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Strange Labor: Toward the Non-Expression of Feelings Themselves

Nevarez G. Encinias
University of New Mexico

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Nevarez Encinias

Candidate

Theatre and Dance

Department

This dissertation is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication:

Approved by the Dissertation Committee:

Amanda Hamp , Chairperson

Ninotchka Devorah Bennahum

Eva Encinias

Donna Jewell

Dominika Laster

Mary Anne Santos-Newhall

**STRANGE LABOR:
TOWARD THE NON-EXPRESSION OF FEELINGS
THEMSELVES**

by

NEVAREZ ENCINIAS

B.A., History of Art, Yale College, 2014

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Master of Fine Arts
Dance**

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Finally, I would like to thank my family for the sacrifices they have made for my education and for my artistic career. My cup runneth over. I hope you see yourselves in this writing, and all that you have shown me.

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M.F.A., Dance, University of New Mexico, 2018

ABSTRACT

This essay accompanies the researcher's Master of Fine Arts thesis concert, *Sensaciones y emociones* (performed on September 5 and 6, 2017). It describes how he employed his training as a flamenco dancer to choreographically model three non-expressive interactions with three discrete feelings in the performances of this concert. The essay outlines the ways in which the researcher used his art practice to imagine alternative strategies for relating to emotions and sensations, as phenomena that might put a body in motion, but that do not always or necessarily travel from inside of a feeling subject, outward, in an act commonly called expression.

Additionally, this essay draws attention to the ideological character of the notions of self-expression and the notion of the dance form. It offers that these ideas can work in tandem in dance discourse, describing the role of emotion in shaping both concepts. Furthermore, it argues that each dancing body presents a specific physicality as it moves, which choreographically models an attitude toward emotion, as that body itself performs a practiced management of feeling.

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Introduction

One way to introduce this project might be to simply (finally) name what it is. On September 5 and 6, 2017, I presented my Master of Fine Arts thesis concert—*Sensaciones y emociones*—in a 100-seat, black-box performance space in the University of New Mexico’s Center for the Arts, Albuquerque, New Mexico. This evening-length flamenco choreography included Vicente Griego *al cante* (song), Mario Febres and Ricardo Anglada *al toque* (guitar), and my father and aunt—Joaquin Encinias and Marisol Encinias—as invited dance artists. One section of the concert also included a special collaboration with video artist Brian Fejer, who montaged my family’s home video footage from the 1960s into a projection that I danced in front of, barefoot. I have included the concert’s program and poster in this document as appendices. *Sensaciones y emociones* was my first evening-length choreography in my career as a flamenco performer.

This essay accompanies and accounts for that final choreographic project, seeking to “identify and analyze specific artistic and choreographic issues of particular concern to [me], and of particular relevance to [my] Project” (Graduate Student Handbook 22). Given this assignment and the training I have received in this program, I approach the total project—both the choreographic work and this dissertation—as practice-as-research (or PaR). My understanding of PaR is most influenced by theater studies scholar Robin Nelson’s *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances* (2013). In it, Nelson writes: “PaR involves a research project in which practice is a key

method of inquiry and where, in respect of the arts, a practice [...] is submitted as substantial evidence of a research inquiry” (8–9). In a project of this nature, a practitioner-researcher employs her own arts practice as method *and* as evidence, with the explicit goal of producing knowledge through inquiry-driven research. Here, I see discrete art works taking on a specific role in the formation of knowledge, and by extension, are then no longer chiefly valued as the end-product of an art-making process. This dissertation will thereby further the work I did in *Sensaciones y emociones*, in which my practice as a flamenco performer: 1) became a means of researching an inquiry; and 2) created an artistic product that can now function as analyzable evidence of that research.

The initial inquiry addressed questions that have come up for me throughout my training as a dancer, centered around the notion of self-expression. These initial research questions were: as a dancer, how might I newly understand the idea and embodied experience of *self-expression*? What are the consequences of naming dance an expressive practice? And more generally, what is the role of one’s feelings in shaping dance works—as they are crafted, performed, experienced, and discussed?

For me, *Sensaciones y emociones* was—in essence—a choreographic and physicalized investigation into the relationship between a dance and three particular feelings. Therefore, this dissertation aims to describe the ways in which I used my training as a flamenco dancer to choreographically model three non-expressive interactions with three discrete feelings in performance. To do so, I collect and discuss the theories and definitions of emotion, sensation, and

affect that I found most useful as I re-imagined self-expression for myself as a dance-maker in the contemporary Western concert dance paradigm. I also outline how I employed my art practice to research alternative ways of relating to emotions and sensations, as phenomena that might put a body in motion, but that do not always or necessarily travel from inside of a feeling subject, outward, in an act often called *expression*.

In that it primarily seeks to document a process of practical experimentation, I sense that this dissertation avoids direct argumentation. However, I will foreground here what I consider to be the two central, argumentative thrusts of this essay. First, I arrive at a description and definition of my notion of *non-expression* on page 31, in which I detail how I worked to physically perform an interaction with my feelings in *Sensaciones y emociones*, as opposed to express them onstage through movement as a medium. Second, on page 52, I argue that “each dancing body presents a physicality as it moves, which choreographically models an attitude toward emotion, as [that] body itself performs a practiced management of feeling.” I extend this logic on the following page, offering a way of thinking about the dance form—the mechanism by which we commonly segregate dancing bodies into generic categories in dance discourse, criticism, and pedagogy. On this, I write:

I would also note that the diversity of physical practices *within* dance creates an equally wide range of conceptions of one’s body, of organizational protocols, and of course, of emotional management styles. Each [dance] form [thereby] works to produce distinctive knowledges and

cultures through these very conceptions, protocols, and styles. This happens through physicalized practice and discourse over time—by way of a body itself. Dance forms become like a body in this process, acquiring a specific set of cultural knowledge through physical practice— instruction on how to use, as well as how to feel, that very body. (Encinias 53)

As such, this essay draws attention to the ideological character of the notions of self-expression and the dance form, noticing the ways in which they can work in tandem, and by noticing the role of emotion in shaping both concepts.

Specifically, the notion of self-expression and the notion of the dance form together give legibility to what can often be difficult to watch and describe— movement and feeling. In seeking to trouble, complicate, or even queer these standard ways of perceiving and discussing dance, this essay imagines alternative practices for performers of movement and feeling. The essay also suggests the ways in which bodies take the shape of feelings themselves, and that in watching dance, the movement of feelings might be perceived, in turn.

The essay has four chapters. In the first chapter, I survey the literature from affect theory and other research on emotion that I found relevant to my work in *Sensaciones y emociones*, in order to define non-expressivity. In the second chapter, I discuss the consequences of regarding dance an expressive practice. In the third chapter, I locate my practice in a lineage of postmodern dance-makers. In the fourth chapter, I employ the concepts I delineate in the rest of the essay to look at some documents from flamenco history, while

introducing myself as a flamenco practitioner and briefly describing the work that I staged in *Sensaciones y emociones*.

I see now that this essay has certain stylistic and tonal characteristics that are worth addressing outright. As literary studies scholar Sianne Ngai offers: “to speak of tone is to generalize, totalize, and abstract the ‘world’ of the literary object, in a way that seems particularly conducive to the analysis of ideology” (43). Certainly, this essay is not a literary object. I do work throughout the essay, however, to honestly portray the world of feeling from which *Sensaciones y emociones* originated for me—just as I work to analyze ideology—and this joint effort has an effect on the tone of the writing. I often write candidly, even casually, to create a feeling of intimacy as I talk about my own, challenging feelings. The essay is littered with italics; I work here to emphatically produce accented rhythm as I write, just as I do when I dance flamenco—stressing what I feel must be stressed, shouting when necessary, making sound. Reading it now, the prose frequently strikes me as performative, but without being the performance to which it refers. It is argumentative, but not quite in the ways I was taught to make an argument. I see that it sometimes borders on being irreverent or anti-academic, and that it even culminates into full-blown lyricism—after over eighty pages of analytical work against expression. Tonally and stylistically, this essay is a bit all over the place. However, I also hope that it makes clear that these choices were not careless or arbitrary, but instrumental to its central, persuasive effort.

On this, Nelson—who supervises practice-as-research PhD candidates as they dissertate—writes:

There is a sense of improvisation, indeed playfulness, in much studio practice even where the research is most rigorous. It thus seems even more ridiculous to be formal about an informal process and, in my experience, first-person accounts of process often read well. It may even be that more gestural poetic modes of expression are useful in this aspect of the complementary writing in the attempt to articulate in words what is ultimately better danced. (Nelson 35)

This piece of writing, which complements my rigorous and playful studio practice, therefore articulates a formal research inquiry, but relies on a range of informal style choices to give the writing its very character. My hope is that you, the reader, do not become so distracted by the text's tonal attitude that you cannot follow the argument. However, after I walk away from a dance performance, it is often that work's very *vibe*, *feel*, or *tone* that I recall most readily. For this reason, I worked to craft a vibe as I wrote, just as I do when I dance.

Chapter One

Non-expressivity: emotion, sensation, affect

This project began with two feelings—two feelings that eventually became three dances. I will admit that they were:

- 1) a desire to *feel better*; and
- 2) a conviction that *my feelings are hard to talk about*.

I struggle now to imagine two sentiments more embarrassing or unremarkable. Regardless, this humble confession of personal feelings—I will call it an *expression*—points us to the central problematic of this essay: the notion that emotions are something we *express*.

On this topic, I wonder: aren't desires and convictions more than just feelings? If so, at what point does a feeling become other than or more than just a feeling? Why even call these feelings? Both seem to be feelings about feelings, or *not feelings themselves*. Do feelings become other feelings in a literal sense? Or is such a process instead figurative—a matter of how we imagine or speak about the life of feelings? And then, what is it to *feel better*? Is it to change *what* one is feeling or to change *how* one feels? In general, how do we commonly talk about feelings? How does this notion of expression fit in?

In this chapter, I flesh out a vocabulary for speaking about feelings, and the related concepts of emotion, sensation, affect, as well as expression, self-expression, and finally, non-expression. I do so in order to later detail how these two particular feelings of mine became three—that is, to articulate a process through which feelings changed or expanded—a process that I used my dance

practice to encourage, and that resulted in the three dances I performed in *Sensaciones y emociones*.

Further, I also develop this vocabulary to consider how we talk about feelings in the field of dance, where the role and status of emotion, I will suggest, have been pivotal in a number of key debates in the discipline, and therefore, have had direct consequence on how dancers dance and make dance. Bear in mind throughout that my work here is primarily preoccupied with the standard notion that dancers express themselves, and that in dance, movement of one's body is the medium of this expression—a means by which we come to know the feelings of another—in the same way that language is often used to express feelings. I will directly take up the concepts of dance, dance forms, movement, and the body in the next section of this essay. Before I move in that direction, and before I flesh out a vocabulary of concepts from thinkers in other fields, I would like to clarify the intentions of this project.

I am not proposing an alternative conceptual model of emotions of my own, derived from my experiences as a dancer. I am also not working in defense of dance itself—that dancers might have privileged knowledge when it comes to matters of feeling. Nor do I favor any one theorist's definition(s) of emotion over any other theorist's definitions. Rather, I am documenting a process of practical experimentation, by which I worked toward the possibility of feeling anew. I began with an intuition that alternative ways of feeling—that is, talking about feeling, feeling per se, *and* the somehow related practice of dancing—existed. I reached a point in my practice as a dancer where I felt the need to feel

differently; my body had hardened around old habits of feeling, and dancing itself had become burdensome. I sensed that somehow feeling differently would change how I move and perform, and so I began researching outside of my own practice, but using that very practice to process the information I found, in turn. In this practice-as-research endeavor, therefore, I find that the various theories of emotion considered in this essay are not in contest with each other for me. Rather, they together point to non-normative ways of conceiving of myself emotionally. From the outset, I held that this conceptual path must be debated, and its theories tested, by theorists and artists alike. That is, I felt that a range of methods of debating and testing theories must be conjointly practiced if we are to move beyond conversations about emotion and expressivity that are ipso facto conversations about mind-body dualism—conversations contingent on hierarchically designed ideas with problematic histories, conversations conducted solely in language.

Secondly, the conceptual framework I am about to construct is built upon feminist efforts and is itself a feminist effort. Throughout, I will consider the work of scholars who have crucially noted that a philosophical preoccupation with emotion was not new or unique to feminism, and far less so to the more recent, so-called “affective turn” (see Ahmed, Pinch, and Terada). Regardless, it was explicitly feminist and queer scholarship that attended to, as the cultural theorist Sara Ahmed phrases it, “how emotions can attach us to the very conditions of our subordination” (12). To state it crassly, as is often done: a feeling subject is a weaker subject, a more feminine subject, a woman or else a *pussy*; a man is

driven by reason, emotion's dialectic opposite, and is therefore more deserving of political power. And indeed, even if feminism was not the first intellectual tradition to problematize the opposition of emotion and reason, the movement's battle cry—*the personal is political*—impassioned many feminists to take their own feelings seriously, and not only in the modes of philosophical and artistic inquiry. To proclaim, as Ahmed summarizes, that “emotions ‘matter’ for politics” is to assert that a woman's expression of her feelings is not an inevitable force of nature to which she is powerless—a leakage from her private subjectivity—but rather, is the very stuff of the public sphere, is an act that *is* world-making and political, that uniquely empowers her as political subject (12). In this project, I have taken my own feelings quite seriously. I believe this renders the project an aesthetic investigation, a personal journey, and a political act. In an effort to attend specifically to the political dimension of this work, I became interested in the relationship between one's emotions and one's status as a so-called subject—that is, the possibility that by feeling, a human is an individual, a person, or a discrete “I.” This curiosity was my point of entry into the literature I will review.

To frame this effort differently: the notion of *the personal is political* has been articulated by the feminist Cherríe Moraga in the following manner.

What brought me to feminism almost forty years ago was ‘heart.’

Feminism allowed ‘heart’ to matter. It acknowledged that the oppression we experienced as human beings was not always materially manifested, and that we also suffered spiritually and sexually. Women of color have

traditionally served as the gateways—the knowledge-holders—to those profoundly silent areas of expression and oppression: domestic abuse aggravated by poverty, patriarchal strictures that distort the ‘spirit’ of religious practice; false familial hierarchies that deform our children’s potential; erotic desire deadened by duty.

Such suffering is experienced by both males and females (not proportionately, but mutually). (Moraga xxi)

Here, Moraga relies on the notion of one’s heart to name something that we commonly employ figurative language to symbolize. In this work, I am invested precisely in these hard-to-name phenomena that are “not always materially manifested” and in “those profoundly silent areas of expression and oppression” that nevertheless enter our cultural, artistic, and discursive imaginaries by means of figurative language, expressive movement, other modes of performance including the sexual and the spiritual, and on the opposite end of the behavioral spectrum: through phenomena such as domestic violence and institutional oppression (Moraga xxi). For me, *this* is the realm and the importance of work on feelings. Theories aside, the notion of emotion is attached to a specific range of cultural practices and conditions—lived realities somehow imagined as not quite real, not quite a problem, or else, a problem for women—things we don’t talk about or talk about only obliquely. This is burdensome work and it can no longer be the responsibility of women of color alone. And I fear that if conversations about feelings remain only theoretical, only personal, or only artistic, these realities won’t be adequately addressed.

Instead, I wonder how these realms of experience might be lived and practiced conjointly. What if my artistic practice is itself a theoretical response to alternative conceptual models of emotion? What if I take my feelings—ugly, personal, embarrassing, unremarkable—quite seriously?

This matter of the heart—an organ—conceived of as a place, and furthermore, as a place to *feel from* and *move from* will be considered later in the essay. Until then, I turn to feelings themselves in a theoretical light, agreeing with artist Naomi Littlebear Morena that “my emotions & intuitions are there for a reason. They are honest perceptions” (156).

Working in dance—a field with its own internal debates about emotion—I will draw selectively from the literature now loosely called affect theory. Considered by many to be a fundamental human characteristic, feeling has inspired extensive inquiry across the sciences and humanities—inquiry that has led to seemingly very little consensus. But here is an example of affect theory at work. It is useful in that it points directly to the theoretical practice of occasionally naming emotion *affect*.

Theorist Brian Massumi begins *Parables for the Virtual*—a key text in affect theory—by pointing to feeling as an intrinsic feature of the human body. He writes: “When I think of my body and ask what it does to earn that name, two things stand out. It *moves*. It *feels*. In fact, it does both at the same time. Can we think a body without this: an intrinsic connection between movement and sensation whereby each immediately summons the other?” (1). For Massumi, a

body is not conceivable without its capacity to move and feel. Furthermore, movement and sensation exist in yet another unmediated relationship; they do not exist independently. His larger project is a complex work with far-reaching implications, built around the following “conceptual displacement,” or progression of ideas: “body–(movement/sensation)–change” (Massumi 1). He offers that recent cultural theory has largely ignored the unmediated relationships between the body, movement, and sensation. Instead, the humanities have used the notion of culture to mediate bodies and change—or, to stand between and account for the changes bodies experience over time. History has consisted of body–culture–change narratives, as culture has consisted of various “mechanisms of ‘mediation’” or “ideological apparatuses that structured the dumb material interaction of things [i.e., bodies] and rendered them legible according to a dominant signifying scheme into which human subjects in the making were ‘interpellated’” (Massumi 1). In doing so, Massumi argues that the humanities have vastly misrepresented two of its central concerns: the body and change. This work is affect theory par excellence for its defense of the human capacity to feel—over the human capacity to produce culture—in understanding human life, no matter one’s methods or aims in understanding.

This is a gloss of classic work from affect theory, page one. My hope is that you, the reader, also find it somewhat disorienting. Important to my work, however:

- 1) Feeling, when imagined as something with great conceptual weight—an alternative to culture for example—is often called affect.
- 2) The notion of the human subject is a product of culture; culture is a concept that, when it renders bodies legible as subjects, *mediates*. For Massumi affect is more *immediate* to the body itself, and its ability to feel as it moves.

In my project, I see expressive movement and self-expression as similar mechanisms of mediation in the dance field. Here, a body is dancing *if* it is expressing its feelings through movement. Just as the notion of culture renders a body a human subject, the notion of expression through movement renders a body a dancer, by way of interpellation (cf. Louis Althusser). I turn to affect theory to gesture to a large body of research that wonders about bodies when they are not interpellated as human subjects through cultural processes, by noticing—via the notion of affect—that there is an unmediated relationship between moving, feeling, and the body itself.

Affect theory of this character is built upon the work of philosophers such as Baruch Spinoza and Gilles Deleuze—who took up the notion of affect explicitly before it was an intellectual buzzword—and other canonical philosophers who addressed emotion or the passions, such as Rene Descartes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and David Hume. Affect theory has since been bolstered by a range of psychoanalytic theories, while also developing as a poststructuralist field of discourse; the scholar of postmodern English literature Patrick Colm Hogan calls it “affective poststructuralism” (Colm Hogan). Quite

broadly, this theory studies feeling, a human behavior that we seemingly experience by way of both our bodies *and* our minds. As such, philosophical debates about mind-body dualism and causality have been conceptually reinvigorated by the notion of affect, as announced by the literary theorist Michael Hardt (ix). Through scholars such as Massumi, the concept has played a role in recent cultural theory, and as I suggested earlier, the feminist intellectual tradition has encouraged many theorists to rely on the notion of affect in explicitly political and queer discourse.

This scholarly interest in affect is distinct from recent, related work on feelings, coming from academic disciplines as diverse as cognitive science, anthropology, literary studies, and history. To summarize the difference and to position myself, I notice that very few people refer to their own feelings (whether of sadness, of existential dread, or of midday bloatedness) in everyday speech as their “affects.” Consider the definition of affect offered by editors Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth in their introduction to *The Affect Theory Reader*: affect is “an impingement or extrusion of a momentary or sometimes more sustained state of relation *as well* as the passage (and the duration of passage) of forces or intensities” (1). They continue: “at its most anthropomorphic, affect is the name we give to those forces beneath, alongside, or generally *other than* conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion” and “that can serve to drive us toward movement, toward thought and extension, and can likewise suspend us [...]” (Gregg and Seigworth 1). Affect is

often conceived as more like a force than a feeling; somehow, it is “beyond emotion” (Gregg and Seigworth 1).

On the other hand, many scholars choose to consider emotion and not move beyond it, often for political reasons. Ahmed writes: “Feminist ears might prick up at this point. A contrast between a mobile impersonal affect and a contained personal emotion suggests that the affect/emotion distinction can operate as a gendered distinction,” just as reason/passion has long operated as a gendered distinction (207). Given my own investments in work on feelings, I align myself with those that have “understood [the affective turn] as a turn away from emotion” (Ahmed 206). I see it as a turn away from those historically regarded as emotional, and away from the ways we talk about feelings in daily life and in dance praxis. Similarly, affect theory is often criticized for a somewhat willful disregard of the related field of affective science—study of emotion in social psychology and the cognitive sciences (Hogan). As will become more and more clear throughout this essay, there are numerous ways in which affect is seen as distinct from and even conceptually superior to emotion. This has certain consequences, which I will discuss in the coming pages.

But despite these consequences, Colm Hogan and Rachel Greenwald Smith—also a scholar of postmodern English literature—both consider the role of affect theory in recent literary studies debates and arrive at similar conclusions. Smith writes: “the affective turn [...] can instead be understood to provide tools for a better understanding of how postmodernist aesthetic strategies in contemporary fiction complicate the relationship between feeling

and the individual; embodiment and subjectivity” (424). Ahmed summarizes her stance similarly, even as she disassociates her work from the affective turn:

In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, I hoped to develop a model of emotion that involves subjects but is not reducible to them; [...] I wanted to show how emotions are not transparent; so much follows when we do not assume we always know how we feel, and that feelings do not belong or even originate with an ‘I’, and only then move out toward others. (208)

A model of emotions that is not reducible to subjects—or that complicates the idea that feeling stems from discrete individuals—reflects trends in affect theory, or perhaps, uses its tools. Affect is frequently defined as feeling without or before a human subject, and is thus associated with preceding poststructuralist critiques of subjectivity, largely driven by white men, as opposed to being associated with feminist scholarship, despite that work’s ongoing investigation of bodies and emotions as political concepts. While theorists like Brian Massumi maintain a sharp distinction between emotion and affect, other scholars such as Sara Ahmed, Sianne Ngai, and Rei Terada stay away from the concept of affect proper, even in taking up similar ideas. Affect may figure prominently in their intellectual preoccupations with feelings, but the concept is typically discussed precisely in terms of its evading attachment to the so-called human subject.

It helps to fully register how affect and emotion are often differentiated along these lines. Sianne Ngai is a literary studies scholar who summarizes the history of the affect/emotion split, with reference to Massumi. She notes that the two terms were first employed by psychoanalysts to differentiate in practice

between an analyst's observation of feelings (called *affect*) as opposed to the patient's own *emotions*, as described by the patient himself (25). This is a difference between "third-person and first-person representations of feeling" that, through various theoretical efforts, eventually became the notion that "emotion requires a subject while affect does not" (Ngai 25). I think that the psychoanalyst–analysand relationship gives a tangible image to what can be quite confusing, seeing as it is very common to conceive of feeling as *always* belonging to a person *in* whom it originates. So-called real feelings, described by a patient from the couch, are no less real once transcribed word-for-word on the analyst's note pad, but they certainly can be considered feelings in another form or state—a psychoanalyst has a different relationship with the word "sad" than her patient does. As the analyst begins a spoken analysis of the emotions/affects she has just transcribed, the feelings continue in a process of change or differentiation. The difference is not that the analyst's notes are a representation of the feelings, while the patient's spoken description counts as the feelings themselves. Both are representations of feeling in language. Ngai thus characterizes this differentiation using one of Massumi's own words for affect—intensity. In Ngai's work on what she calls ugly feelings:

the difference [between emotion and affect] is taken as a modal difference of intensity or degree, rather than a formal difference of quality or kind. My assumption is that affects are *less* formed and structured than emotions, but not lacking form or structure altogether; *less* "sociolinguistically fixed," but by no means code-free or meaningless;

less organized in response to our interpretations of situations, but by no means entirely devoid of organization or diagnostic powers. (Ngai 27)

This is a useful, nuanced deployment of Massumi's own definition(s) of emotion as narrative in nature, or as a "sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal" and as a "qualified intensity; the conventional, consensual point of insertion of intensity into semantically and semiotically formed progressions, into narrativizable action-reaction circuits, into function and meaning" (28). Perhaps a dancer's words will clarify. In a performance workshop on dancers and authorship that I attended in January of 2017, the dancer and pedagogue Chrysa Parkinson described a difference between:

- 1) sadness; and
- 2) crossing paths with a hissing cat, hunching its back.

The second is no less recognizable for being more an affective experience than an emotion per se, such as sadness. There is simply a difference, though both have something to do with feeling.

The difference as maintained by most affect theorists is that affect is emotion without an originating subject, and for precisely this reason, emotion without associated sociolinguistic narratives and meaning—in other words, affects are feeling-based experiences *without* names such as sadness, and furthermore, feeling-based experiences somehow lacking a feeling "I." I now return to Massumi to examine his notion of subject-less feeling in *Parables of the Virtual*.

Part of Massumi's issue with the idea of culture is that "ideological accounts of subject formation emphasize systemic structuring" which gave birth to the very concept of "positionality" —a human subject's location on a grid "conceived as an oppositional framework of culturally constructed significations: male versus female, black versus white, gay versus straight, and so on" (2). His investment in the human capacity for movement stems in part from this question, one that might resonate with many dancers and queer people: "How does a body perform its way out of a definitional framework that [...] seems to prescript every possible signifying and countersignifying move as a selection from a repertoire of possible permutations on a limited set of predetermined conditions?" (3). As such, Massumi wonders about movement of a body as "qualitative transformation" as opposed to a subject's displacement on the grid, which would be those rare moments of success in occupying a new subject position (3). He holds, as many dancers might, that "when a body is in motion, it does not coincide with itself. It coincides with its own transition: its own variation" (Massumi 4). For me, dance has often provided a similar escape from the feeling of being myself; through movement, I sense that I can perform a transcendence of my own societally prescribed identity. Massumi criticizes cultural theory along quite similar lines, offering that its usual ways of thinking about human subjects creates troublesome stasis or cultural "gridlock," largely due to insufficient vocabulary for accounting for human movement (3).

Remember that for Massumi, feeling is a direct consequence of moving—*I move, I feel*. His notion of affect as feeling-without-subject thus begins with the

notion of movement, and continues in his discussion of *sensations*. If a body in motion “does not coincide with itself,” then “sensation is never simple” either (Massumi 3; Massumi 13). He writes: “[Sensation] is always doubled by the feeling of having a feeling. [...] It is an immediate self-complication. It is best to think of it as a resonance, or interference pattern” (14). He describes how an echo—sound bouncing back and forth in the distance between two surfaces—is not reducible to either surface, nor the initial sound itself. Rather, it is the multiplication of sound created by an interference pattern; the sound wave intersects with itself as it bounces from wall to wall, creating an echo. Much in the way we understand the inseparability of a dancer and a dance, “that patterning is not at a distance from itself. It is immediately its own event” (Massumi 14). It positively fills space with itself, and in doing so, re-encounters and interferes with itself in a continuity that is dance-like; Massumi writes “this complex self-continuity is a putting into relation of the movement to itself: self-relation” (14). Our devoted study of the dynamics of this unique scenario often gives dancers the reputation of being *narcissistic*.

When I imagine the life of a feeling in these terms, the notion of a *feeling of having a feeling* suddenly makes sense. A feeling feels more intense to me the more it bounces around inside me; the stronger the initial shout of a feeling, the more I experience it bouncing against my very edges, then interfering with itself and echoing, multiplying into more and more feeling as it resonates. Eventually the feeling dissipates, or another shout is shouted. But the echoing produces both a feeling *and* a dizzying feeling of having that feeling, as it continually self-

relates and multiplies. No wonder we're always trying to get feelings *out* of us; this experience, contained internally, is often quite intense.

Massumi claims that “the best word for a complicating immediacy of self-relation is ‘intensity’” and that “with the body, the ‘walls’ are the sensory surfaces. The intensity is the experience. [...] The conversion of surface distance into intensity is also the conversion of the materiality of the body into an *event*” (Massumi 14). Common representations of the body and the mind as distinct containers of interiority thus make great sense. I experience thinking and feeling as events as they intensely fill the spaces I imagine inside of me. So much is going on in there! But crucially, Massumi holds that “This is not yet a subject. But it may well be the conditions of emergence of a subject: an incipient subjectivity. Call it a ‘self-’” (14). In other words, “I” have not yet done anything in this scenario, even as experience gradually gives me an increasing sense of my me-ness. I suppose it wouldn’t be until I shouted back into myself—intentionally creating more resonant thought and feeling—that I would begin to register myself as a subject or an agent.

I understand this self-reflexive shout-back to be what Massumi calls “emotional qualification” —wherein this inner resonance of sensation is finally named in emotional terms (26). He writes: “the qualification of an emotion is quite often [...] itself a narrative element that moves the action ahead, taking its place in socially recognized lines of action and reaction” (Massumi 26). Only a certain number of emotional concepts are in social and linguistic circulation; they come inflected with histories, and as such, narrative content and

associated courses of action. That is, we do certain things when sad. Affect theorists such as Massumi note that these histories, narratives, and action circuits necessarily implicate the human subject (“*I feel sad*”) and they differ entirely in nature from the “irreducibly bodily and autonomic nature of affect” (Massumi 28).

Taking this concept further, the historian William Reddy summarizes recent work on emotions in cognitive psychology, saying “the learning of what we conventionally call emotions must involve both deep goal relevance and mental control” (32). Citing the psychologists A. M. Isen and G. A. Diamond, who view emotions as overlearned cognitive habits, Reddy here notices a related trend in an affective science, wherein an emotion is a learned act of cognitive labor that is intentional, self-regulatory, and driven by social motives. That is, this labor involves *people*, intentionally shaping how they hope to be experienced *as a person* by others—an effortful act of translation, from feeling to being and doing. Reddy works here specifically to imagine emotional regimes, which “would be essential elements of stable political regimes” in which subjects feel in line with the values of the regime (55). I will discuss this argument of Reddy’s later in the essay. Regardless, his work suggests that the sudden jump from in to out—from feeling affect to then naming and living it as an emotion—positions a feeling body in culture and history. That body is now a subject.

Understanding the ways in which emotions circulate socially and create political subjects is Ahmed’s project in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. I

previously described Ahmed's distrust of the independent concept of affect as a feminist conviction. However, her distrust also stems from recognizing that this felt journey from affect to emotion is lived as "contiguous," likening the act of separating the two to separating an egg yolk from its white:

We can separate different parts of a thing even if they are contiguous, even if they are, as it were, in a sticky relation. We might have different methods for performing the action of separation. But we have to separate the yolk from the white *because* they are not separate. And sometimes we "do do" what we "can do" because separating those elements, not only by treating them as separable but by modifying their existing relation, or how they exist in relation, allows us to do other things that we might not otherwise be able to do. That we *can* separate them does not mean they *are* separate. Given that it was the contiguity between different aspects of experience (sensation, thought, feeling, judgement), how they stick together that I was trying to explore, without assuming the subject as the origin of this coherence, it did not make sense to proceed by separating affect from emotion. I recognize, however, that there are other ways of proceeding. (Ahmed 210)

I fully agree with Ahmed, but I also recognize that I am perhaps taking one such other way of proceeding. Unlike Massumi, I do not strictly maintain that affect and emotion "pertain to different orders" (27). In this project though, I am trying to do something with feelings as a dancer that I might not otherwise be able to do, *until* I am able to imagine my feelings as not belonging to me, or mine only in

those moments that I claim them. Furthermore, I am working with feelings that I do not want to give emotional names; they *are hard to talk about*. In line with Ahmed, I do not see this as expressing affect as opposed to emotion, but rather, as not expressing myself at all. When I surrender or willfully ignore my own status as subject—or deny myself as the origin of all the feeling I am experiencing—I am no longer a self per se, confessing feeling and thereby expressing. As a dancer, I want to *feel better* by feeling in a new way. This is not dance without feeling, but experiencing feeling as not always originating in me. My questions are: to what extent is this possible, legible to others through performance, and ethical? I wonder who before me has done similar work, and furthermore, if doing this work changes who or what I am. If I am not expressing myself, am I even still a dancer?

As attested by the choreographer Martha Graham: “I am a dancer. I believe we learn by practice” (95). And, I am dancer; I often find myself looking for a technique in order to effectively practice what I want to do. Ahmed was the first theorist I encountered who provided me with tools for surrendering my status as a subject, and I would be remiss not to list some of them here.

To begin simply, it was in the *Cultural Politics of Emotion* that I was first introduced to the so-called “inside out,” psychological model of emotions (Ahmed 8). Ahmed encourages the reader to “register what might seem too obvious: the everyday language of emotion is based on the presumption of interiority” (8). As we have seen, this logic extends into even the most theoretical discourse on affect; Massumi likens affect to the “conversion of surface

distance into intensity” performed by echoing sound, bouncing between two walls (14). The notion of expression is a direct consequence of this logic. Ahmed writes on how feelings, imagined this way, became an *object* of study in psychology: “Once what is inside has got out, when I have expressed my feelings in this way, then my feelings also become yours, and you may respond to them” (14). This metaphor relies on spatiality—from interior space, feeling travels out into the world—to reify what cannot be seen. And regardless of the particular emotion, it also gives a narrative arc to the life of a feeling, which makes it easier to analyze. Of course, this is vastly over-simple. I have felt feelings that behave differently: feelings that do not traverse space, feelings that do begin in me, feelings that do not occasion expression. I assume that I am not unique in witnessing the alternative behavior of even some of the most banal of feelings: an *itch*, for example, is a feeling that does not often lead me to expression. It does not begin somewhere within in me. It is a feeling regardless.

Along with subjects come objects, too. Another common way of thinking about emotion complicated by Ahmed is that there is always an object of a subject’s feeling: that which the feeling is *about*. In other words, if I am afraid, there is *something* I am afraid of, and furthermore, it is because that thing *is* scary. While Ahmed notes that critique of this model began as early as Descartes, she summarizes it through an example of a child encountering a bear. Bears are not inherently fearsome; bears are fearsome *to* humans: “So fear is not in the child, let alone in the bear, but is a matter of how child and bear come into contact. This contact is shaped by past histories, unavailable in the

present, which allow the bear to be apprehended as fearsome” (Ahmed 7). Certainly, a bear is scary to a small child; he does not need to have been told about bears to experience fear. But for this scene to be named and apprehended in emotional terms—we are talking about how we imagine fear here, as we do not have access to this particular child’s feelings in real time—an encounter is necessary, and in this moment of relation, a lot happens. Ahmed writes: “emotions operate to ‘make’ and ‘shape’ bodies” (4). In other words, a bear becomes fearsome in an instant, is shaped as an object to be feared by humans, while the child is shaped as a subject—the subject that supposedly feels the fear. In actuality, it is the fear did all of the work here.

Indeed, somewhat in line with Massumi’s affect-as-echo analogy, Ahmed’s fuller claim is that “emotions shape the very surfaces of bodies, which take shape through the repetition of actions over time, as well as through orientations towards and away from others” (Ahmed 4). For me as a dancer, this is intuitive and quite real. I see that my body has been shaped by my feelings; its surfaces stretched and changed through years of feeling feelings. For others, it may not be so straightforward. Ahmed reminds us how a body takes shape from emotion in two ways:

- 1) “emotions create the very effect of the surfaces and boundaries that allow us to distinguish an inside and an outside in the first place” and
- 2) “emotions are not ‘in’ the individual or the social, but produce the very surfaces and boundaries that allow the individual and the social to be delineated as if they are objects” (10).

For example, Ahmed guided my attention to the fact that I notice my body when it is in pain (24). I feel my stomach as distinct from my chest or my back when that pain is a stomach ache, and I feel my insides as distinct from my outsides when my skin breaks, or when I have a secret and I just need to get it out. Surfaces, boundaries, and entities are produced by the very experience of feeling. Ahmed brilliantly explains this idea not only in terms of individual bodies, but also collective bodies (2). For example, the invasion of foreign others in a country often increases nationalistic sentiment—the nation *feels* its body when entered by another, and then often works to preserve or protect itself. It is perhaps clearer here that, again, “feelings do not reside in subjects [i.e., the nation] or objects [i.e., the foreign other], but are produced as effects of circulation” (Ahmed 8). Ahmed’s main interests are social and political structures; she characterizes this circulation of feeling as an “affective economy” wherein what circulates are emotions as I’ve described them thus far. Emotions can be seen as sociolinguistic narratives attached to emotional objects (things that inspire feeling), past cultural histories of contact with these objects, and commonly used figures of speech (metaphors, metonymies) used to name and talk about these feelings, or to put them *in circulation*. The social world *is* shaped as these figures circulate, in part because “the attribution of feelings to an object (I feel afraid because you are fearsome) is an effect of the encounter, which moves the subject away from [or toward] the object” (Ahmed 8). Feelings move bodies, literally and figuratively, and they orient and position us, in turn. But also, “emotions are after all moving” (Ahmed 11).

I can characterize this movement for myself as economic circulation, as sound waves bouncing against surfaces, or as an eruption from my interior as I express myself through dance. But no matter the imagined movement pattern or origin, Ahmed pointed me to the movement of feelings in this world. I had studied the movement of my body my entire life without quite noticing that my feelings move, as well, and that my body has been affected by their movement. I looked again at my body; I noticed that my *chest*—that place that holds my feelings, sometimes called the *breast* or the *heart*—or more literally, the muscles in that area, had hardened around a unidirectional movement path. The overwhelming desire to express my feelings—to get them out of me—had thrown my chest outward and upward, I think, and that is now where I *hold* it. I have not had a dance teacher who has not in some way commented on this holding pattern; in dance as in life, this *posture* of the body can pose problems. We work to keep certain things contained; *keep your ribcage closed*. We want the expression to look effortless; *let it go; drop it*. Alternatively, my chest situation has been named a case of possessing too much courage, and a sign of my training as a flamenco dancer—an expression of the pride and arrogance of our dance. In every one of these cases, emotions are named as moving and shaping me, and in each case, I am properly re-aligned: *our feelings move from inside out* and as such, one must compensate accordingly if one is to express well in our field. This is the work of a dancer with good alignment.

I do not intend to announce myself a victim of my own feelings here, to whom I am indebted, nor of my dance teachers, to whom I am indebted. I only

wish to explain how I came to understand that feelings move. In this process, I also realized just how commonly we imagine that they move in only one direction and from a singular point of origin. We can name this *self-expression*. Affect theorists have worked to isolate feeling from the “self-”, and some have gone so far as to alternatively characterize movement patterns, beyond the notion of expression, such as Ahmed’s figure of circulation. This is where I am intervening. Here are program notes from the September 5 and 6, 2017 performances of *Sensaciones y emociones*:

Sensaciones y emociones studies the role of emotion and sensation in shaping a dance. In this performance, I wonder if my feelings exist mainly in my thoughts, in my body, in the music I hear, or some combination of those places. I wonder if feelings are free to travel in space and time on their own somehow, and I wonder how I might help them to be free. I wonder what is happening — emotionally speaking — when a body is moved to dance.

I began this work by asking myself how I might newly understand the idea and experience of *self-expression*, and then, by investigating other directions and ways in which to move with feeling — as a dancer, as a performer, as a student of flamenco. [...] (Encinias)

To study how feelings might move on their own and how that movement might shape a dance, and to imagine their freedom, I identified three feelings of my own—three feelings that at that time were pointing me to my very me-ness, my subjectivity, or my person. I set them free by no longer imagining them as my

own. I noticed how they behaved. Then, I began interacting with them—by reinserting myself into their lives and manipulating them as material, just as a choreographer works with dancers. Eventually, I choreographically modeled their movement and made three corresponding dances. I will detail this work in the final section of this essay. However, based on the thinking I've presented thus far, I hope it makes some sense that I call the performances of these three dances (as well as the creative effort behind each) *non-expressions*.

By way of conclusion, I'd like to qualify what I mean by *setting feelings free*, or what it is to imagine their freedom. In her discussion of hate, Ahmed writes: "my model of hate as an affective economy suggests that emotions do not positively inhabit *anybody* or *anything*, meaning that 'the subject' is simply one nodal point in the economy, rather than its origin and destination" (46). One way to set feelings free, therefore, is to allow that they move in patterns of circulation, wherein "I" am constitutive of the emotion only to a degree. "I" am one place that a feeling visits as it travels. Particularly in performance, the feelings I experience while dancing are shared with everyone in the room; the feelings visit the audience, as well, coming into existence in large part through their own perceptions of it.

Theatre studies scholar Erika Fischer-Lichte names this ongoing "bodily co-presence" of performers and audience a central characteristic of performance, and calls this exchange the "autopoietic feedback loop" (19; 20). Notice that Fischer-Lichte names here a circulatory, looping pattern—wherein

my performed feeling exists in large part because you are witnessing it. This significantly diminishes my inclination to call it mine in the first place. I may feel happy in this dance, but you are perceiving that I look angry; neither of us are correct. The same feeling is simply affecting us differently, making it hard to name. We might say that an emotion is free here in that it is *intersubjective*: neither mine nor yours but ours, or else, no one's.

Meanwhile, if performance sets an emotion free, so does recognizing, as the political theorist Jane Bennett does, this related matter of it being an *it*. In *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, Bennett notices “this habit of parsing the world into dull matter (it, things) and vibrant life (us, beings)” (vii). She offers that this separation “encourage[s] us to ignore the vitality of matter and the lively powers of material formulations” — that is, that non-living things actually *do* a great deal in the world (Bennett vii). In possessing vitality, or in acting “as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies” and that often “impede or block the will and designs of humans,” things possess something of a life of their own (Bennett viii). I grant emotions a certain freedom when I fully recognize their autonomy and vitality.

Bennet's work is explicitly political. She asks: “how would political responses to public problems change were we to take seriously the vitality of (nonhuman) bodies?” I can use this to model one of my own questions: how would *aesthetic* responses to *personal* problems change were we to take seriously the vitality of (nonhuman, or *nonsubjective*) *feelings*? Furthermore, I wholly agree with Bennett that “what is needed is a cultivated, patient, sensory

attentiveness to nonhuman forces operating outside and inside the human body” as well as “a willingness to theorize events (a blackout, a meal, an imprisonment in chains, an experience of litter) as encounters between ontologically diverse actants, some human, some not, though all thoroughly material” (xiv). Dance must be theorized as one such event, including self-identifying expressive dance, in order to fully register how emotions can operate in performance as vital entities. Further, I am fascinated by the possible materiality of emotions themselves, as another such way to imagine their freedom. As in the case of a potter working because of a deep reverence for clay, the clay is no dumb, mute substance to the artisan but instead *speaks to her*, encouraging her very creativity.

Alternatively, Bennett’s project draws attention to the rampant narcissism of human ways of speaking, which in turn creates an illusion of our very control over the material world (xvi). By extension, one reason for insisting that feelings always come from a person is that, in fact, we often experience them as having control over us. I will call this notion *passion* when I address flamenco and consider its aesthetics and its history. But it is relevant to note here, as the cultural theorist Rei Terada does, that “emotions are often portrayed as expressions of a subject imposed upon the subject” — as we do in describing someone as involuntarily overcome by a feeling; for example, “when someone is seized by remorse or surprised by joy” (5). By extension, Reddy’s work suggests that much of the discussion of emotions as goal-relevant in the cognitive sciences stems from a “folk wisdom of the West” that prescribes that we

“master them or be mastered by them” (15). Reddy considers the work of scientists employing laboratory techniques to observe cognitive effort in emotional situations, such as the cognitive scientists R. M. Wenzlaff and D. E. Bates, who note that “persons at risk of depression may be avoiding depression by means of high levels of conscious thought suppression” (ctd. in Reddy 28). In this work, Wenzlaff and Bates conclude that “full recovery [from depression] may be more likely if individuals do not routinely rely on thought suppression to avoid depressive thoughts” (ctd. in Reddy 28). I provide this to suggest the rather autonomous character of many of our emotions, even as we experience them inside our own heads. Emotions feel free when they operate autonomously, such as when they require effort in order to master or control them, or when they occasion observation and interpretation, or when they call for something like surrender.

To conclude here, Rei Terada’s *Feeling in Theory: Emotion after the Death of the Subject* is another remarkable project in this field of discourse, and I will mention it again as I continue. She suggests the autonomy of emotion by pointing to its significant role in poststructuralist critiques of subjectivity and experience. But she also writes: “I have argued that while emotions are real experiences, the expression that supposedly conveys them and the subject that supposedly expresses them are *angels parasitical* on the phenomenon of emotion; that, rather, the domain of emotion is at once interpretive and nonsubjective” (Terada 118; my emphasis). In *Sensaciones y emociones*, I strived to present the phenomenon of three emotions as directly as I could. I

used myself and my training in self-expression as conservatively as possible, to foreground the qualities of emotions set free, in their own domain. I will admit that the presence of emotion in this form in performance, alongside a body in quite close proximity, dancing nearby, does give off a very strong appearance of self-expression. But I insist here that it is only an appearance—an apparition or an angel.

Chapter Two

Dance the self-expressive practice: the dance form, the body, and ideology

In this chapter, I will consider two works from dance studies—*Dance and the Lived Body: A Descriptive Aesthetics* by Sondra Horton Fraleigh and *Choreographing Empathy: Kinesthesia in Performance* by Susan Leigh Foster—to trace a way of thinking about the *dance form*. I will arrive there by continuing to look closely at the notion of the self-expressive body, ultimately likening the concept of the dance form to a body itself. This will be helpful in recognizing the emotional tendencies of bodies who perform, or are *expressive of*, the traditions of modern dance, postmodern dance, and flamenco. My intentions in the next section of this essay are to position my work in a lineage, and I am interested in how these three dance traditions—with regards to feeling specifically—have come to be seen as different practices, genres, or forms. This will be another instance of feelings themselves giving shape to or bringing a body into existence, or at least, legibility.

The widespread practice in our field of marking a dancer's identity with reference to the category of a dance form (for example, she *was* a ballet dancer but now she *is* a modern dancer) is very related to what Rei Terada calls the “expressive hypothesis” (11). She hypothesizes that: “the purpose of expression tropes is to extrapolate a human subject circularly from the phenomenon of emotion” —or, the idea that “emotion requires a subject; thus we're subjects, since we have emotions” (Terada 11). This circularity is one feature of the ideology of emotion, which is Terada's name for Ahmed's “inside out” model,

wherein expression is seen as feeling originating in a subject and travelling outward, and is a dominant way of speaking about feeling in our culture. Similarly, when we consider dance a self-expressive practice—that is, a person’s danced movement is an expression of her feelings and perhaps *who she is inside*—we are able to extrapolate a subject’s identity *from* that very movement. These are two distinct definitions of self-expression (to let out one’s feelings, as well as to become one’s self through action) working together in the same direction. The result is that every dancing body is an “I,” whose ways of moving indicate through expression both:

- 1) her feelings; and
- 2) her subjective identity as a dancer of a particular dance form.

It would seem, therefore, that certain dance forms come to be associated with certain bodies, as well as certain feelings, imagined or perceived—all via this figure of expression, self-expression.

And yet for many, self-expression is more than just a way to speak about or imagine dance; it is also a way to define dance. I will now consider Sondra Fraleigh Horton’s *Dance and the Lived Body: A Descriptive Aesthetics*. My main focus will be her discussion of the shift from modern to postmodern dance (beginning in the 1950s), with regards to her understandings of dance as an aesthetic and expressive practice. It is worth noting, however, that Horton’s project is explicitly philosophical, as she works “to develop an aesthetic prescriptive of dance through existential phenomenology—particularly through

the concept of the lived body” (xiii). This announcement of aesthetic prescriptivism—an opinion not only as to what dance is or has been, but what it *should be* ideally—underscores what is at stake for Horton in defining dance, and later, in expressing distaste for the postmodern attitude. However, given her stated philosophical approach, her prescriptivism is as much an ardent effort to align dance with certain concepts—for her, they appear to be the aesthetic, the expressive, and the lived body—as it is a proposal for regulation. This does not make her opinions in this particular work any less conservative, in my estimation. But it does draw my attention to the degree to which concepts are relied upon, by dancers and theorists alike and no matter their tastes, to bring dance into concrete legibility. Rather than discount Horton for her prescriptive attitude, I wonder what concepts have guided me toward my own experiences of dance. Have they ever limited my ability to experience movement? Which of my ideas have had an effect on how I move? In light of these questions, this chapter will finish with a brief discussion of the ideological character of self-expression as a concept in dance and its categorization into forms.

Furthermore, it is worth noting explicitly that *Dance and the Lived Body* was written in 1987. I chose to work with this text because, for me, it clearly demonstrates a way of speaking about dance that relies upon the belief system that Rei Terada named the expressive hypothesis and that Sara Ahmed called the inside-out model. Along these lines, Horton defends dance as an expressive practice after several decades of what she saw as blatant anti-expressionism in dance-making. In trying to understand my own non-expressive efforts as a

dance-maker, it felt critical to study an argument that works in the opposite direction, and I selected Horton's work on the topic, authored over thirty years ago. I recognize that this scholarly move has its consequences. But as a practitioner, I experience—all of the time, really—considerable insistence that good dance *is* expressive. I felt quite driven to find this insistence articulated in writing. Horton's work from thirty years ago struck me as relevant here, and I do not find its prescriptivism antiquated in the least; its ways of speaking are still in circulation—in the studio, after performances, in written criticism, everywhere. Rei Terada wonders “whether it is really necessary to criticize expression; as an aesthetic doctrine it seems rather outdated” (11). In this chapter, I will suggest that this aesthetic doctrine is not outdated, at all.

Early in *Dance and the Lived Body*, Sondra Fraleigh Horton points to the popularity of the view that dance is self-expression, and that “one of [her] aims, then, is to reduce the belief that dance is self-expression, so that we may more clearly see the unique substance of dancing and the self that is created, known, and expressed in it” (7). For her, dance is not simply self-expressive because it also aesthetic expression; a scream is self-expressive but not aesthetic. Furthermore, it is beyond self-expressive in that dance offers a unique opportunity for self-transcendence, expressive not of a personal self, but of a universalized or depersonalized self. As such, it seems that Horton disavows self-expression primarily to clarify the philosophical concepts she aligns with, but not to do away with the way self-expression works to generate subjects

from feelings and vice versa. For this reason, the idea never fully disappears in her analysis, despite her aim to reduce its presence. Consider these quotations from Horton:

- 1) “all of the arts are aesthetic and created forms of expression” (22);
- 2) “the universal and (bodily lived) capacity to express, to extend our boundaries through expression, to move out of ourselves and be received by others, is the human capacity upon which dancing is founded” (68);
- 3) “the act of expressing in dance is synonymous with the movement medium in dance” (102);
- 4) “dance exists through human movement, which is always psychophysical expressive form” (103);
- 5) “that is, *without expression there is no dance*” (103);
- 6) “we may say that *dance is expressive by nature*” (125); and
- 7) “Expression cannot be blanked without removing the dancer herself” (125).

I recognize that none of these statements directly supports a self-expressive definition of dance; in terms of Horton’s philosophical work, there is no category mistake here, given her outlined terms. But neither do any of the quotations imagine dance as a practice that may not need the figure of expression, at all. And even when a body is not self-expressing per se, I remain concerned about uncritical faith in the idea that the body can be perceived as expressive—that is, communicative in some sense—at all times, or that its very movement is

expressive innately. For me, this is the same logic that ultimately gives rise to the *she was asking for it* rationale for sexual misconduct. In this line of thinking, a body in a certain form—dressed in a certain way, walking at a certain time of night or standing on a corner—expresses a form of consent. The belief that “each person’s walk expresses him” should not be disseminated as an aesthetic feature of dance, precisely because it can perpetuate cultural problems (Horton 121).

Horton is also careful to prescribe that dance is aesthetic expression as opposed to personal expression. And in being aesthetically intended, Horton sees dance as “movement detached from instrumental usefulness” or the movement of a person as she moves throughout daily life (27). As such, “Dance moves the self beyond a personal identity because it is conditioned by the aesthetic” (Horton 28).

Horton further characterizes the self as expressed through dance as follows:

- 1) “[...] the dancer’s body and her self are created in the dance object—created as the dance” (37);
- 2) “The dancer realizes the self—or comes to know herself—in terms of her capacity to create the self of her fullest possibilities” (38);
- 3) “The self the dancer comes to know and express emerges from a synthesis of the personal and the universal” (29);
- 4) “When I am my dance, it is my self unlimited that is expressed” (33);

- 5) “The self the dancer projects is chosen: a selected, aesthetically constituted, and practiced self” (33); and
- 6) “Although I am embodied in my dance, it is not *who I am* that is projected in my dance. [...] I do not express the personal manner in which I am not my self; *I express the dance*” (32).

Despite her aim of reducing the widespread belief that dance is self-expression, Horton certainly foregrounds a conception of the self—albeit an aesthetic and universalized self—in her definitions of dance. Recall that this was also the case in her defense of expression. I will also add that, for Horton, “the aesthetic exists intrinsically in the subjective field” — a space in which human subjects communicate to each other, and that “is lived by each individual as *the self*” (44). And in a second definition of the aesthetic, Horton writes: “I am proposing that the aesthetic is defined as the affective, is a quality of being moved, in the sense that when I say ‘I am moved’ I mean ‘I feel something,’ and in fact my sense of feeling has been increased. Moreover, when I say I feel something, I am implying an awareness of my sentient self” (45). Dance, then, is an affective activity for feeling subjects, who in feeling are fully sentient of their selfhood from the outset, and in expressing, convey an aestheticized ideal self. In my view, this remains self-expression.

I will speak directly: in the versions of this that I have tried on as a dancer, I have felt beauty in it as a project. I contract and I feel *myself* hollow—I become another self. But then I am distracted again by the feelings themselves—the

feelings which are not me, but that give shape to me—and which cannot be contained by any self I could imagine. They move quite freely and move my body to dance. I move most freely when I allow their freedom, and when I intervene only occasionally.

Perhaps Horton and I are describing the same phenomenon but in different terms. Regardless, I hold that the terms in which we talk about dance precisely affect how our work comes to be perceived and discussed—how it is experienced. I object to the notion of self-expression only because it limits, by prescribing the precise edges of human subjects, the single direction in which feelings travel, and that dance is a necessarily communicative effort, which I will address now. Yet Horton works to dispel the image from popular use in order to foreground the particular, aesthetic features of dance that she hopes to prescribe from a philosophical standpoint. Therefore, when she turns to confront the “antiexpressionist” legacy of the postmodern dance, she does so in terms that to me feel quite antithetical to what was a historical effort in feeling anew.

Horton moves toward a discussion of dance forms by adding to her notion of expression. For her, expression holds action and content in unity. She writes: “*To express*, then, moves from its phenomenal position as an action verb to the nominative position of *an expression*, one which has been accomplished and named according to some qualitative content” (Horton 102). What we perceive a dancer to be doing in a dance is immediately “a marking of [the dance’s] content” (Horton 102). This becomes the grounds upon which Horton

unpacks what she calls the formalist-expressionist tension, which is often viewed as a divide between modern and postmodern dance. For Horton, action (expression; feeling) and content (expressive content; form) exist in unity in a dancer's movement, "which is always psychophysical expressive form," and thus, she disputes the distinction outright (103).

This may be a productive frame for watching a dance as one interprets a text, but in line with my objections above, it limits. Not all dancers dance to reify meaningful content. This is not simply the distinction between choreography and improvisation, or a dancer dancing a dance as opposed to simply dancing. There are some dances—set or otherwise—which are not designed to communicate at all, and in fact work in other directions. This might make it bad dance, depending on one's tastes! But it is dance regardless. Dance *became* a theatrical art form, wherein what is on stage *can be viewed as* interpretable, artistic content, but prior to and alongside this re-contextualization of dance itself, it has performed other cultural functions, as well.

Horton notices that "expression as subjective content (psychological, emotional, symbolic, and so on) has been closely associated with modern dance" which "has always existed in dynamic tension with the formal (structural) considerations" (103). This interest in "the formative object of dance" or a "return to consciousness of *things in themselves*" became the explicit focus of early postmodern choreographers such as Merce Cunningham (Horton 111). As described in Horton's sense of the unity of form and feeling in dance, it is not along the lines of expression and form that these two traditions can be

differentiated. She holds that “even formalist dance such as Cunningham’s is innately expressive because it exists though the innately expressive human body” even if Cunningham succeeded in visibly “cool[ing]” the expression down (Horton 113; 119). By extension, “emptying art of expression” is impossible according to Horton, as cool expression is still expression (118). Speaking of the generation of dancers that followed Cunningham, she writes: “antiexpression *is* expression but, curiously enough, expression against itself” (Horton 124).

This is an insistence that there are still feelings in the dancer’s body, even if the dancer is immobile and stares blankly at her audience for an hour. For Horton, it is irresponsible to call one’s self a dancer and not express those feelings through movement. My attitude here is that the feelings are not only in the dancer but in the room. I notice that Horton turns to her own feelings in watching this work, describing them with a certain vehemence; they *move* her to defend dance in order to defend the human itself. “The human develops through elaborating and extending expressive values, not through hiding, blanking or diminishing them” (Horton 125). In other words, “the human being *grows* through expression” (Horton 124; my emphasis). I celebrate the early postmodern work for diminishing the visibility of the human being—the willful, ever-expressive “I” of the dancer as author and subject—in order to mobilize the feelings of the room, among other things. Some of my favorite dance makes me want to dance in that it moves me. At that moment historically, this was accomplished by stilling the dancer’s body and its expressive output. The work was aesthetic, but it also strikes me as political. A woman on stage at that time

was expected to perform, to look out and to give—to express. Drawing attention to the feelings in the audience that create that problematic expectation was of dire necessity, and still is in many ways. In some moments, it is awareness itself that must grow, and not the human being. If I avoid your gaze as I lightly toss my body around, what will you become aware of? There are other ways of increasing awareness certainly, but this may have been a new way.

To reiterate: one new way to feel—to *feel better* perhaps—is to notice that feelings are not only in me, but everywhere around me. Nor are they me. Rather, they are *things in themselves*. This can become a practice; dancers often dance and make dance through practice. Horton disagrees with the critic, historian, and postmodern apologist Sally Banes, and her feeling that “a new definition of dance (not simply a new style) had appeared” (119). This redefinition, in Banes’s own words, espoused “neither perfection of technique nor of expression, but quite something else—the presentation of *objects in themselves*” (ctd. in Horton 119; my emphasis). This turn to dance-as-object is often understood to be a step away from expressionism toward formalism. But more specifically, it appears to me that postmodern dance, in minimizing both the primacy of technical movement vocabulary and the expressive effort of the dancing subject—two mainstay features of Western concert dance for at least several centuries—was *re-presenting* the body as a means to experience dance. This is not a body imagined in the form of a narrative character, an expressed emotion, or as the dance itself, but the presentation of a body as it exists outside of these figural scenarios. My sense is that in working to present just the body, emotions

themselves became more visible, too. These feelings may not have felt like dance. This was not feeling in the form of “expressive content” (something like might be confused with subject matter, narrative, meaning, or even poetic communication), but feeling proper (Horton 117).

Meanwhile, Horton maintains that the new postmodern dance was merely a “stylistic departure” from modern dance, and remained dance in nature and modern in character (119). In the sense of being another avant-garde expression in the modern tradition of making new and not defining itself, and in striving to reflect the modern subject’s individuality and freedom, postmodern dance was simply bad modern dance—a reflection of slackening in philosophical and aesthetic values (Horton xxxii).

And yet I would like to return to the idea of practice, as a repetition of acts that brings something—dance, for example—into being. In fact, it was not the first iterations of postmodern dance that Horton found troubling. She even describes Yvonne Rainer’s subdued, pedestrian style in *Trio A* (1966) as expressing a kind of grace “through the working intelligence of a subtly detailed body,” and appropriately political, when read to be a form of Vietnam-era protest art against “*techne*”—technique and technology (Horton 120; 132). Rather, it was the slow degeneration of expressivity over time, through repeated performance of the style after Judson Church, that concerned her. She writes:

I witnessed years of blank, smugly cool, walk-away dances throughout the postmodern period. This formula for avoiding feeling (and for not being square) became widespread. Was it an attempt to overcome

poverty of the spirit by expressing it? Or was it impoverished art? There were probably examples of both. Audiences walked away from dance as dance walked away from them. Walking away and looking away became characteristic, almost stylistic, in these dances. Dancers habitually walked away and looked away from each other onstage. *Cool* gradually became *vacant*. (Horton 127)

The repeated acts that brought postmodern dance into popular visibility—walking away, looking away—also slowly vacated the stage of humans and their expressions. It cleared space for bodies to feel, in my estimation. As such, postmodern dance best refers to the work that came of *that* practice—dance as the work of feeling bodies—as opposed to those years of stylistic imitation that followed the initial shift, but whose dances were paradigmatically no different in conception from earlier forms. My sense is that, in awe of this new way to practice feeling, dancers spent several decades perhaps not moving much—or at least, not moving in the ways many expected dancers to move.

This is not the practice of a new style or vocabulary, but a new practice in feeling, which can give new shape to a body as it moves through that feeling over time—as it *feels things out*. New dance can be one result of a new practice in feeling. As this dance is performed, discussed, and eventually taught, perhaps a new dance form takes shape. This is not a new definition of dance, only a new practice. It is (hopefully) not the case that ballet is dance while butoh is not

dance, simply because they are distinct dance practices, specific to distinct cultures, with distinctive practices when it comes to feeling.

Interestingly, one of the branches of recent scholarship on emotion—as summarized by the historian William Reddy—is largely conducted by ethnographers who have “developed new field techniques and a new theoretical apparatus for understanding the cultural dimension of emotion” (x). Reddy notes that, in this anthropological research, “ethnographic data routinely contains traces of collective shaping of emotional effort and collective elaboration of emotional ideals” (56). Citing many of the same scholars cited by Sara Ahmed when she aligns herself with those “who have argued that emotions should not be regarded as psychological states, but as social and cultural practices,” Reddy thoroughly analyzes this approach to studying emotion as reiterative social practice (Ahmed 9). His concept of emotional culture as an effortful elaboration of values and ideals through local, lived practice, or as Reddy further characterizes it, a culture’s “normative style of emotional management” is instrumental to his own argument in *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (121). Reddy maintains that history itself is “a record of human efforts to conceptualize our emotional makeup, and to realize social and political orders attuned to its nature” (xxi). He mobilizes his argument to critique this ethnographic method, holding that the “anthropology of emotions most sorely lacks, at present, a unified concept of emotions as part of the historical unfolding of politically significant institutions and practice” (Reddy 50). In other words, emotions and emotional practices shape history, rather than being

shaped by changes in history. He builds this framework in order to discuss the French Revolution, in explicitly emotional terms.

I am interested in Reddy's notion of "emotional management" (121). He writes: "a normative style of emotional management is a fundamental element of every political regime, of every cultural hegemony" (Reddy 121). I would add: of every *aesthetic regime* as well. I have begun to describe differences in style with regard to emotional management between modern and postmodern dance, and I will notice more differences when I consider flamenco. To call each of these dance forms an aesthetic regime is perhaps strong wording; I feel, however, that the phrase speaks directly to the issue that I began this chapter with—the extrapolation of dancers as subjects of the dance form they express: *I am a modern dancer*. To identify in this way, in many senses, is to align with norms in feeling, or else, to practice in a community of movers that "provide[s] individuals with prescriptions and counsel concerning the *best strategies* for pursuing emotional learning and *the proper end point or ideal* of emotional equilibrium" (Reddy 55). We see such explicitly prescriptive work in *Dance and the Lived Body*. It would be vastly uncritical, however, to associate emotionally prescriptive management practices solely with modern dance. *All* dance communities prescribe and manage, whether explicitly in their pedagogies, or implicitly through any number of other apparatuses. Regardless, it is worth stating once more that I believe this management work is performed not only with regards to movement aesthetics or choreographic practices—the material manifestations of dance—but also in the realm of the emotional.

Later in this essay, I will describe the ways in which my training as a flamenco dancer introduced me to some alternative styles of emotional management. This is not to say that the edict to express one's self was not entirely absent there. In being a concert dance form with European origins, flamenco has in some ways taken similar shape to the modern and postmodern dance forms; flamenco has, after all, lived through the same historical eras of modernity and postmodernity, and is essentially unique as a dance form first for its relationship with the music form—*flamenco*. I will therefore turn to its music to study the majority of flamenco's emotional uniqueness. Before then, I'd like to imagine the dance form less as a community of movers or as a regime, and more as a collective body—that is, a body.

In *Choreographing Empathy: Kinesthesia in Performance* the theorist and historian Susan Leigh Foster lays out three concurrent, genealogical analyses of the terms choreography, kinesthesia, and empathy. In doing so, she puts pressure on various conceptions of an immediate or innate relationship between a dancer's body and a viewer's body, wherein by nature of also having a body, viewers feel what dancers feel. Instead, Foster contends that this "natural or spontaneous connection" has always been historically specific, offering that "the viewer's rapport is shaped by common and prevailing senses of the body and of subjectivity in a given social moment" (2). These prevailing senses radically change over time. She writes: "I argue that any notion of choreography contains, embodied within it, a kinethesis, a designated way of experiencing physicality and movement that, in turn, summons other bodies into a specific way of feeling

towards it” (Foster 2). Foster’s notion of choreographing empathy “thus entails the construction and cultivation of a specific physicality whose kinesthetic experience guides our perception of and connection to what another is feeling” (2).

Foster’s notion of choreography has taken shape over the course of her career. She summarizes that, for her, “‘choreography’ can productively be conceptualized as a theorization of identity—corporeal, individual, and social” or “as a product of choices, inherited, invented, or selected, about what kinds of bodies and subjects are being constructed and what kinds of arguments about these bodies as subjects are being put forth” (Foster 4). In this light, I consider bodies to be *expressive of* certain dance forms once I allow that dance forms are made of dances, practiced by dancers, and that a dance form *is* a body of those dances and dancers. The identities—corporeal, individual, and social—of the dancers themselves are choreographed, cultivated, and constructed by way of the body of dances they practice and perform. Meanwhile, a prevailing sense of those bodies takes shape in the very same act of the dances taking shape through choreographic labor. As I have detailed, attention to the processes through which bodies take shape and become visible—corporeally, individually, and socially—is a way to conceptualize a theorization of emotion, as well. And as Reddy noted, the processes through which historical change takes shape is also contingent on those bodies and their feelings.

This becomes an important analytical tool for me, moving forward. Each dancing body presents a physicality as it moves, which choreographically

models an attitude toward emotion, as the body itself performs a practiced management of feeling. Furthermore, Foster works in *Choreographing Empathy* specifically “to demonstrate how dance practices have been aligned with rather than isolated from other forms of cultural and knowledge production” (12). She describes a range of physical practices that “function collectively to establish a specific conception of the body and its parts and to organize protocols for shaping and fashioning the body and training its movement” —such as physical education, training in etiquette, and medical practice itself (Foster 13). I would also note that the diversity of physical practices *within* dance creates an equally wide range of conceptions of one’s body, of organizational protocols, and of course, of emotional management styles. Each form works to produce distinctive knowledges and cultures through these very conceptions, protocols, and styles. This happens through physicalized practice and discourse over time—by way of a body itself. Dance forms become like a body in this process, acquiring a specific set of cultural knowledge through physical practice— instruction on how to use, as well as how to feel, that very body.

When I imagine a dance form as a body, I am less inclined to quickly read its movement as a visual representation or expression, formally distinct from another dance form’s movement—that is, as a rigid, aesthetic category. When I turn to a dance form as I would to a body moving before me, I see that it is working through feeling by moving its own body. I see how it manages that feeling: by expressing it, by looking away and toward something else, by surrendering to it, or by way of some other strategy. I see how it uses its body

when it performs this work—how it cares for it or does not, how it names its parts, when it rests and how it dreams. I notice when and where people become visible in all this movement, and when and where they fade away, becoming something else again. My attention is drawn to patterns and disruptions; problems and small miracles; feelings that result from feeling other feelings. The dance form has its history and remains quite specific—definitively itself in so many ways—but I also watch it expand before my very eyes as it moves, as it dances in and out of its own past, as it feels its way into a future.

Ngai offers that specific kinds of emotion can “be said to determine specific ‘literary kinds’” or forms (9). She recalls that the philosopher Thomas Hobbes, in *Leviathan*, argues that “the human fear of ‘invisible spirits’ (which, prior to the time of civil society, superseded our fear of the power of other humans) gave rise to a specific form or genre: the oath” (Ngai 9). In fact, she brilliantly writes in *Ugly Feelings* about “feelings that contain, as it were, models of the problem that defines them” and that, as such, have been given form through unique and specific forms of literary expression—Claymation movies, infamously *bad* or non-cathartic novels, the genre of film noir (Ngai 21). Part of the problem with the specific kind of emotion that *is* self-expression is that it prescribes what is to be done with it; it creates a form in its very definition, and that form becomes difficult to move beyond. When I consider writing from Yvonne Rainer in the next chapter of this essay, I will notice the ways in which she worked to do away with the so-called movement phrase. I understand the

phrase to be movement and feeling in self-expressive form—for me, a phrase often tells a small story of the life of an emotion, moving from inside a person outward, reaching a climax, then dying. Rainer worked to move beyond it.

Dancing a phrase feels good! There is nothing wrong with phrases; I love them! But I assume that it feels so good in part because it aligns with my own preconceived notions of how feelings feel. And one danger of self-expressive models of emotion, if they remain too prominent in our field for too long, is that they will ossify. New or other ways of moving and feeling will become more and more difficult to see, as self-expressive movement patterns will become so deeply ingrained in dancers' bodies and minds that concert dance physicality itself will harden in line with those patterns, too.

I described this argument to a friend who dances and ironically, she commented that she never quite feels free to express herself in the first place. The trained habits of her body are, by now, so ingrained that she experiences no sensation of free-flowing emotion from in to out whatsoever. Instead, she is constantly re-negotiating her body's habits, in an effort to be a *better dancer*, so that she may eventually feel the feeling of expressing herself artfully. Dancing the phrases of other dancers becomes welcome respite in this ongoing, strange labor of the self-expressive dancer.

Sianne Ngai defines ideology as “the materially embodied representation of an *imaginary relationship* to a holistic complex of real conditions” (47). Feeling feelings is a quite real, human condition that I enter into an imaginary relationship with when I imagine that those feelings are inside me and that I

must express them in order to get them out, in order to *feel better*, or in order to be taken seriously as a dance artist. As I make materially embodied representations of that experience—a career of dances, full of self-expressive phrases—it distorts, over time, the very realness of my feelings through reiterative practice. Through a repeated imaginative act, I experience my body as a container of feelings that are my responsibility because they *are* me until I express them. My body is *who I am* and it cannot be escaped; eventually the responsibility of my body and my feelings becomes burdensome. Sometimes imagined burdens can inflict drastic physical harm.

Instead, let us occasionally recognize, as Jane Bennett does, that my body is hardly me at all. Each of us “are, rather, an array of *bodies*, many different kinds of them in a nested set of microbiomes” (112). With regards to my body, it is a scientific matter of fact that “the *its* outnumber the *mes*” when I remember that—in the crook of my elbow alone—there live *six* different tribes of bacteria who together have at least *100 times* as many genes as there are in the human genome (Bennett 112). Science cannot be the only way out of ideological entrapment, mind you, but we have to get moving to be sure.

Chapter Three

A history: postmodern dance and feelings themselves

In the following two chapters, I will position my work in *Sensaciones y emociones* within two intertwining dance historical lineages. In this chapter, I consider the history of postmodern dance, and in the next I will look to the history of flamenco. I am motivated here to document the key influences on this project as specifically as I can. Therefore, rather than studying changes over time within each of these two dance forms as if they were distinct aesthetic categories—to eventually arrive at my own work—I would instead like to continue looking closely at bodies and how they are used and described in relation to feelings, or how those feelings are managed through dance work, at different moments in history. This will be helpful in eventually naming the feelings I worked with in *Sensaciones y emociones*, and how I managed them. In fact, some of those feelings were not my own per se, but feelings I was trying on—that I directly borrowed from these two dance histories. And just as art historians often focus on a single art object in order to begin imagining a history, I would like to start narrowing my frame of reference in this essay, too. To do so, I will identify specific instances in which dancers have made a practice of presenting feelings themselves, as opposed to expressing them. What were those feelings and what were the practices?

My mind is now on art history in part because I was first introduced to Yvonne Rainer's *The Mind is a Muscle Part One, Trio A* (1966) in one of my

undergraduate courses, “American Art since 1950,” taught by David Joselit. It was the first piece of art we studied that semester, and I had never heard of the piece nor of Rainer before then. I wasn’t dancing at that time; seeing the grainy footage of all that unremarkable movement was enough to make me cry. In this chapter, I will begin with the historian Ramsay Burt’s *Judson Dance Theater: Performative Traces*—an excellent resource for those who, like me, have felt indebted to postmodern dance and its legacy but remain uncertain exactly why. The majority of the dance I make looks nothing like Rainer’s.

To paint a quick picture to begin: a work like *Trio A* is such a great opening act in a survey course on American art since Abstract Expressionism for several reasons. As Burt details, the postmodern dance apologist Sally Banes drew upon debates in the art theory of her time to make her cases. Meanwhile, Rainer herself was intimately involved with the artist Robert Morris, a founding figure of the so-called minimalist art movement—sometimes called literalist art—in which sculptors began crafting and displaying objects like unadorned cubes in various sizes. And finally, Rainer herself beautifully describes the unadorned, pedestrian movement and its “worklike rather than exhibitionlike presentation” in *Trio A* as “‘minimalist’ tendencies” —or, a kind of expressive minimalism (385; 381). There is a lot going on here, apparently enough to move me to tears. In this chapter, I will unpack this feeling as a way to position myself in a lineage, and as a way to add to this essay’s slowly growing central concept: feelings themselves.

Ramsay Burt tightly summarizes that “whereas the generation of abstract expressionist painters and modern dancers had made claims about the uniqueness of their individual, internal experience, Rainer was primarily concerned with the public nature of artistic production” (90). This is, again, not a turn to formalist aesthetics but rather, an effort “to strip dance practice of unverifiable private associations in order to find a dance vocabulary that would be meaningful in this public space” (Burt 90). Earlier, I called this a presentation to the public of the body itself—a plain display of a body to demonstrate that, in being socially specific and culturally situated, the body is itself meaning-filled. Burt’s overall project, then, is to describe the postmodern legacy—in Europe and the US—as a turn to “the materiality of the dancing body in ways that force the spectator to *acknowledge* the materiality of the bodies of [...] dancers” (2; my emphasis). In this way, Burt’s work is less a survey of postmodern movement aesthetics, and more an acknowledgement of the growing sociopolitical and theoretical awareness in dance artists since the postmodern shift.

He notes that one such turn to theory was performed by Sally Banes, in her defenses of the avant-garde dance work of the 1960s. Interestingly, she turned not to poststructuralism, but to the quintessentially modernist art theory of the critics Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried, to announce what she saw as a confusion of terms by the field of dance in calling postmodern dance *postmodern* at all. It was a perspective she defended for several decades, and one that Burt criticizes. Sally Banes wrote: “Often it has been precisely in the

arena of post-modern dance that issues of modernism in the other arts have arisen: the acknowledgement of the medium's materials, the revealing of dance's essential qualities as an art form, the separation of external references as subjects" (ctd. in Burt 8). This perspective stems from Banes's conviction, cited earlier in this essay, that the Judson Church dances finally presented objects themselves—that is, dance without representational or expressive content, or something like *pure dance*. Meanwhile, Burt explains that this notion of purity was pivotal in the work of the modernist art critics Greenberg and Fried, who believed Abstract Expressionist painting to be modern art par excellence precisely for its formal purity—paint thrown on a canvas, nothing but pure materiality. Furthermore, these critics held that artistic progress toward high modernist purity was “independent of social and political factors” and could only occur when artists devoted themselves purely to aesthetic problems, “unaffected, and disengaged from, the political context in which they are working” (Burt 10).

This is precisely the type of work Sally Banes felt she was seeing when she watched postmodern dance, which is why she found it to be inappropriately named. And if postmodern dance is actually modernist in character, then all this was—as Banes argued—“further complicated by the fact that historical modern dance was never really modernist” in mistakenly seeing *itself* as pure dance, too (ctd. in Burt 8). Burt criticizes this perspective, recognizing that the Judson Church artists were, in fact, more socially and politically motivated than not, even as they made avant-garde, formally minimal dance works. He attentively reminds

that “avant-garde attacks on art are an attack on the only institution over which artists have influence,” and that these attacks remain culturally oriented regardless (Burt 11). This art was rarely concerned with aesthetic issues alone.

I feel silly reiterating an old debate over a line in the sand, but I am fascinated by the feelings of confusion here. The amount of emotional investment in categorizing dance is not arbitrary here; as I have already suggested, the effort to name what we see in another person’s moving body is challenging, in that it is very akin to the challenge of naming what we feel ourselves. My inclination is not to chalk all of this up to pettiness, but instead, to proceed in the way that Burt does, which is to see that the problem here is the concept repeatedly being invoked—the impossible notion of pure dance, abstract dance, or dance that is movement itself, nothing else. This illusionistic concept works to obscure what is actually being seen in every dance: humans themselves who—even when in motion—cannot be abstracted beyond the cultural context in which they live and dance. The various announcements throughout dance history of an arrival at pure dance through a new technique or conceptual approach have not adequately addressed the fact that every dancer is first a person. Or at least, is first a person *until* she actively works to perform otherwise—by beginning a practice of reiteratively working toward a new reality over time.

As such, postmodern dance came into being alongside other artistic projects such as Fluxus Happenings, performance art, and minimalist visual art—all projects that began *to perform* in new directions. This was why Professor

Joselit began his course with *Trio A*. Minimalist art (the first major American visual art movement after Abstract Expressionism) is infamously difficult to introduce to students; many wonder if a series of uniform, metal cubes—factory produced—can count as artistic innovation at all. The avant-garde goals of the movement, however, become much more clear to me in watching a body perform so-called minimalist tendencies. As I described with regards to Horton’s response to postmodern dance, this type of artmaking draws heightened attention to the spectator’s own experience of it, even if only by requiring that the spectator cognitively reason that what she is seeing is, in fact, art—or is, in fact, dance. In watching Rainer minimize her expressivity, Horton was moved to defend her beliefs; I was moved to tears; the both of us were encouraged into an affective relationship with the work. Similarly, Robert Morris’s sculptures strived to increase the viewer’s awareness of her own bodily co-presence with the work—her embodied relationship to an object of perception in real time, in a public space. The modernist art critic Michael Fried disparaged this approach to artmaking by calling it theatrical, and therefore, not visual (Burt 12). As such, this shift marks the beginning of a long trend of American visual artists seeing themselves as *performers*—of their views, of their identities, of their interventions—even in the creation of static art objects.

The “oppositional, critical” quality of this avant-gardism is, for me at least, a pleasure to watch when performed by a person, using her body. Of course, depending on their execution, these behaviors can come off as pretentious or

smug. But the sincere effort of using a body to somehow encourage another to notice her own beliefs and feelings is fascinating to me. On this, Burt writes: “In retrospect [the postmodern] legacy to subsequent generations of dancers has been a body of work and theory that set a precedent for transcending this narcissistic-voyeuristic duality” wherein the performer self-expresses from “an illusionistic center or interiority” while the viewer mutely sits nearby and receives the expression, content, and meaning (87; 86). The critic Rosalind Krauss, who Burt relies on here, offered that minimal artists were instead “asking that meaning be seen as arising from—to continue the analogy with language—a public rather than a private space” (ctd. in Burt 85). I sense that Krauss carefully notes her analogy here to recognize that invoking meaning is helpful, but not entirely precise. That is, I imagine that the very experience of Rainer’s minimalist tendencies, performed in 1966—her use of “energy equality and ‘found’ movement,” its “neutral performance,” all the “task or tasklike activity” onstage, the averted gazes—were enough to encourage a public feeling, whatever the feeling was at that time. Meaning was probably not immediately necessary. The profound difference could, I imagine, be felt: whether emotionally or energetically.

I am influenced by this work when I recall my conviction that *my feelings are hard to talk about*, but that if I allow them to be free, they might mobilize me and the audience toward new feelings over time. In *Trio A*, Yvonne Rainer tamed the forceful energetic output of self-expressive movement—to begin re-

sensitizing herself and her audience, and to mobilize new, public feeling. She had specific, avant-garde motivations for doing so in the era that she worked, but she also developed a set of protocols for managing one's movement that, in my estimation, possessed broader utility. These are protocols for using your body; she spells them out in an essay called "A Quasi Survey of Some 'Minimalist' Tendencies in the Quantitatively Minimal Dance Activity Midst the Plethora, or an Analysis of *Trio A*" and I have studied them carefully. This is where I will begin to suggest overlap between various postmodern emotional management styles and those that I have been exposed to through my training as a flamenco dancer. I maintain that—no matter the discipline—these are practical tools for performers who work to minimize the look and feel of self-expression, and in doing so, may clear space on stage for feelings themselves.

I have already mentioned my sense of the self-expressive character of a movement *phrase*. I developed this idea in reading Rainer's "A Quasi Survey," and her belief that among the postmodern changes in movement invention, the most impressive has been in the attitude to phrasing, which can be defined as the way in which *energy* is distributed in the execution of a movement or series of movements. What makes one kind of movement different from another is not so much variations in arrangements of parts of the body as differences in *energy* investment. (Rainer 382; my emphasis)

My experience is that many dancers, in avoidance of speaking of their work in personal terms, often substitute the concept of emotion for the more neutral concepts of *energy* or *effort*. This is not to say that these words are synonymous; in fact, it would require considerable additional research to describe the history of *energy* as a concept in our field. However, Susan Leigh Foster captures something important about this distinction when she offers that, by the early twentieth century, the body came to be regarded as “a tensile and momentum-driven force that alternately exerts and relaxes in relation to gravity” (9). Modern dance choreographers “commandeered this physicality into expressive action” (Foster 178). A trained modern dancer like Rainer was likely very accustomed to measuring expressive action in terms of energy, both quantitatively and qualitatively. For example, it is common in dance training, as Rainer notes, “to tell a student that he is using ‘too much energy’” (382). I find that it is not so common to tell him that he is using too much feeling. Because Rainer crafted a “continuum of energy” or “energy equality” in the movement of *Trio A* that is often seen as antiexpressionist, and because she worked to create this quality specifically through work on *phrasing*, I became curious about the phrase being:

- 1) a vehicle for emotional expression, as well as
- 2) “a particular distribution of energy” within set movement (Rainer 384; 383).

Here, Rainer describes how this work on phrasing was choreographed “in the direction of movement-as-task or movement-as-object”:

One of the most singular elements in [*Trio A*] is that there are no pauses between phrases. The phrases themselves often consist of separate parts, such as consecutive limb articulations—‘right leg, left leg, arms, jump,’ etc.—but the end of each phrase merges immediately into the beginning of the next with no observable accent. The limbs are never in a fixed, still relationship and they are stretched to their fullest extension only in transit, creating the impression that the body is constantly engaged in transitions.” (384–5)

When I first read this, I gasped. For me, *Trio A*’s choreographed equality of energetic output performs the very work of *emotional management* for the audience. It draws attention to what is, for many of us, ongoing effort—the quiet modulation and control of our feelings. Rather than continue in the tradition of staging one heroic emotion expressed after another (i.e., a dancer dancing discrete phrases), Rainer’s dance presents an alternative, less cathartic, and perhaps more realistic view of emotional life. Feelings blur one into the other; attending to them is a task or requires work, or at least sensitivity; the feelings transition so quickly that it is difficult to ever keep hold of one and truly call it one’s own.

These descriptions also suggest a certain monotony, which seems to be why this movement quality is often called pedestrian or worklike. It never

becomes a herculean energetic effort, but instead, presents the slow, commonplace burning of “ordinary affects”—an affective dynamic described by theorist Kathleen Stewart (2). For Rainer, the dancing body became involved with feeling only through a sort of passivity—showing what it looks like to “move or be moved by some *thing* rather than oneself” (384). This work was hardly devoid of feeling; it simply offered that to express feeling is a “more-than-human,” even rarefied aesthetic effort (Rainer 383). On her own feelings during *Trio A*, she wrote that, in fact, “I was more involved in experiencing a lion’s share of ecstasy and madness than in ‘being myself’ or doing a job” (Rainer 383). That is, feelings themselves did appear—in fact, a lion’s share of them—just as Rainer worked to minimize them. Paradoxically, this was accomplished by no longer representing them onstage in the form of phrases, and instead simply presenting them—somehow more literally—through a single ongoing task.

This is where I notice significant overlap with flamenco music and dance, which in the structured improvisation performance format of *tablao flamenco*, also performs emotional management in real time. Rather than choreographically “position[ing] the viewer as a self-conscious subject in relation to the experience of viewing and reading the dance,” as the minimalist work of Rainer and Morris did, flamenco performances present for the audience an actual moment of musical collaboration—an encounter between musicians and dancer (Burt 78). This adds an additional nodal point in the circulation of energy in a given performance, positioning the dancer in between two contrasting sets of gazes—

which can have an effect of somehow pressurizing the movement. With regards to emotions themselves, these conditions have been described as rendering imagined feelings so intensely visible to viewers that they personify them—naming them as if they were real humans, or else, spirits moving around the room, or even possessing the dancer. In the next chapter, I will consider the ways in which flamenco has been described as a *highly* expressive art form, along these figurative lines. But before then, I would like to finish this chapter by painting one last, impressionistic picture of the influence of postmodern dance artists on *Sensaciones y emociones*.

Recall that my desire to *feel better* and my conviction that *my feelings are hard to talk about* eventually became three discrete emotions, which then became three dances. Coaxing these feelings toward materiality was strange labor—something like entering an imaginary relationship with each one. Dancing each day with all three of them, I slowly began feeling less and less like myself. I turned to the writing of several postmodern dancers as one would defer to an advice column. The most helpful to me were Steve Paxton and Deborah Hay.

I spent several weeks hardly moving. On this, Paxton describes the development of contact improvisation as a search for images: “In recognizing that we do not begin from zero, that we first have to have a desire or image to launch the system into action, I decided that I had to work in the area of images, though cautiously. The images were to be, well, ‘real’” (176). I wanted real images so

badly that—for forty minutes every day—I imagined myself kneeling in a pile of flowers, until I realized just how expensive this would be to stage. I looked a little closer at what Paxton meant when he said that “as the right kind of images were found, a *working model* began to emerge in my mind” and that “in the working model, events of the emotions and disorientations [...] were considered to be symptomatic that the senses were not quite ready to report what was happening to the consciousness, that instead they were reporting to the reflexive part of the mind and body” (178; 180). I was disoriented and experiencing emotional events each day, but I knew I was working. One day I looked up and saw that I had unwittingly written on the chalk board: *I will not use these feelings to punish myself, I will not use the idea of work to punish myself*, and in my notebook: *I am using these feelings to distract myself from the task at hand*. These were thoughts I had never consciously thought before, but that were reported by my senses directly to my mind and body. I prayed for patience and asked myself “to become an observer of the sensations and to work calmly on each emotional, orientational, or habitual block as it arose” (Paxton 181). I started meditating, and began studying when and where I block my own breath to prevent myself from feeling—intentional “gap[s] of consciousness” (Paxton 177). I became quite familiar with the fact that “the consciousness can travel inside the body” and, as Paxton also offers, that “it is analogous to focusing eyes in the external world” (177). Not breathing, I finally realized, is like walking around with one’s eyes closed. I got acquainted with my insides until I found sensations. Then, I finally

decided to call the concert *Sensaciones y emociones* when I learned from Paxton that “sensations are what we feel to be happening at the moment, and they can become images when we take notice that we are observing them” (182). When I finally found the three sensations, I observed them and named them in my notebook, and that’s when I knew I was feeling better. I started moving. Soon after they were images, they became dances. I immediately knew what I wanted to wear. Paxton offered that “first we feel the movements, then we can objectify the feelings into images” and I agree; this was more or less how it all happened (Paxton 182).

Then, to state it too simply, it was from Deborah Hay that I learned that—in this project—the explicit goal was to “abandon holding onto the shape of me” (2). In *Using the Sky: a Dance*, Hay asks: “Without the words to describe it, what if your audience senses these shifting boundaries of your body?” (20). My prayer was to be so boundary-less that “I” would disappear. And so, I borrowed her notion of prayer for all the praying I did. She writes:

Praying arose in the same manner as my other dance exercises. *I am alone dancing and for a few moments my body is caught in an aching sense of depth and connection. I want to know I can revisit here, and so the desire to articulate my experience momentarily replaces the dancing.*

With pen in hand, I sit and record what I believe my body is recreating for my conscious mind. It is usually a single thought, in the form of a paradox, or a riddle. I then construct a network of conditions which guide

my approach to examining the riddle or thought. Not in search of an answer, I kinesthetically gather evidence from the feedback. After several months to a year of practice, I can sensually embody the riddle or thought without having to deconstruct it first. (Hay 55)

For example, my favorite of these is the riddle that Hay sensually embodied in her work in 1987: “I imagine every cell in my body has the potential to perceive wisdom every moment, while remaining positionless about what wisdom is or what it looks like” (103). Once I found three paradoxical sensations of my own, I wrote them down as riddles—impossible tasks in the future tense—to inspire the three ongoing practices that became three dances over time. It is strange to see them typed, but they were:

- 1) *I will use this feeling to get closer to you;*
- 2) *I will surrender to this feeling;*
- 3) *This feeling is behind me and no longer exists; I will go searching for it.*

Chapter Four

A history: flamenco, passionate feeling, and extra-expression

In this chapter, I will draw a connection between one more branch of recent research on emotion and a trend I have noticed in historical descriptions of flamenco—the personification or anthropomorphism of emotions themselves. By looking closely at the stereotypical image of flamenco dancers as performers of passionate feelings, I will describe how the extravagantly expressive, or *extra-expressive*, reputation of the dance form was another avenue into the notion of non-expression for me in this project.

I will also notice that the opportunity to perform a feeling of feelings *beyond* the expressive norms is one way that flamenco provides (and has provided) its practitioners with ways of reiteratively moving beyond the self, as it is standardly imagined. This opportunity was capitalized upon as flamenco took shape as a performance genre. I will describe how, in watching all of this extravagant expression, viewers frequently attested to seeing not only the movement of dancers, but of feelings themselves, as well. This was emotion so intense and visible that it could never originate in or belong to a feeling subject proper, and instead, was often imagined as something like a magical spirit itself—for example, *duende*, or more broadly, a *passion*. I will call the performance practices that took shape around this rampant, Romantic figuration: *extra-expression*. My goal is to once again arrive at these observations by looking closely at bodies expressing themselves through practiced ways of moving, and

to suggest my own relationship with these ideas and practices as a student of flamenco. I will finish this chapter with a brief description of the three dances I performed in *Sensaciones y emociones*.

The branch of research I mention above, as summarized by the historian William Reddy, is conducted largely by historians and literary critics who focus on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These scholars “trace the rise and fall of an emotional revolution of the past, called ‘sentimentalism,’ or the ‘cult of sensibility’—a loosely organized set of impulses that played a role in cultural currents as diverse as Methodism, antislavery agitation, the rise of the novel, the French Revolution (including the Terror), and the birth of Romanticism” (Reddy x). The influence of this revolution—and particularly the birth of Romanticism—on dance history, as well as on the origins of flamenco as a performance genre, cannot be overstated. As the editors of *Flamenco on the Global Stage: Historical, Critical and Theoretical Perspectives* mention in their introduction: “In our view, the strategies of auto-exoticization and exploiting one’s own negative or ambivalent image, like the fictitious image of the Gitano, *lie at the heart* of the formation of flamenco in the context of nineteenth-century Romanticism” (Bennahum et al. 11; my emphasis). Furthermore, they alertly draw attention to those scholars—such as Luis Lavour and Rocío Plaza Orellana—who have written theories and histories of flamenco that regard the art form to be something of a direct response to Romanticism.

Central to flamenco's history, then, has been a set of performance practices that were directly tied to a cultural shift in attitude toward feeling itself, and that were, as the flamenco scholar Cristina Cruces-Roldán notes, "operational from the moment flamenco was born as performance" (210). She details that it is largely through the dance form's two key aesthetic dimorphisms—masculine–feminine and Gitano–non-Gitano—that these practices are performed. She writes: "the romantic opposition of 'body-emotion-femininity' vs. 'mind-reason-masculinity' was systematized as a basic duality in the emergent sexual division of flamenco labor (Cruces-Roldán 215). The voice and music were (and largely still are) the "jurisdiction of men" in flamenco practice, while "the criteria of hypercorporeality condemned women to using their bodies as the ultimate frontier of art and professionalism" (Cruces-Roldán 215). In my experiences, the feminine *de cintura para arriba* techniques for crafting and displaying emotion in the upper-body alone, detailed by Cruces-Roldán in this essay, are still widely taught and performed in flamenco today. This convention operates in conjunction with a range of other coded and practiced movement conventions that feed into this division of labor, such as the association of the virtuosic, rhythm-based footwork improvisation with men, the traditional feminine costume (described by Cruces-Roldán as "symbolizing an anxious expressive overload"), and the tradition of male dancers performing the final act in *tablaó* performances (216).

Meanwhile, the other, Romantic dimorphism at play in flamenco are those practices which perform a "'hyperracialized' Gitano flamenco aesthetic" wherein

“the body acquires a capacity for action [...] that bets on spontaneity, radicalism, defiance, intuition, baroque style, and chaos” (Cruces-Roldán 219). These movement qualities also function as stereotypical character traits of the *gitano*—a racial minority in Spain—whose largely fictionalized image and history was exploited and reiteratively performed to feed a prevalent desire for exotic performances of otherness in nineteenth-century Europe. Cruces-Roldán comments that “flamenco found a place onstage as a new musical and artistic system, a new model, a new commercial code, attractive to those who wished to pay admission” in partial response to these Romantic cravings for intense feeling as purchasable commodity (212). This is not to say that flamenco practitioners and their emotional performances were affected, in the sense that the feelings were somehow fake. But it is to say that these performances of feelings were highly affective—put into motion by stereotypical imagery, socioeconomic marginalization, and a growing bourgeois consumer market and their desires. Of course, then, the feelings that were appearing on the stages of the new *cafés cantantes* in the nineteenth century were coming just as much from without as within.

Furthermore, the Orientalist character of all this commodification and trade is perhaps best underscored by the fact that, even before the institutionalization of flamenco performance in the Spanish *cafés cantantes*, there was a tradition of European tourism throughout the nineteenth century to the countries of the Islamic Mediterranean—Syria, Egypt, and Algeria—precisely to watch a variety of all-female “Gypsy” performance in dance cafes. This

tourism was especially popular amongst Romantic writers, including the French novelist Alexandre Dumas. This history is told with great finesse by Ninotchka Devorah Bennahum in *Carmen, a Gypsy Geography*, in which she summarizes that “the solo female Gypsy performer in North Africa and southern Spain fulfilled the French and British intellectuals’ quest for the inner Orient, the spiritual Orient, and archetypal female presence that allows foreigners the mythopoetic right of return to self via the Holy Land, as if they, like Gypsies, once belonged” (143). Commenting on a similar myth—the fantastical notion that female Spanish dancers are descendant of the infamously lascivious, dancing *puellae gaditane* of the Roman empire—historian Kathy Milazzo reminds us that “myths are discourse, either written or spoken. They seek to elicit emotions rather than offer facts” (40). The appetite for emotions themselves, in other words, has often been enough to imagine and mythologize Spanish dance beyond what is actually to be seen in these dances, or factually true.

For the sake of being as direct as possible, here are five descriptions of Spanish dance. In each, there is telling use of figurative language, varying in nature from allegory to personification. The first is from the renowned, 19th century dance theorist and ballet master, Carlo Blasis:

[The Spanish dances] represent the generous sentiment of an absolute protection of the object beloved, at other times they describe with vivacity the tender feeling it inspires, and the sincerity of the avowal. [...] The

agitation of the body, the footing, the postures, the attitudes, the waverings, whether they be lively or dull, are the representatives of desire, of gallantry, of impatience, of uncertainty, of tenderness, of chagrin, of confusion, of despair, of revival, of satisfaction and, finally, of happiness. (ctd. in Jeschke 99).

The second is from the French novelist Alexandre Dumas who—as Bennahum notes—in this moment romantically conflates the Spanish Orient with the Syrian Orient, as he describes how Spanish “dancing is a joy to the dancer herself”:

She delights in every toss of her head, every flicker of her hands. Her feet spurn the ground, she whinnies with excitement and the magnetic current of her passion streams out to galvanize every man who watches her...the Gypsy Orient is produced for him...the delirious joy of fifty or sixty Spaniards applauding a dancer in the upper room of a café in Seville! (ctd. in Bennahum 148)

The third is from the flamencologist Gerhard Steingress, who here cites the canonical flamenco dancer Antonio Gades on his flamenco choreography of the opera *Carmen*. Steingress apparently works here to distill the essence of flamenco as an art form:

But the image [i.e., of Carmen] does not necessarily depict a prostitute, as one might imagine, for the dance is not simple seduction. Beyond seduction, we remember Gades’s words, “is to squeeze out feeling through movement, and anyone can do that.” In other words, his Carmen

could also do that. To express feeling in public, to share private sentiment, and even to pretend emotion in order to produce *duende* (the magic of flamenco), that is art. The *tablao* (flamenco club) was born out of this impulse, and Gades understood how to broaden, transposing it for the concert stage [...]. (119)

The fourth is from a 1781 poster announcing a Gypsy performance in a tavern in Lebrija, cited by Cristina Cruces-Roldán. As she notes, the poster appeared several decades before “flamenco existed as a named form of performance” (Cruces-Roldán 218). The poster read: “‘El demonio duerme en el cuerpo de las gitanas y se despierta con la zarabanda.’ (The devil sleeps in the bodies of the Gypsy women and wakes with the zarabanda)” (Cruces-Roldán 218).

And the final description comes from the Spanish poet, playwright, and flamenco enthusiast Federico García Lorca. In his essay “Play and Theory of the Duende,” Lorca writes: “The great artists of the south of Spain, whether Gypsy or flamenco, whether they sing, dance, or play, know that no emotion is possible unless the duende comes” (60). He goes on to provide an example of duende coming to the canonical flamenco singer Pastora Pavón, *La Niña de los Peines*, who after being heckled for an uninspired performance one evening apparently resorted to summoning the spirit. Lorca writes:

As though crazy, torn like a medieval mourner, *La Niña de los Peines* leaped to her feet, tossed off a big glass of burning liquor, and began to sing with a scorched throat: without voice, without breath or color, but with

duende. She was able to kill all the scaffolding of the song and leave way for a furious, enslaving duende, friend of sand winds, who made the listeners rip their clothes [...]. (Lorca 61)

To preface this brief discussion of the figure of duende: I have studied with Spanish flamenco artists my entire life, and not one of them has ever invoked duende—neither the notion, nor the spirit itself—in his or her instruction. Whether this image has lost popularity in recent years, or is only in circulation outside of the flamenco community, or is reserved for the most sacred of flamenco conversations to which I have not been privy, I am not certain.

Regardless, if seen as a rhetorical device that became “a cornerstone of [Lorca’s] poetics” precisely as “Lorca’s poetry was turning away from the logic of traditional metaphor to images which attempt to evade rational analysis,” its presence here begins to make more sense (Maurer vii; ix). Lorca, inspired by his experiences as an influential patron of the art form, frequently worked to defend the marginalized, Gypsy performance genre of flamenco to the white Spanish aristocracy. In my view, Lorca thus imagined and crafted the figure of duende, a spirit that functions much like the muse or the angel has—to supernaturally inspire artmaking—in order to figuratively mediate the “hyperracial” performance aesthetic of flamenco song and dance. This is a complicated, poetic effort and there is a lot going on here. What is important, however, is that when Lorca says that “the duende works on the body of the dancer as the wind works on sand,” he is personifying that which is usually imagined to move a flamenco dancer. The

feeling that she would otherwise be passionately expressing—perhaps the “devil” inside her awakened by music, moving her to expression through dance—is now the spirit of *duende*. Lorca describes the dance itself as an altered state, of being influenced from without. Therefore, when he claims that he once “heard an old maestro of the guitar say, ‘the *duende* is not in the throat; the *duende* climbs up inside you, from the soles of the feet,’” he describes the art form in such a way that it takes on a new appearance to an outside eye (Lorca 57). The dancer’s feelings themselves become visible, as her motion is now commotion—the work of a wild spirit.

Once again, feelings imagined this way are hardly self-expressive. They do not originate from within a feeling subject, but are signs of a body’s possession by *duende* himself. They come from *beyond* the body, and move that body into expressive action. And as Lorca suggests, “the *duende*’s arrival always means a radical change in forms” (62). Flamenco thus becomes freshly commoditized as an *extra-expressive*, *hyper-racial*, and *hypercorporeal* art form, wherein the exotic bodies of the performers are animated by forces beyond human comprehension, and wherein feelings are no longer quiet, internal belongings, but are spectacle in their own right—flying around the room, crawling up through the feet from the inside of the earth. Furthermore, when framed as one of Lorca’s many efforts to *sell* the marginalized art form to encourage patronage, *duende* can himself be seen as something of a performing body—

one of the many bodies performing on the flamenco stage—“selling it,” as they say.

Lorca’s duende figure is not alone, however, as can be sensed in the other four descriptions of Spanish dance, as well. This trend in allegorizing, objectifying, anthropomorphizing, or totally personifying a Spanish dancer’s emotions in performance suggest the wide-reaching influence of Orientalist and Romantic imaginative desire on the image of flamenco—both as it is perceived and described. And as I have suggested throughout the essay, the way an emotion is imagined often has direct influence on how that emotion is performed through practiced movement, which can give shape to a dance form, in turn. What each of these descriptions work to do is account for what *is* to be seen in flamenco dance—extravagant ways of moving beyond the expressive norms in other dance forms in that era, extreme physical effort and concentration, a performance of letting-loose or coming-undone that steadily builds in energetic intensity, spontaneous improvisation, excess in costume and volume, hypercorporeality and hyperraciality. In this sense, these accounts strove to match the tone and texture of expressivity perceived in flamenco performance through figurative language. How else would one use words to say he saw emotion itself onstage last night? That is, in being notoriously difficult phenomena to perceive and describe, it is no surprise that poets, novelists, academics, theorists, and tavern owners alike have banded together in their approach to the challenging task of naming feelings.

Of the research that looks to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century cultural production for signs of a great shift in emotional attitude, I was most drawn to the work of the scholar of English literature, Adela Pinch. In *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen*, Pinch characterizes this shift in attitude as epistemological in nature—driven by a desire to *know* what feelings are and where they come from—and that “the eighteenth century’s revolution in epistemology, which both gave feeling empirical origins and declared their social benefits, had strange effects on how writers represented people’s relations to their feelings” (7). She looks to works of philosophy and literature alike. Despite the Romantic image of emotion as stemming from one’s individuality, Pinch notices “the period’s concomitant tendency to characterize feelings as transpersonal, as autonomous entities that do not always belong to individuals but rather wander extravagantly from one person to another” (3). As such, Pinch discusses the “emotional extravagance” of writing about feeling in this period in two senses: that feeling was seen to “stray beyond boundaries” of the individual in nomadic patterns *and* that feeling was often depicted in scenes of excess, lavishness, sentimentality, and generally, without restraint.

Crucially, she observes that “feelings in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century writing appear most excessive when that writing raises questions about whom these feelings belong to, about whether those feelings come from without or from within a person” (Pinch 4). Of course, this is the period

in which flamenco appears as a performance genre—as the professionalized staging of similar extravagance and excess through song and dance, and no less, in a Spanish style. It would be a vast misrepresentation of flamenco, however, to argue that this effort was solely for commercial gain. Pinch’s work here assists in drawing the connection that flamenco was part of wider, cultural inquiry into the nature of emotions themselves, in the very same era as “the rise of individualism and the construction of the subject” and wherein the dance’s extravagance and excess mark its very participation in this inquiry (13).

Therefore, when Pinch writes “the history of feeling and the history of the individual are not the same thing,” I am encouraged to look to flamenco as a performance practice that worked to “authorize and authenticate those feelings” that were being intentionally imagined throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as *separate* from the human individual and *autonomous* in their own right (13). Of course, the history of feeling and the history of the individual eventually became conflated, as has been discussed at length in this essay. We struggle today to imagine emotions as distinct from the human individual from whom we believe they originate, and to whom we contend they belong.

Furthermore, Pinch considers the role of personification in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century epistemological drive to *know* feelings, asking “what it means to represent feelings as persons” and as she works to “reveal the assumptions this practice implies about the knowability both of feelings and of the concept of ‘person’” (Pinch 8; Pinch 8). While she turns her attention to a

much discussed, rather personal-seeming confession of bad feelings in the philosopher David Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature* to argue her points, Pinch's fascinating analysis of this moment relates to my own interest in the of personification of feelings.

I have already noticed in descriptions of flamenco, just as Pinch suggests here, that "personifications of emotions—figures of intense feeling that may belong to no real person—reveal the extent to which the knowability of emotions themselves may depend on rhetorical forms" (21). That is, figurative language plays an instrumental role in rendering an encounter with a hypercorporeal and hyperracial Other—the dancing Gypsy—knowable at all, particularly in visual terms. The movement itself becomes visible (or at least, visually recognizable and describable) precisely as the feelings that inspire that movement are personified. Pinch summarizes that this act of "communication of feeling from one person to another, from writer to reader, is facilitated by *bodying forth feeling in the form of a person*" (47; my emphasis). That is, the intense, performed feelings of the body of another person are most knowable in the form of an *additional* imagined body or person. My sense is that, upon seeing feelings as they appear in flamenco performance—without representational or narrative elements, performed by a marginalized, racial Other, created through the *immediate* collaboration between dancers and musicians—viewers "can't do without the category of the person" in order to describe what they see, or at the very least, the category of the supernatural spirit (Pinch 48). As Pinch explains,

“if feelings seem detached from actual persons, the notion of a bounded, self-disclosed entity for feeling seems indispensable” (48).

Feelings can be hard to see, describe, and know, especially those attributed to an exotic body. An additional body, imaginatively bodied forth, helpfully mediates a challenging encounter—it is a body I have created myself, in precisely the form that I wish to imagine it, standing in between me and the foreign body dancing before my own eyes. Pinch states that “personification thus can both stabilize and clarify the notion of the person and present us with feelings in knowable form” precisely in that the personification is one’s own creation—a crafted image drawn from the viewer’s own existing knowledge or imagination (48). To clarify is often to re-present a challenging idea in already known terms. And in dance practice, stabilization is often how we allow for the mobility of the another body part, such as when the right leg works to stabilize so that the left is then mobile, and free to gesture. The viewer himself feels mobile again upon describing the dancing Other in a way that aligns with his own sense of what feeling is; he has *made sense of things*, things that otherwise baffle. Personification thus re-establishes equilibrium after the disorienting experience of encountering feelings themselves in motion, moving other bodies, by way of performance in real time.

I sense that when Adela Pinch offers that “to personify a feeling [...] is in a significant sense an *impersonal* way of expressing a feeling” in that “it removes

the feeling from the subject who presumably feels it and gives the feeling the autonomy of a person,” she is noticing in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literary practices something that became coded into the practices of flamenco music and dance, as well (45; 46). To a large extent, this is why I felt so at home using my practice and training as a flamenco dancer to re-imagine the notion of self-expression in *Sensaciones y emociones*. While the troubling of self-expression in the modern dance tradition was deemed formalist, postmodern, anti-expressive, or no longer dance at all, my feeling is that there has been a certain amount of space for this work in flamenco since its very inception.

On the one hand, flamenco practitioners have long been viewed as extra-expressive bodies whose feelings are so extravagant in performance that they are seen as something more like *passion* than emotion proper—that is, when they are not fully personified. Passions can be impersonal or depersonalized feelings, autonomously wandering from body to body, animating individuals into action. To be a passionate feeler, then, is to be constantly overcome by feeling, and this is hardly the authored, self-expressive creative act of a choreographer who communicates feeling through dance. On the other hand, in my experiences of flamenco practice, I have noticed that matters of feeling are often considered secondary to matters of listening, relating to, and honoring the *music*. This prioritized effort is seen as requiring total presence in the collaborative moment of *making* flamenco performance; feeling happens, to be sure, but only as a consequence of the act of attending fully to the live creation of music.

Furthermore, there is no one, given person on the stage expressing himself in any moment of flamenco performance—not the dancer, the singer, the guitarist, nor the *palmeros*. The moment, and whatever feelings it holds, is shared; as such, the feelings *feel* impersonal, in the sense that I never feel them to originate in me nor belong to me alone. They are in circulation, bouncing from wall to wall, feelings themselves. Even when I dance alone in silence before the music begins, for example, I feel the presence of the musicians behind me, and that very feeling gives shape to my dance. Even without recourse to the music for inspiration or animation, I am energetically not moving alone.

For that reason, the verb *transmitir* (to transmit) appears much more often with regards to emotion in flamenco pedagogy and practice than the verb *expresar* (to express). In fact, the canonical flamenco singer José Monge Cruz (Camarón de la Isla) was known to say “*El flamenco no tiene más que una escuela, transmitir o no transmitir*” —flamenco has only one school: to transmit or not transmit (ctd. in Viana n.p.). That is, the skillful *transmission* of emotion from one nodal point to another (dancer to singer, stage to audience, teacher to student) is how feeling is mobilized in flamenco performance, or perhaps, how it is imagined. It is a matter of successfully freeing emotions, transmitting them by aiding their travel. In my experiences, however, this work is very real feeling; when dancing well, I literally experience emotions pass by me, fly through me, envelop me, dance nearby. Sometimes, I feel these feelings specifically by way of the music, which I hear inside me, outside of me, everywhere. This movement

of feelings requires complete presence of mind to fully notice, and complete presence of body to fully respond to with one's own movement. And because there are other people involved in these circulations of feeling, the work also demands rather honed social skills—a certain amicability, and indeed, a willingness to move beyond one's self.

I was inspired to try my hand at choreographing *non-expressions* precisely because of these experiences throughout my flamenco practice, in which I have perceived the movement of feelings, but then have all too often felt myself moving in ways that did not complement the movement of those feelings, at all. I sensed that a sort of total movement—of my body and of the feelings themselves alongside each other—could be jointly choreographed somehow, and that this could *only* be done if I silenced the impulse to express those feelings in any way. I believed that if I were to truly experience the feelings as feelings themselves, I could not imagine them into existence. Instead, they would have to arrive in my practice over time. For that reason—in the two evenings of performance—I called the first twenty minutes of *Sensaciones y emociones* the “Llegada” (Arrival). As the audience arrived, so did the feelings, while I knelt onstage and waited for them to move me. The whole experience had humbled me to my knees, and I had spent most of the summer prior in prayer, so I felt that my knees was where I belonged, at least until I was moved to my feet.

In the three dances that followed, I presented three choreographic models of the movement of three feelings themselves. I got acquainted with this

movement by moving my own body under their influence, and as I set movement material, the feelings gave that material its shape. In this way, the dances were something like three-dimensional diagrams of the feelings and their movement, and so I called them choreographic *models*. At certain moments in this process, I felt myself to be interacting with the feelings, or even manipulating them. But I think that the work was most successful when I intervened as little as possible, and the material became set largely through repetition—by repeatedly moving with the feeling each day until it solidified into something three-dimensional and memorable, in that it re-appeared day to day. To say I choreographed the dances feels, well, not quite right.

For example, in one of the dances, I directly transcribed the movement of another body onto my own body from video footage, in an attempt to feel feelings that I had never quite felt before, because they were feelings from the past. In another part of that dance, I sought movement from my own body's memory in order to summon a particular feeling from my own past: a certain flavor of pleasure that I have known but that I couldn't remember at that time. Then, at the end of that dance, I let a feeling walk through me and then walk away, right out of the room, such that if I ever wanted to have that feeling again—God forbid—I would have to choose to go after it. It was an awful feeling, but neither did it come from me, nor did it ever belong to me, and I haven't quite known it since. Vicente Griego, the singer, sang a *cabal* for this part of the dance, whose lyrics tragically read:

*Abráme la tierra
que me quiero morir
que pa vivir
como yo estoy viviendo
prefiero morir.*

This was the last dance in *Sensaciones y emociones*, and it was a dance in three parts: “Interludio,” “Martinete de Antonio Ruíz Soler el Bailarín,” and “Cabal.”

Recall that the riddle for this dance was: *This feeling is behind me and no longer exists; I will go searching for it.*

In the first two dances in the concert, however, I performed flamenco alongside four other flamenco artists, in order to collaborate toward feeling in real time. The first dance came directly out of the kneeling—a practice born of imagining myself kneeling in flowers—and that took the shape of a few *letras* of *bulerías de Cadíz*, which I danced to while sitting on a bench. In this dance, I was modelling how it feels when, for example, dough is rolled out to soften it—or the way it feels when something spreads and, in spreading, comes closer to you, even if it hasn’t exactly moved. The riddle for this dance was: *I will use this feeling to get closer to you.* To use even vaguer language: I was also dancing the sensation of *through-ness*, particularly in the heart space of my body, as well as the sensation of “Against all agony a bunch of flowers in the chest” and of course, the sensations of *bulerías de Cadíz* (Notley 178). I wore crimson colored

pants and a white t-shirt, and it was in this dance (twenty-five minutes into the show) that I was finally able to stand up.

In the second dance, I changed into sage green colored pants and a black shirt while Vicente Griego sang me a *letra* of *cartagenera*. After that, I danced two *letras* of *tarantos*; then was joined by my father and my aunt, and we danced a few *letras* of *tangos* together. The riddle for this dance was: *I will surrender to this feeling*. I found that sensation of surrender by experimenting with the horizontal plane, by back-bending, and by working with a sensation of *daughter-ness*. I have never been a daughter before, but I watched several hours of videos of the classic female flamenco dancers—Matilde Coral, Milagros Mengíbar, Carmen Mora, Merche Esmeralda—dancing *por taranto*. I noticed a certain look in their eyes that I named *daughter-ness*; I wanted to surrender and look that way, too, even if that's a feeling that may never be mine. Tonally, *tarantos* are a rather unique flamenco song form; I find the music rather special. I worked, sometimes for hours at a time, to change the tone of my muscles to match this special *tono de taranto*. I would do push-ups, then stand with my arms above my head and look out into space until I couldn't any more. I also worked to understand what a teacher of mine, La Popi, meant when she told me that she feels *taranto* to be *terrenal* (earthly). This came by yielding and surrendering to the space around me, feeling it as if it were the earth underneath me when lying on the floor, and this is how the dance took shape.

The last thing to mention in this closing description is that, when watching footage of the final performance of the concert, I noticed—among many other things—that I danced much of the night with my mouth open. In all this work, I was embarrassingly slack-jawed, as if breathing heavily, as if aghast or in awe, as if a child asleep in the backseat of the car, as if I had never seen someone perform dance before! I felt such remorse over this until I remembered the first time I contact improvised with someone. That person was so engaged in the feeling of sensations that they moved with their mouth ajar the entire time. As we moved together, in and out of contact, I went in and out of feeling judgmental of such an ugly countenance, until I eased in and, I'm sure, let my mouth fall open as well. The judgement was just another feeling; it came and it went. Just as we breathe in and out of our mouths when we aren't thinking about it, this essay has worked to describe how our feelings travel inwards and outwards, in all directions, entering us and escaping us—as soon as we allow their autonomous movement. Sometimes so much feeling is being felt in all this that one forgets to keep their mouth shut. Early on in the work of feeling feelings in this new way, it was easy to forget.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, I would like to suggest the next steps that this essay would take—if it were a dance that lasted longer than it need last, or if it were a dancer that just kept spinning and spinning. Hopefully, this articulation will also have impact on future performances of *Sensaciones y emociones*, which I intend to significantly revise and re-work after the experience of writing this dissertation.

First, one of my initial intentions in this essay was to provide a fuller description of the choreographic methods that I practiced in making this concert, which are deeply influenced by the dancer and pedagogue, Chrysa Parkinson. Early in the research, however, I decided to give considerable time and effort to what was, for me, the investigation of new ideas, as opposed to those that are already imbricated within my existing practice. I sense that a description of my choreographic and working methods would necessarily rely on close description and analysis of the footage of the concert itself, in turn. Unfortunately, this work was significantly overshadowed by the conceptual groundwork and historical positioning researched in this essay. Here, I would like to note that Robin Nelson cites this exact problem as one of the most common in his advisement of practice-as-research PhD dissertations, wherein the practitioner-researcher submits an inquiry that “has been identified but on a grander scale than the project will bear. Most often this is the result of a lack of understanding that practical inquiry is just as valid as theoretical, or a lack of confidence [...] in the praxis” (81). Referring to a choreographic project that

became overwhelmed by an engagement with post-classical physics, Nelson continues: “What I wish to clarify through this example is the institutional research need for the arts praxis to have the capacity to undertake an inquiry which yields insights of its own, not just to claim resonance by analogy with ideas circulating in another domain” (81).

In my own work going forward, I intend to cultivate confidence in the rigor and insightfulness of my own practice. While I benefitted significantly from the type of research I undertook in the writing of this dissertation, I see the ways in which I could have taken a different course of action. This course—to state it simply—would have looked more closely and specifically at the work that I staged in *Sensaciones y emociones*, analyzing not only the choreographic, but also, the dramaturgical choices that went into its production. Many of these choices were decidedly queer in nature; this iteration of the essay would have turned to queer theory, as opposed to affect theory, for its conceptual framework. Furthermore, a more practice-oriented iteration of this essay would have provided a more thorough description and analysis of the flamenco in the concert—explicating the collaborative musical choices that consumed the majority of my energy as choreographer. It is difficult to discuss flamenco practice without conducting research in Spanish, and in turn, without painstakingly offering explanation for all of the genre’s complexities and traditions—by way of a greater act of translation. I avoided this labor, but upon reflection, I see how the essay lacks a certain amount of translation entirely, and

even in moments when translation (or close description and explication) may have been necessary.

I have also been encouraged by my dissertation committee to indicate in this conclusion that the research I present in this essay is unprecedented in flamenco scholarship. My sense is that this may be true, because this project engages with flamenco via practice-as-research methodologies. But I will also say here that—even in my earliest, stumbling descriptions of this project to other flamenco practitioners—I heard back several *pues, claro, hijo*'s. In other words, the findings that I offer in this essay are not unprecedented, simply unarticulated in scholarly discourse. The practitioners with whom I have discussed this project indicate that this way of thinking—and the knowledge it produces—is already familiar to them.

And finally, it is not too late to share a few last words on the notion of expression. Soon after I finished drafting this essay, I found the choreographer Mette Ingvarsen's "Yes Manifesto" from 2005. The "Yes Manifesto" is seemingly a direct response to Yvonne Rainer's infamous "No Manifesto" from 1965, in which Rainer articulated many of her so-called anti-expressionist beliefs. Ingvarsen's manifesto is short enough to reproduce in full below; however, I will draw attention to the fact that it says "Yes to expression." This "yes"—which I think must be read in the context of the rest of manifesto to be understood—reminds me that my own fascination with expression stems from the fact that I feel myself do it quite often. I perceive feelings travelling beyond the very boundaries of my person when I dance, nearly every day; it is an

emotional experience that is hard to ignore. Oftentimes I even encourage the feelings in this direction. I *let them out*. The point, however, as suggested here by Ingvartsen, is to give this experience a new name. And once expression has a new name, I intend to say “yes” to it again, too:

Yes to redefining virtuosity

Yes to conceptualizing experience, affects, sensation

Yes to materiality/body practice

Yes to investment of performer and spectator

Yes to expression

Yes to excess

Yes to ‘invention’ (however impossible)

Yes to un-naming, decoding and recoding expression

Yes to non-recognition, non-resemblance

Yes to non-sense/illogic

Yes to organizing principles rather than fixed logic systems

Yes to move the ‘clear concept’ behind the actual performance of

Yes to methodology and procedures

Yes to editing and animation

Yes to style as a result of a proposal

Yes to multiplicity and difference. (Ingvartsen 48)

Appendix A

The UNIVERSITY of NEW MEXICO
DEPARTMENT of THEATRE and DANCE presents

SENSACIONES y EMOCIONES
MFA in DANCE
THESIS CONCERT

MARTES y MIÉRCOLES
el 5 y 6 de SEPTIEMBRE
2017

1. LLEGADA
2. BULERÍAS de CADÍZ
3. CARTAGENERA, TARANTOS, y TANGOS
4. INTERLUDIO
5. MARTINETÉ de ANTONIO RUÍZ SOLER el BAILARÍN
6. CABAL

Coreografía: NEVAREZ ENCINIAS
Cante: VICENTE GRIEGO
Toque: RICARDO ANGLADA y MARIO FEBRES
Baile: NEVAREZ, MARISOL y JOAQUÍN ENCINIAS

Directora de escena: JULIA YOUNGS
Diseño y operadora de luces: LOUISE BROWNE
Operador del sonido: ELOY GONZALES
Directores técnicos: TOM MONACO, BILL LIOTTA, y RICHARD HESS
Tramoyistas: JOELLE STRICKLAND, SOPHIA BROUSSARD, ANDREW VILLANUEVA, ARIS ZAFFER, PRISCILLA GÓMEZ, DANE HOPKINS, y los TANM TOROS

Proyección: BRIAN FEJER

Dibujo del cartel: ZAHRA MARWAN
Diseño del cartel: McKENNA GRIER
Grabado del cartel: HOLLIS MOORE

Vestuario: ANA SANCHEZ, EVA ENCINIAS, y BRENDA GRIER

Con gran respeto y admiración a los siguientes artistas flamencos, cuyos pasos estudio en estos bailes: Claudia Cruz, Lucía la Piñona Álvarez, Olga Pericet, Valeriano Paños y Rafael Estevez, Maria Moreno, Rosario Toledo, Anabel Moreno, Matilde Coral, Milagros Mengíbar, Carmen Mora, Merche Esmeralda, Eva la Yerbabuena, Daniel Navarro, Javier Latorre, Concha Jareño, Belén López, Alejandro Granados, Pedro Córdoba, Nino de los Reyes y Triana Maciel, Agueda Saavedra, Iván Vargas, Adriana Santana, Tacha González, Inmaculada Aranda, Antonio Canales, y Marco Flores.

I would like to express the immense gratitude I feel to my family and friends, who are guiding me through this experience with incredible generosity. I would particularly like to thank my grandmother, Eva Encinias, and my mother, Brenda Grier, who have believed in me as I worked this summer. I am grateful to all of my teachers, as well, and especially to my great-grandmother, my grandmother, my father, and my aunt, who have given me my life's great blessing. I hope so deeply to honor them through this work. I would like to thank Vicente Griego, Mario Febres, and Ricardo Anglada for their beautiful music and friendship, and for the example of their devotion to our art. I'm also grateful for the support I have received from the technicians working on this project, who have received me and my ideas with patience and kindness. I am greatly indebted to Amanda Hamp, Donna Jewell, Mary Anne Santos Newhall, Vladimir Conde Reche, Dominika Laster, Blythe Kanis, Simone Ilg di Pietro Reche, and of course, to Eva and Marisol Encinias — for the abundance they've shared with me. Thank you to the National Institute of Flamenco, who has generously supported me as I pursue this degree, and to my father and mentor, Joaquin Encinias, for his ongoing artistic guidance and care. Finally, I would like to give all of my thanks to God, who hears my prayers, for each day's unexpected salvation.

SENSACIONES y EMOCIONES studies the role of emotion and sensation in shaping a dance. In this performance, I wonder if my feelings exist mainly in my thoughts, in my body, in the music I hear, or some combination of those places. I wonder if feelings are free to travel in space and time on their own somehow, and I wonder how I might help them to be free. I wonder what is happening — emotionally speaking — when a body is moved to dance.

I began this work by asking myself how I might newly understand the idea and experience of *self-expression*, and then, by investigating other directions and ways in which to move with feeling — as a dancer, as a performer, as a student of flamenco. In this study, I have been deeply humbled by the incredible music in this concert, and all the feeling that is there. My hope tonight is to stand close-by the feelings for an hour: to use them to get closer to you, to surrender to them, and then to follow them, just as they start disappearing.

Appendix B

The UNIVERSITY of NEW MEXICO
DEPARTMENT of THEATRE and DANCE
presents



SENSACIONES y EMOCIONES
MFA in DANCE
THESIS CONCERT

CHOREOGRAPHED and PERFORMED by
SEVAREZ ENCINIAS

with
VICENTE GRIEGO
MARISOL ENCINIAS
JOAQUIN ENCINIAS
MARIO FEBRES
and
RICARDO ANCIADA

TUESDAY and WEDNESDAY
SEPTEMBER 5 and 6
2017
7:30 PM
EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE
CENTER for the ARTS
UNIVERSITY of NEW MEXICO
TICKETS (\$8-\$12) AT UNM/TICKETS.COM OR
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