, which is known in Colombia as *pornomiseria*. As cultural theorist Ruben

Yepes points out, metaphor can produce an affective transformation in the viewer that impacts future feelings and actions, with respect to the armed conflict (2018).[116]

The metaphoric myth of *Antigone* brings a more timeless perspective to testimonies of real events. For applied theatre scholar/practitioners Monica Prendergast and Juliana Saxton "this is the ethics of care in practice; the ability to honour participants' stories through the conceptual blending of fiction and non-fiction without sensationalizing or exploiting these stories for vicarious thrills" (2020, 11). This combination of genres could also be thought of as an expansion of testimonial theatre. As theatre theorist Ana Puga proposes, including poetic vocabularies and fictitious narratives that position 'character' as a synecdoche for a community, while still remaining linked to a situation of real injustice, offers a fictional approach to testimony that can *intensify* the connection with reality (in Sotomayor-Botham 2016). Satizábal posits that the moving power of *Antígonas* comes from the truth of both the epic and the testimonial. He clarifies:

> *La verdad del mito, como la verdad de ellas [las victimas] se vuelve otra cosa épica, en su dimensión - la resistencia, el dolor y la transformación del dolor en fuerza para denunciar o buscar y conmover [the truth of the myth, like their truth [the victims'], becomes epic in dimension – the resistence, the pain and the transformation of that pain into the strength to denounce or search and move others].*

The performers' real presence on stage demands the audience be present too, as part of an embodied encounter with the capacity to shift (inter)actions towards radical care.

While the epic-testimonial narrative calls for audiences to honor women's right to care for and mourn their loved ones, it does not make explicitly clear that the feminine relationality exemplified by female victims can be adopted by *all* bodies, regardless of gender. As Satizábal

[116] For Yepes, affecting the audience means producing a sentient relationship between viewers and victims (2018). His conceptualization of affect, however, remains within a subjective, social frame and does not spill outside of individuality, toward an understanding of excess affective life as pre-subjective vitality, which my framework of implicated witnessing attempts to do.

sees it, upon being displaced from their domestic role as caregivers, these women become activists, inciting collective care for dead and disappeared men. Moreover, they are *self-proclaimed* mothers, wives, daughters, sisters - givers of life, champions of love. They do not question the idea of being cast in the role of caregiver, nor the idea that it is women's job to care for men. What they are rebelling against is their presumed submissiveness and silence. As in the case of the Madres of the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, state-sanctioned assassinations and disappearances have moved them into the public sphere, where they have become emblematic figures, performing the role of 'female victim' in order to be seen and heard. Appearing as 'inoffensive' women, looking for their lost sons, husbands and fathers is a safety tactic (to stay off persecution); like the Madres, they position their 'female victim' bodies as both the archive and repertoire of state violence, demanding accountability, and transmitting traumatic memory to the next generation (Taylor 2015).

Femininity thus becomes a strategic place to speak from, transforming social respect for the matriarch into a politically potent presence that is both mythical and real - using 'beauty' to move audiences towards care, in Satizábal's terms. The somewhat problematic intersection of femininity, beauty and emotion is central to the aesthetic of the piece, which aims to compel audiences to stop forgetting about a never-ending tragedy. These Colombian Antigones show us that collective resistance to patriarchal violence is possible, precisely because they are typecast to mobilize 'motherly love'. They enact a force of creative (re)existence as a collective body, evoking a sense of interconnection - with each other and the audience - that goes beyond the limits of subjectivity and gender (without saying so). Tovar explains that through embodied group practices, a collective body is generated and a community connects energetically, producing mutual acknowledgement and care (2017, 9). *Antígonas Tribunal de Mujeres* is not

about questioning gender constructs, but a much more pressing issue for these women – fomenting an expressly feminine approach to resisting and disobeying patriarchal power by enacting radical care, which can potentially move others to co-create a more communitarian world where nonviolent, life-affirming relations are valued and reciprocated. This, while not said in so many words, can be felt on an embodied register.

The cast includes victims/survivors of four kinds of state-sanctioned crimes: members of the community organization Madres de Suacha (whose sons were disappeared by the military to meet state quotas for producing 'guerilla' corpses, supposedly killed in combat, but who were really among the over six-thousand 'falsely accused' (assassinated) young men from vulnerable communities); members of the Corporación Reiniciar, who have brought a case against the Colombian state for the political genocide against the Patriotic Union party, which they survived but many of their loved ones did not (the UP united many leftist political groups in the 80s and was seen as a threat by conservatives – more than six-thousand members were assassinated and more than five-hundred disappeared), a student leader who, like others, was a victim of political persecution; and members of the Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo, who have been threatened for defending human rights in Colombia by the Department of Security (DAS). Satizábal brought these female victims together because their stories too often go unheard; guerrilla warfare is more widely condemned and used to justify these state-sanctioned crimes, which have claimed many more lives with greater impunity.

Their creative process involved finding resonances between *Antigone* and their own lives, creating scenes inspired by Sophocles' play that reflect Colombia's current tragedy of bloodshed (Satizábal 2015). In the performance, each woman comes before the 'court' (the audience) to make her rights claim, briefly and passionately. One shows a picture of her murdered son, saying

that he couldn't have possibly worked for the guerrillas, as the military claimed, since he was severely mentally and physically disabled. Another woman holds up her son's shirt, saying it still smells like him. Another hangs a line of photographs across the stage – headshots of the UP members forcibly disappeared by paramilitaries – as she argues her case. *Where are they,* her husband and his comrades, she asks. A younger woman tells her story of being accused of 'terrorism' and imprisoned, via a video projected on a white shawl she holds up. These 'real' victims are not alone - they take the stage with trained actresses, but they speak for themselves, while the actresses perform scenes from *Antigone.* There are multiple Antigones because a single heroine could not represent the unseen masses.[117] The combination of monologues and chorus work creates the sense that the different events recounted are part of a shared experience. Between the testimonies there are lyrical transitions with music, movement, and/or projections that serve as a backdrop for the tragedy. In these choral moments, the line between 'victim' and 'actress' blurs. It is their coming together (as bodies and stories) and the blending of epic myth with contemporary reality that gives them the strength to stand up and speak out.

In the talkback after the performance I saw, one of the victims said she suffered stage fright, but the show helped her overcome that as well as the fear of persecution. Six bodies are stronger than one. It is their vulnerability and strength, as a *collective* female body, that gives their demand weight. This collectivity carries through to the individual narratives. In one scene, Luz Marina enters holding a woven bag of objects belonging to her forcibly disappeared,

[117] Maria Fradinger analyzes previous productions of *Antigone* by Ariza and Satizábal, in the context of the armed conflict:

> It may be the case that the proliferation of Antigones on the Colombian stage speaks to the proliferation of social agents involved in Colombia's particular case…It is true that Colombia's conflict can be seen under the larger frame of "state terrorism," but the extent to which the state has managed to involve the civilian population complicates analytic categories. Colombia's conflict is dispersed into a tri-partite structure, at the very least: the left-wing guerrillas, the military, and the paramilitary militias and their "self-defense groups". (2015, 3)

She adds that massacring campesinos has become a way to expropriate their land and that for Ariza and Satizábal, the cause of the conflict is the exclusion of the majority of the population from participation in public life (3). As land-based livelihoods become more and more precarious, campesinos' rights continue to be disregarded. Many women search the countryside for assassinated loved ones, whose bodies have been thrown into rivers or 'disappeared'. They too are Antigones.

mentally disabled son. As she tells us about him, she places the objects around the stage: his favorite toy, named after his favorite uncle; the bible he spent hours paging through even though he couldn't read. As she finishes the story of his life and what mattered to him, the other women enter, helping her to put the objects back in her bag. They transition into a movement sequence, crossing the stage in a star pattern, making defiant, abrupt gestures until out of breath. Photographs of the dead and disappeared are projected around the periphery of the playing area. Memory is made into a collective labor of love, demonstrating a fierce conviction for how the world *ought* to be - a world where life is valued, not disregarded, where we do not survive by ignoring others' suffering, but by turning it into a chorus that defiantly celebrates life in the face of death.

Satizábal adds, *"*with her son's objects, Luz Marina manages to go beyond denouncing the crime. She makes Fair [her son] present" (2016b, 3 – *my translation*). Her testimony is, in effect, made more 'real' by the undeniable, material *thingness* of Fair's belongings, which challenge the power of the state to make him disappear. This reflects a new approach for Satizábal, which emerged from his initial conversations with the cast about the importance of objects that had belonged to their lost loved ones. As new materialist Jane Bennett points out, people feel enchanted by *things* that produce affects in our bodies, strengthening or hindering our agentic capacities (2010). Satizábal visited some of the women's homes, where they told him stories that seemed to emanate from the objects themselves. He explains:

> *Una de ellas me hizo pasar a una habitación de la casa donde estaba la cama, la ropa, los juguetes y los objetos de sus hijos. Cada vez que tomaba un objeto, empezaba a contar historias de momentos que ella tenía guardados en su memoria. [One of them had me go into a bedroom in her house where her sons' bed, clothes, toys and objects were. Each time she touched an object, she started telling stories about moments she had stored in her memory.]*

From these memories, evoked by objects, *Antígonas Tribunal de Mujeres* began to take shape.

Throughout the piece, the lives of lost loved ones are both sanctified and mythologized, evoking a sense of their absent presence through objects: the starched texture of the linen shirt belonging to a deceased son held up to the light by his mother's hands', an oil painting from her childhood home that is all one women has left of her disappeared father, and the women's embrace in shared mourning, surrounded by the aura of these objects, sending an impulse to touch and be touched through the audience. These are not mere props, rather, they are real evidence of acts of state terrorism and relaciones afectivas. As Latin American theatre theorist Paola Hernandez points out, "the use of autobiography on stage accompanied by personal objects" affectively reconstructs the archive, "not as a repository of the past but a method to imagine possible futures" (2021, 10). These objects also help us feel how the excessive production of death by a system that destroys possibilities for cultivating and valuing life in diverse forms has perpetuated a vicious cycle (rather than letting death be a natural part of life). As Dieguez points out:

> [T]he representations of the absences, the staging of the theatrics of pain, the performativities displayed by the communities of mourners, all are forms of *action for life*…striving to give [the dead] a symbolic body against all the projects of disappearance and annihilation…making possible the conditions for our desire: to wish for life; to defeat death. (2018, 53 – *emphasis added*)

The absent presence of the dead in *Antígonas Tribunal de Mujeres* is a kind of haunting.[118] None of the male characters mentioned are represented on stage. Satizábal explained to me that he works with presence as opposed to representation, which he says is a tool used by politicians and the media to perpetuate the armed conflict and falsely depict its victims as perpetrators. He believes what is needed is the "public, poetic recounting of victims' lived

[118] As Montenegro says, "haunting is not reducible to memories as linguistically articulated narratives; it is an embodied affect generated by what is neither an absence nor a presence but exerts pressure over people—or it is an absence that is felt, and therefore a presence…[this] absence is a virtual presence remaining in materialities" (2020, 84).

experiences," which must include "the mysterious force of poetry that speaks to the deepest fibers of life" (2015, 257, 258 – *my translation*). So, while poeticizing the real is essential, we can also think of his work as emphasizing "the importance of presence," a key concept "for understanding the power of auto/biographical theatre" (Ward 2013, 7). Though the testimonial narratives in the piece have been (re)presented many times, it is their rootedness in memories emanating from the belongings of lost loved ones that gives them real presence. Moreover, poetizing this mourning ritual as an epic tragedy casts the audience as necessary witnesses, implicating us as part of the *action for* (or against) *life,* asking us to copresence the creation of a living archive.

The construction of collective memory is an ongoing struggle that is necessary in order to keep living in Colombia; it is a creative act of putting together the pieces, inevitably leaving holes, but also opening up new possibilities. In order to bear witness to traumatic memories, there must be investment in the power of language *as well as* recognition of affective excess, since testimony implies the relationship between the sayable and the unsayable (Agamben 2002). In the case of Luz Marina's story, words alone will never be enough to express such loss, such love; her son's belongings accompanying her on stage make his absence more visceral. Satizábal explains her testimony as more than the truth: "she speaks and her words evoke the mysterious and magnetic gifts of poetry and the enlightened action that defies the uncontested powers of death" (2016b, 3 – *my translation*). The role of the audience is to co-witness this creative action for life and reaffirm the human dignity of those forsaken by the law and official narratives, not only by hearing their truth but also by feeling a vital connection with them. We are asked to acknowledge our own presence not only as witnesses but as co-creators - of the legacy of violence, the quest for justice, and the struggle to coexist and still remember.

The path to peace is charted not only by changing discourse, but also by cultivating life-affirming relations; feeling more connected with others through creative acts of expressing/witnessing makes life more livable (a premise I develop further in the next chapter). In essence, the desire to speak (and to listen) comes from a need to feel more connected. As I noted in my journal, *when I talk to the baby in my belly, it is the act of talking to her and not what I say that matters, because it generates a connection between us. Even without knowing if she hears me or not, I am assured on some level that feeling a vibrational resonance matters. Our connection matters. It is a joy we share – our aliveness. It is also our vulnerability to one another – the potential loss of connection, the potential for harm.* Audiences attend the theatre in order to be moved by the *live vibration* of the words spoken as well as their meaning. Speaking/listening to others live invites awareness of embodied copresence - feeling our existence as relational and interdependent, not entirely individual nor separate.

When Mayra, a student activist falsely accused of terrorism, speaks her truth to the 'court', her recorded voice wafts over the theatre speakers - intimate yet strangely out-of-body. She tells us of a friend she made in prison, another student who was also falsely accused. Her friend's shawl becomes her sounding board. She holds it up in front of her and a video of herself remembering her friend is projected on it, highlighting their lost yet lingering connection. She lowers the shawl, now speaking live, to dedicate an Afro-Caribbean traditional song (*bullerengue*) to her friend, who she never found again. Her song asks us to hear, in a more visceral way, what their (dis)connection means. It was Mayra who brought song into the piece; her clear, piercing, sorrowful voice became a refrain, channeling the absent presence of the dead into an intensity of *afecto* that pushes onward. Satizábal explains, *Mayra le compuso un bullerengue al hijo de Lucerito y al final de la obra la cantó; eso produjo en el público un*

equilibrio emocional y por eso dejamos que después del aplauso se canté la canción [Mayra composed a bullerengue for Lucerito's son and at the end of the play she sang it; this produced an emotional balance in the audience and that's why we sing the song after the applause]. The bullerengue brings performers and audience to a hopeful place, to be able to leave the theatre feeling that fighting for justice is possible, rather than remaining weighed down by loss. The finale is a joyful, choral mourning celebration that engulfs all – the reverberation of the cast's voices relieves individual pain by sharing it, as a pleasurable resonance across bodies.

Figures 20 & 21: choral scenes in *Antígonas Tribunal de Mujeres*. Photo credit Guillermo Torres (2021)

Scholar/practitioners of performance and conflict transformation Cynthia Cohen, Roberto Gutierrez Varea and Polly Walker argue that theatre in contexts of peace and reconciliation creates spaces of mourning and healing, spaces to acknowledge responsibility and express remorse, and creative spaces that "facilitate intercommunal relationships and recognition of interdependence"; they point out that "beyond the time of the performance itself, the transformations accomplished in dramatic works and rituals affect individuals, relationships, communities and whole societies" (2011, 151). In this sense, we can see how the impact of *Antígonas Tribunal de Mujeres* starts from female victims being seen and heard while they mourn and heal, and how this communal practice extends to the audience, who have the opportunity to acknowledge our own response-ability and interdependence; radical care is not in

fact limited to female victims, but they show us it is needed to resist the paradigm of violence. Ana Puga adds that the "physical presence" of the testimonial performer "creates a greater sense of immediacy and urgency" that "may be accompanied by a heightened sense of responsibility as spectators begin to see themselves as witnesses to a significant event, witnesses with a duty to acknowledge its significance and respond accordingly" (2012, 198). Our role is to listen, to remember, to be present, not apathetic and to respond. Satizábal believes if we are moved to care, we will change our ways of thinking and acting. There is not a specific emotion we are supposed to feel, just that this tragedy affects us all and we must do something.

Casting the audience as the court to whom the Antigones make their human rights claims draws a link with the very origin of democracy and Western theatre. Catharsis, in this case, is not vicarious, but a direct call for us to (inter)act differently. We are addressed as both judge and jury, implicating us as silent accomplices to state terror and as potential defenders of justice. We are asked to not only judge right from wrong but consider our own contribution to a society that has permitted such atrocities. Yet theatrical convention limits our ability to respond. (I will address this problem further in Chapter 4). We remain silent, obedient theatregoers, failing in our implied capacity to declare a just verdict. In fact, we are expected to fail. We stand accused of witnessing a collective call to action but not responding. We are made answerable to the violence referenced on stage *not* via active participation in the drama, but a heightened awareness of our positionality as entwined with that of the others present, even if we do nothing. We are asked to bear witness to our own failure as witnesses. We must take this provocation home with us. Will we continue down the path of doing nothing or take action for life?[119]

[119] Satizábal says the piece provokes the realization that we have ignored glaring human rights violations that have occurred right before our eyes. This is also true for foreign audience members like myself. As a US-citizen, I am a beneficiary of privileges that are defended via state-sanctioned violence against Colombian 'others'. US-trained torturers, employed as part of the plan to eradicate communism, and the US-instigated 'war on drugs', which has brought more violence to rural areas, are examples of necropolitical policies that maintain inequality, locally and globally.

On the most essential level, audiences attend *Antígonas Tribunal de Mujeres* in order to feel something in a shared space, to 'be moved' as Satizábal says—not only emotionally (giving names to sensations) but *existentially.* We want to feel the world is/could be different. There is an important lesson to be learned about how to work through loss via celebration, reinforcing the pueblo's power to resist normalizing violence, thanks to the tenacious labor of love enacted by enraged mothers, sisters, wives and grandmothers. The chorus of Antigones demonstrates how the collective tragedy of the armed conflict in Colombia must be expressed in multiple voices that resonate through many kinds of bodies in order for relations to heal. Satizábal's aim of transforming pain into strength through poeticization generates a collective, embodied experience that sensitizes audiences to the interdependence of our existence. By witnessing the performers' transformation, we become entangled in it. Feminine relationality is felt as a mode of communal survival, precisely because it has been devalued by coloniality/patriarchy/ capitalism/modernity's paradigm of death. Though we will never fully understand others' traumatic experiences, we are asked to *feel-with*, to begin to break the cycle of violence by keeping ourselves present as witnesses. Opening ourselves up to sensorial impacts allows us to become more response-able to our role in this epic-real story, from a more connected, more implicated position - to witness not only the tragedy, but the creative push to live-with exemplified by 'female victims', and so doing, revendicate our own capacity for radical care, with the potential to become mobilized for justice.

While there is much scholarship on Satizábal's *Antígonas* (Chirinos 2015; Cifuentes-Louault 2018; Marín 2018; Noguera 2020), none addresses how the audience feels.[120] For me,

[120] I base my analysis on my own relational experience as a witness. While other scholars in the field engage in audience-based research using surveys or interviews in order to know spectators' thoughts and feelings, my research is not ethnographic in this sense. I make a theoretical claim about *afecto* from a phenomenological perspective. As a felt sense of connection and care, *afecto* is not something that can be proven; it is not a subjective experience, but a pre-subjective intensity of feeling that allows 'my' body to become part of a collective body.

the sensation of 'being moved' was more like chills than tears. I attended *Antígonas Tribunal de Mujeres* with my Colombian husband and his parents. Afterwards, I discovered that my in-laws were in tears and I saw my husband was visibly shaken. *These are stories we know but have repressed*, he told me. *We feel them intensely because we choose to live without remembering them and here we are forced to hear and see and feel.* This was an experience I could not share as a foreigner. In fact, I was not noticeably moved by the testimonies. There was something about their (re)presentational quality - the projection of voice, the poetic lilt, the memorized text - that distanced me from their 'realness'. It was the moments of group song and movement that evoked a sense of presence - a tingling of the skin, a porosity, my body becoming permeated by the charged atmosphere. This sensation moved me towards radical care - it was impossible to feel detached from the collective female body on stage. I believe the rest of the audience felt it too. The story was not new to most people there, but perhaps they had not heard it in *this* way, expressed through the copresence of real bodies and objects enacting the epic proportions of feminine relationality needed to continue living. Perhaps my husband and his parents have forgotten about the performance, but maybe the next time they are reminded of the 'falsos positivos' [falsely accused] or the UP genocide, they will feel the chills or the lump in their throat that they felt during *Antígonas Tribunal de Mujeres* - a physical memory that brings them back to that sense of implication and connection. I know I do.

The Female Body as the 'First Territory': Conde's reparations

As she maneuvers Bogotá traffic, Gaviota Conde tells me about her mother. We discuss the different roles femininity has taken over the generations in our families as we drive to the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, where she will give a workshop for masters students in

research-creation, demonstrating her method for working with female victims of the armed conflict. In the classroom, the students are seated on one side and the invited guests, like me, on the other. To help us connect - with ourselves and each other - the first activity Conde facilitates involves touching our own hands and arms, exploring minute sensations. It is a slow, guided exercise that requires introspection - each in their own process. She then asks us to share our experience of the exercise in words, breaking the sense of isolated bubbles of concentration to connect through language; even though putting our sensations and their significance into words is reductive, in a way, the intention of communicating something intimate moves us into a shared space of *afecto*. Conde describes this relational transformation as follows:

> *Llega el cuerpo de rígido al momento de iniciar el taller, con unas máscaras, unas posturas súper a la defensiva…Luego cuando empezamos a avanzar en los ejercicios pasa que la gente cambia el tono de voz. Se vuelve más dulce, habla más pausado, profundiza en las conversaciones…se abrazan...cuando te abrazan ya no te quieren soltar. La forma de relacionarse corporalmente cambia.*
> *[At the beginning of the workshop, bodies arrive rigidly, with a defensive posture, wearing masks…Later, when we start getting into the process of the exercises, people's tone of voice changes - becomes sweeter. They speak more slowly. The conversation deepens...People hug...And when they hug you, now they don't want to let you go. There is a change in the physical way of relating.]*

Participants go from not wanting to open up to not wanting to let go of one another; that sense of connection may dissipate when the workshop ends but it remains a relational possibility.

The second exercise she facilitated enhanced awareness of our physical and emotional needs and allowed us to find relief by making our own symbolic choices. First, we unwound balls of red string while moving around the space, each retracing our life path. Conde then placed yoga matts on the floor for us to sit on and told us to use the string to make a protective barrier around ourselves. Each person made a different kind of barrier – some close to their bodies, some far away. Next, she handed us each a colored cloth to add to our barrier. I was six months pregnant and sitting on the floor was giving me chills on this rainy evening, so I gladly used my

cloth to keep warm. Conde made us each feel cared for, providing the space, time, and symbolic resources for us to care for ourselves in our own way. When came time for reflection, I felt shy and was not sure what to say. Giving meaning to our physical sensations seemed to also mean giving meaning to our lives, setting high stakes. Others in the group were more ready to open up. There were tears and laughter; past and present experiences bubbled to the surface. Even though I did not speak up, I was affected and my presence as a listener affected those speaking. Even before words were spoken, there was a collective softening. By listening to our own bodies first, we were prepared to actively listen to each other.

Conde's method links an ethics of radical care with a practice of (relational) self-care – taking time to breathe, relax, and listen to the (collective) body, recognizing oneself as viscerally connected with others. Awareness of our Vincularidad as deserving care was established through a process of turning inward to open outward.[121] It was not only expressing/witnessing personal narratives but feeling how affects moved through and between bodies that fomented a sense of interdependent self-care. Becoming sensitized to our capacity to affect and be affected also meant vulnerability to being undone. *Cuidado.* When we walked our life journeys, our strings entangled. But we could protect ourselves as much or little as we wanted when we constructed our barriers. The first step was gaining a sense of security in our own skin, in relation to others - being not exactly *with* but *beside.* This being beside then transitioned into *being-with* - becoming one with the group, part of a collective body, while maintaining an interior sanctuary. What emerged was a relationality that defied total self-containment and affirmed each life as invaluable to all.

[121] As Walsh and Mignolo explain, for Andean Indigenous thinkers, "vincularidad is the awareness of the integral relation and interdependence amongst all living organisms (in which humans are only a part) with territory or land and the cosmos. It is a relation and interdependence in search of balance and harmony of life in the planet" (in Winget 2019, 8).

Conde's work expands the idea of feminine relationality developed through the work of Satizábal and Ariza, making it specifically about humanization, in a decolonial sense akin to Buen Vivir.[122] Her workshops offer a space for women to be together differently, to *be-with*, as a possible source of relief from the drain of selfless care work. The trajectory of the workshop moves from embodied awareness towards (optional) testimony, as opposed to the other way round, as in Satizábal and Ariza's work; while they create (re)presentations of feminine relationality that intervene in Colombia's culture of violence, Conde goes a step further to create spaces of encounter that offer an intimate experience of this relationality. Embodied awareness is expressed and witnessed, but testimony is not required (while for Ariza and Satizábal it is central). Moreover, Conde's method does not require public performance for expressing/ witnessing how (relational) self-care is essential to a radical ethics of care. Her focus on the 'body as territory' first and meaning-making second allows for reimagining aesthetics in terms of the capacity for physical sensitivity and the creation of meaning therein,[123] as an alternative to representational aesthetics. Reflecting on one's sensations together with others in her workshop not only gives them meaning but leads to a sense that our most intimate sentient capacity is always already relational, subjective yet inseparable from all life.

When Conde facilitates a body-mapping exercise, she asks us to draw our bodies on small sheets of paper. There are about fifteen people present, mostly women, ranging from early 20s to late 40s. We draw symbols for each of the six primary emotions (anger, sadness, disgust, fear, joy and surprise) and how they are felt in the body during specific years of our lives (first

[122]The Andean indigenous notion of Buen Vivir offers a more communitarian alternative to modern ideas of development and individual rights defined within a neoliberal world order. It requires working for the communal needs of the earth, humans and nonhumans, for the good of all life, rather than prioritizing an autonomous, individualized idea of wellbeing.

[123] Sonia Castillo, who was one of Conde's professors, uses the term *estesis* in Spanish to refer to the corporeal condition of existence, in the sense of perceiving physical stimulations; she explains *estesis* as "the condition of receptivity or porosity – i.e membrane-like – of all living beings" and adds that Katya Mandoki understands aesthetics as the study of *estesis* (2015, 137-139 – *my translation*).

35-40, then 30-35, then 25-30 years old and so on, all the way back to birth). Conde asks how these emotions marked or impacted us over the years. As opposed to the body-mapping exercise described in the previous chapter, which focused on migration and sensation in relation to place, the focus here is on transformation over time. Though we are not expected to share our drawings (which we did in Performing Migration, on giant paper) this exercise similarly facilitates self-awareness and embodied copresence in an intimate space of *afecto* that can only be perceived by experiencing it - individually and collectively, subjectively and pre-subjectively. Here, like in Yolo Teatro, it is enough to share a creative space, without showing any kind of product.

Figure 22: image of my body map drawn in Conde's workshop.

Photo credit Sarah Ashford Hart

I am interested here in how the sense of *being-with* I felt in Conde's workshop allows for experiencing life differently for a moment – a connection that lingers – and why this foments a feminine, life-affirming, humanizing kind of relationality. Conde says women often neglect their own wellbeing to care for others, which creates a need to address how emotions produced by violent relations remain present in the body. (This of course looks different for the middle class Bogotana students in the workshop I attended than for the displaced female victims Conde usually engages.) She describes her method of 'reparations from the body' as an intervention into socially conditioned corporeal practices of victimization. It begins with sharing an intimate

process of embodied self-care among women and leads to the resignification of life itself. Patriarchy separates women from their connection with each other and their creative life-force (Gutierrez et al. 2020). In resistance to this, Conde cultivates feminine ways of relating that she says are humanizing. That is, rather than the modern/colonial 'human', conceptualized as the autonomous individual, whose humanity is constructed by reducing relations to material production, humanization here can be understood as practicing relations that sustain life (de Sousa Santos 2015). The kind of humanization Conde seeks is communal, affirming all lives as interdependent. Julieta Paredes adds, "we start from community as the inclusive principle of caring for life," which cannot be forsaken in the service of autonomous individuality (2013, 8-9). The femenine relationality cultivated in Conde's work can be understood as a contextually Colombian feminist practice that reveals the damage done by colonial/modern (patriarchal/capitalist) relations and how they can be transformed *from the female body.*

Conde explains:

> *La pregunta de cómo nos podemos relacionar desde lo femenino es muy compleja porque no sabemos. Nos toca construirla día a día…Pienso en útero. Pienso en creación. Pienso en calorcito. Pienso en fluidez. [The question of how we can relate from the feminine is very complex because we don't know. We must construct it from day to day…I think of the uterus. I think of creation. I think of warmth. I think of fluidity.]*

Though feminine relationality is not limited to biological maternity, if we recognize that all lives are inseparable from the earth, caring for life becomes a labor of love for the mother-of-all, a vital response-ability shared across difference. While Colombia's armed conflict destroys life-worlds, imposing excessive death, separation and sameness on lively, biodiverse, heterogeneous territories, revaluing the female body as the 'first territory' – of subjugation, resistance and healing – emphasizes how the creative force of life animates continual transformation, via a shared somatic sensitivity, a shared skin. In Paredes' terms, skin is continuous, shared by all

living beings as part of a single body, the *Pachamama*; the external limit of our different bodies (the skin) is thus not in fact a border separating us, as we are made to believe by the patriarchal, individualist paradigm (in Guzmán & Triana 2019). Conde's work offers a space where the skin can feel more porous, without over-exposure, and the damage done to female body-territories can be recognized in order to heal, relationally, fomenting ways to *criar la vida con amor [nurture life with love]*. This kind of 'motherly love' means *not* meeting violence with hatred, which perpetuates the cycle of injury. Rather, responding to hatred with love can "banish the hatred" (de Spinoza 2009, 203), potentiating lasting peace based in 'no repetición' [never again].

Female victims learn to transform their body-territories in response to violence, to continue living by caring for life - a capacity essential to peacemaking. Conde clarifies:

> *Ese cuerpo al ser desplazado ha tenido de cambiar varias veces de territorio…les fueron quitando cosas no solo materiales, sino que también les fueron quitando la alegría, la esperanza, la posibilidad de cuidar a sus hijos…de poder relacionarse con otros de una manera natural…"Mi cuerpo cambió" [dicen]…"Fue duro, terrible, pero me [fortaleció]." [That body, upon being displaced, has to change territories many times…losing not only material possessions, but also joy and hope, the possibility of caring for children, of being able to relate with others in a natural way…[The women say,] "My body changed…it was hard, but it made me stronger."]*

Displaced women often wind-up working care labor jobs in urban areas, a mode of survival they call 'guerrearse la vida', redefining the term *guerrero* [warrior] from a feminine perspective - a non-violent *guerrera* who struggles to care for life rather than destroying it. Remaking their life-worlds requires a capacity for transforming violent relations into relaciones afectivas, which in Conde's work is recognized as a strength that heals communities. This can be understood in terms of de Sousa Santos' epistemology of the south - reclaiming ways of knowing, being and relating emergent from groups that have suffered systemic destruction, oppression, and discrimination caused by capitalism, colonialism, and the naturalization of inequality (2011). Reclaiming this capacity uplifts guerreras as the axes (re)orienting webs of relations.

I believe Conde's approach has the potential to surpass gendered essentialisms; I propose we can expand her idea of the female body as the 'first territory' - *territorio sagrado en donde se inscribe la historia del sujeto [sacred territory where the history of the subject is inscribed*] - to account for "gendered dualisms – nature, culture, body, mind, subject, object, resource, agency, and others – that have been cultivated to denigrate and silence certain groups of human as well as nonhuman life" (Alaimo 2008, 240). New materialist Stacy Alaimo locates agency not in individual subjectivity, but in the constant, complex, intra-active, transformation constituent of the matter of life (2008). In the context of Colombia, the female body in particular cannot be separated from the land, because both have been dominated and dispossessed using the same strategies of extraction and enclosure.[124] While the interdependence of all life can be manipulated to engender inequality, being respone-able to it means recognizing that territory is not 'outside' our bodies. The body is not *in* territory. Territory *is* the body - not separate from the 'natural' world nor human society but made by/with them in a continual process of (ex)change. In this sense, the process of changing territories Conde refers to above can be thought of as a transformative, embodied process of world-making via relational movement (from victimization to healing) and the 'subject' as symbiotic with all life.

In Colombia, the violence of displacement is enacted through sexual violence against women, as a way to expropriate their territories (Hernández et al. 2015, 412). The violence of displacement is not just patriarchal in the sense that "Colombia's armed conflict is essentially between men, who are the majority of those pushing the guns" but also because "women have been displaced in greater proportion than men" - most of all women from minority ethnic groups

[124] Violence against women and the earth is a political strategy that aims to stop community-based movements in defense of territory and practices of reproducing life (Gutierrez et al. 2020, 64-65). Yet the possibility of (re)creation has always existed as a feminine capacity that has been negated but can be recuperated in order to transform the world (Gutierrez et al. 2020, 70).

(Hernández et al. 2015, 410-412 – *my translation*). Expulsion from ancestral territories damages the sense of ethnic identity, which in Colombia is rooted in a communal, place-based way of life; displaced people in urban areas are not only confronted with discrimination but must adapt to a 'modern' (colonial), more individualist paradigm. Decolonial scholar Arturo Escobar adds that "territorialized" communities have maintained the art of living by *feeling-thinking* with territory,[125] despite colonial/modern (patriarchal/capitalist) attempts to destroy their life-worlds (2014, 16). Moreover, life is relational and interdependent not only for certain groups or situations, but for all beings everywhere (Escobar 2014, 109). While men, gender-nonconforming people and many other lives are harmed by patriarchal violence, this research focuses on creative work with female victims. Importantly, Conde does not presume to 'heal' participants in her workshops; she provides space for enhancing *their* healing practices, recognizing how their body-territories have transformed and how this transformation (re)builds worlds, relations and selves.

There are notable resonances here with Aimee Cox's idea of *shapeshifting*, which reflects how Black girls' experience of Detroit is a daily choreography that transforms the affect of the spaces they inhabit and registers its effects on their bodies (2015). As Cox writes it, Black girls' creative power of relational self-making, pushing against socially constructed labels, emerges from their sense of their own humanity as enacted in the pursuit of full lives, despite dehumanizing structures.[126] Displacement engenders agential transformations, as a starting point for self-care, leading to the creation of new life-worlds that affirm collective humanity.

[125] Escobar locates the now common use of the term 'territorio' [territory] as originating with Latin American movements in the late 80s and early 90s, when indigenous, afro-descendent and campesino/a groups in Bolivia, Ecuador, Perú, Colombia and Brazil re-signified debates around territory (as opposed to 'land') and gained political visibility, contributing to the Zapatista vision that without the material and cultural conditions for the reproduction of life (i.e. territory) there can be no human dignity (2014, 82).
[126] Cox's community dance practice makes space for Black girls to be more than "disenfranchised citizens", as complex, vibrant, interconnected beings who make their world as much as they are made by it (2015).

Similarly, Conde's work is essentially about humanizing the self as relational. She extends this humanizing relationality to all life, saying:

> *Para mi sentirme humana ha sido más una conexión con todo lo que existe - desde la conexión con la tierra hasta la conexión con los otros seres humanos y no humanos. Cosa que me da mucha más vida…es más comunitario. [For me, feeling human has been more of a connection with everything that exists – from the connection with the earth to the connection with other human beings and nonhumans. This gives me more life…its more communitarian.]*

This sentiment is inspired by indigenous, Afro-Colombian and campesina ontologies, in which territories are space-times of the human community's interrelation with the natural world (Escobar 2014). As Escobar points out, one of the most damaging inventions of modernity is "the idea that we exist as separate, autonomous beings" (113). Conde does not negate society's belief in individuality; she values re-signifying individual identity as well as experiencing the self as relational. This reflects a neo-indigenous approach to relationality in the modern world.

When I was seven months pregnant, I accompanied Conde to a women's group of neo-Muisca tejedoras [weavers].[127] Traditional bag weaving is an ancestral practice of reflection and connection that informs Conde's facilitation work. As women weave, they put their intentions into each stitch and share this process, which has been re-learned by *mestizos/as* like Conde, who want to reconnect with their Muisca roots. The bags [mochilas] they weave represent the uterus of each woman (the female life-giving potential) and the earth (the mother-of-all). I was encouraged by the group to weave a mochila for my baby's placenta to be buried in, which gives the child a sense of rootedness in a territory and allows the *madre* [mother earth] to recognize

[127] The Muiscas were the original inhabitants of the Andean plateau that is now the city of Bogotá and the region of Cundinamarca; it is said that most Bogotanos have some Muisca genealogy. The leaders of the neo-indigenous Muisca movement have studied with other indigenous nations in Colombia, such as the Koguis and Witotos, whose communities, ways of life and worldviews have not been erased the way the Muiscas' were; these leaders have become ordained by the indigenous networks of Colombia as Muisca 'abuelos' (spiritual leaders and keepers of tradition) and are now teaching others how to practice forgotten Muisca traditions, while still living in the 'modern' world of the city.

and protect her.[128] (I wove the mochila and the placenta was buried in the paramo highlands near Bogotá, but that is another story.) Sharing this experience with Conde was essential for me to be able to feel how feminine, life-affirming relations can enhance a sense of interdependence with nature and that this can be a humanizing practice, sanctifying the female body as the 'first territory'. It is from this perspective that Conde approaches working with female victims, to heal scars of contemporary *and* historical (colonial/patriarchal/capitalist/modern) violence. In her workshops, listening/feeling and being listened to/felt without judgement, on an embodied register, allows the modern self to be redefined and expanded through the experience of co-witnessing as a collective body-territory that is shaped by and gives shape to complex, vital relaciones afectivas.

Conde's approach stems from living within a culture of violence, as a Colombian woman, and knowing the fuerza [strength] needed to find other ways of relating. She is also aware that the idolization of motherhood as 'The Source' of relaciones afectivas can put pressure on women (like herself) who do not assume a traditional maternal role. For many of the displaced women she works with, working in the care labor industry means navigating a complicated web of affective and economic ties, which can constrain their capacity to care for their own families. Yet finding ways to adapt to these challenges, remake themselves and build alternative networks of care can be an opportunity for transformation – of themselves and their relational worlds. Colombian anthropologist and queer theorist Camila Esguerra highlights not only the violence enacted against Colombian female (and non-cisgender 'femme') displaced people and (im)migrants in the care industry but also their rebellion and resistance:

> Their stories show me that surviving and making life [*el hacer vivir*] between borders – because all of these people make many others live, without them the world would not

[128] In the neo-Muisca community, *madre* is used to address women in conversation (i.e., "hola madra, ¿como estás?") as well as to refer to the earth (la madre tierra).

> turn –, despite the expulsions that once begun never end and the precarious care work they realize, is an unspeakable rebellion against the apparatuses of death assembled through colonization and globalization (2019, 100 – *my translation*).

Esguerra offers *el hacer vivir* as a relational alternative emergent from the daily practices of displaced/(im)migrant women (and femmes). Conde's workshops enhance this radical, rebellious, reciprocal kind of care and reinforce its value, as a capacity essential to healing damaged relations, which necessitates caring for the female body as the 'first territory'.

She was motivated to develop an embodied approach to reparations because most workshops for victims take a psychological approach (i.e., healing individuals by talking through their personal stories of victimization). Wary of how this kind of talking cure can re-inscribe relations of violence,[129] and miss the centrality of the female body as the 'first territory', Conde places more emphasis on what is felt than what is said. In her workshops, healing is embodied, not only narrative-based, and collective, not only individualized; what is healed is not just trauma but the culture of violence. She explains:

> *En la sociedad en general a lo que estamos acostumbradas es a como atacarnos entre mujeres, pero cuando encuentras una palabra solidaria, un abrazo solidario, una mirada sin juzgar, ver ese femenino de otra forma también ayuda. [In society generally women are used to attacking each other, but when you can share words or an embrace in solidarity, exchange a look without judgement, it helps to see femininity in a new way.]*

She facilitates a space of *afecto* by care-fully (re)creating energetic connections that extend beyond victimization towards more (decolonial) humanizing feminine relations. It is important to her that participants do not feel reduced to the label of 'victim' – ascribed in part by their very

[129] This is the danger of imposing a supposedly universal Western definition of trauma in which "traumatic experiences must be retold and mastered" because, as Stef Craps warns, "in collectivist societies individualistic approaches may be at odds with the local culture" (2013, 36, 41). Craps continues:

> Moreover, by narrowly focusing on the level of the individual psyche, one tends to leave unquestioned the conditions that enabled the traumatic abuse, such as political oppression, racism, or economic domination. Problems that are essentially political, social, or economic are medicalized, and the people affected by them are pathologized as victims without agency, sufferers from an illness that can be cured through psychological counselling. The failure to situate these problems in their larger historical context can thus lead to psychological recovery being privileged over the transformation of a wounding political, social, or economic system. (41)

participation in a workshop for 'female victims'. She hopes they can see themselves as 'survivors', emphasizing interdependent rather than individual survival. Like Ariza, she values how victims come to acknowledge all they have learned in order to survive traumatic experiences and recognize the vital capacities they contribute to the collective peace effort.

When victims are interviewed as part of the official reparations process, they must show proof of the harm they have suffered, telling a story of their lives that is reduced to 'el hecho violento' [the experience of violence]. This does not account for how their body-territories have had to repair themselves, in relation to others, and it creates the illusion of the state caring for victims (materially), while disregarding how caring for life (theirs and others) is an essential labor performed by female victims. Rather than staging their stories for an audience (the public or the state), participants in Conde's workshops co-witness a shared healing process, which extends to their relational worlds. This approach does not intend to change discourses of collective memory (nor garner material reparations) but facilitate an intimate, embodied experience of feminine relationality - of reparative, humanizing interdependence (in the decolonial sense). One might wonder whether this is even possible when we begin from unequal positionalities. Conde, like myself, as well intentioned as we might be, as academic artist/researchers working with vulnerable communities to which we do not belong, occupy a position of great privilege. Conde is a middle-class White-*mestiza* - a Bogotana who has not been directly affected by armed violence nor displacement. However, her work, like mine, is not about humanizing the 'other' in a charitable way; it is about humanizing our *selves* as responsible to our interconnectedness with others. By fomenting the collective capacity of female victims to heal the damage done by violent relations in Colombia, Conde's work reinforces an exemplary

route to peace from below, mobilizing *afecto* via practices of *being-with* that soften but do not erase perceived separateness.

This is distinct from Ariza and Satizábal's work, because rather than creating a performance to affect others, the outcome is a transformation in how participants feel. Conde facilitates an "aesthetic of care", in James Thompson's terms, which "draws attention to our reciprocal relations with others" so that autonomy is seen as "partly illusionary", and value is placed on "a felt responsibility for the other," which manifests as "love, affection, or trust" and moves towards "viewing positive and caring relations" as a source of justice (2015, 434). For Conde, a radical ethics (and aesthetics) of care extends to a Vincularidad with all life and necessarily begins from (relational) self-care; this is collectively embodied through a group process, in which female victims care for their body-territories as a sacred, creative force of life with the capacity to heal damaged relations, setting a precedent for nonviolence. Thompson adds:

> The emerging connections between individuals coalescing in this process have an aesthetics – a shape, a feel, sensation and affect. This does not exist within one particular person or object of the work, but appears in-between those involved, so that there is a sensory quality of the process and outcome that cannot be disaggregated from the collective effort…*the show is not always the thing…*aesthetic value is found in co-created moments and not only in public display. (438)

On one hand, Conde's workshop process might be too short-lived for Thompson's liking, as she usually works with groups for a series of just six sessions. On the other hand, the feeling of *being-with* I experienced in just one workshop session with Conde generated a lingering sense of the potential for becoming more connected without diminishing difference. Free from the pressures of creating a performance product (which can limit the space of co-creation in order to script a show), Conde's method can evolve with each group's process. It is thus a method of "crafted caring" that is "continuously modified as it is practiced", to cultivate mutual regard

(Thompson 2015, 437). In this way, she facilitates the co-development of an embodied practice of reparations. Like the female body-territory, this practice is shaped by, while (re)shaping, its relational world, through processes of transformation brought about by connections with others, experiences of violence and strategies of (collective) survival.

Conclusion

Ariza, Satizábal and Conde offer contextually Colombian approaches to theatre facilitation that foment feminine relationality in response to the violence of the armed conflict, which is enacted on women's bodies via patriarchal practices of obliterating the other to gain territorial control. In different ways and to different degrees, their facilitation methods cultivate *afecto,* through moments of collective bodying enmeshed in memory narratives.[130] This allows for witnessing in an embodied way that potentiates visceral responsiveness and radical care. Their projects all create an "aesthetics of care", in Thompson's terms, where "the aim is to cultivate the understanding that regard for others is central to making the world a better place – where remaining the bystander is an affront to shared feelings of mutual concern" (2015, 439). Ariza and Satizábal's projects focus on the witnessing that occurs in the audience; the publicly performed collectivity of women's bodies and voices in their productions is more outward facing than the intimate co-presence experienced in Conde's workshops, which moves participants towards *being-with* (without an external audience).

[130] In Latin America generally, the line between collective creation and community theatre facilitation is not clearly defined. *Afecto* is key to any collaborative process, however, and when it is made central, as with the projects discussed here, the work becomes clearly distinct from more commercial projects in which spaces of *afecto* can get closed down under the pressure to produce a marketable product. On the other hand, many times a performance product is needed in order for there to be a collaborative, community-based creative process at all. I have focused on projects with a participatory or community-based aspect, and that value process and product in different ways, because this puts the importance of *afecto* into relief, not as a set method, but an approach to facilitating interaction that can take many forms.

In order to heal the scars of violence on female bodies and their relational worlds, these projects demonstrate how nonviolent relational alternatives, offered by female victims, are intrinsic to peace and reparations (a proposal I continue to explore in the next chapter). Satizábal's *Antígonas Tribunal de Mujeres* politicizes radical care, championing women's right to care for loved ones (in this case, dead and disappeared men), demanding that society protect this right, which the state has negated. Ariza's *Paz Haré La* creates a polyphonic voice and body that represents solidarity and (self-)care among women, in order to inspire a more inclusive national imaginary that acknowledges the oppression of women and sees their self-liberation as the path to peace. Conde's method of 'reparations from the body' enhances female victims' capacity for radical care, creating a shared space where (relational) self-care is valued as the basis for collective healing. As social contracts have been worn down by a 'fear of the other' in Colombia, displacement and assassination have become accepted as necessary for survival (of 'us' versus 'them'). Arturo Escobar identifies this as a crisis of the modern/capitalist (colonial/patraiarchal) liberal world order, with its insistence on the illusion of "progress", which makes individualized consumption and competition the norm, permitting the extractivist land-grabbing that fuels the armed conflict (2014, 21, 115). He adds that this norm is being challenged through comunitary logics that offer a means of transition to Buen Vivir (149). In line with this movement, Ariza, Satizbal and Conde's work shows, in different ways, how collectively caring for life is a form of resistence to violence from below.

Many people in Colombia do not want to change the status quo of violence. The question at hand is: what needs to be repaired in order for peace to become an enduring reality? Human relations? Collective trauma? The inability to care? I find Conde's approach most revealing, as it is essentially about connection – with oneself as relational to others, with the body as territory,

and with the capacity to heal as a feminine fuerza that sustains life. Similarly to Ariza and Satizábal, Conde's work allows for envisioning a new kind of social contract, but she starts from how it *feels* for those most harmed, while Ariza and Satizábal aim for audiences to witness the impact of the armed conflict on female victims, in a viscerally implicated way. Listening-with these projects, I have been struck by how all three emphasize the female body as the site of violence. Ariza focuses on liberating women from oppressive gender roles in a way that Satizábal does not, while Conde's work emphasizes internal transformation as the starting place for not only social change, but a humanizing relationality that affirms all life as interdependent.

Their practices sit on a spectrum between narrative and affect (or meaning and experience); they do not work with e*ither* affect *or* narrative, as I once thought, but combine them in different ways. In Colombia's transition to peace, I've learned, generating *afecto* requires narrative, because demanding inclusion in the peace discourse, particularly for female victims, is tied to a collective need to feel the possibility of coexisting without violence. Transforming violent relations by cultivating a life-affirming, feminine relationality requires *both* social *and* affective transformation (these cannot be separated, as I initially imagined). With my own practice-as-research discussed in Chapter 2, I was interested in how theatre facilitation can potentiate new relationalities in spaces of enclosure, in the sense that we can connect as *more-than* discursively isolated categories of being, but I realized that narrative can also sometimes potentiate affective attunement. In the context of violence and displacement in Colombia, I found that identity labels are a necessary place from which to advocate for the right to exits and simultaneously demonstrate an alternative way of coexisting. These projects make apparent that facilitation cannot simply move alongside social constructs to focus on the realm of affect but must both work within and overflow discursive limitations on life that are very real yet

not all there is. While Conde's process moves from noticing internal sensations towards sharing them with others, Ariza and Satizábal's more narrative-based work reveals how denouncing injustice through a process of (re)presenting lived experiences offers a way to coexist nonviolently, such that conflict can make communities rather than break them. Each facilitator (re)values the persistent excess (expressly feminine) "push of life" in the face of violence through a distinct combination of affect and narrative, as a means to repair damaged relations.[131]

They are committed to imagining another possible, yet unknown world, while still caught up in the harsh reality that peace is not yet fully realized. Sonja Kuftinec proposes that theatre facilitation can create a space of potentiality that "produces and rehearses an alternative future reality, a relational *feeling* and experience of difference that enacts new possibilities as it sustains future actions" (2009, 150). These projects demonstrate that an alternative relationality is *already* possible, here and now. They show how reparations must address both human rights violations as well as a deep-seated fear of the enemy within the nation and why this requires re-evaluating our sense of self as fully separate from others. These Colombian facilitators create spaces of affective transformation that foment a sense of collective existence and encourage individuals to interact in nonviolent ways, in order to shape a more inclusive (national) community that can sustain peace.

[131] These Colombian theatre projects show how relaciones afectivas are necessary for life; this is also an important aspect of community theatre generally – caring relations that are felt as essential to aliveness –, alongside discursive interventions.

Chapter 4

Moving-with: a path to implicated witnessing

Introduction

This chapter explores facilitating *implicated witnessing*, a form of active engagement experienced by audiences listening to testimonial performances, virtually and live. The notion of implicated witnessing expands the humanizing potential of testimonial performance to include audiences, as well as participants and facilitators, as part of a web of shifting relations that overflow socially constructed identity categories and trouble our sense of individual separateness, while validating real experiences of subjugation and trauma. It evolves from Chapter 3, showing a how expressing/witnessing visceral responses to testimonial performances can move witnesses towards radical care, via intimate experiences of copresence. This offers a complimentary approach to studies of spectatorship focused on social change, by centralizing the importance of affect and embodiment, letting us see often overlooked facets of human interdependence as part of a collective body. In much witnessing theory, "embodied relations have taken a backseat to signification", but the framework of "affective witnessing" centers "encounter, embodiment, affect and intensities of experience", placing newfound "focus on the inherently relational and inescapably bodily aspects of witnessing" (Richardson & Schankweiler 2020, 235-238).[132] Implicated witnessing emphasizes these bodily aspects. Moreover, it is a particular kind of affective witnessing - the intention is to foment *afecto* (a felt connection of care and solidarity). When witnessing testimonial performance, this means making oneself vulnerable to being affected by another's pain and joy, as a shared responsibility. It requires a

[132] Richardson and Schankweiler point out too that "the affective is in this sense not against signification and cognition, but constitutive of processes of sense- and truth-making" (2020, 237).

care-full approach to facilitation, so that witnesses do not become overwhelmed or close themselves off; they must feel both safe and put on the spot, in social and affective terms.

In this chapter, I analyze how my methodology for *moving-with* has taken shape, as a path to implicated witnessing, across two phases of practice-as-research in distinct contexts. The first phase consisted of process-based workshops for moving-with digital stories of deportation to Mexico, through contact improvisation, engaging audiences in California. I have documented the results of this initial research on moving-with elsewhere.[133] I therefore spend a bit more time here discussing how a return to moving-with became necessary when disseminating a performance/video of the embodied testimonies of female victims/survivors of Colombia's armed conflict, using improvisational scores (on Zoom) as a way of making connections across divides. My overall aim with this practice-as-research is to explore how audiences can, quite literally, 'be moved' by recorded testimonial performance. Moving together while listening allows for a feeling of embodied copresence, even when we are not physically in the same place, and this makes us feel viscerally *response-able* to the histories of violence that are narrated,[134] so that others' lives are felt as inherently interconnected with our own, across time and space. In more traditional theatre, when audience participation is limited to a talkback after a performance, implication can occur, but it remains on the level of discourse and does not necessarily foment this sense of visceral response-ability. When implicated witnessing occurs as part of a participatory performance or workshop, participants, facilitators and audiences feel their

[133] For an earlier analysis of moving-with digital stories of deportation in Spanish, see: Hart, S. A. (forthcoming) "Afectar la humanidad, desafiar la exclusión, *moverse-con* la narrativa de la deportación de Esther." In *Humanizando la deportación: informes desde las calles de Tijuana,* coordinated by Robert McKee Irwin & Guillermo Alonso Meneses. Tijuana: Colegio de la Frontera Norte.

[134] Puig de la Bellacasa explains response-ability as a "multifaceted collective reciprocity at stake in the responsibility to respond to being touched", or in this case, moved (2017, 116).

encounter as an affective (ex)change that resonates across bodies, highlighting a human capacity for sensorial responsiveness and the trans-subjective relationality it engenders.

Attuning to the affective, embodied impact of testimonial performance, rather than focusing on how narratives are represented, allows witnesses to become somatically aware of our positionality in relation to the stories told. In applied theatre, a great deal of emphasis is generally placed on narrative representation, largely because participants feel a need to tell their stories, but for witnesses, listening to their words and identifying or empathizing with them is not enough to implicate *everyone present* as playing an active part in the story; physical engagement (moving together) has a more transformative affective and embodied impact, because it breaks down the distinction between audience, participant, performer and facilitator, creating a sense of becoming *more-than* - part of a vital connective tissue through which the narrated experience emerges and resonates. This chapter explores my practice of facilitating active listening *from the body,* expanding the concepts of implicated witnessing as well as *more-than-ness* and the enmeshment of affect and narrative from previous chapters. Applied theatre scholar/practitioner Dani Snyder-Young helpfully reexamines the social versus affective impacts of applied theatre:

> If the goal of a project is "social change", those goals are not met by a relatively small group of people having a moment of magical connection that does not result in action in the real world. However, that connection is worth the experience for its own sake…Those moments change lives…How can we examine, evaluate and communicate the social value of the unintended biproducts of theatre – the relationships built…What are the effects of affect? (2013, 139)

These questions are a jumping off point for this research. The relationships built and the effects of affect are not unintended byproducts of implicated witnessing, but the main point, and while there is certainly a social value in terms of changing future thoughts and actions, I see the "magical connection" Snyder-Young describes as a lingering feeling that can influence our experience of the "real world" and the relational possibilities therein. Revaluing corporeal

sensitivities that have been repressed, such as a visceral response-ability that reminds us our lives are always already interdependent with others', offers a decolonial approach to listening, which can highlight, challenge, and move alongside 'us/them' categories created by nationalist, racist, misogynistic, and classist discourses. It warrants repeating that throughout the project of coloniality/capitalism/patriarchy/modernity 'others' have been constructed as 'non-human' or 'less-than-human'—such as indigenous and black people, peoples of the Global South, women, gender-non-confirming people, differently abled people, members of political parties not in power and the land itself—and continue to be seen, within the neoliberal paradigm, as exploitable, disposable and undeserving of protections. As discussed in earlier chapters, rights are systemically denied to those deemed less- or non-human, so that those in positions of privilege may benefit from others' criminalization, confinement, displacement, and premature death. This othering influences how testimonies are heard (or not). My proposal via moving-with is that implicated witnessing can sensitize the privileged to the vital need to humanize ourselves (in a decolonial sense) by cultivating more reciprocal, life-affirming relations.

In this research, there are no detached observers; all participants are co-researchers, shaping the central questions and outcomes (Chilisa 2012). As it is performance practice-as-research, rather than conclusions, collective reflection on practical experiments leads to new questions, which can only be explored through more practice. Applied theatre practice-as-research in particular can be thought of as a polyphonic conversation, where "polyphony suggests a number of different voices participating in the overall project, frequently following their own routes and independent needs, sometimes harmonious and occasionally not…Importantly, all will be in conversation and, as such, will be non-hierarchical knowledge producers" (Mackey 2016, 487). I extend the idea of polyphony to an embodied, sensorial register of being affected, responding,

and affecting others, as the central axis of this research; the embodied (and virtual) experience of moving-with creates a polyphonic conversation *among bodies* that demands visceral response-ability. My own curiosities, which initiated this research, have been complimented and transformed by the contributions of numerous collaborators (Mackey 2016).

The most recent research phase emerged through my fieldwork in Colombia. It takes the shape of *Moverse-con Anastasis Corporal* - an exploration of actively listening to the testimonies of female victims of Colombia's armed conflict. *Anastasis Corporal* was a collective creation I co-facilitated in 2020 with participants from the Bogotá-based female victims' theatre group Anastasis. Due to the pandemic, our entire creative process took place online. Together, we learned to work with Zoom to engage the body in collective and individual memory construction. *Allowing their bodies to speak,* as Anastasis put it, *offered a new way to tell stories of violence to which society had become numb.* Applied theatre scholar/practitioner Aylwyn Walsh notes that "giving voice" to marginalized groups "has less to do with the margins and more to do with what the centre will and will not listen to, and on what terms those in power will consent to unplugging their ears. 'Voice' can even normalise a shifting of responsibility to the powerless to do better at competing in the imaginary market of the 'attention economy"' (2021, 3). Responsibility for doing the hard work of listening to victims' voices should be shared across society at large, particularly in Colombia's present context of transitional justice and the new circumstances of social distancing. Therefore, the subsequent project, *Moverse-con Anastasis Corporal,* sprang from the need to find less passive and more active ways for audiences to engage with Anastasis' testimonies. To do so, I returned to the moving-with methodology that I

had developed in relation to the Humanizing Deportation digital story archive,[135] exploring how contact improvisation could offer ways to listen from the body.

With *Moverse-con Anastasis Corporal*, my initial questions were: *how do their voices move us? How do their words affect us? How do their experiences implicate us?* These inquiries, as with the first research phase, could only be explored through creative practice (as-research), so that thinking and doing were synergistically intertwined in generating new knowledge (Contreras 2017). Together with performing arts students at the Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá, I created improvised movement scores in response to these questions and invited Zoom audiences to join us in listening with the whole body (individual and collective, virtual and physical). We found that by moving-with *Anastasis Corporal*, it was possible to feel more connected, more present, more affected, and that making individual pain into collective response-ability in this way offered a form of resistance to the normalization of violence. The techniques developed for moving-with Humanizing Deportation could not be directly transferred to this phase of research, but served as a jumping off point; similarly, our findings are not intended to be generalized to other contexts but could inform future explorations of listening from the body. This research is not objective - it is specific to the bodies engaged and the histories that shaped our encounters. This chapter incorporates to a greater extent than Chapter 2 the voices of my collaborators, because our practice-as-research process involved keeping a shared log. Documenting the affective, embodied impacts and transformations that audiences/participants experienced offers a lens through which to view our process. I ask readers to 'take our word for it' to some extent, while also recognizing that words will never fully account for the entirety of the experience. I

[135] For more information on the Humanizing Deportation project's objectives, methods, and history, see: Irwin, R. M. (2020) "Digital Resources: The Humanizing Deportation Archive." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Latin American History*, edited by William Beezley. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

highlight our context-specific discoveries about implicated witnessing, while leaving space to attend to the gaps - to what cannot be fully translated or rationalized.

Devising *Anastasis Corporal* and Engaging Audiences

Anastasis met through The Solidarity Fund for Colombian Judges, an NGO providing support to judicial servants and family members in situations of risk; they created their first play in 2017, to tell their stories through representational characterizations. The process brought up unexpected feelings and they realized that they needed to give their bodies more space to speak, not as characters but as themselves, in order to feel more fully present in their testimonial performance. The protagonists are Rosa Milena Cárdenas León (whose mother was disappeared in 1985, during the occupation of the Palace of Justice by the guerilla group M-19 and then the military, which left hundreds of hostages dead), Rosa Lilia Yaya Cuervo (whose father was assassinated in 1989, during the genocide against the Patriotic Union party that resulted in six-thousand deaths and five-hundred disappearances), Luz Nelly Carvajal Londoño (whose husband was assassinated in 1989, during the Rochela Massacre, perpetrated by paramilitaries who detained and shot 15 members of a mobile judicial commission), and Yolanda Myriam Arteaga Sichacáy (whose husband was also assassinated as part of the violence against the judicial branch of government; his killers were never identified, and as in all four cases, remain unprosecuted).

Seeking graduate students who could guide an exploration into embodied expression, Anastasis first connected with Gaviota Conde, because of her process-based method of 'reparations from the body' (discussed in Chapter 3). Conde invited me to co-facilitate, as an applied theatre practitioner, because Anastasis' aim was to create a public performance - a new endeavor for her. During my fieldwork, Conde and I had discovered many affinities between our

practices; our co-developed method became a more-than-representational approach to testimonial performance that explored expression and witnessing through embodiment and affect (and virtual connectivity). We began by asking the group what they wanted to transform - in themselves and the world - and what they wanted to express. They said they wanted to feel a physical release, to express their emotions, and acknowledge their experiences. It was important for them to not only denounce 'el hecho violento' but also share experiences of radical care, as a survival strategy. The title *Anastasis Corporal* signifies how they revived themselves by channeling their rage into a love-for-vitality, remaking their life worlds, or as they put it, *choosing life over death*. Over the years, they'd stayed strong for their children, continued to fight for justice, but hadn't stopped to listen to their bodies; in our workshop they were finally able to break their bodies' silence. One of their aims was to achieve *a higher level of comfort and ability in expressing themselves physically*. This kind of embodied memory work facilitates inter-corporeal communication (Contreras 2017), so feeling a sense of embodied connection was key.

Our creative process started from releasing pain and tension left in the body after the assassination and forced disappearance of their loved ones. Anastasis said that working through their memories in this way enhanced their awareness of *how violence had become normalized in their bodies.* They wanted to publicly share the embodied transformations experienced in our workshop, as a way of inspiring other victims to join their healing practice, *using the stage as a territory for peacemaking*. They also wanted to nuance national memory narratives. Milena explained, *the issues of violence in Colombia are different today than they were 30 years ago; displacement has become more of an issue than disappearance and assassination.* While past crimes that remain in impunity are overshadowed by new kinds of crimes, victims of the

previous era of violence (like Anastasis) have not been fully recognized. Anastasis wanted to visibilize their story and call upon audiences to recognize *our own* role in perpetuating violence, as residents of a country that is extremely unequal. This meant combatting cultural anesthesia to the trauma of the armed conflict. Interestingly, *anesthesia* means insensitivity to pain and temporary loss of the sense of touch, while *anastasis* means against (*ana)* inactivity *(estasis),* and *estesis* (the root of *anestesia* [anesthesia] in Spanish) means the capacity for perceiving and reacting to physical stimulation or being affected (Mandoki in Castillo 2015).[136] So, by exploring embodied expression as collective healing, Anastasis hoped to de-normalize violence and *sensitize* spectators to become less passive and feel more viscerally connected and response-able.

Projects like this have the potential to engage society in a way that institutional systems of reparations do not, by facilitating more active listening to victims' contributions.[137] Our initial screenings of *Anastasis Corporal* - a video of our process that invited audiences to witness Anastasis' healing transformations - only partly achieved this aim, however. In the talkback after our first screening, Lucero said, *we're raising awareness about the deepest aspects of our lived experiences, and by doing so, we're moving things that have not yet healed.* Anastasis see this as a two-way process of healing oneself and others through sharing experiences of loss that inspire re-existence. However, I do not believe that just watching Anastasis' testimonial performance does enough to *really* move audiences. (I had first begun to feel this way about *Antígonas*

[136] *Estesis* might be considered a better translation of affect, in Spanish, than *afecto*, which has a connotation of love or care (a specific affect). Like affect, *estesis* is more neutral and refers to the capacity of bodies to affect and be affected - a concept central this chapter in terms of the physical sensation of affects.

[137] As Sherin Shefik explains, with regards to institutional systems, "[o]nly a small number of local citizens currently engage with transitional justice mechanisms, and they do so in highly prescribed ways, such as through giving evidence or testimony as witnesses or defendants. The locally affected people thereby have little or no opportunity to participate in designing the goals of the process or the nature of particular mechanisms" (2018, 316-7). To this point, Luis Carlos Sotelo Castro adds, in reference to the Colombian scenario, "[a] post-conflict context, in particular a transitional legal mechanism, may end up being experienced by the victims as a continuation of the abuses against the civilian population by other means. These other means, more specifically, involve disguising a lack of ability to listen to their lived experience – their truth – behind a theatrical curtain that, while it claims to give a space for their voices to be heard, does so under very specific and defined conditions of enunciation" (2019a, 281). Both authors argue that participatory performance can facilitate more accessible spaces where victims can express themselves and *really* be heard.

Tribunal de Mujeres, Satizábal's collective creation with female victims discussed in Chapter 3, which inspired me to further explore embodied copresence as a form of active listening that could move witnesses more viscerally.) *Catharsis* is a term that Anastasis have used repeatedly to describe our work. Snyder-Young defines catharsis as an opening of emotional floodgates, "an extreme organic reaction to [a] moment of new understanding" spurred by a "jolt of surprise" that "jars audience members out of passivity, making spectators think critically about their role in the larger social drama making [the] theatrical event necessary" (2013, 87-88). Yet rather than emotional response or critical thinking, in the context of this work, inspiring change has to do with healing the *collective body*, which requires unsettling people's perceived separateness from the performance of memory; I believe this can be most fully achieved by engaging all those present in an affective (ex)change.

After four online screenings with talkbacks, I was still not convinced that when people watched our video/performance they actively presenced their own embodied sensations – which has become central to my understanding of implicated witnessing. When we asked audiences to pay attention to how they were moved (or not), they said things like: *this work makes me feel strength and hope. Healing of the soul and reconciliation with the past. So much resilience. A beautiful appropriation of memory. Anguish, connection and rebirth. Union in difference. Women-as-body, vibrant, brave, resisting to re-exist. They [Anastasis] transform their pain by telling their stories. They transmit their feelings and their power to keep fighting. The message is that despite everything we have to remake ourselves and continue on with love. I need to take a breath.* Anastasis' message comes across clearly, but the bodies in the spotlight are most obviously theirs. While our piece asks audiences to witness healing transformations that necessarily extend beyond Anastasis as individuals, the verbal responses indicate that audiences

see the capacity for transformation as a symbolic representation, rather than feeling it as an embodied sensation. Feeling hope and love as the basis for resistance and making change is important, but these feelings are not clearly located in the witnessing body. The only response that references an embodied sensation is *I need to take a breath,* reflecting the hard work required to actively listen from the body.

It thus became clear that facilitating a space for somatic response was necessary in order to enhance listening as an affective (ex)change. Memory, trauma and performance studies scholar Luis Carlos Sotelo Castro posits that "cultivating 'practices of listening' after a violent conflict is key" and suggests we think of listening in contexts of transitional justice as a reciprocal relationship or exchange, not a transmission process (2019a, 279; 2020).[138] I would add that active listening requires awareness of embodied relationality and responsiveness. Because Anastasis' testimonies were told from the body*,* audiences needed to presence their *own* embodied reactions. This was not necessarily easy and required care-full facilitation. While Anastasis learned to actively listen to their bodies and each other's, as demonstrated in their performance, watching this process in the form of a video presented online did not automatically engage audiences in active listening. We needed to acknowledge that many of our audience members also had traumatic memories of the armed conflict stored in their bodies, which they might resist facing in order to avoid retraumatization. As one audience member explained, *we <u>all</u> have to transform our bodies and the system by transforming our emotions (not just victims, but everyone).* Our work was not just about 'healing victims' but healing audiences as well, and this required a more participatory process of expression/witnessing that made *every body* more

[138] Sotelo adds that we cannot assume "circulating victims' testimonials is an adequate means of achieving reconciliation", because audiences may not actually want to or not be able to hear them (2020, 221). Moreover, "not being heard multiple times after giving testimony of their suffering" can have a negative impact on victims, "deepening resentments" (Sotelo 2020, 221). Therefore, more attention must be paid to how to facilitate more engaged listening (Sotelo 2019a).

answerable. Based on my previous practice-as-research moving-with digital stories of deportation, I hypothesized that moving-with *Anastasis Corporal* might lead to a more intimate sense of connection for audiences, implicating them/ourselves as witnesses with an active role to play in the process of collective memory construction. Let us now return to that earlier work on moving-with.

Phase 1. Moving-with Stories of Deportation: (de)humanization and *more-than*

During the summer of 2017, I conducted fieldwork in Tijuana as part of Humanizing Deportation, a community based digital storytelling project focused on documenting and disseminating the human consequences of deportation.[139] I was part of a team of graduate students from California and Baja California, who collaborated with participating community authors to facilitate the creation of their digital stories and publish them in an open-access online archive that makes visible a diverse range of personal experiences, from crossing the border in hopes of a better life to dealing with the challenges of being undocumented, surviving the abuses of immigrant detention, families being separated by the 'wall', maintaining unbreakable bonds of love, struggling with addiction, making a new life and building community.[140] A year later, back in California, I began considering the ways in which *witnessing* these narratives could become an embodied experience of moving-with them that amplified both speakers' and listeners' human capacity to affect and be affected by each other and the world.[141] The narrators in the

[139] The Principal Investigator of Humanizing Deportation, Robert Irwin, describes digital stories as "testimonial audiovisual shorts, usually no more than five minutes in length, that are produced in a DIY (do it yourself) style using everyday software for Internet-based diffusion" (2020, 2).
[140] To access the Humanizing Deportation digital story archive, visit www.humanizandoladeportacion.ucdavis.edu.
[141] My notion of witnessing refers to the concept developed in spectatorship theory, where the observer "becomes so ethically and empathically engaged in or by a performance that he or she is transformed from a passive watcher into an active witness" (Wake 2008, 188). In similar terms, Diana Taylor defines witnessing as "an involved, informed, caring, yet critical form of spectatorship" (1997, 21).

Humanizing Deportation archive affirm their connectedness to vital networks of care that are limited and fragile, enduring and adaptable, and that entangle us all. If the performance of their testimonies of detention and deportation, through digital storytelling, could be a humanizing speech act, then, I hypothesized, witnessing these stories could become a humanizing experience of visceral connectivity—listening from the body, being moved into contact.

The initial research phase explored how the role of the active, involved, caring witness could be embodied though contact improvisation to evoke a sense of self as relational. This offered a feeling of humanization not based in the colonial hierarchy of human/non-human (which denies certain bodies rights, protections, and even life, by exploiting their labor and resources to build nations based on inequality). Humanization, as expressed by the narrators of the Humanizing Deportation archive, is the cultivation of life-affirming relations *in spite of* state violence, reflecting decolonial thinker Rafael Bautista's notion that we humanize ourselves by revendicating others' humanity (2017) - a central premise of this dissertation. If dehumanization (via systematic isolation, confinement and social or biological death) is the intended effect of hegemonic discourses that criminalize and racialize certain bodies,[142] then, I proposed, performative acts of expression and witnessing could reaffirm the humanity of both narrator and witness as inherently interdependent. As explained earlier, nationalistic discourses attempt to expel 'unwanted' (im)migrants from society in order to mark the limits of belonging and the right to rights, allowing society's belief in its own happiness to remain unquestioned, yet

[142] One such hegemonic discourse is the global mobility regime, which allows some people to move freely across borders but not others, marking certain (non-White) bodies as inherently 'illegal', so that the U.S., for instance, may capitalize on a constant supply of exploitable labor from undocumented (im)migrants (Shamir 2005). Those left without the option of obtaining legal status are put in a state of exception, where the notion that they are fully human and deserving of rights is questioned. As Ayten Gündogdu explains, "one's exclusion from a political community also marks one's expulsion from humanity, or from the common world of speaking beings" (2015, 21).

indebted to other lives.[143] By facilitating a space for witnessing individual narratives as a collective experience, I found that privileged U.S. audiences could move beyond passive spectatorship of the Humanizing Deportation digital stories to *feel-with* them; we could copresence how we were moved by these (virtual) voices, opening ourselves up to what they taught us about humanization as an embodied experience of being inherently in-isolatable from the world.

During 2018, María Ceja and Juan Camilo Cajigas - my collaborators in Davis - and I explored a range of contact improvisation techniques for moving-with the Humanizing Deportation digital stories, making space for reflecting on how they resonated in different body-minds, inviting participants from the local community to pause and listen, taking time to connect and move together. Participants were a self-selecting group, interested in issues around the deportation of Mexican communities, with links to the University of California, Davis. Moving-with these stories in this Global North context of relative privilege challenged certain ingrained neoliberal beliefs in individual rights and wellbeing (as opposed to decolonial practices of Buen Vivir that seek harmony among all beings, with the intention of irradicating all forms of oppression).[144] Moreover, we explored the relation between expression and witnessing as affective attunement, rather than focusing on understanding narrative, even though narrative is often thought of as the main way for traumatic experiences to be communicated to witnesses.[145]

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[143] I use 'unwanted' to indicate the arbitrary categorization of certain bodies, subjected to constantly changing laws that mark migrant identities as good or bad, based on an unstable conceptualization of what and who is 'legal' or 'illegal'. Martha Escobar explains that "at one moment, individuals or actions can be classified as non-criminal; at another, changes in legislation can reclassify those same individuals or acts as criminal" (2016, 87). Keeping this categorical criminalization rhetoric in flux is a state strategy of control used to justify, mask and deploy the violence of the U.S. border industrial complex (Perez 2016).

[144]Interestingly, the participants who identified as men and those who identified as women reacted differently. For women there seemed to be less resistance to bodies becoming one mass moving together. For the men, when this began to happen, there was a visceral pulling back, not exactly in self-isolation, but a tentative hesitance…*how to proceed?* Could it be that the erotic, feminine creative force was intimidating (Lorde 1984), or was this more about trying not to impose masculine dominance?

[145] In order to liberate the narrator from never-ending trauma, by externalizing it as a past event that can be articulated, the empathetic listener is considered crucial to the process of bearing witness (Laub 1992). I find this trauma studies approach to witnessing informative yet limiting, as it is based in a connection via language, backgrounding affect and embodiment. When we approach witnessing from a performance studies lens, co-presence and visceral response-ability become more central.

We tried to express somatically how hearing/feeling the narrators' voices impacted and changed us, paying attention to our senses and impulses, points of connection and departure.

This approach emerged from our initial research question: *by moving-with these voices, how can we amplify their performative resistance to dehumanization?* Exploring ways to not know but feel experiences of subjugation and resilience that are inarticulable within the discourses that categorize subjectivities, in effect, moved us beyond words. Rich countries, like the US, fortify borders, prisons and detention centers to cut 'unwanted' migrants off from society, infringing not only on their right to free movement, but also the right to affiliation and the right to speak and be heard as fellow humans.[146] Scholar of human rights Alison Brysk proposes that by offering a narrative that is properly framed as useful to those in power, the "rightless" have the ability to speak, be heard, and even change discourse.[147] An effective rights claim must be marketed in the public sphere as compatible with the hegemonic agenda (Brysk 2013);[148] this accurately describes the way many narratives in the Humanizing Deportation archive work discursively but does not account for how their connection with other lives can be felt somatically. Being seen and heard on their own terms is important to challenging the dehumanizing status quo of confining and expelling migrants, but telling their stories also involves affecting and being affected by complex webs of relations, thus contesting the state's attempt to negate the right to exist relationally.

[146] Sara Ahmed explains this is because "some bodies are presumed to be the origin of bad feelings insofar as they disturb the promise of happiness" and "public comfort requires that certain bodies 'go along with it', to agree to where you are placed", because "to refuse to be placed would mean to be seen as trouble" (2010, 39). In other words, certain vulnerable people are excluded from society in order to avoid making other people feel bad for them (*out of sight, out of mind*).
[147] Brysk (2013) refers to Arendt's (1979) term – the "rightless" – which applies to people whose human rights are not protected and who do not have access to civil rights as citizens – particularly, refugees seeking asylum in a foreign country.
[148] Moreover, an effective rights claim will never encompass the whole truth of the experience of "rightlessness" and one must decide strategically which part of their story to tell (Brysk 2013).

This research is concerned with the impact of these stories on witnessing bodies and explores how people (especially those whose *personhood* has been taken for granted)[149] can be moved to feel our lives are intertwined with the narrators'. Theatre theorist Ana Puga and sociologist Victor Espinosa note that in order to evoke empathy, migrants are often encouraged to "perform suffering", which seems like "the only way to move the migrant from outsider to insider, from undeserving to deserving of rights, from criminalized 'illegal alien' to celebrated model citizen", by showing that they have suffered enough "to earn their right to belong" (2020, 3-5, 25). Moving-with the Humanizing Deportation digital stories reveals that feelings of care - not as moral obligation, but embodied implication - emerge not in response to performances of suffering but expressions of care for oneself as relational. While political scientist Ayten Gündogdu, like Brysk, posits that to make witnesses feel a sense of responsibility, testimony must draw from a repertoire of recognizable scripts (2015), I believe there is more to it. Witnesses' bodies are affected by what we hear, even before we comprehend our somatic responses; moving-with can enhance our capacity for listening to inarticulable sensations that resonate through voices and bodies, creating a sense of connection. When we are made to feel response-able *in this way* to unequal distributions of privilege and suffering, digital storytelling can be humanizing (in Bautista's sense) not only for narrators but for witnesses.

Attempting to witness expressions of trauma is seen as essential to healing - psychologically and socially, individually and collectively; the importance yet impossibility of communicating traumatic experience through testimony has taken the foreground in

[149] The modern/colonial category of the 'human' is defined in terms of *personhood,* a position historically reserved for White property-owning men. In Western thought, *person* is taken to mean the individual self, understood as having the right to own one's own body and identity, along with their symbolic cultural capitol, a condition that permits the exchange of labor and other capacities in order to acquire more personal value (Skeggs 2004). Moreover, citizenship within a nation-state, the condition of possibility for access to rights, requires *personhood* - the mask though which one can speak and be heard in society, and without which non-citizens' rights are denied (Arendt 1979).

conversations around witnessing in trauma and memory studies.[150] I believe the issue at hand is witness's (in)capacity to listen beyond understandable scripts. As trauma and memory scholar Dori Laub points out, witnessing requires the intimate presence of someone who listens empathetically and resists withdrawing, even when it's difficult; when language fails, he says, listeners must attend to the gaps and silences (1992). The idea of listening beyond words and staying present without fully understanding can be fleshed out further by considering affective attunement as an embodied, relational experience inherent to witnessing testimonial performance. Stanton Garner's work on *Kinesthetic Spectatorship* can help deepen the conversation. He asserts that "performance and spectatorship are deeply implicated in each other through the intercorporeal dynamics of perception, enactment, and embodiment" (2018, 24). The embodied aspects of witnessing are too often backgrounded, though, especially in the case of pre-recorded testimonies. As Garner points out, language "generates its own sensorimotor realities" and "cognitive operations do not exist prior to or independent of embodiedness; rather, they are dependent on the body's situatedness in the world" (7, 18).[151] This is true whether witnessing testimony live or virtually.

Actively listening from the body facilitates a heightened awareness of our positionality in relation to others, or in witnessing theorist Thomas Trezise's words, "an empathy tempered by the awareness of an irreducible difference, where it sustains the relation between listener and [narrator]" (2013, 30). Although our encounter with the digital story narrators was not live,

[150] Elizabeth Jelin argues that the testimony of traumatic experiences produces holes - what cannot be said, what does not make sense - for narrator and listener (2002). Cathy Caruth emphasizes how speech limits experience and "the danger of speech, of integration into the narration of memory, may lie not in what it cannot understand, but that it understands too much" (1995, 154). Yet only via the listening of another can the "impossible" (unfathomable experience) be acknowledged (Caruth 1995, 11).

[151] Embodiment can be understood here as the condition of being bodies *in relation to* the world, building, as Garner does, on Csordas' movement-based approach, which in turn draws on Husserl's idea of the animated organism, where being alive and movement itself are essential and interconnected and all living things are understood as mobile, without a fundamental break between human and non-human life (Csordas 2015). The capacity of experiencing, sensing and feeling movement is thus the constituent basis for agency and, in essence, life. Rather than being *in* the world (passive and inert), our bodies are considered to be *attached* to the world via a web of intentional threads that we ourselves spin.

hearing their words while making contact with other bodies in a shared space evoked a copresence that heightened our sense of being implicated "in events that are happening to others" (Rothberg 2019, 32). As noted earlier, for Rothberg, implicated subjects are "participants in and beneficiaries of a system that generates dispersed and unequal experiences of trauma and well-being simultaneously" (12). I propose we can expand this theory to account for how our bodies are attached to others and the world through movement, taking on Manning's appreciation for the *more-than-ness* of a sense of self not merely contained within the skin (2012) and Paredes' notion of the skin as a connective tissue shared by all living beings (in Guzmán & Triana 2019) - a somatic sensitivity to life's change and motion. Contact improvisation can expand the sense of the individual body to become *more-than*, by placing focus on "the physical sensation of touching, leaning, supporting, counterbalancing, and falling with other people" (Novak 2007, 224), so that embodiedness is felt as a vital connection with other lives that we are constantly negotiating.

Moving-with brings about an embodied, symbiotic sense of (more-than) human experience that moves alongside *personhood* (the social mask needed to speak and be heard in the public sphere (Arendt 1979)). When witnesses attune to how a voice from the Humanizing Deportation archive moves us into (or out of) contact, we can feel how our own mobility is attached to others' (im)mobility, shifting our attention to the delicate balance of precarity, pressure, resistance, and support that is part of living/moving together in/with the world. Contact improvisation potentiates embodied listening and responding that in turn foments our sentient capacity to feel we are part of "the more-than of experience in the making" (Manning 2012, 7-8). It softens socially constructed corporealities, allowing us to explore our relationality through organic movement. It enhances our awareness of the affective aspects of experience that cannot

be accounted for as subjective (intensities of feeling that are pre-subject, pre-body) – particularly, *afecto*. As "animate" beings, we can know many qualities and meanings of experience from the perspective of our movement before giving them words or interpretations (Sheets-Johnstone 2011). In Manning's terms, "the 'I' is the afterthought of a complex affective process that will always nonetheless, to some degree, retain the collectivity at the heart of its having come- to- be" (2012, 27-28).

I take onboard Manning's proposal that *a life* is not reducible to *a body;*[152] rather, we are caught up in the vital force of all life*,* which has infinite possible manifestations (2012). Bodies come into being, momentarily, through the experience of events or encounters; affects, felt in bodies, color experiences, but affect is *more-than* subjective (Manning 2012). There is an affective excess that potentiates, shapes and overflows all feelings, bodies, events, perspectives and positions. Relation precedes self; the skin is a point of contact (not a container). We experience encounters through embodied, relational movement, but the full affective potential of experience cannot be felt (or known) by a body. My experience of an event is a particular perception, not all possible perceptions. Still, I can feel that there are other possible perceptions. In other words, experience is more than just 'mine'. Experience is embodied and *more-than* individual, subjective and *more-than* social. It is the part of being and becoming in/with the world that can be felt in an instant as well as the potential for everything more to come or that can be or ever was. In Western thought, we tend to limit our perception of experience to what can be rationalized from a subjective identity, but an unbounded affective excess can also be

[152] As the basis of phenomenological theory, Merleau-Ponty argues that experience can only be perceived from the body in the world (2012). When experience is rationalized consciously from a subject position, it is mediated by language, and language can never convey all of embodied experience; it will always be a partial articulation of a partial perspective (Merleau-Ponty 2012). Our perception of experience is thus always situated, in a subjective sense and an embodied sense. However, one's experience is not hermetically sealed off to others; we are "attuned to one another, implicated in one another, as part of an innate intercorporeality" (Merleay-Ponty in Garner 2018, 12). Sheets-Johnstone adds to this conversation the idea that movement is itself a kind of intercorporeal language (2011) and Manning expands the notion of the body to become *more-than-one* (2012).

attuned to, alongside social constructions. While the colonial/patriarchal/capitalist/modern paradigm creates a sense of individual independence and disconnection, all bodies are in fact connected as part of a web of life that exceeds and precedes subjectifications. We are all animated by a shared vitality - an energy of perpetual becoming, change and motion, growth, decay, rupture and collision, that constantly remakes our 'selves', our bodies and our life-worlds.

Moving-with can foment affective attunement to our shared vitality, which requires care (and *cuidado* – it can be dangerous to open oneself up too much). Moving-with thus evokes Puig de la Bellacasa's notion of "thinking with care" (in a way reminiscent of Yolo Teatro, discussed in Chapter 2, but on a more intimate register), as an ethical obligation that requires being "aware of troubling relations and seeking a significant otherness that transforms those involved in the relation and the worlds we live in" (2017, 83). In this line of feminist thought, research is a situated, relational process that changes all those involved. Moving-with requires us (co-researchers, movers, witnesses, bodies moving and being moved) "to work for change *from where we are,* rather than drawing upon others' situations for building a theory" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 87). When theorizing contact, it is also important to recognize that "efforts to reclaim touch—aka proximal intimate knowing—as a neglected way of knowing need to resist an idealized version of knowledge-touching" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 20). This work is not about trying to know or interpret others' experiences, but experiencing and knowing ourselves, our bodies, in relation to others. Implicating ourselves (privileged U.S. audiences) as viscerally response-able to being touched by the voices of people who have been deported can create a space of *afecto,* both virtual and real, in which we can feel how our shared vitality is negotiated via interdependent movement. This kind of affective connection, however unstable and

fluctuating, potentiates the life-affirming relationality needed for reciprocal humanization (in the decolonial sense).

Implicated witnessing is an ethical call to decenter our sense of being comfortably safe in our own skin. Following Chela Sandoval, I see this active kind of witnessing as a presentist form of thinking, doing, being and becoming; it requires a combination of attention, love, and co-recognition, not only listening but exposing our felt responses, making ourselves vulnerable together (Alvarez 2014). Implicated witnessing reminds us that interdependence is an undeniably vulnerable aspect of life, one that we must take responsibility for (as noted earlier in Chapter 3).[153] A central question, then, is how to sustain work that demands us to make our bodies vulnerable in ways that can feel unsafe. It requires affective labor on the part all those involved, particularly the facilitator,[154] responsible for holding a space where participants can open themselves up and also protect themselves. This affective labor involves a kind of mask or bubble - a permeable skin that allows the body to experience contact and *more-than-oneness*, while care-fully feeling out the (porous) limits of the self. Somatically, this evokes a sense of personhood that goes beyond the mask through which to speak and be heard in the public sphere (Arendt 1979). The Spanish word *persona* comes from the Latin word *sonare,* to resound with intensity, so "to be a person is to be a vessel that receives and shares vibration and sound" (Lederach 2011, xi). It entails the capacity to resonate with others; it involves speaking and listening not only as message-transmission but as affecting and being affected on an embodied register. In what follows, I will show how moving-with can "get behind the mask" to the "sound,

[153] As Michael Lazzara argues, "the notion of vulnerability can serve as an invitation to combat certain kinds of 'individualistic doctrines' (such as neoliberalism in this case) that are more preoccupied with 'praising the rights of the "I"' than with thinking about the ways in which human beings are and must remain responsible to/for one another," because, I would add, we are inherently interdependent beings (2018, 18).
[154] As Preston says, "the applied theatre facilitator needs particularly strong capability as an emotional labourer" (2013, 243).

vibration, and voice" (Lederach 2011, xi) of humanization - the connective tissue of co-existence - without entirely dissolving protective bubbles.

Moving-with Esther's Story: initial explorations

I will discuss the experiment of moving-with one digital story in particular,—"Tireless Warrior", by Esther Morales Guzmán (2017a-c)—which I helped facilitate. Before I met her in 2017, Esther had already made a new life for herself in Tijuana, after being deported, becoming an entrepreneur, activist, poet and leader in her community. She had appeared on various news programs, showcasing her successful Tamaleria (La Antigüita) and had been cited in books and articles (Escobar 2016; Ibarra Gonzalez 2016). When I met her, she was interested in disseminating a part of her story specifically related to her embodied experience of motherhood and her ceaseless fight to survive pain and violence through love and labor. She wanted others to feel the harmful extremes to which denying *personhood* (in Arendt's terms) may lead, but which still failed to rob her of her humanity.[155] I will not focus here on her narrative, as I have done elsewhere (Hart forthcoming), but on how witnesses can respond to it physically. When I recorded Esther's story, a powerful life-force in her voice made me feel admiration, rage at the injustice she faced and sorrow for her suffering—*a pang in my lower abdomen made me lean in*. I wanted to explore how witnesses in California could feel her message of *afecto* as resistance, strength, vulnerability and support. *How could we not only be moved-by, but move-with her words, responding not only to the meaning but the somatic resonance?*

Figure 23: image of the "small dance" in our workshop at Sol Collective.

Photo credit Juan Camilo Cajigas

[155] While detention and deportation attempt to dehumanize, I argue it is not possible to fully negate anyone's humanity when it is understood as an inherent interdependence with all life.

When my collaborators, María Ceja and Juan Camilo Cajigas, and I began to develop techniques to engage others in moving-with Esther's digital story, we asked ourselves, *how could moving-with her story cause and/or alleviate embodied tensions?* We tested exercises for responding to these questions with community participants (who were not experienced in contact improvisation). The first exercise we facilitated was Steve Paxton's "small dance" at Sol Collective in Sacramento. Maria explained the "small dance" as follows: *standing, centered, allow yourself to feel how gravity pulls you towards the ground—is it to the right or to the left, font or back? Allow yourself to fall past the stable centered point until you need to take a step to catch yourself. After that come back to the center and do the small dance again, letting yourself fall even more.* We listened to the audio from the first part of Esther's digital story - about her initial immigration from Oaxaca to LA and how she chose to raise her daughter alone in LA after traveling back to Oaxaca to conceive her (Morales 2017a) - and performed the "small dance" as a group, paying attention to the sound of her voice and how it made us move (or not). The group gradually became aware of the other bodies in the space, falling into and away from each other, giving and receiving weight. One participant noted, *it was hard to listen for content, having the impact from other people falling, but her soothing voice and the vulnerability of falling, just that connection, it was nice, because we all fall sometimes.* We discovered that a physical stress one might feel in response to Esther's

story could be alleviated by pushing into another body in a way that brought comfort. We had to attune to ourselves to attune to one another and negotiate how much to give or resist, connect or disconnect.

We then began to wonder whether moving together really helped us hear/feel Esther or not. A few months later, we tried the "small dance" again while listening to the first part of Esther's story with a different group, at International House, in Davis. We learned that contact improv exercises can make it harder to hear a story, when we are too busy listening to our own and each other's bodies to pay attention to a recorded voice, but we also learned to listen in new ways.[156] It was not precisely the words, but the sound and rhythm of Esther's voice that moved us into an awareness of our embodiedness as a relational response-ability. We also realized that since Esther's digital story was not only auditory but also visual, we needed to explore the relationship between seeing, hearing and touching. We watched the second part of her story – about how the U.S. government separated her from her daughter by detaining and deporting her, scarring the most intimate part of her body-mind, when on her last attempt to cross back to her daughter, the Border Patrol hesitated to rescue her from drowning in a bog and ICE delayed medical treatment, leading to a permanently damaging vaginal infection (Morales 2017b) – while sitting still, making physical contact with a partner; we asked workshop participants how being connected in this way affected the way they viewed her story. They said: *being attached to someone else helped me be attached to her story, maybe because I felt more present. I could feel the human body, so I felt her story more, like she was also here with me, almost as if I knew her.* The sense of interdependence, involving both resistance and support, emerged not only as a

[156] For a more detailed description of these workshops, in Spanish, see: Hart, S. A. (forthcoming) "Afectar la humanidad, desafiar la exclusión, *moverse-con* la narrativa de la deportación de Esther." In *Humanizando la deportación: informes desde las calles de Tijuana,* coordinated by Robert McKee Irwin & Guillermo Alonso Meneses. Tijuana: Colegio de la Frontera Norte.

theme of Esther's story, but a felt sensation in our embodied experience of hearing/seeing her, while feeling our own and each other's somatic responses as intimately connected.

As Maria, Juan Camilo and I continued developing techniques for moving-with, it became clear that we also needed to attend to how the *meaning* of Esther's words resonated across bodies. In an exercise we called the "mirror" score, *one person selected a word from Esther's narrative and entered the performance space, moving <u>like</u> that word/idea; the others watched for a few minutes and then another person entered the space, mirroring the first person's movement/dance.* This score allowed us to experience Esther's words in a new way. When the follower didn't know the chosen word beforehand and was simply presencing the leader's physical interpretation, new meanings materialized. Then, when we discussed what we'd experienced, the leader heard back an unexpected definition of the word/idea they'd chosen. For instance, '*love*' was *spiraling, elusive, weightless, fluid, twirling around, up and down, momentum*. We also explored breathing with Esther, as a way to *feel-with* the kinesthetic aspect of her speech. In our "breath" score*, one person listened to Esther's narrative (with headphones) and tried to breathe with her, moving-with the breath. The second person felt the first's breath-movement by keeping a hand on their back - following, eyes closed.* Sharing breath required listening carefully, cohabiting the vital act of breathing. There was a cautiousness – *cuidado, you might lose your breath -,* a vulnerability and answerability. We felt our shared vitality in this reciprocal connection to ourselves and each other, in space, as living, breathing, moving beings.

We learned that this work was not only about how to listen to the Humanizing Deportation digital stories, such as Esther's, through contact, but also how this offered a way for us to make contact with our humanity, as the capacity for *feeling-with.* Contact is not a result; it is a gesture towards *afecto*, a humanizing kind of relationality (in Bautista's terms) that

revendicates life and love, always precarious, always in-process. As Juan Camilo put it, *we seemed to be moving towards becoming one body, not distinct bodies making a connection. Together, we were establishing a field of perception that we were able to enter. A field of humanity? Could we also disconnect and become isolated?* To this I responded, *at what point did we come into or out of contact? Could it be that we were in contact the entire time, breathing and moving together in the same air-space-world? Where were the limits of one experience of being and the beginning of another?* Participants said they felt more isolated at the beginning of our workshop and then began to attune, with the help of Esther's voice, to how their bodies were connected by a shared energy. Because they were new to contact improv, there was awkwardness around making/feeling physical contact initially. Esther's familiar-sounding voice helped each group push beyond their comfort zone to engage in an intentional, intimate and vulnerable experience of relational movement, which generated a visceral sense of response-ability to her story. As one participant noted, *it was like a wave in and out of listening and making connections and wanting to do more.* While challenging to sustain, this work offered a way to (momentarily) circumvent structures of dehumanization - much like my practice-as-research in Chapter 2, but here the site of transformation was the audience.

Figure 24: image of the "hacerse masa" score in our workshop at International House.

Photo credit Juan Camilo Cajigas

Rather than answers, we were left with more questions. *If the experience in-the-making of becoming human is not individual, but inherently communal with all life, how can we move towards an embodied understanding of becoming more-than-one?* For Bautista, dehumanization is a consequence of having lost the sense that life is communal, and it is intensified by the tendency for human beings to disconnect themselves from the earth, while humanization requires living for all life and the recognition that humanity comes from the *humus* of the earth (2017). The work we do produces our own humanization or dehumanization, depending on the kind of relation we establish with the earth (revendicating or destroying life–ours and others') (Bautista 2017). *What, then, was our work moving-with Esther? Could affective attunement to her labor of love humanize both narrator and witness as inherently interconnected, by creating a somatic sense of community based in an ethics of care for all life*? Care, or being careful, in contact improv, is not 'selfless' giving, but a dialogue and a balancing act, in relation to different bodies, not self-contained, nor independent (only out for one's self gain), but necessarily interdependent (*you fall, I fall*). Thinking/feeling along these lines of inquiry, we moved-with the third part of Esther's story – about how she managed to overcome depression and alcoholism via a tireless work ethic and now lives with dignity, making tamales in Tijuana (Morales 2017c) –, attempting to embody her life-giving work with corn tamales. With our "hacerse masa" [make yourself dough] score, we invited participants to volverse tamal [become the tamal], *coming together as parts of a whole, particles sticking, moving in mass, as a humus-y collective body*. We copresenced, for a moment, the sensation of becoming *more-than* selves, shifting relations towards collective existence in-the-making.

Although the individualistic 'American dream' has created a reality in which Esther and her daughter work and live on opposite sides of a dividing line, missing one another, Esther

understands why her daughter stays on the 'other side'; she too has lived that grueling dream. Today, Esther's labor of love as an activist/entrepreneur, providing nourishment for her community (especially those in need), enacts an ethic of care that overflows colonial/capitalist/ /patriarchal/modern structures. Her 'time' in the U.S. taught her that the capability of caring for oneself and others—despite innumerable limitations—is essential to humanness and can never fully be denied. It may be interrupted, commodified, confined, renegotiated, but love persists, crossing all kinds of boundaries.[157] (Ironically, Esther's tamales travel to California every day with her many U.S. customers.) Moving-with Esther's story invited audiences in California to attune to *afecto.* This allowed us to fissure the eternal not-quiteness of the American dream (Berlant 2011), enabling the self to become *more-than* a 'good' citizen/worker/consumer, *more-than* a social category, and more relationally conscious by *feeling-with*. We were able to be together differently in this process, to *be-with,* alongside quotidian frameworks. We discovered a different pacing than the productivist pacing of neoliberal normativity. This change of pace affected our bodies and even our sense of the meaning of life. It also led us to more questions: *What if we lose ourselves in the moment of pause? Will life outside our space of afecto become an unbearable reality?*[158] For implicated witnesses, who benefit from unequal distributions of wellbeing and trauma, would the response-ability felt in a contact improv workshop be sustainable elsewhere?

[157]I refer to Sandoval's conceptualization of love as a technology for transforming the world - a practice of emancipation and resistance conducive to coalition-building (2012). The power *con-movedora* denied by hegemonic discourses of coloniality, she says, is the "oppositional consciousness of the oppressed", whose creative life-force foments difference-in-collectivity rather than homogenization as isolation (18-23 – *my translation*).

[158] Berlant cautions that when a person cannot change their life materially, one moment of relief produces a permanent crack in their ability to survive (2011).

Figure 25: image of our presentation at the 2018 UC Davis Performance Studies Symposium.

Photo Credit Ekaterina Zharinova

Phase 2. *Moverse-con*: lessons on facilitating implicated witnessing in a Colombian context

In what follows, I further develop the concept of implicated witnessing, reflecting on lessons learned from moving-with *Anastasis Corporal*. This second phase of practice-as-research is even more clearly indebted Michael Rothberg's notion of implicated subjects occupying "positions aligned with power and privilege without being themselves direct agents of harm" (2019, 1). In the Colombian context of transitional justice, Rothberg's framework helps account for peripheral roles generally left out of memory and human rights discourses that focus only on perpetrators and victims; implicated subjects can be bystanders, accomplices and/or beneficiaries who participate in injustice in indirect and often unconscious ways (2019). With this second phase of research, what began as expressing/witnessing female victims' embodied knowledge extended to overcoming disconnections in society at large. My coresearchers at Universidad Javeriana and I found that a collective sense of visceral response-ability to heal damaged relations could be enhanced by sharing our/their somatic responses to how the excessive production of death - fueled by fear, hatred and indifference towards 'others' - involves every body. Importantly, implicated witnessing goes beyond subject positions to the sentient capacity for listening *to* and *from* the individual and collective body (an idea introduced in the previous chapter and developed further in phase 1 of this research, which gains new relevance here). Valuing embodied knowledge in this way follows in the vein of postcolonial feminism and shifts the aim of the work from sharing Anastasis' healing transformation publicly to calling on audiences to open them/ourselves up to, literally, 'being moved'.

Even before thinking about audience engagement, the tension between representation (as product) and transformation (as process) was a central question. As a facilitator of *Anastasis Corporal*, I was inclined to focus on our collaborative process as itself the 'artwork', but since Anastasis' aim was to create a performance for an audience, I was also responsible for making sure we had something to show. Although I entered the collaboration with an understanding of moving-with, Anastasis had certain expectations as a theatre group that had to be honored. In the end, we found that the video/performance format offered a way to share our process with others, online. When I initially showed the group an edited video of our movement exercises early on in the workshop, they noted how seeing multiple bodies moving together in different Zoom boxes created an effect of not-quite-unison, and how editing these images to overlap allowed for one's movement to emerge from another's body. Watching recordings of our process thus helped us understand what we were doing as we went: expressing how Anastasis' bodies had changed in relation to traumatic events, but also in relation to each other, remaking themselves together. The virtuality of Zoom theatre foregrounded "the relation between material bodies, virtual bodies and cultural environments that variously form, define, constrain or render them intelligible"; our workshop was an experience of virtual embodiment that impacted our material bodies and relationalities (Brians 2011, 122). Our performance/video interweaves the creative expressions of each member of Anastasis into a collective body and voice that incorporates the frames and delays - possibilities and limitations - of Zoom. It is an incongruent, mediated, shared, embodied story.

Another key facilitation question that came up while working with Anastasis was how to create a sense of safety and agency, while avoiding revictimizing or retraumatizing. This involved initially *not* thinking about the audience. As Yolanda explained, *with Zoom theatre, we*

didn't focus on the audience, but our own experience. We never tried to represent anything or look good; everything just happened in the moment. Allowing ourselves to not-know where we were going delayed the pressure to 'produce'. This is not a common approach to community theatre in Colombia, because a sense of security in structure can seem important in an unpredictable world. There was always the possibility that events outside our control would intervene in the workshop - a large-scale protest, torrential rain, or a family emergency. This is why, culturally, value is placed on simply being 'present', as manifested in Anastasis' desire to be more present in their performance, as well as our aim for audiences to be more actively present as listeners. Working virtually, in social isolation, 'presence' took on new significance. Even though we would have preferred to work 'in-person', the relational, embodied, affective aspects of expression/witnessing became integral to our Zoom theatre work in a way that was more powerful than we expected. Opening ourselves up to affecting and being affected was a notably intimate and agential experience when it happened from the safety/isolation of our own homes. Creating a space of *afecto* in this context felt all the more valuable because an in-person exchange was impossible. Transcending distance by virtually *being-with* - via a Zoom theatre process that was new to us all - reaffirmed applied theatre's prevailing power to facilitate collective resilience.

Our workshop was a process of wayfinding, cultivating "the capacity to respond to the unpredictable situations of practice" that are "inherently unstable, messy, interconnected, conflictual, uncertain," just as our world, and require the same balancing act and inner groundedness that life in Colombia does (Hughes et al. 2011, 193). I reflected in my journal: *We began our third session by breathing into our center, playing with balance. I invited everyone to connect with a feeling, deep down, that was what we each wanted to say. First, we let out sounds*

that expressed what we felt. The next step was finding words. Lucero's words were "birth, laughter, earth". Yolanda said, "I had never explored the center of my body – I found strength". Lilia added, "it was a search for emotional and physical balance". Milena noted, "meaning emerged from the body without being fully named". As Sotelo says, often "victims do not find the words to describe their harm", so expressing/witnessing (post)traumatic experience poses an epistemological challenge (2020, 230-231); it was precisely this challenge that led us to listening *to* and *from* the (individual and collective) body. Improvisations, such as saying words inspired by movements in a jam of live voices and recorded bodies, created a conversation between body and word. Movement and meaning-making became entangled. Milena described it as *each one finding her own way to express what another's movement-message made her feel.* These discoveries about moving-with within our workshop led me wonder how Anastasis' movement-message would provoke unpredictable sensations in audiences and how to affectively facilitate a space for copresencing others' somatic responses as part of our process/product.

By the time we reached the dissemination phase, I felt certain it was necessary to engage audiences in an experience of *feeling/being-with* similar to our workshop process and doubted whether our performance/video would do it. I knew that creating a space of *afecto* on Zoom required certain conditions. Initially, in our workshop, I had been more focused on how the scores we created would *look* for an audience, rather than how they *felt*. I facilitated exercises too quickly, rushing to get to the 'composition and sharing' phase, which took Anastasis to a place of self-consciousness and made it more difficult to feel an embodied connection. Gaviota Conde, my co-facilitator, then suggested we structure each workshops in three phases: first rootedness, second (self)protection and third expression. She usually facilitated the first two phases, based in body-mind centering. Meanwhile, as noted in my journal, *I spent most of the time focused on*

how I would transform this material into a theatre exercise…which created a sense of distance, as facilitator. This self-distancing was at odds with my commitment to affective facilitation. It was a byproduct of working via the camera/screen, as opposed to facilitating an in-person encounter. I was uneasy about my *de facto* role as editor of our video/performance. As Sotelo says, "artistic decisions may lead (at times unintentionally) to regulating what the victims get to voice and thus what their interlocutors get to listen to", which can change what was supposed to be an "interactive affair" into "a choreographed or sculpted object" (2019a, 284). It troubled me that I ended up fine tuning Anastasis' creative expressions in iMovie, rather than crafting open-ended frames for relational (ex)changes with audiences.

Figure 26: image from an edited recording of our third Zoom theatre workshop. Photo Credit Sarah Ashford Hart

However, creating our performance/video was a necessary first step on many levels. For one, Anastasis wanted a product to disseminate virtually. Moreover, as facilitator, I needed to overcome my apparent anesthesia to being affected by Anastasis' testimonial performance, in my effort to make sure it would impact others. Applied theatre facilitators often develop strategies to avoid burnout, like creating an affective bubble, in order to behave in an appropriately positive

or unaffected way and thus hold space for others to express their feelings (Preston 2013).[159] My own affective bubble became a concern for me when we were working with objects belonging to Anastasis' lost loved ones. *I asked them to observe the material qualities of the objects. Yolanda's deceased husband's watch had marks of use she hadn't noticed before. Milena's mother's skirt was worn and restitched around the waistline, reminding her daughter how much she had loved it. I had them verbalize what they wanted to remember about the person the object had belonged to, while physically performing an action they recalled the person doing with the object. When we paused to reflect, it was evident that everyone was deeply moved (except me). After the session, Gaviota asked me how the work had impacted me. I replied that I distanced myself emotionally by focusing on ways of channeling what was expressed into performance scores. I didn't feel moved by their words, but excited or frustrated by their work with the body, the object, the voice, etc.*

Although I initially I worried I was not listening properly, by not paying attention to what Anastasis said, I eventually came to the conclusion that narrative moved me less than other vocabularies of expression, and I was in fact actively listening to the embodied, affective, relational register of their performance, alongside their words. By attuning to the (virtual) materiality of bodies, objects and voices, I was able to viscerally feel what they wanted to express: essentially, love. As Milena put it, *this is living memory that comes from a place of love at our very core*. I wanted to help them find ways for this feeling to touch others. The visceral, the spiritual and love have been defended by decolonial feminists as alternative forms of knowing that have been repressed by colonial/modern capitalist patriarchy (Snyder-Young 2013,

[159] Preston adds that in order to better appreciate the affective labor of facilitation, "enabling and making visible an open dialogue about the emotional challenges for the facilitator generates understanding and counters notions of concealment or mystery around the professional capacity of the facilitator" (2013, 231).

90). Anastasis' object work had the potential to move witnesses to feel a love-for-vitality that demanded respect and care for every being (living or dead). As they said, *bringing back the dead in this way was powerful because it felt as though they were "here with us"* (not 'long gone', as was their assassins' aim). Anastasis had begun exploring object work in their previous theatre piece and it had left them feeling overwhelmed. It was my hope that they could gain a sense of empowerment by clarifying the kind of memory they wanted to express. Yolanda concluded that in our workshop, *they were able to express what they missed most about their loved ones, which felt like a much-needed embrace.* I, too, felt touched by this embrace, on a somatic level, and it was this resonance of *afecto* that I believed audiences also needed to feel.

Just as many Colombians have grown numb to hearing repeated stories of victimization, my apparent disinterest in Anastasis' words came from being over-saturated with narratives of traumatic experiences during my career as a facilitator. Gaviota noted that I'd brought a new approach that didn't focus on recounting the victimizing event, but on reenacting an everyday memory of the lost person, which allowed Anastasis to conjure things they had not recalled before. Lucero, whose object was a letter, told us that in it her deceased husband had written a song for their daughter, which she had cherished, but she had never considered the precise moment when he wrote the lyrics and what he was thinking and feeling. Doing so made him more present. Theatre scholar Paola Hernandez calls this the "affective hold of the real" in testimonial performance, when performers (i.e., untrained actors) use objects from the past that "contain their own meaning and are reimagined in the present" (2021, 2-4). She adds that an "affective relationship between actor and audience" can be generated through such object work (3). In our workshop, an affective relationship first emerged between actor and object, which radiated out into a space of *afecto*, connecting performers and facilitators. Our

video/performance only partially captures this relación afectiva, which requires attuning to the embodied materiality of memory-making in the moment. Reviving love in this way moved our work alongside discourses of victimization that had become tiring; *but how would it resonate with audiences?*

Our audience's initial verbal responses to our video/performance (quoted earlier) confirmed the resonance of Anastasis' message but did not necessarily indicate that people felt they were a part of the healing transformation Anastasis embodied. Disseminating our video/performance did, however, demonstrate that the affective, embodied, relational register of testimonial performance could be enhanced via Zoom, at least within our workshop process. After our first workshop, *I had felt isolated and tired, and had been at a loss for how to engage.* Many people felt similarly alienated by the new reality of Zoom, but I found that this was only true for me when our encounter was limited to talking/listening. In our second session, when we began to explore movement scores, *I felt lightened, connected and energized. This change in affect was thanks to a willingness not only to <u>be present</u> together, but to <u>do something</u> together that we all needed - to move together -, creating a felt synergy across time and space. I felt I was simultaneously in my house and a space shared with the group.* I think of this as a virtual thirdspace (of *afecto),*[160] which was particularly healing in the context of the pandemic. Anastasis said they very much needed to feel this sense of embodied re-connection, which is evident in our performance/video. Hernandez posits that the testimonial performer's body-as-

[160] In his essay titled *Thirdspace: expanding the scope of the geographical imagination,* Edward Soja critiques the binary between *Firstspace,* or perceived space, which "refers to the directly-experienced world of empirically measurable and mappable phenomena" and *Secondspace*, or conceived space, which in contrast, "is more subjective and 'imagined"' (2000, 14-18). Trapped in this dualism, he explains, "geographical imagination could never capture the experiential complexities, fullness, and perhaps unknowable mystery of actually *lived* space" (20). Thus, Soja looks beyond human geographers to "feminist and postcolonial critics who approach the new cultural politics of class-race-gender from a radical postmodernist perspective" (22). In this line of thinking, he deems *Thirdspace "*a space of radical openness, a site of resistance and struggle, a space of multiplicitous representations," saying, "it can be mapped but never captured in conventional cartographies; it can be creatively imagined but obtains meaning only when practiced and fully lived" (28).

archive produces possibilities for how "new forms of intimacy and belonging can create new sites of performance that highlight how conviviality and community are central" (2021, 12). As a witness myself, I believe the witnessing body can also become a site of performance in this work, but to get there, our audiences needed to feel they were part of (not just spectators of) our virtual thirdspace.

Our Zoom theatre workshop explored the ways that Anastasis' memories affected their own and each other's bodies, as co-witnesses. We created body maps based on life-changing events and devised movement sequences inspired by how these events were felt somatically. While one woman narrated her body map (i.e., *at seven years old, I don't want to feel, I don't want to think*), the others performed their own movement sequences *in response* to the narration they heard. This process led to a debate about whether our aim was to tell a story or express sensations. Lilia argued, *we cannot just show the audience our emotionality; we have to make a statement.* Yolanda responded that our work so far had been about our *feelings* and it was important to leave it open to interpretation; *there's no good or bad response, just different sensations,* she said. I proposed that we hold space for audience responses, in order to find out how people were affected (or not). This space initially took the form of a post-screening talkback, because Anastasis wanted to present their work in a recognizable format. Still, I continued to wonder how audiences could be called upon to express/witness their responses on a somatic register, just as Anastasis did. Scholars of affect and witnessing Michael Richardson and Kerstin Schankweiler point out that "digital media technologies have increased the reach of possible 'co-witnesses', produced new tempos of connection and communication, and enabled the formation of witnessing communities through processes of affective witnessing" (in Weber 2020, 332-333). Facilitating implicated witnessing required moving privileged audiences into a

shared, virtual space of *afecto,* where we could become more vulnerable, connected and response-able.

Figure 27: images from the final segment of Anastasis' video/performance. Photo Credit Sarah Ashford Hart

After a screening organized by the Centre of Memory, Peace and Reconciliation, audience members asked whether Anastasis' objective was overcoming trauma; there was an assumption that our work was therapeutic for Anastasis, not for witnesses, because people saw themselves as bystanders. Anastasis replied that they had to heal themselves *in order to accompany others' healing*, which was their larger aim. After their loved ones were assassinated or forcibly disappeared, they had been filled with hate. By fighting for justice together, they found new purpose and came to see forgiveness as necessary for peacebuilding. As Lilia put it, *keeping memories alive allows us to transform pain into love*. For her, *forgiveness has to do with saying 'never again'.* She now works for the same state that was her victimizer because she believes *it is necessary for us all to rebuild damaged relations, on individual, familial, community and national levels* (including relations with the dead). Anastasis exemplify how transitional justice

requires radical love and relaciones afectivas - an example society at large can learn from. The somatic scars of violence are not an individual problem; they permeate relations throughout Colombia, in the form of fear, hatred, pity and apathy. Our video/performance revendicates female victims' *don* [gift] (Gomez 2016) for transforming violent relations into life-affirming relations, as an alternative relational possibility for *all* bodies (like Conde's work in Chapter 3, but with the aim of wider dissemination). In our initial screenings and talkbacks, however, this did not hit home for audiences in terms of their own implication in the collective healing process.

Transitional justice lawyer and artist Sherin Shefik highlights the problem with assuming that participatory art only heals victims:

> [A]lthough participatory art can be a very effective form of healing for the participants themselves, it should not be reduced to only having this impact. It can offer a whole range of potential impacts. One such example is the domain of shared responsibility in the aftermath of atrocities, which is a domain that has been largely missed by traditional transitional justice measures…[Participatory art] can aptly demonstrate how everyone is indeed connected to the violence, and that they are therefore all responsible for what took place as well as for what ought to take place subsequently. (2018, 323)

As a facilitator, I share in this responsibility (and ability) to respond. Though I have never been directly involved in armed violence, as a White, Gringa-Latina, foreigner from a powerful, imperialist nation, I benefit from how inequality is maintained through state-sanctioned violence against 'others' (in Colombia and globally). Snyder-Young points out that many applied theatre facilitators want to intervene in problems beyond those that impact their own day-to-day lives (2013). While this is true, I see this work as aiming to sensitize our *selves* as response-able to our inherent relationality with other lives. In our Zoom theatre workshop, we experienced an embodied connection that helped us all feel more alive, highlighting how survival is interdependent, especially in pandemic. As Anastasis see it, our video/performance shows the vital need for *rebuilding ourselves together*. In the following section, I will explore how moving-

with extends this *'ourselves'* to witnesses, as a way to become more viscerally aware of our relationality and answerability to past-present histories violence and healing.

Exploring How to 'Be Moved' by *Anastasis Corporal*

After a year working with Anastasis, I initiated a month-long virtual practice-as-research project with eight performing arts students from the Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá during 2021. I proposed we explore how to let ourselves 'be moved' by Anastasis' testimonies, listening from the body to the sensations we felt in response to their voices, opening ourselves up to affective changes. I was interested in how an embodied sense of implication for witnesses (a visceral response-ability felt in moments of copresence) would take on new meanings and manifestations in the Colombian context, compared to my previous research moving-with digital stories of deportation in California. The students were relatively privileged young people from Bogota, who attended a prestigious private university and had not been directly exposed to the armed conflict. Most had never worked with victims' stories in an artistic capacity, nor had they interacted with any victims. Yet, as scholar of peacebuilding and the arts Cynthia Cohen points out, "in most cases of violent conflict, people on all sides have been traumatized in ways that limit their capacity to listen" (2003, 2). As we would discover, even for those who believed themselves to be safely distanced from the conflict, there was inherited, collective trauma. Moreover, "[a]s media technologies are increasingly constitutive of contemporary cultures, societies, economies and politics, the role of witnessing has become inescapable such that we now live in 'an era of becoming a witness"' (Richardson and Schankweiler 2020, 239). The students were, by default, already familiar with the testimonies of victims disseminated on TV and the web - perhaps too familiar to notice their impact.

This practice-as-research took a different approach than most theatre about the armed conflict; we were not trying to "visibilize" testimonies but "perform listening" to testimonies (Contreras 2017, 20 – *my translation*). We learned that this required practicing stillness and waiting for impulses. One student commented, *I learned how to actively listen to with my whole being…and that even the power of the pause and not doing anything does something.* This discovery led to a key question posed by another student, *¿why is listening to these cases in itself a response and resistance to violence?* My proposal - that letting ourselves be moved physically and changed affectively by the testimonies of female victims was a way to resist the normalization of violence - had taken on new meaning as the nation was shaken by historic protests. Young adults across Colombia, fed up with the continued assassination of community leaders,[161] unequal access to healthcare and education, and the lack of support from the government for the working class during the pandemic, took to the streets in unprecedented numbers. They were met with police brutality, which led to civilian deaths. The students in our group felt conflicted. On one hand, they wanted to do something about state-sanctioned violence that was now clearly targeting students who engaged in peaceful protest. On the other hand, they felt a responsibility to their families to stay out of trouble, to be there as caregivers, and go to work and school, as was their duty. They did not want to become another statistic in Colombia's human rights violations. Together, we explored how they could respond as researcher/creators, reflecting "on and in action" (Contreras 2017, 7 – *my translation*).

We began our process by reading anthropologist and activist Diana Gomez's (2016) article on the politicization of affective (dis)connections in Colombia, to provide theoretical context on

[161] As Blanco and Sorzano stated in 2021, "[m]ore than 170 ex-guerrilla members and over 300 community leaders, mainly Afro-Indigenous working on the implementation of the [peace] agreement or protecting their territories and the environment, have been assassinated since 2016" - the year the peace agreement was signed (2021, 18).

peacebuilding from a victim's perspective - something the students had asked for, to learn how to approach the 'conflict' as artists. Gomez, a victim herself, says to non-victims:

> To construct a society that enables life to flourish…society as a whole, you and we, all play an important part…Emotions have been unrecognized and devalued, which has meant that their importance to the construction of social ties, communities and society in general has been invisibilised. (105-108 – *my translation*)

In response, the students asked *¿how can we reconstruct damaged relations that generate apathy and resentment in our society?* - which became a driving question for our work. Because our process was longer than the one-off workshops I facilitated in California, we were able to explore the students' questions in relation to my own and deepen the insights generated by moving-with. Working via Zoom led to a hyperawareness of how the screen framed our work visually, which at times made it difficult to focus on what we felt but was also necessary, due to the new emphasis on engaging external (online) audiences in a way the screenings of *Anastasis Corporal* had not. We found that repeatedly listening to Anastasis' testimonies made us become 'more numb' to them, yet at the same time, repetitive movement allowed the body to better 'perform listening'. The simultaneous gain and loss of sensitivity, due to repetition, mirrored the larger social issue of apathy to normalized violence.

Moving-with Anastasis' testimonial performance had the potential to affectively impact witnessing bodies in Colombia in new ways not because stories like theirs were unheard-of, but because too often spectators were unable to really listen.[162] In this sense, the "breath" score gained new relevance. In California, it had involved trying to breathe *with* the narrator; here the students felt more engaged in listening to Anastasis while breathing *in response* to the narrators'

[162] While Puga and Espinosa argue that "[e]ffective spectacles of suffering may have tangible impacts on spectators' bodies: unease, nausea, tears, an elevated heartbeat, a clenched stomach, and shortness of breath", and they associate this impact with the "wow factor" of "listening to a previously unheard account" (2020, 15), in this particular context, the notion of an account being "previously unheard" takes on new meaning.

breath, in a kind of dialogue. Our new breath score was about connecting with *ourselves* by paying attention to *our own* breath-response, as a source of movement (rather than connecting with other movers). At first, students felt dizziness, heaviness, or a lump in the throat; then we discovered that breathing into specific body parts could help release these tensions (answering a key question from the previous research phase). We combined this new breath score with the "small dance" while listening to Anastasis' object-inspired testimonies, *playing with weight, falling, breathing with different body parts, and resting.* We learned that simple, repetitive movements best facilitated feeling the reverberation of Anastasis' voices in our bodies and expressing/witnessing our somatic responses.

We also found that the metaphor of continually falling and regaining balance resonated as an innately human experience, as it had in California. While we were not able to make physical contact, there was a feeling of connection when we performed the "small dance" via Zoom, which made Anastasis' testimonies feel familiar in a new way - not in the sense of over-saturation, as with the media, but in the sense that *we all fall sometimes,* as with Esther. In addition, students found that *they wanted to resist falling, creating more of a struggle against gravity. There was a sense of strength in rooting through the center, as well as exhaustion and the need to recover from a fall before carrying on.* The students' physical sensations thus mirrored Anastasis' message. Moreover, the sound of Anastasis' voices influenced listeners' movement in a way similar to Esther's; students said *they felt most affected by the tone of voice and wanted to let go of the meaning of the words.* We discovered, too, that nonverbal sounds, like gasps and cries, gave the clearest impulse to our movement; students described this as *a subtext that was sensorial, not logical*. When following these sensorial impulses, our own embodied memories

came up, which provoked a sense of care-full relationality that felt even more intimate than in California.

Combining and fine-tuning scores brought clearer insights about how active listening involved attuning and responding to the vibration of a voice, while also recognizing the significance of words. For instance, while moving-with Lilia's object-inspired testimony, using the combined small dance/breath score, I noted that *when she spoke of her memories of her father, I felt a sense of floating, but when she spoke of her fight for justice, I felt a sense of collapse.* My sensation-awareness came from a combination of feeling her tone of voice and comprehending her use of language. We also gained new perspective by adding co-witnesses within scores. In one instance, *three people on camera performed the small dance, listening to Anastasis' body map narration, while the others watched.* Being witnessed while 'performing listening' created a troubling tension between how we felt and how we looked, but the experience of co-witnessing allowed for greater recognition of how Anastasis' testimonies affected other bodies – in this instance, evidencing collective responsiveness as breath-movement. Considering how co-witnesses saw/felt scores like this took our research a step further than the previous phase, to include potential impacts on audiences. Creating, performing and co-witnessing scores nuanced our understanding of how all those present could be moved towards embodied implication.

Soleto helpfully points out that (co-)witnesses not only listen, but "recall their own memories, because they are implicated in the other's memory" (2019, 199 – *my translation*). The scores we created for moving-with Anastasis' words generated new understanding of our own relation with their words. One score involved selecting words that impacted us from an object-inspired testimony, *moving in response - not representing the words but expressing how they*

made us feel. We found we could choose how much we wanted to let ourselves be affected by feelings left in the body from past experiences associated with the selected words. This was not about identification with narrative representation so much as becoming aware of *one's own* position in relation to the remembered experience and context (Sotelo 2019b, 199). Sensitization to our embodied connection with Anastasis' testimonies and the present-history of violence in Colombia did not mean imposing choreographic interpretations. Although the students were trained dancers with a range of techniques, the experience of moving-with *Anastasis Corporal* was more meaningful when we did less, practicing stillness to increase bodily awareness of relationality (Estrada-Fuentes 2018). The constant negotiation between opening up to being affected and protecting ourselves, while remaining present and responsive without imposing interpretations, became central to implicated witnessing.

From these experiments, we began to envision how to facilitate being moved as a kinesthetic experience for spectators. Richardson and Schankweiler remind us that facilitating witnessing is an affective "open-ended and relational process" that "can be mediated, communicated, shared, experienced and recomposed by others who become co-witnesses across fluctuating temporalities" (2020, 238). The Zoom interface became our aesthetic frame as we composed scores to demonstrate/facilitate implicated witnessing for audience/participants. With our "mirror" score, for instance, the shared space through which we transmitted the sensation of a word-as-movement was now a virtual space that others could co-witness. *I read out selected words from Lucero's testimony and when the student performers heard the word they had each chosen, they began to repeat a movement, turning on their cameras, framing their movement from different angles to highlight impulse or trajectory, gradually mirroring one another.* Across three performances of this score for audiences, the same words gained new meaning: '*volará'*

[*she will fly*] generated a sense of *reconstruction* as well as *unfolding* and *liberation*, '*injusticia'* [*injustice*] became *pausing in motion* as well as *the distribution of weight*, and '*sueños'* [*dreams*] became *spiraling* as well as *the warmth of an embrace*. After performing this score, we revealed which word-sensation each student had moved-with, showing how each time we chose different words and felt different sensations – a kind of 'this is how we do it' teaser, before inviting audiences to join us in moving-with.

Performing Sensitization

Our interactive Zoom performance was designed to gradually engage audiences in copresencing their own somatic responses to *Anastasis Corporal*. It began with students demonstrating scores for 'performing listening' and ended with (some) audience members joining in. The guided journey we crafted aimed to sensitize bodies to their (situated and relational) capacity to be affected by testimonies of violence and healing; it went from watching and listening to writing and drawing and finally moving and speaking. Becoming conscious of the transformative impact of witnessing required raising embodied awareness of implication as visceral response-ability.[163] One of the students put it like this: *our bodies became mediators for Anastasis' testimonies, and this not only changed us on a sensorial level but also changed our ways of thinking [about the armed conflict].* Sotelo posits that "memory-making and listening do not resolve the conflict but can perhaps help make the conflict conscious on a personal level" (2019b, 199 – *my translation*). We wanted audiences to experience this for themselves on an embodied register. For the interactive ending of our Zoom performance, we invited everyone

[163] Sotelo describes the act of listening as an act of being present for the other, which, when embodied as a "performative act of memory", can facilitate a process of activating participants, as agents of sociopolitical (and affective) change; however, if artists who work with memory as the material for "performative acts" do not design a participatory space for listeners to position themselves in relation to what is expressed - i.e. a space of response -, the transformative power of witnessing can be wasted, as it will not be made conscious (2019b, 200-201 – *my translation).*

present to mirror Anastasis' gestures. This facilitated kinesthetic empathy in an unconventional way;[164] physically mirroring Anastasis' movements, as part of the performance of listening, put witnessing bodies on the spot, as active participants in memory construction. The kinesthetic empathy we felt was not about putting ourselves in Anastasis' shoes but sensitizing ourselves to how their experience related to us, to our experiences, and to our embodied memories.

Rather than dramatizing Anastasis' story, repeating their gestures let us feel what their bodies were saying. This approach could be associated with the physical action-based acting techniques developed by Michael Chekhov, Vsevolod Meyerhold or Eugene Vakhtangov. However, we were not 'acting'; we were *reacting* and inviting audiences to *react,* as part of an affective (ex)change. Our work could thus be considered a "performative listening process", in Sotelo's terms, providing an "alternative space" to that offered in representational theatre, where performed memory "becomes a catalyst for new memories" to come out and "be worked through in the context of a small group", in which participants presence their own "healing, emotional process" and "become mutually aware of each other" - answerable to one another, I would add - as part of a co-witnessing experience (2020, 227-229). We concluded by inviting everyone present to create a gesture that would express how the whole experience had made us each feel. Rather than grief and sorrow, *Anastasis Corporal* ends with a celebration of undying love, as a source of strength and resilience. This was inevitably reflected in our final score as a collective

[164] Kinesthesia involves "the experience one has of one's movements as a result of sensations generated by one's muscles, joints, tendons, and the vestibular and other systems involved in balance and orientation" (Garner 2018, 2). Kinesthetic empathy is often associated with mirror neurons and the ability for seated spectators to vicariously feel what performers feel, as their brains simulate the experience of movement observed on stage. Empathetic identification is problematic, however, because it can reduce the experience of the subjects represented to an essentialized simplification in the minds of the audience without allowing for reflection on the impossibility of full understanding. Susan Leigh Foster's work critiques universalism in discussions of kinesthetic empathy and shows that kinesthetic empathy is grounded in situated bodies, requiring negotiation across difference rather than presumed sameness (2011). Bonnie Meekums helpfully describes the kind of physical mirroring we employed when moving-with *Anastasis Corporal* as "a form of kinesthetic empathy linked to the movement metaphor," where "the understanding of another's spontaneous dance is always only partial and is filtered through the experience of the person who is attuning to this" (2012, 62, 55).

expression of *afecto*. Still, not everyone in the audience accepted our invitation to move-with. Some remained seemingly passive spectators. The mediated aspect of our Zoom encounter meant audiences had to work all the harder to "let down walls" (Snyder-Young 2013, 109) - in physical, social and affective terms.[165] Becoming implicated witnesses required a willingness to express their/our felt sensations, just as Anastasis did, and to be witnessed doing so.

After one interactive performance, presented as part of the Javeriana's Week for Peace, audience members said they had been able to engage with content matter that in other instances could feel overwhelming.[166] Of course, audience responses in post-show talkbacks may "feed artists the answers they want to hear" due to pressure to perform the "appropriate affectual condition for the rest of the audience" (Snyder-Young 2013, 136). Interestingly, those who spoke up after our interactive performances were often at a loss for words, trailing off or repeating the same words multiple times to hold back tears. There was a sense of verbal paralysis, of searching for words to articulate strong sensations - which was not about 'saying the right thing', but potentially 'feeling the right thing'. Some, like my husband, said the performance *coaxed them out of apathy*. This had been our aim, but the audience's responses revealed that it was a dangerous prospect, as it meant re-opening wounds that had been scarred over in self-protection. Asking people to let down their affective shield to allow for a flood of sensations where there had been numbness required great care. Helpfully, Anastasis' message left audiences with newfound motivation to heal collectively. This hopefulness, based in love-for-vitality, was

[165] As Snyder-Young point out, "[t]he promise of communion, of 'pure' connection with others, is undermined by the real limits of individual ontology. Humans desire connection, but not at the expense of individual identity, individual choice, and individual agency" (2013, 97).

[166] Moving-with challenged the tendency to withdraw produced by bombardment with representations of suffering. Audiences said that it was the way we were able to generate a sense of connection via Zoom that offered a different proposal than the usual *pornomiseria* [*misery-porn*] seen in theatre and dance about the armed conflict. As one audience member put it, *it made me really be there, not just thinking but feeling too, from the body.*

copresenced kinesthetically, as moving-with allowed bodies to feel more connected with each other and the larger context of conflict and reconciliation.

While we were not trying to "control or censor the raw emotion that might arise", which Shefik warns can inhibit participatory art's potential to (re)create community, mend social bonds and foment collective responsibility (2018, 332), we *were* trying to cultivate the sense that transforming pain into hope was a possibility for us all. In Colombia, apathy towards victims' testimonies is a common coping mechanism; living through the current transition to peace, while hearing daily news reports of assassinations and armed violence is emotionally exhausting, especially when it feels like *deja vu*. But apathy on the part of the privileged allows for the status quo of violence against others to continue. Therefore, it is important to unsettle the 'detached bystander' role. Rothberg argues that "detached bystanders" are in fact "morally compromised, and most definitely attached" to the political and economic (and, we could add, affective and embodied) dynamics of human rights dramas (2019, 33). Awareness of our role, as implicated witnesses, requires the hard work of active listening, not only to victims' testimonies, but to our own somatic responses as part of the process of healing damaged relations. Facilitating a space of *afecto* (a specific affect, yes) can support witnesses in becoming sensitized to complex feelings that can otherwise be difficult to face.

For older audience members, the youthful energy of the student performers felt particularly hopeful, as it showed the next generation was prepared to recognize Colombia's long-standing wounds. In their view, the students were actively resisting forgetting and repeating histories of violence, inspiring others to feel that healing from this painful history was a shared responsibility. Younger audience members noted that the current state violence students were protesting seemed like a repetition of the violence Anastasis had faced a generation earlier; one

said that *responding physically to Anastasis' testimonies cultivated a sense of their own capacity for taking action.* The fact that Anastasis were present in the audience, reacting to audiences witnessing their video/performance, also helped overcome the distance that can be felt when listening to recorded testimonies. Moving-with voices that otherwise might have seemed to be from another time created a connection of care, not only with a forgotten history, but with female body-territories (virtual and very much alive), as an ever-expanding site of subjugation and resistance. Like the projects discussed in Chapter 3, collective bodying facilitated a space of *afecto* that sensitized witnesses; in addition, *expressing* somatic responses made listeners more (inter)active. Anastasis said they felt reenergized upon witnessing the student performers taking up their cause, letting *their* bodies speak in response to Colombia's present-history of violence. The younger generation's responsiveness reinvigorated the resistance to desensitization.

The students helped me see that on one hand, society had become indifferent to violent events, and on the other, artistic projects that voice victims' stories were quite common, so audiences often tuned out, or when they tried to listen, they would get fed up, saying *I want to go back in my bubble.* This was what we were working against when we asked audiences/ourselves to react to Anastasis' testimonies. Our work directly addressed the challenge of becoming desensitized through repetition and mediation. And it was not easy. A number of students left the project early. Those who stuck it out said it tested their stamina, not only because it brought up difficult feelings, but also because constant exposure to Anastasis' testimonies dulled their capacity for sustained sensitivity. One student asked, *how can I make sure these stories really get inside me and constantly keep moving me?* Sensitization was not a switch that could be turned on and off, it was a process of taking two steps forward and one step back; it was not, in fact, like opening a floodgate, but gingerly peeling back protective layers that continued to build up. It was

even more difficult to gauge this process for audiences;[167] I cannot confirm whether the sensitization we facilitated, however deeply or actively felt, was sustainable long-term.

Copresencing (More-than) Absences

This practice-as-research relied greatly on the student performers' input as coresearchers, because they viscerally understood (in a way I could not) the difficulty of confronting painful memories that seemed distant but were in fact shared. As Cohen points out, participatory arts projects in contexts of transitional justice "must reach beneath people's defense but do so in respectful and gentle ways" (2003, 3). To do this, the students created scores for engaging audiences in fleshing out their own enquiries, particularly around (more-than) absences. For instance, one group of students explored the theme of absent bodies, shadows, illusions, invisible figures, and what they called the 'expanded body'. They created a score that started by asking audience members to think of a word to describe the smell of one's own mother and write it in the Zoom chat. Then we heard Milena's object-inspired testimony, which begins with the words, *around my silhouette, I see how my life has taken many turns since birth.* She goes on to express how the disappearance of her mother affected her: *I began a spiral, a spiral of pain, of injustice, of disappointments, but also of stubbornness, love, and solidarity, which called upon me to transform…to transform this absence, this pain, into resistance.* The students gradually engaged audiences in actively listening to Milena by inviting them to conjure a personal sense-memory

[167] I conducted a survey to collect audience responses. To the first question - *how did the performance affect you?* - most responded that they felt moved. This only partially confirmed that we had achieved our goal, as it was not clearly an embodied response. To the second question - *in which part of the body did you feel sensations?* - most responded that they felt something in their stomach/heart/center. This more clearly revealed that sensitization had occurred, and that it felt like a stirring of the heart or a pang in the gut. When asked how they were *implicated* in the stories heard, audience responses were mixed - from feeling pain and sadness to wanting to do something to contribute, feeling responsible and wanting to learn more. The lack of consistent responses shows that implication played out differently for everyone. The fact that no-one responded *I am not implicated* seems to prove that our interactive performance did in fact implicate witnesses (at least those who engaged).

that was shared alongside the students' performance of listening, creating gentle waves of resonance with maternal (more-than) absences.

Figures 28-30: students performing the "silhouette" score with Milena's testimony on Zoom. Photo Credit Sarah Ashford Hart

The student performers moved in spirals, silhouetted against virtual backgrounds of abstract drawings they'd done in response to moving-with Milena. They each used a broom handle to support and generate their movements, giving a sense that they were writing in the air, at times, or cleaning up a shattered home at others. Their silhouettes appeared and disappeared as they moved, due to how Zoom interpreted their bodies' presence/absence. Afterwards, co-witnesses were asked to draw our own sensations in response to this score and then share our

drawings by holding them up to the camera. Amplifying Milena's embodied memory by expressing its resonances in our own body-minds on different registers let us copresence her loss, without collapsing difference, like a much-needed embrace across time, space and positionality. The creators of the silhouette score described it as *conjuring the presence of the absent by amplifying intimate connections that linger.* Anastasis taught us that keeping the dead alive through creative acts of embodied memory can allow loss and sadness to transform into joy and *afecto* that touches an enlivens others. Copresencing these (more-than) absences became our way of feeling how we/they were part of a collective body that remembered – "a fluid structure in which [we] could find support and creative impulse" by moving-with (Estrada-Fuentes 2018, 300). The spiral - as image, movement and concept – represented and enacted spinning and navigating the webs of relaciones afectivas that entangle bodies (somatically, virtually and posthumously), such that physical distance no longer felt like separateness.

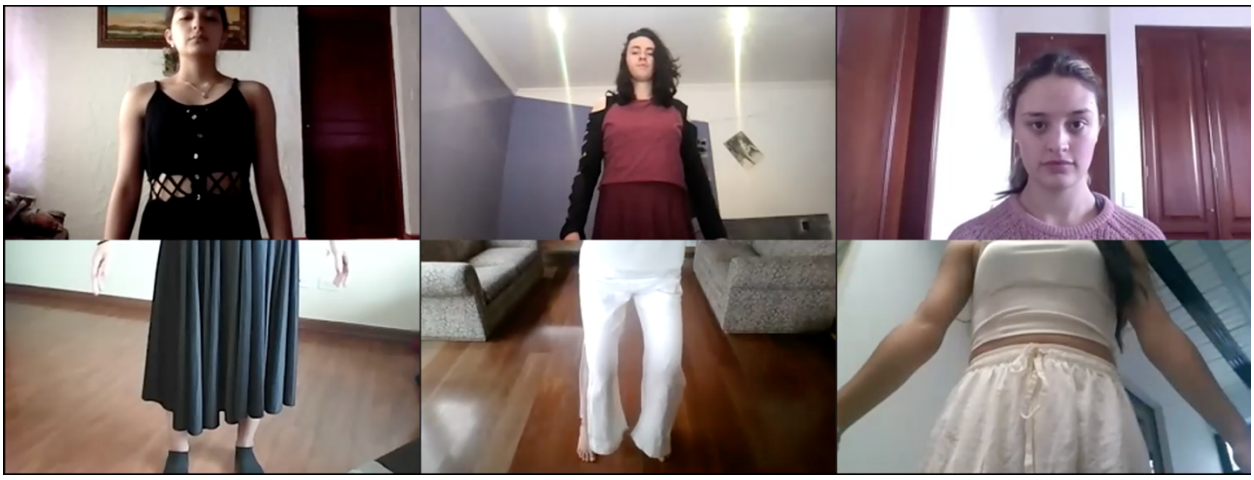

Figure 31: image of students performing the "collective body" score on Zoom. Photo Credit Sarah Ashford Hart

To establish a shared space on Zoom, we initiated our interactive performance with a "collective body" score. *The students situated their bodies in the Zoom boxes as parts of a whole, breathing together but not necessarily in unison, attuning to one another somatically.* This

allowed us/them to presence the interplay between connection and disconnection in a similar way to the "hacerse masa" score created for moving-with Esther - pushing the limits of the skin/screen as a porous barrier that contains/separates us.[168] Like in California, contact here was an intention, not a result. Collective bodying did not do away with physical, affective and social distance, but it did allow us to move into a virtual thirdspace (of *afecto*) that facilitated what Rothberg calls *long-distance solidarity,* "premised on difference rather than logics of sameness and identification" (2019, 12). The audience initially observed from 'outside' and eventually (some) were able to enter this shared space, gaining a sense of visceral response-ability. As we had learned with Esther, moving-with can sensitize witnesses to the narrators' power *con-movedora,* or creative life-force in the face of subjugation (Sandoval 2012). In Colombia, it also sensitized us to how the "drama of the war is a drama that implicates us all" as a "collective body, a nation in grief" (Restrepo in Sotelo 2019a, 282). Rothberg concludes that, as social (and, we could add, *embodied, sentient*) beings, "[s]ince we live among others, our models of responsibility must leave behind the individualist assumptions of liberal legal culture…and consider instead what it means to act collectively—which also means indirectly and at a distance" (2019, 47-48). *Moverse-con Anastasis Corporal* collectively embodied this implication.

In both phases of this research, collective response-ability for unjust absences and the forgetting (or ignoring) of continued, excessive violence against others was facilitated by moving-with (deepening my initial notion of response-ability to become more collective). There were notable differences. With *Moverse-con Anastasis Corporal*, we listened to the memories of

[168] As Manning says, "when the skin becomes not a container but a multidimensioned topological surface that folds in, through, and across spacetimes of experience, what emerges is not a self but the dynamic form of a worlding that refuses categorization. Beyond the human, beyond the sense of touch or vision, beyond the object, what emerges is relation" (2012, 12).

those *left behind* - the victims who survived. In this context, it was not the narrators who were absent. In fact, they were virtually 'present', although their testimonies were pre-recorded. Meanwhile, the digital stories of deportation we moved-with in California evoked a sense of the narrators' undesired absence from the U.S.. Moving-with Esther prompted those left behind (those of us able to stay in California) to recognize the inhumane consequences of deportation.[169] In both contexts, by sharing our somatic responses to recorded testimonies, witnesses were able to feel our own implication in the unequal distribution of privilege and suffering that perpetuates histories of violence. One student in Colombia said that moving-with made it possible to *be conscious of our place, the other's place, and the other's humanity - how we all deserve dignity and respect for the simple yet transcendental fact that we breathe, feel, love and live.* This sentiment speaks to our situatedness and relationality as witnesses, as well as Bautista's call to humanize ourselves by revendicating the humanity of others, in a decolonial sense (2017). In Colombia and California, saying *'*never again*'* to dehumanization, from a position of privilege, requires repeated attempts at feeling a connection with stories that are hard to hear.[170]

Although we never indicated explicitly to audiences/participants that the goal of moving-with was to feel more connected with each other and the narrators, it was implied in our scores. Long before this practice-as-research, though, participants in many different creative workshops I facilitated often expressed a sense of feeling more connected, more free, or more human, even

[169] One of the most painful consequences of deportation evidenced by the narrators of the Humanizing Deportation archive, and Esther in particular, is family separation; as Robert Irwin explains, the effects of family separation "resonate well beyond the life of the person being punished with deportation, producing often devastating effects – multigenerational trauma – on loved ones, including many US citizens," such as Esther's daughter (2020, 12).

[170] Blanco and Sorzano point out that "the fundamental principle of decolonial thought is the need to 'unlearn', to rethink what we think we know, to reconceptualize notions and ways to produce knowledge and to accept other systems of knowledge as valid and diverse populations as citizens with full rights" (2021, 179). Moving-with can help witnesses unlearn habits of withdrawal and apathy when encountering others' stories of violence and healing. It reconceptualizes listening as an embodied, relational, affective (ex)change, rather than a one-way, rational transmission process. Blanco and Sorzano add that for certain groups of victims in Colombia (particularly, ethnic minority communities), the meaning of peace goes beyond legal definitions to "living in harmony with other living beings and the environment: el buen vivir or vivir sabroso" (181). Anastasis call on witnesses to consider our role in both legal justice and the radical care necessary to sustain life.

when our explicit goal was to create a performance (which, as mentioned earlier, is what essentially inspired this dissertation). While this affective impact could be theorized in different ways, I am committed to thinking with theories that emerge from practice-based, collaborative processes, which has led me to rethink humanization in terms of connection. Although moving-with (in both contexts) could be seen as an experience of self-aggrandizement for people not impacted by armed violence or deportation, listening to the voices of 'others', to feel 'bad for them' and thus better about ourselves as 'good humans', there is another important aspect to consider. A shared interest in the content of the testimonies brought us together, but it was the resonance of the narrators' voices in our bodies that facilitated an intimate experience of relational movement, allowing us to feel less separate from others, which in turn let us feel our connection to present-histories of violence and enclosure - not always a comfortable sensation for privileged audiences. Implicated witnessing pushes us to the limits of self-containment, towards becoming *more-than* individuals, *more-than* social categories, letting us copresence the shared vitality that animates all life and needs care.

What we come away with is the value of making space for revendicating human connectivity, fomenting the capacity for affective attunement as a form of collective resistance to the systemic exclusion, criminalization and dehumanization of certain bodies (as 'unwanted' migrants or 'unmournable' deaths), as well as to the sense of disconnection, distance and self-containment those of us in positions of privilege are socialized to feel. By listening from the body to the voices of female victims/survivors, we found we could literally 'be moved' to feel how a counter-hegemonic ethic of care affirms all lives as interdependent (*you fall, I fall*). Esther's digital story reclaims her right to care and be cared for, championing the will to survive and resist dehumanization through love (Sandoval 2012). Witnessing her story demands a

somatic response to her call to stay connected and feel our way across barriers—the skin, the border, the autonomous self—just as she does. *Anastasis Corporal* calls upon witnesses to make ourselves *answerable* in a different way - to recognize our relational positionality and respond by opening ourselves up to *feeling-with* (as part of a nation/territory in grief) and *being-with* (as part of a collective body).[171] In both contexts, the embodied sense of implication facilitated by moving-with extends beyond socially constructed subjectivities and legal frameworks (of citizenship or justice) to the *more-than* of experience in-the-making.

(In)Concluding: final thoughts and future directions for *Moverse-con*

With this practice-as-research, engaging audience/participants in actively listening from the body to recorded testimonies of violence and healing offered a way to viscerally feel how all lives are interconnected via relational movement. This may seem like a grand claim. However, there is a gap between what a body can know and what a text can convey. As performance studies scholar/practitioner María José Contreras points out, "embodied knowledge is a different kind of knowing, which can expand the epistemological horizons that Eurocentric academia has established" since "what the body knows cannot be translated into discourse, at least not entirely" (2018, 85 – *my translation*). While recognizing that language's capacity to show what can be felt by moving-with is limited, I have attempted to (partially) document how this work *does something* to challenge the normalization of violence, by sensitizing (at least some)

[171]As Judith Butler puts it, "I am already bound to you, and this is what it means to be the self I am, receptive to you in ways that I cannot fully predict or control" (2012, 142). She adds, "if I possess myself too firmly or too rigidly, I cannot be in an ethical relation. The ethical relation means ceding a certain egological perspective for one that is structured fundamentally by a mode of address: You call upon me, and I answer" (141-2). Answerability is thus inherent to ethical relationality. Michael Lazzara adds that how we choose to "heed the call to accountability" has moral implications and "under optimal circumstances, to 'account' for oneself, as Judith Butler asserts, means to heed a call to transparency and truthfulness in the interest of forming or strengthening community – that is, in the interest of a greater good that lies beyond the self" (2018, 13, 8). He refers specifically to "first-person accounts as acts of individual responsibility toward an-other", yet as I have shown, this logic can be extended beyond speech acts to *embodied* call and response, which also implies "rendering oneself vulnerable to another", not only in a moral sense, but the somatic sense of affecting and being affected (8).

witnesses in positions of privilege - getting under our skin in a way our (individual and collective) body-mind won't forget. The mediated aspect of using Zoom as our shared space for moving-with *Anastasis Corporal* made feeling an embodied connection seem unlikely at first. This is precisely why we needed to test *how their voices move us, how their words affect us, and how their experiences implicate us,* in the context of an ever more virtual, distanced, unequal and unpredictable reality. An in-person experience of witnessing testimony would entail a face-to-face call to recognize the other's humanity that would be harder to ignore. Working with recordings that, in other instances, online audiences might just scroll over, makes the (momentary) creation of a co-witnessing community that is answerable all the more impactful.

Colombian society has developed a coping mechanism of not being affected emotionally by repeated atrocities. As Ruben Yepes explains, apathy - the affect of indifference - is the result of over-saturation with representations of violence (2018). In other words, the trauma of the armed conflict is not an interruption of normal life - it is normalized (even in peacetime). Yepes says that society has become callous to the suffering of others, suffering that would not be humanly possible to comprehend let alone empathize with if it were fully recognized (2018). He posits, "[i]f those Colombians privileged enough to see the conflict as something distant are to participate actively in the construction of its memory and in the social changes that the country needs, they must first accumulate within themselves the affective energy [*energía afectiva*] that this commitment requires" (18 – *my translation*). Performances that contribute to the production of this *energía afectiva* play an important role in peacemaking and collective memory construction (as evidenced in the previous chapter). Moreover, as I have attempted to shown with this chapter, interactive performance, like *Moverse-con Anastasis Corporal*, that facilitates active listening to recorded testimonies can hold audiences accountable in unprecedented ways, by

raising embodied awareness of this *energía afectiva* in the moment it is felt, as a vital connection (in fact, 'energy of *afecto'* would be a more precise translation than 'affective energy' here). When the performance ends, we may go back to our 'bubbles', but *something* remains - an affective residue, a relational possibility, a somatic shift. And even when this fails to occur for some, important lessons can be still learned.

Those witnesses who did not actively engage, who apparently preferred the passive spectator or 'detached bystander' role, also made an important contribution to this research, by indicating that their apathy (or fear) needs to be listened to. In a future iteration of this work, more space could be made to explore how audiences 'just sitting there' are *not* in fact failing to react. As Garner argues, "sitting and not-moving exists on the movement continuum" and "while spectators may suspend certain motor engagements with the outside world when they take their seats…they continue to move and to perceive movement around them" (Garner 2018, 10-26). In other words, they are still present*,* still connected. Perhaps our focus on activating spectators veiled how not-moving is a somatically viable response that also does something*,* just as apathy (or silence) does, as a political stance symptomatic of trauma, which merits care. It may permit the status quo of violence against others to continue, when those in "positions aligned with power and privilege" who are not "themselves direct agents of harm" refuse to acknowledge their own implication, but it is also an invitation to spend more time asking *why* (Rothberg 2019, 1). Something motivated people to join our Zoom space, which, based on the feedback we received, seemed to be a desire to feel something differently together (to *be-with*). We attracted people predisposed to try to listen to victims, despite any apathy (or distrust) they might have felt. Their presence indicated a desire to try to activate feelings obscured by a conflict, where many see themselves as *both* victims of *and* part of the system of oppression (Schimpf-Herken

and Baumann 2015). Perhaps, not feeling able to move is not the same as not-feeling. This begs the question; *how could we engage those least likely to hear/feel these testimonies?*

The techniques we developed for moving-with *Anastasis Corporal* are limited in terms of access, with regards to disability, technology, and leisure time as well as political inclination. Perhaps we could create other modes of engagement that do not presume all witnesses enjoy the same level of physical ability nor the access to technology and time necessary for undertaking these kinds of artistic endeavors. The very premise of engaging audiences in witnessing via embodied expression relies on their willingness to spend time and energy valuing creative, dance-like activities as something important to peace, reparations, and life in general. While innovative, impactful, and moving on many levels, this practice-as-research contains assumptions that will need to be reconsidered in the future. At this moment, it feels as though more time is needed, in order to gain critical distance. I recognize that there was a tendency to seek a specific outcome (*afecto*), on my part as facilitator. Affective facilitation involves providing open-ended frames for relational transformations, which can ideally potentiate *afecto,* but should not foreclose the importance of other kinds of affective impacts (or resistance to being impacted affectively). Due to the scope of this study, I have not attempted to investigate why some audience/participants apparently were not moved (or did not move); there was no mechanism for capturing the feedback of those who did not wish to give any. Despite these limitations (or areas for future enquiry), this research has revealed overall that for the many audience/participants who did engage, moving-with *Anastasis Corporal* resulted in feeling more viscerally response-able to humanity's collective, vital, vulnerable interdependence.

Chapter 5

Conclusion: further thought on facilitating *afecto* and more-than-humanization

Doing/thinking/feeling Trajectory

With this dissertation, I have documented embodied experiences of specific applied theatre (or participatory performance) practices in (de)humanizing Latin American contexts, honing theoretical terms that have emerged through and between each process to create a conceptual framework that can shape future inquiries into affective facilitation in other contexts. Starting from the context-specific generates not a universal theory/practice of facilitation but a non-prescriptive orientation towards the creative encounter that plays out differently in every instance. The distinct strategies of colonial/patriarchal/capitalist/modern dehumanization, carried out via institutional enclosure and state violence, in the specific contexts where the projects I study have taken place across the Americas evidently call for distinct approaches to 'affective facilitation', with the commonality that all attempt to reassert the humanity of all those involved by presencing their/our implication in vital networks of care. Importantly, each creative process leads to new ideas and questions, which can inspire future action and reflection, so that practice and theory become intertwined in a reflexive praxis.[172]

The path of my (*doing-)*thinking began from my realization that applied theatre that serves the interests of carceral institutions misplaces the aims and misvalues the impact of the work, which essentially hopes to be liberatory;[173] by re-placing the focus on affective

[172] According to Paulo Freire's notion of praxis, "ideas can only exist if they are applied" and the coextensive reflection and action inherent to praxis requires reflexivity, which then facilitates subsequent actions (in Mackey 2016, 488).
[173] Robin Nelson describes practice-as-research in the arts as a rigorous "dialogic engagement of doing-thinking" that can mobilize the potential for new knowledge; it is a "method used to develop know-what from know-how" via critical reflection "about the processes of making and its modes of knowing" (2012, 19, 44), and I would add, not-knowing.

transformations rather than 'having something to show', we can redefine what it means to say this work is 'freeing' or 'humanizing', so that humanization can be understood in a decolonial sense, as feeling physically connected and vitally interdependent with other lives (rather than only meaning representation in the public sphere as a self-contained *person* with individual rights). In the initial chapters, I discussed the problems with applied theatre becoming instrumentalized within neoliberal state discourses, specifically with respect to projects in prisons and immigrant detention in the U.S. and Chile, focusing on my own experience as facilitator, which led me to appreciate the importance of *afecto* and *cuidado* (care and its potential to help or harm), affective attunement to all kinds of affects, and not-knowing (allowing the 'point' of the work to shift in the here and now).

With Chapter 3, in the context of Colombia, a country where the state does not have total territorial control, its power is contested by armed groups in conflict, and a pervasive 'fear of the other' normalizes violence, I learned that the problems of the neoliberal state/institution and its identity categories must be addressed differently. The violence of disappearance, assassination and displacement is distinct from that of incarceration, detention and deportation, in the sense that greater involvement of the institution/state is desired by victims/survivors and their allies in Colombia*,* along with being seen and heard as part of the peace and reparations discourse. In this context, my revised proposal was that we must value process as well as product, narrative *and* affect. By listening-with the praxes of Colombian theatre facilitators working with female victims/survivors of the armed conflict, I found that the capacity to cultivate relaciones afectivas as a strategy for collective survival emerges specifically from the female body-territory as the site of subjugation and resistance, offering an alternative to violent relations - a path to peace from below that others can follow. When it comes to audiences (an important aspect here that

was not central to the work in the previous chapter), I realized that moments of embodied copresence on stage allow all those present to feel more connected and implicated, as part of the problem and the solution – a notion I continued to explore in the next chapter.

With Chapter 4, I further developed the idea of implicated witnessing, introduced in Chapter 3, exploring the role of the audience in testimonial performance and, specifically, how to make the audience's experience of embodied copresence more visceral. Moving-with – a methodology I created for facilitating active listening from the body – invites privileged audiences to literally 'be moved' by prerecorded testimonial performances – whether U.S. citizens listening to digital stories of deportation to Mexico or Bogotano/as listening to a video/performance by victims/survivors of Colombia's armed conflict. Even via Zoom, we found that moving-with allowed us to feel connections across apparent divides, moving us (or some of us) beyond passive spectatorship to feel more kinesthetically and collectively response-able. This final practice-as-research process solidified one of my main hunches throughout the dissertation - that facilitating embodied, relational movement is a necessary supplement to narrative representation in applied theatre, in order to potentiate the affective impact of the work. Moreover, moving-with shifts the site of impact from applied theatre 'participants' to its audiences (and facilitators) as *necessarily active* participants in the performance of memory construction.

As I hope has become clear, the impact of this work cannot be premised alone on the meaning of representations; focusing only on what can be understood or changed in discursive terms problematically backgrounds a wide range of important affective impacts that are felt somatically, and are meaningful, but can be difficult to articulate. Engaging bodies in kinesthetic expression, witnessing and response in relation to narrative, one another and the given context,

can help enhance the affective impacts of applied theatre, in particular in Latin American spaces of (de)humanization, precisely because in these spaces, the felt aspects of co-existence come under attack, become more resilient, and therefore cannot be ignored. Accordingly, affective facilitation is all the more vital. I am not proposing to leave narrative behind completely; participants' stories often need to be told and heard. What I suggest is that we let go of the scripted show as the predetermined outcome to allow for greater appreciation of unpredictable shifts in how we can feel our relationalities unfolding. This approach resonates with participatory dance and disability scholar Petra Kuppers' idea that "an encounter extends beyond our individual skin sack – and yet remains available to our senses" even while "[c]olonial histories have proven that it is much too easy to shut one's self off" (2022, 5).

I thus propose that affective facilitation be understood as a context-specific, open-ended relational arts practice that provides frames for liberatory transformations, making space for the emergence of alternative relationalities with all kinds of bodies (not only those deemed human), allowing us to feel how we are not fully self-contained but inherently interconnected, as part of a community of life. Affective facilitation offers a way to potentiate *being-with* and *feeling-with,* so that we might imagine and nurture other possible ways of being together in/with the world, alongside the colonial/patriarchal/capitalist/modern paradigm, or at least feel that there exists something *more-than* the separation and confinement of discursively constructed categories of being. To do this, we need to emphasize the affective transformations facilitated by applied theatre – specifically those that potentiate life-affirming relations; this is not just any kind of affect but *afecto* (a connection of care and solidarity, felt as radical love). It foments the sense of being *more-than* individual, where experience overspills subjectification into a shared life-force. However, the affective cannot be completely separated from the social. Projects that aim to make

representational interventions in discourse also potentiate affective transformations and when affective attunement occurs, new possibilities emerge for witnessing narratives from an embodied, porous state of connectivity. My point is that the impact of this work is not only the effect on our ideas and potential (inter)actions, as in social change, but also a widened existential sense of what is possible in terms of ways of being and becoming in/with the world.

This process is not necessarily easy and, particularly for witnesses (as I learned by moving-with), it must unsettle our sense of being comfortable in our own skin. Creating a space of *afecto* can allow all those present to become vulnerable together, enabling us to attune to our sentient response-ability, our capacity to affect and be affected, and our connectedness to one another, which requires care. This expansive aspect of existence is always there but gets backgrounded; affective facilitation can offer much-needed spaces to nurture and amplify it. While *afecto* paves a way to the future possibility for alternative relationalities that we can feel here and now, there is not a set destination; opening ourselves up to ways of being otherwise involves thinking/feeling a world we have *not yet known* into existence. This brings me back to Preston's idea that *facilitation flow* requires not-knowing rather than "a preconceived position of knowing endgaming" (2016, 1253). Feeling *something else* is possible does not necessarily mean flowing towards a new set of societal structures, but overflowing reality as we know it. We may not be able to rationalize this sensation, but we can attune to it affectively. As cultural memory scholar Kate Willink points out, "[o]ne way affect becomes agentic is through entrainment, the capacity of bodies to sync up without necessarily coming to the realm of consciousness or recognition" (2022, 4). This entrainment, or attunement, or flow, is an enhanced embodied awareness of our interdependence – of how our positionalities are intertwined in unequal and dynamic ways.

This interdependence involves vulnerability and the need for collaborative survival. Human Rights scholar Jill Stauffer points out that "even beings who call themselves sovereign should know that they will need the help of others if that sovereignty is to be meaningful—sovereignty always relies on others who acknowledge its worth and thus observe its boundaries. Dehumanization is, in part, the refusal of that response. Sovereignty is dependence" (2015, 30). Recognizing that sovereignty is dependence draws attention to "the vulnerability that defines us as embodied beings and thus bears on what freedom can mean for us"; we are never in fact "free to make decisions about right and value unaffected by others," as (neo)liberal discourses would have us believe (Stauffer 2015, 37-38). Anthropologist Ana Tsing helpfully extends the implications of this "condition of being vulnerable to others" to encompass more-than-human collaborations - a notion to which I will return in a moment (2015, 20). She explains, "staying alive – for every species – requires livable collaborations. Collaboration means working across difference…without collaborations we all die…in order to survive we need help, and help is always the service of another…it is unselfconscious privilege that allows us to fantasize counterfactually – that we each survive alone" (28-29). Collaborative survival is transformative and unpredictable – encounters change us and "we are not in control, even of ourselves" (Tsing 2015, 20).

Affective facilitation acknowledges the (more-than) human condition of vulnerability and dependence, along with the need for collaborative survival; it intentionally orients transformative creative encounters towards community-building, via embodied copresence (the physical manifestation of *afecto*), while relinquishing the desire for control and the kind of freedom that relies on fantasies of individual independence, valuing instead moments of freedom from dehumanizing enclosures – moments of connection. Other scholars, facilitators and participants

of applied theatre have said this in other ways; we all know we get *something* out of this work. For me, that *something* is being in the same space (a theatre, a prison, a community center or a university classroom), live or virtually, and having a different experience of being there in relation to others. What James Thompson calls *performance affects* necessarily becomes *afecto* in Latin American contexts of (de)humanization. In cultures of mistrust and silence, with ongoing histories of violence and colonization, the devaluing and othering of certain lives has become institutionalized and normalized. Feeling better - more alive, more in tune with the Vincularidad of all life – can occur (momentarily) via sharing a creative space, moving together, and expressing/witnessing experiences beyond identity discourses of marginalization and victimization (although the encounter may start from sharing those stories, it can take us *somewhere else*).

My learning as a theatre facilitator, tracked through this dissertation, began from my own failures regarding complicity within neoliberal institutional frameworks that promote self-improvement rather than collective responsibility.[174] I have found, however, that different contexts require certain levels of institutionalization, in order to be able to do this work at all. It is important to remember that even when institutionalized, applied theatre is also always about expressing/witnessing all kinds of affects, from painful to joyful, thus facilitating a felt connection to the webs of relations that shape and are shaped by our worlds. Many applied theatre projects in Global South contexts strategically utilize the institutional support provided for a 'product' to sustain the vital process/practice of cultivating life-affirming relations. My

[174] Perhaps a better term than complicity would be complacency, which Michael Lazzara defines as "upholding the status quo, resisting change, and acting in a self-interested manner, all the while attenuating or downplaying the foundational violence that led to the current state of affairs" (2018, 7). Meanwhile, he conceives of complicity as "direct involvement in wrongdoings (with varying degrees of agency and at either greater or lesser removes from actual crimes)" (7). However, Lazzara also notes that complacency and complicity are on a continuum of complicities; I therefore use the umbrella term complicity, while acknowledging that I have often been referring to the more complacent side of the continuum.

initial failure to see the necessary double use of the institution reveals my own critical positionally as being (mostly) from the North, like so many other applied theatre theorists - I recognized the need for facilitators to creatively negotiate with authority but saw it, from my limited perspective, as more an enclosure than a mode of collaborative survival. A question I have grappled with throughout this dissertation is how to use my privilege to work against dehumanizing enclosures. My experience working within Latin American contexts of (de)humanization has helped me appreciate how nurturing relaciones afectivas (in various ways – inside, outside and alongside institutions) can make all those involved feel more able to live in spite of state violence.

As colonial settler states, the US, Chile and Colombia are all founded on the expropriation of territory and racist politics. Their legal apparatuses value certain lives and freedoms over others, but each state has differing abilities to enforce or change these values. The degree of cultural homogeneity also differs. While Chile is often referred to as 'one small town' (ignoring the disputed Mapuche territory), Colombia is really many nations within one (including to some degree territorially sovereign indigenous nations). California could be thought of as a nation-sate within the US, given its territorial and economic vastness and its strong regional identity (which ignores or 'assimilates' its native peoples). While the projects I have studied respond differently to oppressive states and cultures, local institutions and injustices, all of them critique dehumanization from the perspective of how it feels. The specific problem addressed by each is distinct: criminalization, incarceration and second-class treatment of female economic 'migrants' in Chile; confinement and commodification of the body and desire for Latinx (im)migrants seeking safety in California; fear of the other, the perpetuation of violence and indifference to its impacts on female victims in Colombia. In these contexts, relaciones afectivas are necessary for

collective survival, so their life-giving power is targeted by violent state/institutional enclosures, such as immigrant detention, displacement, deportation, forced disappearance and assassination.

Bodies can be confined, controlled and removed; care networks can be coerced, limited and interrupted, but they are never fully cut-off. New life-affirming relations form across divides and can be felt all the more viscerally because of their opposition to dehumanizing enclosures. This is why *afecto* is key to applied theatre in the (de)humanizing Latin American contexts in which I have worked. Given the specificity of each kind of enclosure, I have found that *afecto* can be reached through multiple creative pathways (playbuilding, workshop facilitation and/or engaging audiences) and that some approaches mitigate more than others the potential harm (*cuidado*) of opening ourselves up too much. *Afecto* nurtures a sense of autonomy that is communitarian, not individual, and based in reciprocity, making us viscerally conscious of our vulnerability and dependence as relational, embodied beings. Although the basis of the modern nation is the biopolitical capacity for its inhabitants to be at once bare life (*zoe)* and political life (*bios)* and to thus be controllable, since they can be detained/interned and reduced to bare life (without rights),[175] I do not believe that dehumanizing enclosures like detention truly reduce anyone to non-existence, although that is the aim. Interdependence as a human condition is exploited to produce hierarchy, but our inherent interdependence with all life means that our bodies are never fully separate from other lives or the land (even in death) and always exist symbiotically – as part of a collective, more-than-human body.

The trajectory of my doing/thinking/feeling has led me to the notion that the female body is the 'first territory' of subjugation and resistance to the violence of coloniality/patriarchy/

[175] In Agamben's terms, political life (*bios*) is defined by participation in a sociopolitical order; this concept/practice is now completely entwined in citizenship within a nation-state (1995). Meanwhile, bare life (*zoe*) is biological, not political, and can therefore be killed without it being considered murder (Agamben 1995).

capitalism/modernity and cannot be separated from the land in the struggle for alternative ways of relating, being, and knowing. This became apparent during my research in Colombia, where women are at the center of reparative narratives and affects, but it is in fact a common thread throughout all of my research/practice. Gender ends up being central to my thesis (though not fully fleshed out in the earlier chapters), because feminine relationality is key to understanding the life-affirming power of theatre facilitation and its potential for fomenting (decolonial) humanization. Affective facilitation aligns with Andean, indigenous, decolonial, frameworks of communitarian feminism. 'Female' can be understood as a gender as well as a kind of relationality that affirms/creates life, one that can be practiced by *all* bodies. 'Body-territory' is individual and collective, incorporating identity, history, place, memory, self and also sensations, affects, relations, migrations and unknown potential. So, the 'female body-territory' is both an objectified construction and a collective life-force.

A dialogue might begin here between new materialism and *Place-Thought* - an indigenous way of being, where femininity is an embodied connectedness with land, "based upon the premise that land is alive and thinking and that humans and non-humans derive agency through the extensions of these thoughts" (Watts 2013, 21). Indigenous studies scholar Vanessa Watts explains that colonial societies were constructed by "disabling communication with Place-Thought, and implementing a bounded agency where women are sub-human/non-human" and "humans" (or men) act upon a passive natural world (associated with femininity) (31). Place-Thought still exists alongside colonial structures, however; it has even infiltrated academic thought. For instance, Karen Barad asks "what it would mean to think about thinking as part of what the *world does"* (in Haraway 2011, 9) and Stacy Alaimo proposes that we reimagine ourselves "in constant interchange with the 'environment'", within an epistemological space that

"allows for both the unpredictable becomings of other creatures and the limits of human knowledge" (Alaimo 2008, 262). Human embodiment can thus be understood as inseparable from (more-than-human) nature, as it is composed of the same 'matter'. To challenge the human-nonhuman duality, following Barad's notion of intra-action (referring to difference *within*, not with others) Alaimo locates agency not in the individual person, but the intra-active capacity for transformation constituent of the matter of life. So, we can see that nature (or territory) has agency, which 'human' agency is always already bound up in/with.

This opens up the possibility of expanding the relational sense of self I have explored to include interconnection with more-than-human body-minds. It also recalls the creative "push of life" that escapes enclosures, which coloniality/patriarchy/capitalism/modernity has attempted to negate and control by subjugating women, nature and all kinds of devalued lives.[176] Political theorist Jane Bennett adds that "the sense of nature as creativity" implies the "becoming otherwise of things in motion as they enter into strange conjunctions with one another…producing the new," even *in* our bodies (2010, 118). She offers the term "vital materiality" to encapsulate this "very radical character of the (fractious) kinship between the human and the nonhuman", explaining "[m]y 'own' body is material, and yet this vital materiality is not fully or exclusively human. My 'own' flesh is populated and constituted by different swarms of foreigners…it is thus not enough to say we are 'embodied'. We are, rather, an array of bodies" (112-113). While this concept of embodiment as necessarily plural, porous, and contaminated by others *within* (potentiating collaborative survival and transformation) deepens the premise that theatre facilitation can foment affective attunement to a shared vitality

[176] Alaimo argues that concepts of nature have been used (in contradictory ways) to oppress certain dehumanized people, including women, people of color, indigenous peoples, queer folks and the working classes, supposing their proximity to nature, and/or their presumed unnaturalness (2008, 239).

that animates all life and needs care, it also extends beyond the scope of this dissertation, pointing towards new directions for future research on more-than-humanization, to which I will return momentarily.

Renewed Methodology

With this research, initial questions necessarily led to practice-based explorations (or encounters), which generated new knowledge as well as greater awareness of what was *not known.* Applied theatre researcher/practitioners Jenny Hughes, Jenny Kid and Catherine McNamara explain that with applied theatre practice-as-research, "theoretical endeavor, research activity and creative practice do not exist outside of each other but are each part of practice," and this methodology, "rather than posing answers to clearly defined questions, develops articulations of experience that may not be accounted for by habitual and institutionally bound framings of those experiences" (2011, 194). They also note that the accounts of applied theatre practice offered by participants and theorized by researcher/practitioners "always only indicate temporarily abstracted fragments of the practice" (207). The findings of my applied theatre (practice-as) research are neither generalizable nor objective, as my analysis is contained within the particular universe of each creative process - the bodies, histories, and spaces that shape and are shaped by relations therein - and my own situated experience, which can only be partly communicated and does not entirely fit into traditional frames of evaluation.

As I have said, my main inspiration for this dissertation was a desire to understand and document what is happening in an applied theatre workshop or performance when there is a shift in affect, a kind of softening in the space that feels like becoming part of something shared.[177] To

[177] I see both workshops and performances as 'performative', involving the doing and becoming of certain actions or interactions, which are both framed by and re-frame identity and culture and also embody a presence that allows for affective attunement - a

help explain how performative practices generate embodied communication in ways that exceed words and representations, María José Contreras describes the generation of energetic modifications and resonances across and between bodies as occurring via copresence, creating an intercorporeal system that supersedes the sense of being discrete individual bodies by working with vibrations to create an atmosphere that encompasses bodies in a common cadence (2008, 153-155). She adds, "the feasibility of entering into attunement with the body of the other depends on technique, but also on a disposition of openness that is not exclusive to acting or the performing arts" (161 – *my translation*). Opening up to our capacity for affective attunement can challenge what we think we know. The neoliberal, (neo)colonial paradigm is based on presumed certainty about bodies and their limits; it often engenders research based on set aims and outcomes that foreclose our openness to experiencing the *here and now* of research as intercorporeal energy in motion.

Affective facilitation (as research) requires constantly rediscovering the 'method' by remaining conscious of how we affect and are affected by our (ex)changes. It entails trying to position ourselves towards affirmation, solidarity, and connection, rather than isolation, rejection and disconnection, because these latter actions are part of the neoliberal system that relies on knowing and certainty - on placing the other, on aims and outcomes. To imagine other possible approaches, not-knowing is essential, but not always easy nor straightforward. As Victoria Foster says in *Collaborative Arts-Based Research for Social Justice,* the anticipation of a better world requires defiant imagination, in that it defies expectation and constraint and allows for hope by

transformation of the affect in a space among a group of people into a shared collective experience. In these terms, a dinner party is also 'performative', not only because of the roles we play, but because there is a certain feeling that takes us over, or washes over us, as we begin to tune in to the same vibration - maybe we all begin to dance. If we pay attention to this process, we realize the energy has changed (transforming our space of interaction). If we then explore new meanings and practices of dancing, we begin to open up new possibilities of what can happen at a dinner party. In this sense, saying workshops and performances are performative means they consciously re-define what they are as they become anew.

"multiply[ing] perspectives towards an affirmation of life as a means to knowledge without guarantee," which means "accepting uncertainty and rejecting the notion of 'absolute knowledge'" (Doucet, Mauthner and Lather in Foster 2016, 21). Best practice may look different in every instance and is never unblemished by failure; it requires body-mind responsiveness, sensitivity, and care-fulness, to learn what we are doing as we go and resist entrapment in discursive regimes of control (of knowledge, bodies, language and relations). The researcher/facilitator must embrace the vulnerability of not-knowing and be critical of potential pitfalls therein, in order to bounce back differently in relation to collaborators.

I have come to think of the methodology developed through this dissertation as *critical not-knowing,* which requires taking responsibility for what we do not know, not approaching our creative encounters nor our reflections on them innocently but acknowledging difference and the potential for facilitating harm as well as liberation. It requires recognizing the ideologies we bring with us, to try to see past them. It also requires stepping up when we are called upon to share knowledge we have, while at the same time not imposing nor presuming to 'know better'. Approaching applied theatre (practice-as) research from a position of critical not-knowing does not presume one does not know what to do. Bringing our arsenal of techniques into arts-based explorations can enhance the potential to critically not-know. The difference with a methodology that presumes a certain aim or outcome is that we *do not know* where this process may lead. Rather than leading a group through a set of rehearsed steps, this approach entails offering frames for exploring and reflecting together. It may lead to entanglement and misunderstanding; the responsibility of the facilitator/researcher would then be to highlight the moment of confusion as an important discovery. I may think I know how a given theatre activity should work, according to past experiences, but that idea of 'working' may not suit every group or

context. *Work for what, for who, when, why?* This is what we must constantly ask in order to critically not-know.

Critical not-knowing as a (practice-as) research methodology for affective facilitation, specifically, means embracing vulnerability and uncertainty rather than seeking reliability and predictability. This allows for constantly (re)doing-thinking affective facilitation as a context-specific praxis. It is an ethical position akin to what performance artists and transfeminist theorists Dani D'Emilia and Daniel B. Chávez call *radical tenderness* - "to tune in with, not just empathize with" (2015). We can *feel-with* a group creative process without knowing, understanding, or presuming too quickly what this feeling means or what it is 'good for'. D'Emilia and Chavez say, "radical tenderness is to channel irresistible energies and convert them into untamable embodiments" and "to find a galaxy in the eyes of another and not break the gaze" (2015). By embracing the untamable, unnamable sensations that move between and through bodies, not as a distraction or something peripheral to our work, but as its driving force, we can open ourselves up to becoming-with more than what we know. By valuing how intercorporeal energy in motion colors applied theatre exercises, potentiating new possibilities for what we are exercising, we can allow ourselves to be "pierced by the unknown" (D'Emilia and Chavez 2015). For facilitation practice/research to come from a place of critical not-knowing, we must allow the work to tread on dangerous ground. The question is how to hold the gaze and not be overwhelmed by new galaxies we discover.

I have become critical of not-knowing through writing this dissertation. While not-knowing helped us move alongside institutionalized aims for projects in contexts of immigrant detention (discussed in Chapter 2), for facilitation practices engaging female victims/survivors of the armed conflict in Colombia (discussed in Chapters 3 and 4) there was a need for a clearer

'method'. This was due to the unpredictability of daily life and meant that creating a space of *afecto* was different from the open-ended approach needed within the overdetermined carceral space; it was, instead, a more intentional practice of transforming violent relations into relaciones afectivas. In other words, to facilitate a sense of human connection in certain contexts of state violence, depending on the kind of institutional enclosure, knowing what the shared intention for the creative process is from the outset may be necessary, but this 'knowing' can still be a collective process of knowledge-making. Carceral contexts, on the other hand, may require more openness to letting go of any intention and adapting to the way affects and relations change unpredictably (*afecto* may even emerge from discomfort). Within the total institution, a predetermined method can become another kind of enclosure to resist, but in the absence of the institution (abandonment by the state), there can be a need to imagine an institution to work in and against (possibly applied theatre itself). In each case, *some kind* of technique, structure or project is necessary (even if it must change), to provide a sense of safety or validation, as something to reinvent together, or as the excuse for the encounter.

Critical not-knowing is not a disciplined methodology – it is a trans-disciplinary approach. It is the kind of socially-engaged research that Dwight Conquergood advocates for, as it reaches "outside the academy" and is "rooted in an ethic of reciprocity and exchange" generating "knowledge that is tested by practice within a community", exploring ways of (not) knowing that are "grounded in active, intimate, hands-on participation" (2002, 152, 146). It involves *listening-with* (presencing embodied responses), which is a kind of *maieutic listening* - "a listening that brings to birth" (Warman in Willink 2022, 10). As Willink explains, "such an embodied listening approach emphasizes interviewing as the relational practices of listening and attuning…attending to the non-verbal affective elements" (10). Combining interviews with observant participation in

applied theatre workshops and performances, practice-as-research and certain ethnographic performance methods, my dissertation research has birthed new knowledge from "affective experiences, senses, bodies and imagination and emotion as well as intellect," moving all those involved "at an emotional and sensual level and [impacting] our thinking" (Foster 2016, 2, 125).

In terms of ethnographic method, the object of this study has been applied theatre facilitation, not a specific culture or community, although in my view, affective facilitation and the context in which it occurs are inseparable. Dorinne Kondo helpfully notes that "corporeal epistemologies of ethnography" are "forms of experiential knowledge emerging from putting one's embodied 'self' on the line" and she argues that the creative process of making theatre, like ethnographic fieldwork, "involves a bodily, sensorial, affective, intellectually complex encounter with the world" (2018, 5-6). She positions herself, the ethnographer, as a collaborator in the theatre-making processes she studies (8). I concur with Kondo that "creativity is work, practice, method: a site of theory making and political intervention" (7), and I believe we can extend the idea of ethnographer as collaborator to applied theatre research, reconceptualizing ethnographer as facilitator. To this we can add the notion of the semiotic *chora* as the site of creative work - the "energetic result of our ever-present and evershifting relationship to difference" (Kristeva in Hartnell 2020, 7). The object of study thus becomes the affective space experienced through bodies engaged in creative work - how it shapes our (ex)changes and shifts us towards *afecto* (or not).

This research has also been influenced by the participatory transformative research approach that scholar of indigenous research methods Bagele Chilisa outlines, with the guiding principle of "purposive active engagement and political action by both the researched and the researcher", where all "begin with a clear understanding that research is not neutral and that

ideology determines the methodology of searching for knowledge and defining what can be known" (2012, 229-235). However, the sustainability of my collaborations was difficult to insure and the extent to which participant/co-researchers could mobilize for self-reliance in the face of institutional enclosure and state violence was uncertain. Rather than focusing on democratic inquiry, as in traditional participatory action research, I took onboard sociologist Jessica Fields' approach to "participation and inquiry as deeply felt encounters rife with possibility and disappointment" (2016, 38). Participatory action research requires significant adaptation in certain (de)humanizing contexts where it is unlikely to establish equal footing for a dialogical encounter; in light of this challenge, Fields suggests unpacking the complex relationships that emerge as a shifting terrain for the co-production of knowledge (2016). She adds that "research is enlivened by turning away from methodological conventions" and that "anxious situations" are not "obstacles to empiricism"; they are "visceral experiences of social difference and affinity" (36). Her emphasis on moving away from methodological certainty towards reflexive embodied inquiry helped lead me to critical not-knowing.

This research has been based in processes of collective knowledge-making. As indigenous researcher Shawn Wilson says, knowledge is relational and research is a ceremony, requiring a process of "checking your heart" (2008). Although my work is not indigenous research, Wilson's ethic resonates profoundly with my overall thesis about the importance of *afecto*. Institutionalized neoliberal ways of knowing can reaffirm what we already think we know, but critical not-knowing with *afecto* potentiates ways of *thinking/feeling-with* that do not deem any way of knowing as less valuable than another, working to build connections. Still, there is the very real problem of the commodification and ownership of knowledge within academia; my name appears as author of this dissertation, obscuring the collective nature of the

doing/thinking/feeling-with it documents. In applied theatre practice-as-research "co-creation with multiple others is a major challenge", marking a difference with most other practice-as-research in the arts generated by individual artists/scholars; even if applied theatre "participants might not be co-authors" they still "inhabit the research findings" and "knowledge production is therefore shared" (Mackey 2016, 486). It is my hope that this dissertation evidences polyphonic conversations among many voices and bodies, and that this might inspire new conversations with others doing-thinking applied theatre in Latin American (de)humanizing contexts - not only those within academia, but those working 'on the ground' with arts organizations, governmental institutions, community groups, and NGOs. I also hope it generates cross-pollination between the somewhat siloed disciplines of performance studies and applied theatre.

Colectivo Sustento

In order to envision future directions for this research, I will revisit and expand a few central concepts, using a final, brief case study – *Colectivo Sustento,* a Chilean prison theatre and permaculture project. I will reflect not only on the projects' premise, but the affective impression of visiting their garden (rather than witnessing a theatre performance). *Colectivo Sustento*, facilitated by Penny Glass in Santiago, Chile, since 2012, exemplifies the premise of affective facilitation - working against dehumanization by creating a space for *being-with* and affirming life as interdependent despite violent enclosures. It demonstrates, too, how affective attunement and implicated witnessing may reach beyond the 'human' towards more-than-human connectivity and response-ability. The idea of cultivating sustainability spilled from their prison theatre project into Glass's back yard, in the form of a community garden, where formerly incarcerated and non-incarcerated collaborators grow vegetables—a space for exploring

alternative ways of *living-with* (a term that requires further thought). Their creative work overflows the prison walls, nurturing their community—a kind of bridge between 'inside' and 'outside'. It is no longer just a prison theatre project, but an effort to feed and employ people, whose money or labor then supports those who are and have been incarcerated (Glass 2018; 2019). This shows how the collaborative capacity to survive oppression is based in the power of affective life to escape limits and suggests that caring for interspecies connections (that are vulnerable and complex) fosters collective response-ability to the entanglement of human-nonhuman autonomy.

On their website, *Colectivo Sustento* states (as of November 26, 2016),[178] that their methodology is a continual learning process, creating a future in community, in resistance to neoliberalism, motivated by principles of community theatre, sustainability and social justice. Despite being facilitated by an Australian 'expat' (which may take on the appearance of reinscribing colonial relations as a White Westerner 'helping' the 'subjugated'), their work foments a radical kind of care that acknowledges vital interdependencies and the potential violence of care that is about appropriation rather than reciprocity. It potentiates resistance to the Eurocentric whitening process of *mestizaje,*[179] which maintains economic inequality and epistemic violence by classifying 'indigeneity' as 'uncivilized' and incapable of economic mobility, increasingly incarcerating poor nonwhite people who challenge the established order, keeping power in the hands of the ruling class. While Glass is an outsider with privilege, whose applied theatre work could have fallen into neoliberal tropes, marginalizing and responsibilizing

[178] For more information in *Colectivo Sustento*, visit their website: www.colectivosustento.org

[179] Reid Gomez criticizes the homogenizing concept of *mestizaje*, in that *mestizos* become categorically non-native (2003). In context of Chile, Mapuche, Aymara, and other indigenous heritages have been devalued by the Whitening project of *mestizaje* or creolization, which marginalizes and erases indigeneity, creating a contradiction within a 'mixed' population, such that colonization becomes internalized despite the existence of heterogenous cultural elements (negating the 'Indian' within). Meanwhile, the historical exploitation of indigenous land and labor continues in the form extreme socioeconomic inequality, policing, and debt, impacting the majority working-class *mestizo* population.

participants, she has long practiced a politics of non-institutionalization (when possible), which alleviates the pressures of producing measurable effects.[180] Her 20-year commitment to facilitating theatre in the prison near her Santiago home, as a horizontal collaboration largely unbeholden to funding schemes, has generated a practice of community-building based in relaciones afectivas that engage human and nonhuman (plant) actors and the earth.

Anyone can join *Colectivo Sustento*, as a volunteer in the garden, signing up for their organic food baskets, or learning their methodology for prison theatre in their practical workshops. The incarcerated actors in their theatre troupe Felix e Ilusiones comment in a video on their website (as of November 26, 2016) about the benefits of using their bodies to express themselves in different ways and how theatre distracts them from day-to-day prison life. Their theatre pieces subvert oppressive identity labels such as 'criminal' or 'victim', so that new subject positions can be performed - like 'hero' or 'friend'. Moreover, they do not merely reproduce the citational performance of rehabilitation, reintegration, and self-improvement, where prisoners must "testify to victimhood and adopt narratives of heroism despite structural inequalities that remain intact" (Walsh 2018, 228). As *Colectivo Sustento* puts it, "all of our work aims at living differently…we foment connections between people and with the body, to embrace, to play, to trust and respect the cycle of nature, just as our native peoples have done, resisting for 500 years" (as of October 24, 2019, on their Instagram account @colectivo_sustento – *my translation*). Rather than focusing on the representational qualities of their theatre practice as a stand-alone intervention, separate from or parallel to the garden, which Glass herself tends

[180] For a more detailed description of *Colectivo Sustento's* approach to sustainability, see: Glass, P. 2018. "*Autogestión*, Conviction, Collectivity and Plans A to Z: *Colectivo Sustento* in Continuous Resistance." In *Applied Theatre: Economies*, edited by Molly Mullen. London: Bloomsbury Publishing; and Glass, P. 2019. "'Heart and heartbeat': Working beyond prison theatre, performing *protagonismo social* in the real world". In *Performing Arts in Prisons: Captive Perspectives,* edited by Michael Balfour, Brydie-Leigh Bartleet, Linda Davey, John Rynne, and Huib Schippers. Bristol: Intellect.

to do, I propose we can appreciate how the embodied language of theatre and the material work of the garden have overflowed their presumed limits, mutually affecting the bodies and relationalities they are shaped by, potentiating alternative modes of being and becoming in/with the world.

Figure 32: image of the Glass's front yard in Santiago, where *Colectivo Sustento* grows and sells food and plants.
Photo credit Carolina Vera, Barbara Fuenzalída, and Rocío Huenchullán (2016)

It is a hot, dry summer afternoon in 2012. I have navigated the concrete topography to find Penny's house for the first time, in a 'peripheral' neighborhood of Santiago (San Miguel), known for its prison (Colina 1). There are luscious bushes and fruit trees in her front yard, a shady island of green in contrast to other more barren yards on the street. Penny tells me the aromatic herbs all over her kitchen were recently harvested from out back. I drink a much-appreciated glass of water, enjoying the minty scent. The new permaculture garden is still under construction. There are piles of earth all around, waiting for beds to be made. Others are there working, each undertaking their own project. The air is dusty. There will be a group lunch later. Before this year, the garden was not part of their prison theatre work; it is a new experiment, to

help the group become more sustainable, so that those released from prison can continue making theatre together. One of the co-facilitators, a college student the age of Penny's own son (who's recently gone away to college), lives with her in the house. He tells me the incarcerated participants I've asked him about are in fact 'actors', with years of experience in their company. Penny tells me she prefers it when <u>they</u> describe the work themselves. I trace my hand along the trunk of an old fig tree, sensing a long history.

Although my aim is to recognize the interspecies collaboration *Colectivo Sustento* potentiates, I struggle here to access the extended sensorium in order to do so. In Kuppers' words, *"*[p]henomenological inquiry here is not just a focus on this narrating 'I', delineating how the layered rich world appears to her, but also full of ethical challenges to frame 'soma' with 'eco soma': self-sensation with bodied world and not just the world of those who seem similar to the witnessing self" (2022, 17). When the actors in Felix e Ilusiones say that the permaculture garden is particularly valuable for those who have been released from prison and struggle to reconnect with the world outside (as of November 26, 2016, on *Colectivo Sustento's* website), I wonder, is this for economic reasons, because it provides community, or because it is an oasis from the (modern/colonial) 'human' paradigm of violence and disconnection - a place to contemplate trees, smell plants and work together for the harvest? Although relaciones afectivas get caught up in institutions and the market, and economic survival, health and the future of kinship networks are all influenced by the need for and lack of access to material things and limits on the ability to care for one another (Han 2012), the practice of permaculture,[181] based on principles of earth-care, people-care and fair share, enact an alongside mode of collective

[181] Permaculture is a set of design principles centered around whole systems thinking simulating or directly utilizing the patterns and resilient features observed in natural ecosystems; it uses these principles in a growing number of fields, from regenerative agriculture and rewilding to community resilience and organizational design (Wikipedia 2022).

survival. Rather than self-gain, in the sense of the individually sufficient self, autonomy becomes dependent on community with *Pachamama*; humanization takes on an expanded decolonial meaning - revindicating interspecies connection and response-ability.

More than an applied theatre project, *Colectivo Sustento* is a kind of family or kinship network that has come to revalue the importance of growing food, aligning with Andean indigenous cosmovisions, in which the centrality of food to the productive order prioritizes the common good (Buen Vivir) and establishes values for human-nature relations as well as family-community and community-authority relations, making the (neo)colonial exploitation of labor an affront to human dignity (Rivera Cusicanqui 2010). Their work recalls Mignolo's idea of liberation through *border thinking* – not waiting for liberation to be granted by the oppressor, but the oppressed taking it for themselves – and how this requires collaborations between the oppressed and their allies (2003).[182] Being in *Colectivo Sustento*'s garden has certainly made me and many others feel freer – i.e., more attuned to our Vincularidad with all life - which as I have argued, *does something* to counter dehumanization, but should we be concerned that the garden is being 'used', exploited for our human benefit? Then again, maybe *border thinking* is actually an extension of Place-Thought; that is, maybe the land (the garden itself) is taking action through *Colectivo Sustento*'s work. Scholar of reparative social-ecological arts practices Laura Burns helpfully points out that, although colonial capitalism has excluded "the radically porous body as an extension/expression of land and its relations" from the political sphere, the capacity of the earth and all kinds of more-than-human beings to guide and propel acts of decolonization demands attention (2021, 171-176).

[182] Mignolo argues that *strong* and *weak border thinking* are both necessary for achieving effective social transformations (2003, 9). *Strong border thinking* comes from the disinherited, from the pain and fury of the fracture of their stories and their subjectivities, while *weak border thinking* is not a product of the pain and fury of the subaltern themselves, but those who take up their perspective (Mignolo 2003, 28).

Rather than thinking of our bodies as inhabiting a site and our actions as changing that site, what if we think of the material vitality of the site as taking action on, through and with our bodies? What if we acknowledge the presumption of the land's emptiness or inanimacy as a Western projection – the settler colonial notion of the Americas as territory waiting to be occupied, without a life of its own?[183] What if we consider the animacy of site as being enacted through interspecies collaborations that have their own surprising life-force? To do this, I believe we need to learn to access the extended sensorium – to sense how we affect and are affected by, and thus are not separate from but connected to, other beings and the earth, as part of a shared vitality that needs care. *Colectivo Sustento*'s work shows that enclosures, such as prison walls, socioeconomic classes, and human/nonhuman categories, are contested by intra-acting bodies of all kinds (as there is no 'outside'); instead of remaining impenetrable, these borders (the wall, our skin, identities) become membranes constantly permeated by interdependently autonomous actors (Mezzadre 2013). In this sense, love-for-vitality becomes about pushing the limits, in a precarious balancing act. *Colectivo Sustento* exists from day-to-day, without long-term security that the project will continue to be sustainable - what if the crops fail, or the prison closes its doors, or the collaborators cannot come together to do the work (because of a pandemic, for instance)? Perhaps, though, sustainability over time does not directly weigh on the work's affective impact - its residue and potential.

We can return here to Barad's feminist, new materialist notion of intra-action, "in which subject and object are in constant emergence, rather than pre-existing as static and boundaried" (in Hartnell 2020, 4) and apply it to the practice of living-(in community)-with *Pachamama.*

[183] Tuck and Yang explain that within settler colonialism, "[l]and is what is most valuable, contested, required. This is both because the settlers make Indigenous land their new home and source of capital, and also because the disruption of Indigenous relationships to land represents a profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence" (2012, 5). The settler justifies his actions because he "sees himself as holding dominion over the earth and its flora and fauna, as the anthropocentric normal, and as more developed, more human, more deserving than other groups or species" (Tuck and Yang 2012, 6).

Colectivo Sustento's human actors are able to circumvent the pervasive disconnections and objectifying relations of (neo)colonial neoliberalism via intra-action with edible plant collaborators. Their creative work potentiates otherwise ways of being and becoming together, beyond violence, exclusion and exploitation, in the form of a theatre company that crosspollinates with an organic food initiative. This proposal shows *afecto* to be a connection of care and solidarity entangling all the human *and nonhuman* actors involved in the garden, the prison theatre workshop, their public performances, and their food basket sales - a place-based collaborative survival strategy that makes communitarian existence with *Pachamama* the basis of autonomy (Escobar 2014). This interspecies, intra-active performance of resisting (neo)colonial control of self, economics, knowledge, and life also exemplifies how Latin American arts practices can offer a means to decolonize modes of sensing and being sensed (i.e., aesthetics) (Mignolo and Vasquez in Ramos 2018, ebook). By fomenting relaciones afectivas with others *and the earth* (as vitally integrated), Glass's co-facilitation practice expands the potential of affective facilitation towards more-than-humanization, which we could think of as living-with.

Future Directions

I will not attempt to develop this notion fully, but it must be noted that living-with indicates an intriguing area for future research. While looking beyond the anthropocentric worldview was not the main focus of this dissertation, it has become an undercurrent to the idea of (decolonial) humanization - a feeling of connection with all life. Still, the animate role of more-than-human actors was not explored in previous chapters because it was not central to the case studies, which focused on combatting dehumanization in Latin American contexts of state

violence and institutional enclosure (prison, immigrant detention, deportation, forced disappearance and assassination), products of the colonial/modern 'human' paradigm. My main argument has been that applied theatre can potentiate embodied experiences of being differently together, via attunement to *afecto*, alongside discourse, and that this can be liberating for participants, facilitators and audiences in these contexts because it foments life-affirming relations - a notion that could certainly extend to other kinds of lives. I have not yet explored how more-than-human bodies are affectively impacted by this work, perhaps because of applied theatre's reliance on language, a problem I have addressed but not resolved. *Stesis* [*estesis* in Spanish], a term mentioned in the previous chapter, could become helpful here, as it refers to the sentient capacity of all living beings and allows for a consideration of aesthetics in relation to nonhuman worlds; philosopher of art Katya Mandoki uses *stesis* to coin the notion bio-aesthetics, which encompasses the receptive, responsive condition of all life as somehow involved in making meaning from sensations (in Castillo 2015, 139).

Another potentially helpful notion is feminist, new materialist, queer of color theorist Mel Chen's idea of *animacy*, a tool for rethinking dualities such as life/death, in order to queer categories like human/nonhuman and open up possibilities for understanding how biopolitics (making live and letting die) depends not only on human life, but many bodies that are not usually considered 'animate' (2012). Chen defines animacy as a quality of agency, awareness, mobility, and liveness, and proposes this term rather than 'life', which is already associated with the (modern/colonial) 'human', to extend this potential to bodies that are not usually considered to be alive (like rocks) or human (like plants), recognizing how relationalities intertwine across apparent divides, involving different kinds of animate actors (2012). Animacy, like *stesis,* lets us appreciate actors usually considered nonhuman or inanimate as not in fact on the other side of a

dividing line, but as part of a life-death continuum - an ethical-aesthetic negotiation no body is outside of. What if we reconsidered life and death as intentions, as forms of valuing, sensing, relating, and acting? Living-with would then not exclude death altogether but require a kind of care-full attentiveness to delicate balances that sustain complex worlds; meanwhile, destroying ways of life, limiting ways of being, or controlling movement and relationalities could be seen as *excessive* death-production. As I learned with my research/practice in Colombia, death itself is not the 'problem' but rather its unsustainable production in an imbalanced paradigm that destroys ever more the possibility of cultivating and valuing life in its many forms, distorting what it means for death to play a part in life. Living-with could thus offer a more-than-human approach to creative work that resists excessive death-production.

In 2010, two years before *Colectivo Sustento* began, there was a fire at Colina 1 (the prison where the theatre troupe Felix e Ilusiones had been working with Penny Glass since 2002). The families of the 81 prisoners who perished in the fire blamed the prison for intentionally causing their deaths (the doors remained locked so they could not escape). This kind of excessive death-production is what *Colectivo Sustento* resists, by cultivating a collective, sustainable mode of survival, gaining freedom not from incarceration but from the socioeconomic and affective enclosures that enable carcerality and from the negation of interspecies interdependence and the relationality of all kinds of intra-active bodies. As Kuppers explains:

> [T]he "commonsense" understanding of one entity as alive and human and another as inert and nonhuman is already imbricated into politically charged structures of understanding the earth. To think of body/earth/material entanglement also means to think through and beyond any easy understanding of "the body" and "embodiment," to go beyond a meaning that aligns with liberal understandings of a White independent colonial self. (2022, 20)

Kuppers offers "eco soma" as a way to reach out beyond the self toward others, "registering the physical/psychical dis/comfort waves that happen in that energetic field" of body/earth/material

entanglements (2022, 28). This is another direction for future research on affective facilitation. I have not fully explored the possibilities of *feeling/being-with* the earth or other more-than-human body/materials - for instance, the prison walls and doors as actors.

Kuppers adds that "[n]o body is untouched by violences of colonial, racialized, gendered, linguistic, and corporeal punishment. And yet, the words 'body/bodies,' 'embodiment,' and 'somatic,' lend themselves to futurities thinking of self-care and communal as well as personal happiness" (2022, 22). In other words, there is no 'innocent' approach to (self-) decolonization but there is hope in living-with community based in *Pachamama* as a way forward. While adopting the term decolonization as a White academic living in the Americas could be seen as a "move to innocence," used to relieve settler guilt, without attending to the need for making reparations for stolen indigenous lands and lives (which are inseparable) (Tuck and Yang 2012), land-based reparations is a notion that exceeds the scope of this dissertation, requiring further thought. Affective facilitation aligns more intentionally with the Latin American idea of 'decolonial gestures', understood as:

> [A]ny and every gesture that directly or indirectly engages in disobeying the dictates of the colonial matrix and contributes to building of the human species on the planet in harmony with the life in/of the planet of which the human species is only a minimal part and of which it depends. And that would contribute to planetary re-emergence, re-surgence, and re-existence of people whose values, ways of being, languages, thoughts, and stories were degraded in order to be dominated. (Mignolo in Beauchesne and Santos 2017, p7)

I understand decolonial gestures to also include embodied, affective gestures.

It is worth remembering that certain Native American studies scholars based in the North understand coloniality differently than the Latin American decolonial thinkers (Mignolo; Walsh; Bautista) and Latin American feminist decolonial thinkers (Paredes; Lugones; Segato) whose work this dissertation follows. For instance, Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang argue that decolonization is "a distinct project from other civil and human rights-based social justice

projects" and necessarily involves the repatriation of land to indigenous peoples, which does *not* mean the "adoption of indigenous practice and knowledge" by settlers (2012, 2-14). Meanwhile, Latin American decolonial thought "is preoccupied with an 'undoing' and rethinking of dominant discourses and traditions," to unpack "the complex grid of subjugation and domination that intersects race, gender, knowledge, being and various forms of capital, and aesthetics," by thinking from the *borders* of colonization (Ramos 2018, ebook). I will not attempt to reconcile these distinct approaches to decolonization and decoloniality, but simply identify this conversation as a potentially fruitful crosspollination of ideas that warrants further exploration.

Moreover, my focus on affect, embodiment, and *being-with* indicates an underexplored area of decoloniality. Most decolonial conversations across the hemisphere centralize identity and representation as important to sovereignty, without focusing on somatic or aesthetic work that happens alongside discourse. Perhaps the Colombian concept of *sentipensar* (Fals-Borda; Escobar) could help bridge the perceived divide between the sociopolitical and the sentient, as it indicates *feeling/thinking-with* subjugated experiences of coalition building, in relation to territory. Still, there is more work to be done in order to explore embodiment and affect in applied theatre from a decolonial perspective, to understand *more-than-oneness* in a way that does not erase the spirit of each being but foregrounds the visceral Vincularidad of all bodies/materials/earth. This line of future research might draw on the notion of utopia as "an aesthetic trope with a concrete sociopolitical impact that serves a dynamic space for the (re)construction of a 'better life'", rethinking utopia by considering "indigeneity and decolonial perspectives from across the Americas" (Beauchesne and Santos 2017, 9). Affective facilitation might mutually expand this utopia project, amplifying and (re)valuing spaces to exist alongside

instrumentalized sociopolitical orders of representation, doing/thinking/feeling utopia by fomenting *afecto* and *cuidado* as key to collective survival and flourishing.

To reiterate, rather than limiting what we can *be/become-with* to the already knowable, a key aspect of applied theatre is viscerally expressing/witnessing that which *cannot be articulated,* and this takes place alongside discourse, creating affective spaces for exchanging ways of being/thinking/feeling otherwise, emergent from violent experiences of colonization/ patriarchy/capitalism/modernity that are not (yet) representable in national imaginaries. However, in Colombia, were I currently live, there is a widespread desire for yet unrealized national wholeness (to live together with difference, without violence), which includes autonomous indigenous groups represented in government and a peace process that attempts to visibilize wrongs in order to bring reconciliation among warring factions. Who am I to say that yet inarticulable experiences should never or can never be articulated in this context? Perhaps the question at hand is, *what new vocabularies should be explored, not only for symbolic reparations, but for enacting re/co-existence?* Memory construction is a creative act that involves narrative, affect and copresence, in addition to historical contextualization. As Manning says, "what drives life is the creative advance always active in the constellation of occasions that make up experience," via the "nexus of past and contemporary occasions" (2012, 23-24).

How can we talk about the social and the <u>more-than</u> social aspects of experience as a relational field of past-present exchanges? Applied theatre is a product of human society, although it has more-than-human aspects and, as I have argued throughout this dissertation, it is a communal, somatic experience that goes beyond that which can be fully signified. The creative encounter is the tip of an iceberg; what lies beneath are the material, embodied, affective and social relations that produce it. Applied theatre usually emerges in response to social problems,

one of which is the self/other divide, constructed to prioritize some individuals' and groups' lives and wellbeing over others'. Perhaps we must start from the terms that the practice emerges from, that is, the terms of social reality, in order to let go of them to a certain extent and find a new language for the *more-than* of the applied theatre experience. *'One' feels more connected with the world - how to say this without starting from 'one', as if the 'self' were already separate?* My aim is not to obliterate the uniqueness of each being, as all bodies/materials/earth are distinct manifestations of the creative force of affective life, but to acknowledge that there is a connective tissue of animate experience that is also real. Language is dangerous in that it pins down experience as something understandable. It turns an in-the-moment process into a past event. It commodifies the unknown into something communicable.

How can I write the absences, the gaps, the holes of expression? How can I write the not-knowing of a moment coming into being? This dissertation has focused on how relational shifts can be presenced on an embodied, affective level, as central to the impact of applied theatre, but words cannot fully capture my experience of the (practice-as) research process, which is always also *more-than* 'mine'. Foster explains that collaborative "arts-based research methods enable a diversity of experiences to be communicated in ways that disrupt 'common sense' understandings and act as a reminder that there are possibilities for things to be otherwise," which necessarily "involves coming up with ways of 'knowing the indistinct and slippery without trying to grasp and hold them tight'" (2016, 1, 130). My research is not about fully understanding applied theatre experiences, as that is impossible, but trying to facilitate a continuous movement towards the unknowable. My trajectory as a facilitator has gone from focusing on representation to valuing how embodied experience overflows language in meaningful ways; nevertheless, I continue trying to write it as a never-ending process of thoughts bodying.

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