

# The Voice as a Limb

Discovering Pedagogy and Politics Through the  
Bridge of Voice and Movement

MERCEDES BALAREZO FERNANDEZ



“All you can do is breath and hope” 2020  
Co-directed by Maia Nowack and Mercedes Balarezo  
Photo: Maia Nowack

**ABSTRACT**

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<p>This work analyses what the concept of voice means and how to deal with its unconventional use in a dance context, through a radical pedagogy approach. The radicality of the pedagogy in this process is based on guidelines determined by me in order to set up a horizontal teaching style while working with a neurodivergent group of people. The principles of the pedagogical approach are around the temporalization of teaching and the tone of the encounter with the participants. The concept of micropolitics, taken from Felix Guattari and Suely Rolnik, is present in this work as a method to understand the relationality between the person's experience of their voice and what are micro and macro political implications of these explorations. The micropolitical analysis that this event reveals is firstly the importance of enabling an extraordinary experience where the body-mind is testing fringe zones, in this case the improvised flow of movement with a vocalization that deviates from a quotidian use of voice. Secondly, it involves raising critical awareness of what sensations, thoughts, emotions emerged. And thirdly, organizing this information for oneself and at a later stage sharing it with the working group and engaging in discussions with them.</p> <p>“The Voice as a Limb: Sounding Dance Laboratory” is a space where the exploration of the phonatory possibilities of voice are combined with movement improvisation to create an extraordinary experience to enable awareness and discussion. In this practice, the voice is perceived as part of the body that grows within the depths of the torso, moves and composes in this space in relation to oneself and the others. The <i>sounding limb</i> is encouraged to drift away from the use of the semantics of spoken language or music. By enhancing the embodied perception of the voice and welcoming it to the movement, this work aims to raise awareness about the relationship with one's voice, give different input for the creation of movement and experiment with possibilities for a unity of expression that holds the body-breath-voice in what I have started to call <i>sonomovements</i>.</p> <p>“All you can do is breathe and hope” is the performance resulting from the process that Maia Nowack and I held with the students of Vocational Qualification in Dance at Vocational College Live. Through this process we facilitated a workshop for the students, where we were able to test our approach to pedagogy, develop our practices and share a creative process. A detailed description of the practical work is presented accompanied by reflections on how the challenges that emerged were resolved. This performance was the crystallization of the exploration of those phonatory possibilities that “The Voice as a Limb” enabled, in coordination with the creative methods we used to involve students in the dramaturgy of the choreographic worlds that we created with them.</p> <p>This thesis work follows Robin Nelson's approach of Practice as Research in Arts and is deeply inspired by Erin Manning's propositions for Research-Creation. In Nelson's multimodal method there are three modes of knowledge intertwined: the theoretical, the practical and the outcome of the juxtaposition of both. The reaserch inquiry is the following: what has the practice of “The Voice as a Limb: Sounding Dance Laboratory” during the work with Vocational College Live's dance students taught me about micropolitics and radical pedagogy? What does it mean to put the voice in the centre of the dance practice? How do my guidelines on radical pedagogy affect the process of the workshop? What is the relationship between radical pedagogy and micropolitics in this project? And what are the pedagogical tools needed to pass the threshold towards the voice-movement exploration?</p>			
<b>ENTER KEYWORDS HERE</b> Sounding limb, sonomovements, radical pedagogy, micropolitics, co-facilitating, co-creation, neurodivergency, honey-time, voice and dance, voice and movement, phonatory exploration, practice as research.			

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# 1. INTRODUCTION: WELCOME TO THIS TINY GALAXY

Dear reader:

Welcome to the written component of my thesis work. Here, I will elaborate on the practice and theoretical framework that I have been researching in these two years of studies at the Master's Programme in Dance Pedagogy in The University of the Arts Helsinki. Also, you will read the description and analysis of the project that took place at the Vocational College Live, which is the artistic component of this thesis. The research inquiry that this study poses is: what has the practice of "The Voice as a Limb: Sounding Dance Laboratory" during the work with Vocational College Live's dance students taught me about micropolitics and radical pedagogy? What does it mean to put the voice in the centre of the dance practice? How do my guidelines on radical pedagogy affect the process of the workshop? What is the relationship between radical pedagogy and micropolitics in this project? And, what are the pedagogical tools needed to pass the threshold towards the voice-movement exploration?

I would like to introduce you to the way that the following sections are arranged. As you will read in the last chapter, the dance performance created for this work consisted in a score of four worlds. You can read in detail about them later, but what I want to say for now is that, after many sleepless nights thinking how to organize all the content gathered, I encountered an idea that made me open my eyes wide, smile and then frown. This idea is to follow, in my writing, the same score that we created for the performance. After giving second and third thoughts I decided to go with this frame.

Before I give you more information on each chapter, I would like to present the context. In the end of our first year of studies, my classmate Maia Nowack and I were talking about how much we both would like to work together in a school with a programme in dance. Maia had taught at Vocational College Live for a few sessions on her first teaching practice and she shared that the experience was rewarding and interesting. After a few more conversations we started to think about a collaboration between both of us teaching a workshop there. The idea evolved into the creation of a performance

and later into the possibility of this project being our thesis works. After exchanging e-mails with Jasmiina Sipilä, Vocational Special Needs Teacher in Dance at Live and consulting with our Professor in Dance Pedagogy, Eeva Anttila, the project was given the green light.

I will explain shortly about the four worlds and what you will find in each chapter. The first world (chapter 2) was about quiet sounds. I will include in this section the personal reasons that motivated me to do this research and, developing from that, I will present a short overview on voice theory and the description of the practice that I call “The Voice as a Limb: Sounding Dance Laboratory”. The second world (chapter 3) was about sharp, quick, popping out sounds. In this chapter I write about three things that have sharply popped out from this practice: radical pedagogy, micropolitics and practice as research. The third world (chapter 4) was about challenging movements and sounds. In this chapter I will describe the challenges that I found throughout this research, in the workshop and in the creative process towards a performance. Finally, the fourth world (chapter 5) was an airy creation of a sculpture of how a person dreams their voice to be. In this section I will elaborate on the dance performance presented as artistic component, articulating the reasons behind our choices, detailing the score of each world and the reflections that each enabled from the pedagogic and artistic perspective.

One last thing before you jump into the hard stuff. As you can imagine, I could not have done this without the help of many people that have supported me in different ways and in different moments of this process. I want to show my gratitude to: Eeva Anttila, Jasmiina Sipilä, Heini Nukari and Katri Kauppala - all intelligent and talented women who inspired and guided me. To Maia Nowack, for creating such a smooth, honest, fun and insightful shared journey. To Diego Gil for being a brilliant, present, clear and sensitive supervisor. And finally, with my eyes wet, I want to dedicate this work to my parents who have, through their love, gave me all the possibilities of the world.

Connecting myself to my voice and including all this knowledge to my own training as a dance artist and as a person, has opened my eyes to a whole universe that I am just starting to discover. This tiny galaxy, composed of four little planets, full of embryos of worlds, has been done with much love, motivation and dedication. Even though it was

hard to focus, this has given me purpose and mental sanity during the social distancing quarantine caused by the Coronavirus pandemic. I hope you will find the reading of this work clear, interesting and thought-provoking.

I wish you a pleasant journey and thank you for your interest.

Warmly,

Mercedes Balarezo

## 2. FROM SILENCE TO WHISPERS

### 2.1. The voiced/The silenced

This all started with silence.

An uncomfortable silence used to block my throat from a very early age. Unable to express feelings and ideas I decided to shut up. After moving very far from my country, speaking something other than my native language I became even more silent. And I was noticing that this constrain in my throat is not normal, not healthy, not me. My interest in the voice and movement emerged intuitively and unexpectedly as an urgent desire. As Sara Motta (2018) explains, this is a silence that is not related to the lack of knowledge, but emerges from a long history of being asked to be quiet, for getting in trouble for pointing out problematic issues, being guilty of uncomfortable situations and generations of secrets kept for survival. She elaborates on the denied possibility of free-being in the capitalist coloniality for the racialized and feminized from whom speaking is banned. This has directed my attention towards who is voiced and who is silenced. And where does this silence come from? How did I learn to be silent?

I am a privileged mestiza Latina woman from the middle-class, who has had access to education. Though my pale skin could make you read me as white, I identify as mestiza. Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2018) has stated that one can be mestizo by blood, (my average Andean phenotype would not hide my origins), by childcare in a mixed race environment and also from landscape, being constructed by the scenery where you grew in (in my case between the gorgeous Andean volcanoes). Being heard as a woman in the highlands of Ecuador is related to a modest use of a sweet, high-pitched and loving voice. As Motta (2018) writes, women are only heard when they speak with the master's language, when we assimilate. Loud laughter, for instance, is accepted when the laughter is supporting the master, the husband or the boss. The social acceptance of feminized voices is still very limited. Adriana Cavarero (2005, p. 167) has stated: "Women in general, it could be said, adapt themselves to a silence that conforms to a "natural" feminine adequacy when it come to logos". It became clear for me that the

fact that I have been raised in a patriarchal society such as Ecuador, has shaped, more than I would like to admit, my relationship with my voice.

The assimilation of speaking the master's language is illustrated in a different way by Cavarero's (2018) analysis of the myth of Echo. According to the Roman poet Ovid, the nymph was severely punished by Juno for distracting her while Jupiter was in bed with other nymphs. The given punishment was to take off her talent for talking and her loquacity, turning the nymph into a repeating machine of sounds. She could only repeat the last sounds that other people said, but could not follow her own intentions. This caused a very unfortunate misunderstanding with Narcissus, who was disturbed by what he thought was inappropriate behaviour from Echo. The nymph, repeating the last sounds of Narcissus' words, said loudly: *coeamus!*, which out of the context where he used this word, alludes to coitus. Narcissus felt disgusted with her verbalization and rejected her. As a consequence of this rejection, Echo started a progressive disintegration of her youth and beauty. Her body faded away and only her voice remains (Cavarero, 2018). Condemned to repeat what we have learned from older generations, women most of the time must quiet down our thoughts. Life has taught us that is easier to remain silent or agree with the master rather than saying what others do not want to hear from us. Especially if the other is the father, the husband or the boss.

The possibilities of voicing the feminized is narrowed down to adding our voices to the master's, which creates a lack of vocal plurality, limits the understanding of the world and gives a one-sided perspective. Salomé Voegelin (2018), refers to Frances Dyson's work when presenting the political and capitalist soundscape as a monochord:

Dyson's interpretation of silencing echo as a modern day form of acclamation, or what we might understand as popularism, allows her to critically engage in resonance beyond harmony, and to suggest the resistance of the corporeal to produce a dissonant and plural "echo" that does not simply respond without a sound of its own but defies the monochord to contest ideas of a homogeneous soundtrack of ecology and economy. However, she acknowledges that these

possibilities are disabled in the absence on the time and space for breathing.

(p.20)

How could I, who has never explored the voice, who does not have musical education, dare to challenge the monochord for possibilities of vocal expression as a subversive act? How could I rebuild Echo's body through movement? Moreover, what happens if I play with the impossibility of producing meaning and bring the non-sensical sounds to the core of the dance practice? Would this open the spectrum of the possibilities for sound and breath?

We learn to use the voice for communicative purposes, but it could lose its complex possibilities for utterance when it is reduced to the raw material of language. Dolar (2006) argues that voice is closely intertwined with semantics. When it becomes only the tool by which we convey words, its corporeality disappears in the message. For instance, Dolar (2006, p. 24-25) points out this phenomenon: "when we listen to someone speak, we may at first be very much aware of his or her voice and its particular qualities (...) but soon we accommodate to it and concentrate only on the meaning that is conveyed." Therefore, it is my interest to dive into the corporeal dimension of voice and play with the multiple possibilities of its materiality. I want to research what happens when the voice is understood as much more than "an acoustic robe for the mental work of the concept" (Cavarero, 2005, p. 35) and, independent of the semantic, how that materiality of voice can be understood as a bodily creation, that might compose a *sonomovement* unity. I will explain later in more detail what it is that I am calling a *sonomovement*.

Voice and body are intimately connected to identity, personal history and social context. If I think that voice could be related in a different way to the semantic production, drifting away from language or music, it does not mean that I am looking for a "natural" voice that does not recognize the subject's complex features. In fact, directing the attention to the frictions that the person's voice and movement encounters in reality has become an important part of this practice. LaBelle (2014, p. 5-6) mentioned that the voice is "always already a *voice subject*, rich with intentions and meanings; accented, situated, and inflected by the intensities of numerous markings and their performance."

I am interested in putting this *voice subject* at the center of the exploration in this practice. LaBelle (2014, p. 62) also states that “the relation between sense and nonsense, of the semantic and the sounded, is to be appreciated as the very fabric of the voice.” I consider the “nonsensical” use of voice a way to raise awareness of the subtler layers hidden beneath the semantic, as part of the richness of this fabric of the voice.

## 2.2. The Voice as a Limb: Sounding Dance Laboratory

My voice, a waterfall

My voice, a History’s piece

My voice, all the screams of the world

My voice, the trench from where I shoot peace

My voice is stubborn

My voice is me

Before the voice is turned into singing voice or spoken words, it is an organic manifestation of life. What then remains of voice if it is neither language nor music? (...) When voice is separated from the layer of words, it is up to the listener, or to the receiver, to make meaning or interpret what is heard and/or felt. An open door is left for interpretation (...) Emotions and thoughts, under the anonymity of the speechless voice might flow free as dancers in disguise at a Carnival. (Balarezo, 2019)

Last year, for my teaching practice I entered something completely unknown by facilitating a dance workshop where the relationship between voice and movement was explored. The challenge was hard, and the learning was fulfilling. “The Voice as a Limb: Sounding Dance Laboratory” is an open-ended process and a method that is reinvented every time a sounding limb is created. This became a practice that more and more exposed myself to my history of silence by getting acquainted with theories about

the politics and poetics of voice. What made my passion for this practice grow throughout the workshop was the fact that the exploration of voice and movement enabled the discussion not only about participants' own relationship to their voice but raised the awareness in the relationship between our voices and the world.

### 2.2.1. Guidelines and concept of this practice

- **Breathing** is the bridge between movement and voice.
- It became clear that my interest was in emphasizing the connection between the voicing and the moving, not in their overlapping. Different to what happens, for example, in musical theatre where the performer has to master the skills of singing and dancing at the same time, a *sonomovement* is the search for a unity of expression formed by sound and movement. The connection for these can be found as a starting point in organic gestures such as yawns, sighs and sneezes and they can be developed through movement improvisation. By allowing one impulse, need or intention to manifest through the voicing and moving channels, one rehearses the alliance between them.
- In this work **there is not a hierarchy of sounds**. From the quietest voice, to the loudest, yawns, moans, tongue-clicking, laughter, whispers and all indescribable sounds are equally important possibilities of expression.
- At this phase in the practice, **words are not used**; we practice with the materiality of the voice as the raw substance for exploration. Also, there is **no aim towards musicality**, even though it can be the case that in the exploration some sort of melodies and rhythms can appear, and group composition may occur.
- It is important to associate the *sounding limb* (I will elaborate on this later) and *sonomovements* with a scaffolded process that challenges the participants to take risks, but also respects their timing to **cross the sound threshold** when ready to navigate in an open structure.
- Facilitator and participants can **be comfortable with their discomfort**. When the tasks seem too unfamiliar or even embarrassing for some of the participants, there is a need to give time for the person to be with the task and

deal with it in their own way and accept any kind of outcome as part of the exploration.

This workshop is informed by techniques of voice such as Kristine Linklater's method, Complete Vocal Technique presented to me by Katri Kauppala's and Heini Nukari's work "Body is Voice". These working methods have helped me to discover my voice and have provided inspiration for some of the exercises that I have included in the repertoire of my practice. Here the technical work of the voice is a pedagogical tool that becomes an access point for exploration in safe and common ground, not too far at this point from some sort of comfort zone. Furthermore, it is a safe vehicle that takes people to the threshold of sound exploration without hurting their body.

"The Voice as a Limb" is the perfect excuse to close myself into a dance studio for a couple of hours to "let the demons out". When I allow myself to overflow in emotions, to feel silly and clumsy, to scream and cry, I am making a political statement. This is my militancy. When I am alone in the studio, the result of this practice is an expanded and vibrant body devouring space, vibrating a sense of wholeness from the inside. Sometimes they are repetitive *sonomovements* that induce me into some sort of trance. Sometimes it is me tapping my lower back sobbing, feeling I am being cried by my sounding body. I have never found this by myself in the studio before.

### 2.2.2. The Sounding Limb

I encourage you to imagine your voice as a *sounding limb* growing from the depths of your guts, like a sci-fi device that you can grow whenever you want, just by desiring to. All our limbs are connected to the centre of the body, the torso, by a big and movable joint that allows circumduction. This first joint of the sounding limb is the diaphragm and the complex muscles that are involved in breathing, especially the ones located in the lower part of the torso. Somewhere there you will find "the first cells" of your *sounding limb*, which are very movable and flexible.

Later, in the limbs we find a second joint that allows slightly narrower range of movement but indispensable for the articulation of them. The knee or the elbow of the voice is the complex of the larynx, vocal cords and constraining muscles. By itself this joint cannot do much. If we listen to the sound produced only by the vocal cords, there is not much range of movement, yet it is an essential element of our *sounding limb*. Then we find the most articulated device at the end of the limbs that allows all the refined movements that we need them to do. Here one can decide to smash a can, pet the head of a little bird or write your name in grains of rice. This articulated device in the *sounding limb* is the mouth, soft palate and nasal cavity, where we produce vowels, we colour sounds and give quality to our voice. Do not forget that for every movement there has to be a coordination of all the parts of your limb.

This new limb can reach much further away than you do with your other limbs. You can “touch” someone that is meters away from you. Your *sounding limb* stretches your presence.

the voice might be imaged as a cord, or may extend outward, unfurled, or cast like a line, but which retains an extremely vital link back to the one who speaks, to the face and further, to the depths. (LaBelle, 2014, p. 6)

Although, this imaginary appendage is based on the understanding of an able body. It is a didactical tool that can be used for most people with the possibility of sound and imagination.

## 3. POPPING UP

### 3.1. The how of an encounter

we who don't feel radical pedagogy can really be introduced but nonetheless feel the necessity to attempt the crafting of a way; the how of an encounter. (Benveniste, et al., 2015, p. i)

I will start the description of my approach to pedagogy during this work, by going back in time to when these studies began. I have been very interested in critical pedagogy from Paulo Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" and became even more deeply interested with the book "Pedagogy and Politics of Hope" from Henry Giroux, who defines critical pedagogy as:

A form of educated hope committed to producing young people capable and willing to expand and deepen their sense of themselves, to think of the "world" critically, (...) to serve the public good, take risks and struggle for a substantive democracy. (Giroux, 2019, p. 70)

When I facilitated the workshop "The Voice as a Limb" for first time, my experience in this practice was precarious. Even though I felt insecure and out of my comfort zone, it was a strength, because it obliged me to be in the mode of an "ignorant" teacher. This is in reference to Jacques Ranciere's (2014, p. 1) argument that "one ignoramus could teach another what he himself did not know (...) opposing intellectual emancipation to popular instruction.". This position helped me to meet different modes of education. For this new project with the Vocational College Live students, I felt more grounded in the practice, but a new challenge appeared; the fact that I will share this work with a neurodivergent group of students. For this reason, the decision to take a radical pedagogy approach came from a deep need to be truthful and transparent to the students

and myself. It was very important to reclaim the ownership of the term, in order not to get lost in terminology or theory and to have a concrete base to come back to if the process would sent my practice into an ambiguous place. In order to gain that ownership, I had to define what the radicality of my pedagogy was going to be.

The inspiration for this approach came from my previous work experience as well as several foundational texts. Inspired by the subversive approach to teaching found in the text written by Rose-Antoniette (2015), I found myself entitled to invent my own guidelines for my own radical pedagogy. Acknowledging that these thoughts are also informed by the concept of micropolitics found in Felix Guattari & Suely Rolnik's (2008) literature.

There are two main guidelines to my approach to radical pedagogy:

- The temporality of honey
- The tone of the encounter

### 3.1.1. The temporality of honey

The texture of my radical pedagogy has a thick density. It is a fluid that does not run fast, it's like letting honey move. Honey has many properties: it is rich in nutrients, it is soothing and even though it looks like gold, it is possible to see through it. It requires patience to observe it moving. It requires you to pace your gaze calmly on it and enjoy the brightness, while you may have to adapt the position of the surface due to the unexpected paths that it might take. When honey is gliding through a surface, it may encounter some sort of obstacle. The only thing that one can do is to tilt the surface a little more and wait until it slowly overcomes the hindrance, or tilt the surface in a different direction to change its path. The decision-making is a negotiation between the attentive gaze and the route that the honey wants to take. The only rule in this is not to use a spoon or knife to interrupt its flow and flatten the honey down right where YOU want it to be.

Golden rule for this guideline: DO NOT RUSH THINGS THAT NEED TIME

This guideline comes in response to the temporalization of the first workshop. The connection between movement and voice is breath and breathing needs time. If one

wants the breath to be relaxed and expansive through the whole body, one cannot rush the time that it takes to release muscular tensions and raise awareness. Many times, I had to fight myself with the idea of taking “too much time” for breathing exercises. Under what parameters of time was I considering this to be too long? “The capitalistic order has an impact on modes of temporalization. It (...) imposes a time of equivalences, beginning with wage labour, through which it gives value to different activities of production” (Guattari & Rolnik, 2008, p. 59). Looking through the lens of capitalistic modes of temporalization, spending 30 minutes breathing on the floor might be seen as a waste of time, unless we invent a value for it. The perception of time varies when the aim is to achieve a bodily state instead of the accumulation of activities.

“A pedagogy engaged with a pragmatics of the useless invents value in the learning. It does not decide in advance what is useful.” (Manning, 2015, para. 17) There is an inverted peak in this work. Starting with deepening breathing might cause relaxation, sleepiness, yawns and heaviness, even boredom. This is not what one expects in a dance workshop, yet this bodily state is crucial for the proposed exploration. When pacing my gaze calmly and observing the movements coming out of the breathing awareness, I am the first person who must drift away from the capitalistic mode of temporalization, to give up the need to rush or keep up with a timetable. This is where the idea of honey-time started to emerge. The “invented value” that Manning is talking about here is the calmness that allows a belly to relax, that opens up a deeper breath, oxygenates bodies and softens the muscles. This state is precious fertile soil for the movement and sounding. In my perception, what happens in this slowing down of the tempo is that something gets left behind. This apparently “useless” long time reserved for breathing creates something impossible to measure. But, if one is attentive, it’s clearly recognizable in the faces of the participants because from this calmness different waves of energy can emerge. The invented value is in the fact that the bridge between voice and movement is built by air and patience.

The invitation to produce sound that is not musical and is not language might be a big challenge. Breathing is the first tool to explore for those that might be uncomfortable with the request of sounding. In order to experience a relationship with voice that does not include frustration or judgement, each person’s own time must be respected. Rushing the process might reinforce resistance towards the use of voice. Accepting this invitation, metaphorically speaking, is like crossing a threshold. Passing the threshold means the person decides that the air exhaled will vibrate the vocal cords even in the quietest sound while moving. Remember the golden rule? This is something that needs time. The decision to cross the threshold of sound comes when the person is ready and

willing to. One can argue that there might be social pressure coming from the group but this is ultimately beyond the control of the facilitator. Nevertheless, if the group shares this approach to temporalization the pressure might be lowered. I will elaborate on the “*cross the sound threshold*” in this project in the next chapter where I describe the process.

Agreements were made through group talks, daily check-ins and discussions on the way to relate among group members and to each other’s voices. The creation of such a safe space required patience. It was tremendously important to invest time in listening to what each member of the group had to say about their relationship with their own voice and their need to feel safe, particularly because the group consisted of people attending a special education college. They were looking into their own experiences and beliefs and, by sharing them they made crucial societal problems of the visible and audible. Their insights reveals the tension between reality and the forces of the present. This is where, according to Suely Rolnik (2020), the micropolitical resistance happens.

We built a structure through the development process, based on making deadlines for ourselves as facilitators. Instead of filling these deadlines with goals, we approached them as doors to enter another phase of the project with whatever amount of material that we have gathered so far. An important factor in following this guideline was the agreement with the Vocational College Live. Jasmiina Sipilä, Vocational Special Needs Teacher, offered us the chance to work with the group of students from Vocational Qualification in Dance and to apply our approach to pedagogy with complete freedom and agency. There was no set length of time required for the final dance performance that we were creating. This gave me liberty to explore the time guideline in more depth.

The tension between my habits and the honey-time approach was present most of the time. It required me to take a step back, breathe and trust again and again the golden rule. Even on an unconscious level, I found myself several times going back to a mode of work that looks forward for results, craving for material, aiming towards the performance. I constantly reminded myself to “step back, breathe and trust!”. I was experiencing what Rolnik describes as two forces opposing each other, the life demanding its space in a form of a new possibility and the conservation of the reactionary old fashion (Rolnik, 2017). I was struggling to embody the values of honey-time even though I recognized how much more down to earth it made me feel. I had to educate myself in this approach to time with the conviction that it resists the capitalistic mode of temporalization.

### 3.1.2. The tone of the encounter

It has called my attention that several times, in my diary, I write to myself: “I have to trust myself”, “I have to trust my work” and “I have to trust the exercises that I proposed”. It seemed like I would have to convince myself that trusting myself is possible. (Balarezo, 2019)

This is a fragment from the paper that I wrote about the first workshop of “The Voice as a Limb: Sounding Dance Laboratory”. I am wondering how many times this issue with trust must have appeared in my journal for me to put it like this. It’s precisely through the competitive and directive education that I have received that I have internalized the idea that “I am not good enough”. For this reason, the tone of the encounter that I want to grant through my teaching is that which emerges from an encounter of people who know they are enough and that the other sees them as good enough.

We cannot but deplore the way that typical forms of education perpetuate the stratification of life, the way they grow in our minds the belief that our goal (if we learn well, if we conform to the institution’s definition of intelligence) is to define who we are and what we’re doing in accordance with a limited series of roles... (Rose-Antoinette, 2015, para. 6)

Following the argument of Rose-Antoinette, my radical pedagogy is neither an attempt to increase the value of a person nor to improve something that is broken. On the contrary, the radicality of this pedagogy resides in the affirmation that an education must potentiate each individual’s strengths, allow each individual to develop their own path and that there is nothing to improve or add to people. Through the exploration of this practice there may be insights about oneself and one’s relationship to voice, power or society that expand this kind of awareness and allow individual and collective

growth. The tone of the encounter applies to the interaction with the students, but also to my colleague as well as to myself.

### 3.2. Micropolitical resistance or the invisible trench

I want to locate this work as part of an ecology of capitalism critique practices, which is not intending to perpetuate the values of a virtuosic dance, where the development of extraordinary physical skills for an extraordinary abled type is at the centre. The dance practice that I am proposing is an extraordinary embodied experience which creates space for an interactive observation of oneself and the world and through this body-mind reflection generates more possibilities to interact with the outer and the inner worlds.

From the first “The Voice as a Limb” workshop, a sense of empowerment was often mentioned by the participants (Balarezo, 2019). I understand this as a result of each individual’s “intensive reflection of oneself in relation to society, that is, *conscientization*” (Carr, 2003, p. 8) which is a key point in the empowerment process, due to the awareness of the “political dimension of their personal problems” (p. 15). I am taking this statement that Carr made based on Paulo Freire’s thought, to explain one side of the phenomena, but I still felt there was something else going on. Here is where the concept of micropolitics entered my scope to help me comprehend in a rounder way how I see this practice.

I was greatly inspired by Guattari & Rolnik’s work *MOLECULAR REVOLUTION IN BRAZIL* (2008), which I first encountered in Spanish (Guattari & Rolnik, 2006). As a bodily sensation rather than an articulated thought, this concept helped me to see the worthiness of this practice; not only as an artistic exercise but as an event that through embodiment opens up a discussion about society and power.

(...) in fact, politics and micropolitics are not everywhere, and that it is precisely a question of placing micropolitics everywhere—in our stereotyped relations of personal life, conjugal life, romantic life, and professional life, in

which everything is guided by codes. (...) Nowadays, any important problem, even on an international level, is basically linked to mutations of subjectivity on the various micropolitical levels. (Guattari & Rolnik, 2008, p. 190)

According to Suely Rolnik (2017), humans are the matrix of the micropolitical sphere and the matrix of the micropolitical resistance is the unconscious. The demands of society have been internalized on an unconscious level where they shape a person's desires according to the demands of the system. According to Guattari (2008, p. 58): "the capitalistic order produces modes of human relations even in their unconscious representations". Before a human is born, society has already expectations for that life, including codes to be taught in order to make that human-animal a civilized person at the service of this society.

What is relevant for this practice is that the ways that we have learned to use our voice and movement are shaped by these codes and unconscious representations. And it is in this expressive and creative exploration that some of these codes are challenged. The encounter between voice and movement informed by a radical pedagogical approach helps to direct the attention to how the system "manufactures people's relations with the world and with themselves" (Guattari, 2008, p. 58). This can be noticed in the way we are taught to control the sounds that have a natural connection to the body, such as moans of pleasure or pain, sonorous yawns, sighs and laughs. These and more sounds are almost all supposed to be minimized as a sign of education in social manners. In this workshop when these expressions are requested, one can notice how difficult it can be for some people to let go these social norms and to overcome the shame that organic sounds are associated with.

I am claiming that this practice can be framed in terms of what Guattari calls *singularization processes*, which means systems that are detached from the internalization of the capitalistic values. Art can be a singularization process, when it is "something that can lead to affirm values in a specific register, irrespective of the scales of value that surround us from all sides and keep watch on us" (Guattari 2008, p. 63) . This is also the case when it generates other possible worlds and logics, creating,

according to Rolnik (2017, p. 5) “embryos of other worlds” by “inhabiting our body”. In this case it would mean forming possibilities for the pluralization of sounds in movement and the democratization of the use of voice, as well as for critically examining how the relationship with these forms of expression have been built. Rolnik, during an interview, stated that the “unconscious is a factory of worlds” (2020). In this case, it is not only by noticing the constraints in one’s movement and voice but also by allowing oneself to dive into the strangeness, where the body can inform the unconscious of more possible worlds to inhabit. Such singularization processes are creative endeavours aiming to subvert the desperate need of doing fast production under the logic of consumption. They have a common quality and can also be recognized in “a warmth of relations, in a certain way of desiring, in a positive affirmation of creativity, in a willingness to love, in a willingness simply to live or survive, in the multiplicity of these willingnesses” (Guattari & Rolnik, 2008, pp. 63-64).

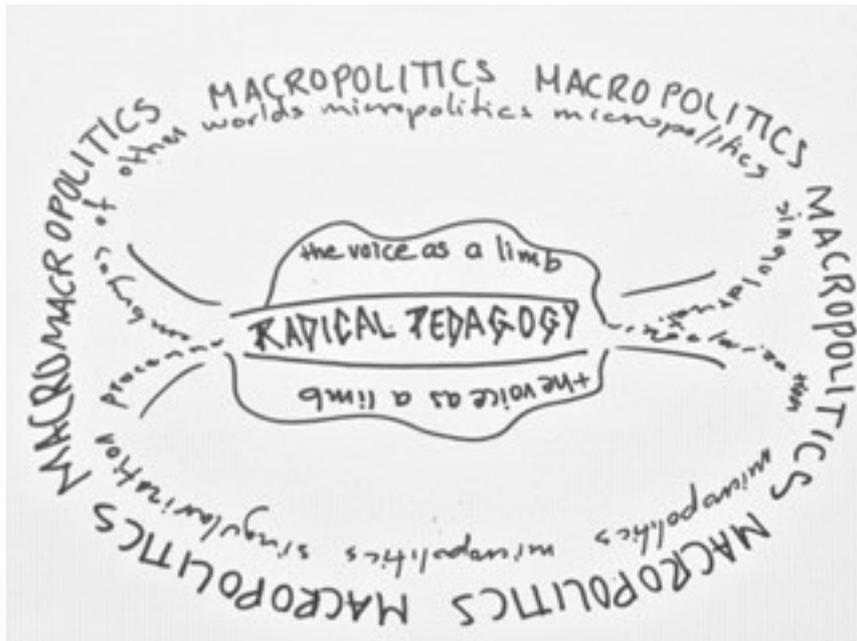
I want to elaborate on how empowerment is understood by Suely Rolnik (2017) in relation to macro and micropolitical insurrection: to explain the inextricable relations between the macropolitical and micropolitical, she writes that the intent of the macropolitical insurrection is to empower the subject which means “to leave the state of invisibility and inaudibility in order to occupy affirmatively a place of speech and possess the right to a dignified existence” (para. 24). While the same intention in the micropolitical insurrection is “potentializing life force” (para. 34). Potentializing life force means regaining the power of creation and reclaiming the language of images, gestures and sexuality, as an organism defending itself from a virus that has entered it to damage the anatomy, or “leaving the shell of a body structured in the dynamics of abuse (...) so another body, still embryonic, can germinate and take its place” (para. 33). Both spheres are intertwined, influencing each other and operating in parallel:

When their insurrection embraces potentialization and refuses to restrict itself to the claim of empowerment, it is more likely that the drive’s movement will find its utterance and from it an effective transmutation of individual and collective reality will result. (Rolnik, 2017, para. 34)

In this particular work, people might find a sense of empowerment in the voice or/and movement through their concrete, complex and creative exploration. But this is a by-product of the intent to feel, recognize, express and share all the subtler nuances that are located on another level of understanding, which can only be accessed through imagination and the playfulness. In my understanding, this is the territory of micropolitics. Bringing awareness to the breath and connecting it to the movement/sound expression, while paying attention to both the rational and the emotional world, means potentializing the life force. And it is from here that I want this practice to operate.

According to Guattari & Rolnik (2008, p. 63) “a *molecular revolution* consists in producing conditions not only for collective life but also for the embodiment of life for oneself, both materially and subjectively”. All the living and non-living beings who we share the planet with should be included in addition to oneself. What Guattari has called *molecular revolution* is an ethical-political attitude that could function as a counterweight, or, if this is impossible, at least as a force of resistance towards the system of slavery, culpabilization, punishment, failure and alienation. It is in accordance with this ethical-political attitude that I locate the values that inform my work. It is my intention to develop this practice as an exercise in resistance that supports the current molecular revolution taking place in the world.

The concept of micropolitics is a tool to articulate, organize and locate the impact of the practice described in this study, which is directly connectable with the guidelines of the radical pedagogy that I have proposed. Radical pedagogy is the nexus in which micropolitics meets the practice of dance. The proposed guidelines on radical pedagogy also have an impact in the macropolitical sphere. The image below illustrates how I have tried to understand the relationship between these theoretical frameworks within the context of this practice. In this image you can see my practice as an amorphous mass that is dynamic and growing while radical pedagogy is crossing this growing mass transversally and communicating in a double way with the micropolitical level, which is in constant friction with the macropolitical sphere.



Hand drawing by Mercedes Balarezo

### 3.3. The practice of research

Take seriously that generating new forms of knowledge implies generating new forms of experience for which there are no pre-given methodologies, for which there is no pre-determined value. What research-creation can do is propose concrete assemblages for rethinking the very question of what is at stake in pedagogy, in practice, and in collective experimentation. (Manning, 2016, p. 134)

#### 3.3.1. Methods

In this section I will present the approach and methods used in this study. My goal is to understand practice in depth by making sure that the theoretical framework that underpins this study is in accordance with my values. Through this I hope to discover what voice work can offer dance. I recognize that there might be a risk that the students and/or the voice will be seen as the “object of study”, which is something that I want to

consciously avoid. The literature related to methodology has been selected based on these interests.

I started this project with an interest in action research. According to McNiff and Whitehead (2010, p. 7) “Action research is about finding ways to improve your practice.” There are three characteristics described by the authors from this method that resonated with me, the first of which is that the authors stated that practitioners become researchers who acknowledge the situation where the research takes place. It is important to consider the context where this research takes place: a vocational college for people who need special education. Adjusting the practice to the needs of the students is central. The second important characteristic that appealed to me is that one of the main characteristics of action research is focusing principally on improving learning instead of behaviours. In the “Tone of the Encounter” I describe how the encounter will start by the premise that there is nothing to fix or to be improved in the students, nor in my colleague, nor in myself. The intention of the work and further research is to enable shared learning and “purposeful action with educational intent” (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010, p. 19) in relation with others. Thirdly, action research is intentionally political. Finding an existing situation and deciding how to operate upon it is a political act. I became aware of the political implications of this work on different levels: for example, the use of power as a teacher, deciding which discourses I want to challenge through the pedagogical approach that I propose and the critical observation of how one relates to his or her vocal possibilities within movement.

Later, I became aware of Nelson (2013) work “Practice as Research in the Arts”. Even though action research and practice as research are very similar to one another, the more I read this book, the more I became convinced that latter approach was suited better for what I wanted to find with this written component. I started to shape the study into this direction. I have become interested not only in improving the practice, which is at the centre of action research, but in pointing out and understanding the knowledge emerging from the practice itself. For this reason, I began exploring this work through Nelson’s (2013) multi-mode model for practice as research, which seemed to be the tool through which I could connect various realms of knowledge that started appearing in this practice. The author explains that this method understands practice as a knowledge

generator and holds that theory is imbricated with practice. The challenge of overcoming the separation between theory and practice and finding this unity (Nelson, 2013) is what made me decide to use this method.

### 3.3.2. The research inquiry

In an early stage of the process I posed the research question: what has the practice of “The Voice as a Limb: Sounding Dance Laboratory” during the work with Vocational College Live’s dance students taught me about micropolitics and radical pedagogy? This was the closest I came to articulating the practice and the theory into a single research problem, yet it did not feel completely satisfactory. I felt that the relationship between practice and theory is much more complex, which linear causality is unable to capture adequately. Multi-modal inquiry refers to a double-arrowed relationship between: a) previous knowledge and readings on the matter as theoretical framework, b) practical and corporal knowledge, and c) critical reflection after each intervention or event (Nelson, 2013). In this model these different modes are unified by the research inquiry. In order to establish this inquiry, I went back to the questions that began emerging. Some of the questions were born before the practical work, others in the studio during the sessions, some through reading theory and some appeared in the process of writing this work.

The research inquiry of this work is the following:

- What does it mean to put the voice in the centre of the dance practice?
- How do my guidelines on radical pedagogy affect the process of the workshop?
- What is the relationship between radical pedagogy and micropolitics in this project?
- What are the pedagogical tools needed to pass the threshold towards the voice-movement exploration?

### 3.3.3. Different knowledge modes overlapping

Nelson's (2013) multi-modal epistemological model of practice as research presented an overlapping mode of knowledge that converges in the "know-how", "know-what" and "know-that" of practice. It is important to mention that these modes of knowledge are intertwined and operating simultaneously throughout the writing of this work. In different chapters, some of the modes of knowledge are more identifiable than others but they do not operate in isolation.

First I will examine the "know-how" also known as procedural knowledge. It refers to the tacit knowledge that is embodied, which according to Nelson (2013, p. 43) is often "taken for granted by art practitioners" and is not easy to put into words. In this paper, the "know-how" appears in the second chapter with the description of the practice of "The Voice as a Limb" when I describe the role of breathing in this work, and the synergy between a human limb and the voice. This is also present in the fourth chapter when I describe the process of the workshop, the exercises used and the group response. Finally, it also informs the fifth chapter where I list the exercises we used for deepening the embodiment of the scores.

Secondly, the "know-what" is developed from the "know-how" through constant critical reflection during the process. In this method, "know-what" is when the researcher starts to understand "what works" and what are the foundations of these achievements. The "know-what" in this work is presented in the second and fourth chapters when I write about the sound threshold in coordination with the approach to honey-time. In the fourth chapter I also list the challenges that we faced and how we responded to them. Finally, in the fifth chapter I describe the scores that are the embodied condensation of the "know-what" of this process.

Thirdly, Nelson (2013) argues that the "know-that" mode is the academic knowledge that the practitioner gains by reading other authors. This kind of knowledge informs the practical work through the research inquiry and is activated by the complex ideas that are already in the praxis. In the second chapter, for instance, there references to studies on voice and theory that support the concept of this practice. This is linked to the the

third chapter, where I expose my ideas about micropolitics, radical pedagogy and practice as research, all of which are concepts that have emerged in the development of this work. In addition, there are different sources of academic knowledge throughout the written component that have been activated by the praxis in the studio and during the written reflection.

### 3.3.4. Documentation

For this section I will use Erin Manning's concept of "Research Creation" as a reference.

A technique has to be invented for each process, and as the process changes, so does the technique. Technique builds repetition and difference into the act, opening a process to its potential to differentiate itself as this or that. (Manning, 2016, p. 136)

The main documentation used for this work are my journal notes taken during or after each session. The practice of taking notes immediately after the experience is a tool for self-reflection and a way to process cognitive and emotional information. This is a "technique" inside the practice that serves as documentation. In the same fashion, from the beginning of the process, the students were informed that this project was part of a thesis work and that some parts of their writings might be used for our final writing, they were asked for their informed consent to use parts of those. The students were requested to write short reflections after almost every session. The nature of the writing was open, they did not have any instruction for it. After the performance they transcribed what they wanted to share from their notebooks and delivered anonymously through the head teacher to us.

There is only one video of the performances, few pictures and even less videos were taken during the workshop because keeping the atmosphere in the sessions intimate was important part of the work. There are recordings of the voices of the participants during some of the exercises, which depict a vary range of vocal expressivity. I must admit that is still hard for me to negotiate between the need of documentation and the resistance to

the intruder eye of the camera. Though I would like to have more visual material as anecdotal reference or illustration, the emphasis was put in the praxis, in the event and the interaction of the participants with the exercises that we proposed, not in the visual component as evidence.

A speculatively pragmatic approach takes the event, not the subject, as its point of departure. Its pragmatism is that it remains interested and engaged with all that the event can do, which includes how it positions itself in the field of relation. (Manning, 2016, p. 135)

My decision of keeping the documentation as simple as possible was in one hand the rejection of putting the object of a study outside of the practice itself and the trust that this research can be sustained by the critical reflections enabled among the participants and in myself. The privilege to make a statement through the way I write about my work is not taken loosely. I want to remain true to my values regarding my work, make clear my positionality and how I appear in this research.

## 4. CHALLENGES

### 4.1. The encounter with Vocational College Live

The desire to work with the students from Vocational College Live started around the last period of our first year of these studies. My classmate Maia Nowack had led a few dance sessions there last year and her willingness to continue with them coincided with my interest in sharing my practice with students in vocational dance training. In our discussions with Maia, we decided that we wanted to co-direct a performance for the group as a result of the workshop. We contacted Jasmiina Sipilä who was head of the program and our proposal was positively welcomed. This is how our exciting idea ended up in the crystallization of our thesis work. It is important to clarify that Maia and I have done separate studies with the same process, with different research questions and scopes for our work. The title of Maia's thesis is "Weaving Presences, Unravelling Normal: Affirming Diverse Ways of Being in Dance Pedagogy".

Jasmiina Sipilä was supportive and gave us creative and pedagogical freedom to approach our studies. This was a privileged position because there was no imposition in terms of time or content, making it a perfect field to explore the guidelines for the research that both of us had.

The schedule for the work was as it follows: a workshop period from November 26th to December 18th, twice a week. Then the process towards a performance: from January 7th to February 12th, four sessions a week. Ending with a performance on February 13th at the Theatre Academy in the University of the Arts Helsinki

Vocational College Live defines itself on its web page as the largest institution offering special education in Helsinki area. The training provided is for people that need support due to health reasons, learning difficulties and social or psychological challenges. They provide different types of training such as rehabilitative, pre-vocational, vocational and specialist training. The students have individual and flexible study plans and work in small groups (Vocational College Live, 2020).

We had at our disposal an assistant teacher that helped the ones in the group who needed support for the writing tasks. There was psychological support for the students that we could reach at any moment if needed. We had a budget for teaching supplies as well as for the production. It is important to mention that the safety net that Vocational College Live provided was the corner stone of the success of the work. We could focus on the creative work in a safe environment were I felt safe and respected as a facilitator and artist.

## 4.2. Co-teaching, co-learning and co-directing

Co-teaching requires communication, consensus, compromises, agreements and a lot of planning together. Maia and I held two open workshops at the Theatre Academy before meeting the group at Live, as initial try-outs for our work together. In our discussions we agreed that the cornerstones of our teaching method were the awareness of the asymmetry in power inherent to the teacher-student and choreographer-dancer relationship. Our decision in this regard was to communicate and act with transparency and as much horizontality as possible. Though our practices and research focuses were different, our core values were aligned.

While co-teaching with Maia, I could be more relaxed due to the shared responsibility and the trust of knowing we were supporting each other. All the time there was help with words, ideas, ways to explain things. We were mindful about the time each of us talked and took for our exercises. There were some days when one of us was directing or teaching more than the other and that was compensated by opposite roles on the next day. Even if one would talk more than the other, the content was always planned by both of us. As the process unfolded, we were able to merge our practices more and the co-teaching started becoming more fluid. Although our interests were different, we found that both studies easily overlapped, complemented and nurtured each other.

When the creation of the performance started, we already had a smooth and settled way of working together. Co-directing was full of negotiations in terms of aesthetics and concepts. It was interesting to observe how easy it was for me to detach from my personal taste and compromise my ideas when remembering that the aim was to create

something together, not only with Maia and myself but with the whole group. Overall, having a discussion partner for the teaching and directing was an experience of growth and self-reflection. Maia is a wonderful person to work with and deep insights, clear thoughts, accurate and sincere words were always present in class and in our conversations.

### 4.3. The atmosphere in the studio

The group that we worked with was the students of Vocational Qualification in Dance in Vocational College Live. Although this is an institution for special education, in our conversations with Jasmiina the three of us agreed that we did not need to know about each student's diagnosis. We felt that instead it was going to be more helpful for us to know how long each participant has been in the program, which tools we can use in our teaching, and what kinds of individual and group needs and strengths exist. In order to be consistent with the pedagogical guidelines that I chose, I was intentionally avoiding entering the encounter with preconceptions or labels. Furthermore, the research in my study focus was not related to diagnostics. I acknowledged that since I had very little experience working with neurodiversity and intellectual disabilities this would represent a challenge and a major learning opportunity. I would have to consider making adjustments in my practice in the same way that I have done with all the groups that I have worked with.

According to Steve Gabry (2015, p. 232) neurodiversity is a movement that “encompasses people with a variety of diagnostic labels (such as autistic spectrum conditions, dyslexia, dyspraxias and AD(H)D), and arguably has roots in both disabled people's and survivor movements”. The author explains that even though this term was originated by people with autistic spectrum diagnoses sometime around the year 1990, over time more people with different psychiatric diagnoses have identified with this movement. Gabry (2015, p. 233) argues that “in some cases the broader field of “developmental disabilities” or “learning difficulties” were acknowledged as being part of neurodiversity (...)”. I will use the broad umbrella term “neurodiversity” to refer to the different learning impairments present in the group without putting them in the forefront of the study, but as a situation to be acknowledge.

I found that my pedagogical guidelines of radical pedagogy, which were the result of previous experience with this practice and my intuition, were connected to two of the cornerstones of the neurodiversity movement. One is to reject the pathologisation or the idea that there is a need to be cured (Graby, 2015). This resonated with the my ideas concerning the “tone of the encounter”, according to which I aimed at entering the encounter with the conviction that there is nothing to fix, neither in the participants nor in myself. Secondly, the concept of honey-time that comes from the intention of putting the students well-being in the centre of the work over a normative behaviour in the setting of a dance workshop or rehearsal, is aligned with prioritizing the individual’s definition of well-being over normative function (Graby, 2015).

A characteristic of this group dynamic is that in this institution, the timeframe for each person is arranged individually. Some of the students left earlier on certain days and others were absent because of medical appointments, or other reasons. Our teaching had to take this into account and make sure that we were providing a structure where everybody felt comfortable jumping in and out as needed. One challenge was to create a structure of teaching that allowed for a flux of people. It was also important to create common knowledge among the group that was welcoming for the ones that for any reason could not be present. This feature turned out to be the stretched possibility for honey-time.

My perception was that the atmosphere in the room was mostly open and vibrant. The students were willing to try the things we proposed, even if sometimes it felt awkward or uncomfortable. There was always respect and patience both ways. Behind the shy silence that one could perceive in the first weeks, there was attentiveness and a disposition to learn. The use of voice seemed to be in between their desire for movement and the demanding task. Even though we were putting very hard challenges in front of them in terms of focus and breaking old habits, they were constantly trying their best. Our relationship grew slowly as we introduced the explorations and the voice. Gradually they started to share more of their thoughts, questions and comments. The atmosphere in the room was always peaceful in a way that I find hard to describe. This calm did not come from a lack of problems or hard situations. This peace may

have come from the trust that the group had in themselves, in each other, in their head teacher and later in us. It was the attentive tranquility of someone learning to deal with themselves. Whenever this peace was broken or some tensions emerged there was always the assertive intervention of Jasmiina, through whose clear and gentle communication the balance was re-established.

#### 4.4. Process

In the first day with the group we were very aware of the use of time. We had to remind ourselves not to *rush things that need time*. Besides introducing ourselves, our interests and the working schedule, we briefly presented our approach to pedagogy as guidelines to follow during the whole process:

- *Make the exploration your own*
- *Reframe the task so it makes sense to you*
- *There is no right way to explore, there is no way that this should look or feel and the way you do it is good enough*

The first four weeks was a period of getting to know each other, building a relationship and setting the tone of the event. During this period Maia's and my work was still clearly divided, but we shared our time teaching as equally as possible. Our interests were different but included a clear possibility to merge. We had time to see in each other's work where and how one's research could enter the other's. As a unifying umbrella we selected topics of interest that we both shared and wanted to address from our perspectives: inside/outside, leading/following and focus.

We were teaching in English and there was always one of the members of the group translating into Finnish. The group would have English credits for this project and the ones who did the translations would have more credits. Translation made everything slower but was an important learning opportunity to try to give clear and short instructions and select what is absolutely needed to be conveyed for the task to be understood.

#### 4.4.1. First challenge: how to introduce the sound in the movement?

In my work, the emphasis for the first sessions was always on breathing because this forms the bridge between sound and movement, the link between the inner and the outer and the first cell of the *sounding limb*. In the first sessions that I taught, the focus was on subtle sounds of air. We worked on taking the air towards the lower part of the torso and expanding it gently with a relaxed belly in 360 degrees. Lip rolls and tongue rolls (also known as raspberries) produced laughter among the group. This was a good opportunity to talk about laughter, which, according to Labelle (2014, p. 115) “dramatically moves the body(...) The laugh *vibrates* us- we *shiver* with laughter-(...) The physicality of the laugh though also sends its corporeal force away from the individual body to enter dramatically into the social”. Laughter appeared quite frequently, sometimes as a way to cope with a task that challenged the social norms of the use of voice, often times as a result of unfamiliar sounds or movements of the lips or tongue, or the organic geography of the interaction. I told the students that laughter is always welcomed in this work, it mobilizes the entire phonatory system, relaxes muscular tone and never fails as an ice-breaker.

The response to the breathing exercises was focused yet relaxed movements in coordination with air flow. The introduction of sound was a request for making the exhalation audible with the resistance of air, exhalation is accompanied with one consonant sound such as “s”, “sh” and “f”. This task presented different levels of challenge for each participants.

#### 4.4.2. Second challenge: how to deal with silence?

I introduced the relation between sound and parts of the body through an exercise that connects rooted walking (two partners holding a participant’s heels and pressing them gently towards the floor in each step) with exploration of the sounds with a closed mouth. In my journal I recorded feeling that there was some resistance to the work and that I had to hold the space with patience for them to overcome the ambiguity and awkwardness of the task. It was too early in the process. The complexity of the task

refers to the coordination between initiating the movement, perceiving the input of the touch of the partners and imagining a translation from this haptic impulse to an abstract sound. I interpret that the reason for the resistance that I perceived was that it was a complex exercise that was introduced too early. This excerpt from my journal concerns the discussion afterwards:

*(...)Then "A" commented that it was interesting that I said: "what would your feet say if they would have a voice?", I added that indeed am very interested in what happens when we give voice to parts of the body. I felt in that moment there was a general nod of understanding. 28.11.2019*

This was the first time that I had asked them to sound a movement, to create such an imaginary connection. I had not yet explained to them how I understand what a *sonomovement* is (maybe I did not know yet) and therefore the task was unclear. But adding the last comment at the end seemed to clarify the purpose of it. After the experience with this exercise, I withdrew my thirst for sound and went back to breath and subtle sounds of air. The reason for that is I wanted to establish a clear yet relaxed relationship between the breath and movement before asking for more sound. I have to admit that in some moments, I was afraid they would not want to sound at all, but I decided to respect their silence for as long it would take.

While this was happening, there was another layer that was in my mind, which I was not able to resolve yet. What would be the relationship between the concept of micropolitics and this workshop? How would I approach this in practice? I had not figured out how exactly this concept was going to influence the work.

*For now, the thoughts about Micropolitics are in the closet. Right now, I don't know what to do with it or how to direct it. 03.12.2019*

In the next session's entry, I answered to myself:

*For the moment I don't need to introduce any idea about politics. The fact that we do what we do is already political. 04.12.2019*

#### 4.4.3. Third challenge: how to present my approach to voice in this practice?

I prepared the introduction of sound differently. I wanted the students to have a reason to sound for themselves. I shared with them my personal experience as a silent person, my need of voicing out, my encounter with voice and movement. I opened my process as transparently as I could. I talked about my idea of the voice being a *sounding limb* and my interest in what this practice affords. This entry in my journal captures the moment:

*...they have been very patient with me and these weird things that I have made them do. But today their patience started to pay off. Knowing where this interest of mine came from was an important trigger for empathy. As "E" said during the break: "when you understand the reasons, you can fill the gaps or put together the points more easily than if you don't know and try to relate to old experiences". 10.12.2019*

This was a before-and-after this day. Talking about my own experiences with voice resonated with them. That was the first day that I heard some of their voices in the exploration.

#### 4.4.4. Fourth challenge: how to start the reflection about one's relationship with one's voice and how to enable the discussion with the group?

In the last part of the sessions or even between exercises, Maia and I encouraged conversation among the group. Normally there were few interventions and whenever we asked a question or feedback there was silence and, in the end, almost always the same few people shared something. I wanted to find a kind and easy way for them to voice out their experiences and comments and through this enable a self reflection about their relationship with their expression of voice/movement. This is a central point for our praxis since by working in the reflective articulation of the lived experience and the

creative exploration, a conscientization process emerged, which is how micropolitics came to round things up. When the creative work activates the dialogue between the immediate perception of the body-mind and the conversation we are having in the work, both the macro and micro political spheres are being addressed. It remains important to give space for conscious reflection to happen by inviting the sensations experienced (all of them equally, including shame, uncomfortableness, strangeness) to the rational level. Even more important is to give them a space to be shared with others and to receive the others as well.

In a different session, I asked the students to reflect on their relationship with their voice, first by writing something in their own notebooks and then by discussing in pairs. The following day, I utilized the *voice sculpture-exercise* from Kristin Linklater that was presented to me during Ben Joiner's workshop in Helsinki (29.11-1.12.2019). This is a pair exercise where one partner is witnessing the other's movements and sounds as they are creating an imaginary sculpture of their own voice; first as it is now, and then how they would like it to be. After exploring their own thoughts in private, sharing in pairs and, finally, experiencing this through movement and imagination, the conversation started to flow little by little. Everybody shared a few or more precious sentences about their relationship with voice.

With all this input we introduced the exercise of connecting pairs. In this exercise one person moves and the other sounds the movement with the hand either directly on the back of the partner or very close to the partner. When the connection is established, they stretch it by separating themselves while holding on to the relationship between movement-sound. In relation to these exercises there were a couple of comments that caught my attention:

*“E” said that it was good for her to have the image of the sculpture of her voice as something external from herself. Later “Z” commented that for her was easier to make sound from the movement of someone else, that she wouldn't be able to engage with the sound of her movements the same way. That lead me to think that there is some sort of distance element needed as a tool for reflecting upon one's voice. 19.12.2019*

There is an interesting element of *distance* in both interventions that needs attention because it can be consciously used as a pedagogical tool, especially when keeping in mind that the voice is something intimately linked to our identity. This kind of *distance* gives space for new perspectives. The interaction with other people allows a person to depersonalize the responsibility for one's voice, thus lowering the threshold to enter the exploration.

## 4.5. The creation of the performance

The schedule for this period was as follows:

- Weeks 1 and 2: creative process/ finding common interest among the group/ what is this about?
- Weeks 3 and 4: narrowing down and working in-depth with what we have found
- Week 5: having a structure and rehearsing it
- Week 6: rehearsing at the Theater Academy and performing

### 4.5.1. Creative process/ finding common interest among the group/ what is this about?

When we came back from the winter break in January 2020, we started the creative and exploratory part of the performance. The first thing we did when coming back from the break was to set the boundaries and needs of the group. Everybody wrote down the things that they needed to feel safe to create. It was a very important thing to set the boundaries and common agreements. It took longer than we expected, which was another instance of honey-time. No matter how long it took for us to complete, it was an investment. Some of the students did not share anything the first day and we continued the next day and encouraged all of them to add at least one sentence. When it was as complete as it could be, we read it out loud with the Finnish translation and we agreed that these are the rules and boundaries that needed to be taken into account.

To discover individual and common interests within the group, we wanted to create some sort of brainstorm so the students could express what was on their minds. In order

to do this, we asked the students to create questions for the group to answer. Then we read each question aloud and everybody would answer each question in a timeframe of 40 seconds each by writing down the first thing that came to their minds. Later, we asked them to choose the answers that they wanted to share and transcribe them in sticky notes and collect them onto a large paper. After most of them had contributed their answers, they had to find categories in which they could group the answers that they gave. They were asked to do this without our mediation. A situation occurred while this was happening. One of the participants did not want their answer read out loud, but some other participants argued that they had to read it aloud in order to locate the answer under a category. The first person was annoyed by this response and left the room. This interaction happened in Finnish and we could not understand what was happening. Jasmiina, who was there observing the class that day, explained the situation to us later. There would have been a chance to intercede on behalf of the student who did not want their answer to be read. However, we had already delegated this task to the group and we had to respect their decision on how to proceed. The language barrier limited our possibilities for interaction and at the same time forced us to take a step back and hand over agency to the group.

The categories that they created were: “voice”, “spirit animal”, “farts”, “what’s hard for you”, “wishes”, “I like” and “tools”.

Looking for ways to access their imagination, we proposed an exercise in pairs where one person finds a comfortable position and for ten minutes imagine that they are watching the performance, from both the performer’s and the audience’s perspective. The other person listens, takes notes and later shares with the group. Listening to their ideas was very inspiring and their images were full of colour, textures and all kinds of atmospheres. This was one of the exercises that influenced the performance the most.

These two exercises were free variations of activities inspired by the workshop “Non-hierarchical working methods” by Blaue Frau, which was facilitated by Joanna Wingren and Sonja Ahlfors at the Theatre Academy, which I attended during December 2019.

Until this moment there were two parallel paths; the continuation of the workshop with the exploration of the embodiment of voice and the creative tasks for generating material. During these two weeks it seemed that all of the students, one by one, in their own time, decided to cross the threshold of sound. This also included the students who were quieter at the beginning. I transcribed in my journal this intervention from one participant during a “check-in” round:

*Yesterday, during the check in, “L” said that she could feel the process, that there was something that has been built in order for her to sound as she did the day before. “D” added that she realized that there was a process that allowed her to feel good while sounding and that she felt good that making sounds felt good. 17.01.2020*

#### 4.5.2. Narrowing down and working in depth with what we have found

The next phase of the process involved a twist in the methodology. During the next two weeks Maia and I were supposed to collect all the material that the students had produced, revisit the explorations, revise all the exercises done and gather the sensorial images that they shared during the imagination exercise. The limited amount of time to weave a structure for the students to navigate safely, led us to the decision that this new phase was going to require us to take a more active participation in the creative process. Since we wanted all the creative choices to be taken by the group, this twist was a critical moment in the development of our approach to pedagogy. We prioritized the fact that a structure had to be presented promptly enough for the students to have sufficient time to integrate it in their bodies and feel secure in performing it.

We connected and organized all of the material that we had into different atmospheres informed by concrete actions, colours, textures, sounds, statements and questions. By doing this, we found that different worlds were emerging. What this “emerging of a world” meant was something akin to a phase in laboratory work: putting chemicals together, trying reactions and saving the compositions that created concrete actions where the bodies were clear in what they were doing and which allowed the atmosphere to appear. The clarity of the actions was important for the atmosphere of these worlds

since it produced a tangible dynamic and texture in the movement and sound, as well as organization in the space. We did not initially establish how many worlds were there going to be and stuck truthfully to the concept of honey-time as we created as many worlds as it was possible to explore.

The material we had to create these worlds was: *sonomovement* explorations, *leadingfollowing*, throwing loud sounds with the body, stopping and going as a group, inside/outside, the voice sculpture. *Leadingfollowing* is a term borrowed from Andre Lepecki (2013). Sometimes the order of the word is playfully changed to *followingleading*. According to this concept, the follower in a dance duo is not in a passive nor a submissive role. Lepecki analyzes Erin Manning's essays on tango, where she writes that following is a way to take initiative by engaging with the leader. I would add that leading in dance requires the leader to pay attention to the follower and to be clear with the intention of movement. In the interaction of leading and following when dancing together we can intentionally blur the boundaries of each role, ending up in *followingleading*. The way we addressed this in class was that many of the pair exercises in "The Voice as a Limb" had a moment when the roles were defined and the the prompt was to enter the *leadingfollowing*.

In this moment of the process we took the decision that we will not use music for this piece and that if any external source of sound is needed, it was going to be the recorded and edited voices of the students. When we used recorded music during rehearsals the dominance of the auditory input was very challenging to overcome afterwards when students were asked to sound.

Two students from the group were responsible for the costume design and would receive production credits. We gave them freedom to explore their own ideas, we did not have any specific image for the costume and their initiative was important to us. They proposed two groups of shirts: yellow and red, black leggings, white socks and accessories such as jewellery or flowers in the head. We decided that the accessories would be the "cherry on top of the cake" and that it would be chosen by each of them, giving a sense of individual identity. The most wonderful thing to witness was the

commitment with which they embraced their task and the satisfaction that it brought to see it on stage.

#### 4.5.3. Having a structure and rehearsing it

The next phase of the work was the deepening of the embodiment of each “world”. We realized that during this new phase it was not sufficient to warm-up the voice and body and that we needed to activate the relationality of their creative body-mind along with their fellow dancers. We had to generate a set of experiences to enable them to access a particular atmosphere for each world through embodied memory. The exercises that we had brought to the studio in the beginning of the process had a double function, acting as triggers for experimentation. At this moment they became access points to entering the modes of existence that each world required from them in order to be created:

*While I'm writing this, I'm hearing a choir of sighs, moans, breaths and if I raise my eyes, I see bodies flowing, being moved by their own air. 6.2.2020*

#### 4.5.4. Rehearsing at the Theater Academy and performing

The excitement of rehearsing in the venue with the lighting and the audience space brought a lot of focus and attention to the students. The Theatre Academy is a respected higher education institute for arts. Performing there was a step forward in their artistic education, allowing them a new kind of contact with the University of the Arts' environment.

At this point the threads that held the different worlds together were still very thin and we needed to repeat the score as many times as possible to allow all the group members to have a similar level of comfort and confidence while performing. Based on our notes and the feedback from Jasmiina, we wanted to sharpen our focus on the different qualities of movement/sound for each world, as well as on projection/direction of the voice and gaze throughout the piece and the transitions from one world to the next. We noticed that the notes that were addressed verbally were not incorporated, but all the

details that we worked through exercises were embodied in the execution of the piece. The exercises were designed based on the same explorations that the worlds came from, but they were more precise in developing specific things, for example sometimes a muscular tone, sometimes awareness of the group and so forth. This carved out an embodied attitude and understanding of the requested atmosphere for each world, which in the long run made it more accessible to tune into the piece, where the changes had to occur consecutively and constantly. Also, by practicing these exercises, the spectrum of diversity in the dynamic and texture of the movement and sound became richer. This was in contrast to the verbal explanations of our notes that were frequently forgotten, therefore not generating any difference in the rehearsal and the performance.

#### 4.5.5. The performance day

This was a very demanding day since they would have two performances in the same afternoon and for most of them this was the first time experiencing such a thing. We had one unfortunate incident but overall there was a sense of success and accomplishment. When the students got in the space, we had about 50 minutes time for warming up. We attuned the body-voice-relationship-creativity in the atmosphere of each world. Then the students had 40 minutes to prepare on their own.

A few minutes before the show we gathered on the stage but one of the performers was not ready. This student locked herself in the toilet. The assistant teacher, the head teacher from Live and the student's personal assistant were taking care of her because she was overwhelmed and unable to assertively ask for help in this moment. The rest of the group was in their positions ready to start and it was time for the audience to enter the space. We waited for five more minutes, after which we had to make the hard decision of starting the show without this participant. This situation was stressful for everybody because we did not know what to do and how to proceed with the tension of the audience ready to come in, the rest of the group ready to start and the time passing by. This was a new student in the program and the personnel from Live were still learning how to support her in different challenging situations. We learned that she needed more time to get ready and the time pressure affected her. This would be an

example of the honey-time reaching its limits in situations where the time frame was tight and corresponds to external factors rather than the students' needs.

The rest of the performers managed to stay focused and perform the piece in a very generous and mature way. After a couple of hours of resting and eating, there was a second performance. My perception of the piece was very different during the last performance because I finally stopped analysing and worrying about everything and enjoyed watching them with wonder and gratitude.

## 5. ALL YOU CAN DO IS BREATHE AND HOPE

*“The best of what we are lies in what we hope to be.”*

*Grayling*

The title of the piece was found among the sticky notes where the students had written answers to their own questions during a creative exercise to generate material for the performance. The full text was: *“No, you can’t trust in others. All you can do is breathe together and hope.”* I was fond of the last phrase because in a simple way these nine words described the reason that I started doing this practice: to build a better world to live in by looking for a hopeful resistance and a sense of togetherness. It resonated with Maia as well and we decided to shorten it to *“All you can do is breathe and hope”*. We received permission from the participant who wrote this note and the rest of the group responded positively to the proposal.



Photo of the actual sticky note taken with my mobile phone during the process

I will describe in this chapter the final version of the scores of each world in the order that they appeared in the performance. Then I will elaborate on the way this world took shape and the exercises that we used as strategies for embodying the atmosphere of each section. LaBelle’s (2014) work has been a particularly important influence throughout

this process and will be referenced in order to unravel what is contained in this moving vocal work.

## 5.1. First world

Written excerpts from some participants' descriptions of this world:

*“The first world was a world of hiding where we were under covers and made quiet movements.”*

*“The first time we did the hiding world it was so much fun.”*

The score of the world is as it follows:

- Find a place where you want to hide (you can use blankets or your own clothes to cover yourself), stay in this space and start to explore the quietest sounds that you can and small movements while in your hiding spot, just for yourself.
- Notice if there is a “character” or “persona” that appeared from the sound and movement exploration, you can play with one or allow yourself to find others.
- Start to direct your quiet sounds towards outside of your hiding place. You can start to look outside every now and then while remaining hiding.
- Move to other spaces at your own pace, while hiding.
- You do not want to be close to another person, if you see or hear someone coming close to you, find another hiding spot. Quickly checking the outside is ok but try not to let the others see your face.
- Now, initiate a dialogue with the persons moving around you for as long as you feel it is needed and then move to find another conversation. For the dialogue use the quiet sounds and small movements. You are all still hiding under your blanket, you do not want to be heard by the rest, pay attention to the sounds coming from your interlocutor. Do not rush your pacing.
- A sound mark will indicate that you can go slowly to the corner, keeping the conversation that you are having or encountering some other in the way.
- When you arrive at the corner of the room, position yourself next to another person, facing towards the centre of the room, over your knees and lower your

torso over your legs, you can keep the quiet conversation with your neighbour until everybody is in the group and then every sound stop.

- Feel your neighbour, all of you as a group will raise your head and torso, taking out the blanket from your head. Stay there sitting on your knees looking calmly forward.

I started by introducing the voice work little by little until the exploration of loud sounds but I wanted to be clear that there is no hierarchy in terms of the value of volume. Loud is not better nor worse than the other. Moreover, what is important is to experiment with a broad spectrum of volumes. Also, honouring quiet sounds was important due to the mostly quiet nature of the majority of the students in this group. In this regard LaBelle (2014) says:

(...) the whisper may in fact speak for those without voice. In this way, the whisper may carve out an empty space, a quiet zone within the order of language and power, to charge the social and political structures with uncertainty, and promise: with all that seems to be relegated to the periphery. To speak the unspeakable. (p. 157)

LaBelle (2014), elaborates on murmurs and whispers and how they evoke the idea of an intimate conversation, sharing a secret or planning a conspiracy. Such atmospheres fluctuated randomly, freely and almost unintentionally in this world. After doing the score for the first time, for instance, one of the students shared that she imagined she was in a dungeon on a secret mission. It was clear from the beginning that this was going to be the first scene of the piece.

For the embodiment of this world, going back to the exploration of voice and textures helped to give colour and variety to the quiet sounds. To pay attention to tactile stimuli helped to “listen with the skin” which was important to give life to the body beneath the blanket. Also, we used one exercise where two people had a “conversation” with a partner through *sonomovements*. In this way the dialogical non-verbal communication

was activated, which was useful for preparing the students to listen to their partners and project their movements and sounds towards an interlocutor.

## 5.2. Second world

Written excerpts from participants' descriptions of this world:

*“Popcorn: This world was also nice and I especially liked how certain movements were varied for me because of my asthma. This strengthened what was said in the beginning about everybody being taken into account as themselves.”*

*“The second world was Popcorn world where we crawled across the space and jumped up one by one like popcorns.”*

*“The popcorn world was the most challenging and awkward for me. I felt like I would have liked to do something more aesthetic and polished.”*

The score of the world is as follows:

- When all of you are seated looking to the front, lean forwards until your hands touch the ground and you end up on all fours.
- Together, start to move one the arm and then the other and crawl.
- Crawl slowly, with the spine elongated, very neutral and minimalistic movements.
- While crawling, whenever you want, make a sharp and quick *sonomovement* that stands out from the group, and then go back to your position and keep crawling.
- You must listen to the *sonomovements* created by others and compose yours in relation to what you are hearing. Remember that silence is part of the composition.
- Once the whole group passes the centre of the room, *sonomovements* should be more frequent and overlapping with each other but the crawling remains very slow.
- Once the group is close to the end of the room, one person runs in the opposite direction and jumps with a sound.

- The group starts to walk, each one in different direction. Pick a spot in the space, walk there with clear direction. When you arrive, jump and release a sound that goes sharply to one clear direction in the room from one part of your body and repeat it.
- When you see one person walking very slowly from the centre of the room to the corner you start to increase the speed of what you have been doing until you go as fast as you can.
- Red T-shirts: when the person that was walking slowly disappears through the curtains, you direct your last run and jump in that direction and go to hide.
- Yellow T-shirts: when the person that was walking slowly disappears through the curtains, start the next score.

The idea for this world was to group loud, sharp, piercing and quick *sonomovements* with clear direction in space from different parts of the body. When we talked about loud sounds, screams and shouts during the workshop, we discussed in what circumstances one can use these kind of sounds and their importance. I wanted to emphasise that even though a strong voice can be associated with authority and a cry is defined in the Oxford dictionary (2020) as a “shout or scream, typically to express fear, pain or grief”, a loud piercing sound might also be a way to express joy, surprise and fun. LaBelle (2014) located the crying voice as part of public life that demands attention. It expresses that something has happened and something needs to be expelled out from the body from which it comes. It is my intention to open the exploration of the various territories of loud sounds through this work. It is my contention that crying and screaming, when understood as a loud, sudden, piercing sound that carries emotion, irreverently shares a emotion to the public sphere demanding acknowledgement. According to LaBelle (2014), crying in front of a crowd is a social, political and religious act. In this part of the performance we took the loud and sharp sounds in a playful way, to broaden the definition of loud sounds as an expression of joy and energy.

This score was not easy to find. We tried a few different versions of it that did not satisfy us. Then we abandoned it for a few days until we came back with a different idea. This was a learning opportunity because we understood that our error was that we

did not have a concrete physical task that created atmosphere. We had images and a sense of what we wanted the atmosphere to be but no way of getting there. With this experience, our artistic choice was that all the worlds will come from concrete physical tasks. Finally we understood what was the physicality of the atmosphere that we were aiming to develop.

The first exercises that we used for embodying this world was throwing sounds from different parts of the body to a clear direction, which is also a way to work with the projection of voice. This means working with the ability of voice to be heard loud and clear throughout a room. The second exercise involved walking in the space, deciding on a spot and walking directly to it, making a gesture (in this case a jump with a sound) and repeating. This was an exercise that demanded a complex progression of instant decisions: where to go, from which body part and in which direction to project the *sonomovement*.

### 5.3. Third world

Excerpts of participants' written description of this world:

*“Difficult/challenging things: This world was my favourite since the beginning. Movement-wise I was able to show my skills the best. This world was also the one where I got so much braver with using sound and I overcame myself.”*

*“The third world started when the reds ran to the curtains and the yellows stayed on stage to make challenging movements and the reds made challenging sounds and then we changed.”*

The score of the world is as it follows:

- Yellow group: make challenging movements, do what is difficult for you when you dance, do what you do not like or do often. Keep in mind the compositional elements: space and speed.
- Red group: make challenging sounds, do what is difficult for you when you sound, sing or talk, that what you do not like or do often. Keep in mind the compositional elements: listening to the others and silence.



the students. This score was a way to acknowledge their efforts. At the beginning, challenging things and tension were not differentiated. By experimenting with the score, we noticed that these needed to be distinguished and decided to use the tensions as a moment to unify the entire group. We wanted them to keep their attention on both their own group and on the entire group.

The tools that helped the development of this world were the inclusion of two composition elements, namely time/dynamic and paths/formation, which came as a response to the tendency to lose awareness of the fellow dancers and general composition. The second tool was rehearsing tensed *sonomovements* together and everyone releasing at the same time. We understood tension to be all movements that require a big amount of energy, either stretching or contracting the body.

Interesting for this research was that when they were hiding behind the curtains, the students liberated their voices so much more and allowed themselves to play and aim for a broader range of sounds. Being hidden permitted what LaBelle (2014) refers to as “impersonation” which is a situation that allows some sort of a masquerade to take place. The mouth might cultivate new configurations because identity is not revealed. This possibility of detaching one’s face from one’s voice creates a space for the proliferation of fantastical characters and their vocal identities, allowing the participants to sing almost impossible pitches, experiment with ridiculous noises, laugh at themselves and overall having fun with their voices. This brings me back to the *distance* element that was mentioned in the chapter 4 about the risks that one can take with the voice when the body is not seen, opening the possibility to use this element as a pedagogical tool.

#### 5.4. Fourth world

Participants’ written excerpts about this world:

*“Air sculpture: I liked this one the least out of all four worlds. The structure of the world was the most boring.”*

*“The fourth world was a sculpture world where everyone made their own sculpture and stops and group stops.”*

*“I liked the fact that in the dream voice sculpture part I really thought what I’d like my voice to be like. That was a powerful experience and I noticed my voice growing towards the dream voice during the project.”*

The score of the world is as follows:

- When the circle you are in is small, decide together as a group to start the airy *sonomovements*. Move and sound from the arms in connecting with someone, like you are moving the air with the other dancers.
- When you hear the sound mark, move slowly towards your final position.
- When in your position, switch to building your voice sculpture. Imagine that you can build a sculpture in the air using all the materials and textures of your voice and movement. Imagine how you would like your voice to be and create that in the space.
- One person at a time will stop moving in the group, This person calmly observes all the sculptures and this person decides when they can start to move again. There must be at least one person observing at the time.
- If you found a *sonomovement* that interests you, use it repeatedly while you find new movements. Play with the repetition.
- The last recorded sound mark denotes time for the whole group to observe. Stop your movement, look around, let your breath sound as it is. Observe and listen to the breath of your fellows. You will decide together when to start to move again.
- When you feel the lights are dimming there will be no more stopping. Keep on moving, sounding and creating your sculpture until the lights are completely gone.

The first part of this score came from an exercise from “The Voice as a Limb” in which two people face each other and put their hands together, one makes *sonomovements* while the other person offers resistance. The goal of this exercise is to involve different amount of efforts in the *sonomovements* and notice how it modifies the texture of the voice. Also, through a clear tactile connection, the perception of the others’ palms activates density and plasticity to the *sonomovements* from the hands, arms and upper body. The second part of the score comes from the “*voice sculpture*”-exercise from Kristin Linklater that I have described in chapter 4. When adjusting this exercise to the

score, we realized that the role of the observer had an important impact on the purpose of the *sonomover*'s task. There was a big difference when we asked all of them to "create the sculpture" at the same time, because they did not have an interlocutor to connect with and communicate to. One might think that the interlocutor could be the audience, but I see it as a connection dynamic intrinsic to the organism of the group. For this reason, we decided that in order to have an observer among them, one of the dancers should stop and to watch and listen to their fellows. In the end, they all become observers when the whole group stops.

The voice sculpture is a task that requires imagination. I believe that imagination is hope's best friend. It was therefore natural that this score turned out to be the closure of the performance. The vanishing of the ongoing sculpture into the darkness implies a continuous creation of each participants' own sculpture. Voice and movement are not finished products but living entities in a never-ending mutation and transformation. As LaBelle (2014) writes:

Voice must be emphasized less as an articulation of certainty, and more as a performative attempt at identity. One that no doubt fully integrates all such hesitations, pauses, distortions, and disfluencies—this are, in effect, the very indication of agency, as being under the pull of language (p.141).

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Dear reader:

First, thank you so much for coming all the way with me through this text. I really appreciate your patience and generosity. Now, I would like to wrap up by presenting the conclusions of this work and invite you to imagine all the further possibilities of this practice and the realms where it can give light, bring joy, raise awareness and generate knowledge.

If you remember the research inquiry that I mentioned in the chapter 3, you already know the first question with which I want to spend a moment: what does it mean to put the voice in the centre of a dance practice? By putting the voice (the concept and the lived experience) in the centre of a dance workshop, two realms have been activated and started to work simultaneously: an aim towards conscientization and an artistic embodied endeavour.

The first of these, the “aim towards conscientization” is related to the political... dear reader, you deserve my total and naked honesty here - the word “political” scared me and I have been shy about bringing it into the practice. This is possibly due to the fact that I have wrongly learned that talking about politics is uncomfortable, inadequate in certain circumstances and that it can divide people. Or it may be due to my ill-preparedness in this field. On the other hand, I have pursued an artistic career because I believe art is a tool for social justice and pointing out problematic situations. Taking action through the language of creativity is how I operate in the world.

You may recall from that long third chapter what Suely Rolnik states about the human being as the matrix of the micropolitical sphere, and the unconscious being the matrix of micropolitical resistance. Do you? Well, you can see the political dimension of the practice when, through an exploration that challenges the social codes that we take for granted about how it is acceptable to use voice and movement, we first direct our attention towards our relationship with ourselves and then to the society, its norms, codes and expectations and our positionality in it. This process is served by the

embodied explorations, by lived experience, and there is a need to create a space to observe, to acknowledge and to ponder this relationship and the experience itself. That which lies deep in the micropolitical terrain demands time, attention and action.

I do not know if you agree with me on this, but I am claiming that the process of conscientization has to be intimate and personal, but also shared and public (the *public* here means a small working group in a dance studio). There is something powerful in the action of sharing personal insights among a group, putting our “voices” in the conversation. Of course, a safe space-approach preceded the dialogue, meaning that we established beforehand what we needed to feel safe, our claims for respect, asked for consent, respected each other boundaries and rejected any kind of discrimination. The time for enabling this conversation is central to the interest of conscientization and the methods through which this dialogue can be made generous, respectful and critical are in a developing phase.

Please keep chapter 3 in mind, because I want to recap the emergent temporality of honey-time and what it does to the “aim towards conscientization”. It introduces patience to the process towards dialogue. Honey-time means enjoying the creation of a safer space, in honey-time it is delightful to place one’s gaze calmly and follow the practitioners as they approach their thresholds to sound. Honey-time means opposing the capitalistic mode of temporalization, it rejects the ravenous accumulation of content or the exhaustion of the movement. It is proud of the subtle yet deep realizations that come through its rich, nutritious and translucent fluid.

In the “aim towards conscientization”, it is possible to find a crossroads where the micro and macropolitical insurrection converge. When writing about empowerment I pointed out how Paulo Freire’s work has been examined through a feminist lens (Carr, 2003) and remarked that conscientization is part of the empowerment process. According to Rolnik (2017), potentializing the life force is part of the micropolitical side of empowering the subject. I found that integrating the macro and the micropolitical spheres for this purpose is important because it opens up the possibility for both empowerment and the potentializing of life force. The life force is potentialized through a practice that celebrates the creation of a language made of gestures and

sounds, leaving behind the constrictive structure of aesthetical judgement. At the same time, it processes the embodied event by observing our positioning and bringing the experience into dialogue. In doing so, conscientization becomes the scaffolding for taking action and possible change in the macropolitical sphere.

Now let's move forward to the second realm that I have called the "embodied artistic endeavour". I would like to take you with me to the analysis of how the grammar that I have been using for this practice became a helpful input for dance improvisation, an important step in the development of the embodied perception of voice, and how it broadens possibilities for composition and relationality when using sound as a fifth limb in the context of an artistic practice. I want to ask you to recall the second chapter, where I described the *sounding limb* and the *sonomovements*. Both are imaginaries born from breathing. The *sounding limb* is the "tool" that is developed and the *sonomovements* are what it is possible to do with that tool.

*I felt like I found a deep chamber in me where I was able to go in when I breathed in my stomach. It was very balancing and calming. Compassion also lives in there. (Participant's written reflection)*

You already know about the centrality of the image of a *sounding limb* in a practice called "The Voice as a Limb". Between you and me, I have to admit that this has not been like this from the beginning of this practice and I am just starting to be able to use this image in a more assertive and creative way. It has been included in all the exercises that I have been creating and collecting, and also while reframing some of the scores, so that the process of growing the *sounding limb* becomes strongly present as imaginary and a bodily sensation. Moreover, I am discovering how the *sounding limb* is a metaphor for the in-betweenness where voice inhabits. Body and no body, from the flesh but not flesh, breath but not just breath, inner and outer, presence without presence. It allows us to direct our attention to the materiality of the voice, which sprouts from the depths of our body in the lower belly, grows across the torso, emerges through the gate of the mouth and extends to places where our other four limbs would not be able to reach to. As a plant that grows simultaneously towards the sky and towards the centre of earth, the *sounding limb* is bi-directional and creates a bridge

between the inner and the outer body. This can be perceived as a large amount of impulses that inform the movement. Also, it demands a complex coordination of relations between oneself and opens many possibilities to relate with others, which leads us to the next concept.

Through this writing I have understood the importance of explaining to the participants from the beginning that a *sonomovement* is one unity of expression, the same impulse manifested by breath, voice and movement. It requires a specific coordination that might be completely new for most of the participants. Directing their attention towards the investigation of how does this concept appear in their body-mind is essential in the development of this practice, since it is a new notion that demands further research and promises interesting potential. My dance artist's mind is fascinated by the possibility of expanding movement patterns by studying in depth the *sonomovements'* language, exploring their influence on the repertoire of dance improvisation and further contributing to the professional dancer's creative training as a tool of dance pedagogy.

My final concluding idea is that radical pedagogy is a thread that transversally crosses the two realms I have described and unifies them. To illustrate how this approach to pedagogy shaped the process and integrated the theoretical and practical works, I will bring back relevant moments of the process and connect them with broader ideas. To highlight and organize these juncture points I will borrow words from Diego Gil, my supervisor, who generously shared his insights about my work. I will organize them into three groups that are inextricably intertwined with the concept of honey-time, which are: the value of distributed agency, the element of *distance* and the affirmation of difference.

To dive into these categories, I would like to ask you to recall chapter 4 where the challenges of the process were described. Firstly, the value of distributed agency in this process is crystallized in different ways. For instance, the fact that the process included English to Finnish translation forced us as the facilitators to take a step back at some points and give the group total agency to operate autonomously. The language barrier made it impossible to know how the information was flowing as well as forcing us to trust in the collaboration of the whole group as knowledge keeper and sharer. It also

appears in the participants' active partaking in both creating a safe space and generating, organizing and naming the creative material. It was also present in the strong commitment that the students who made the costume design developed to this work, when their ideas were respected and encouraged. Furthermore, the element of *distance* stimulated the participants to play with the materiality of their voices, for example with the helpful mediation of a transitional image in the "voice sculpture"-exercise, or in the external input of a partner's movement or the "impersonation" that the anonymity behind the curtains allowed. This encouraged them to go further in their exploration, take risks, be playful and, in Rolnik's terms (2017), generate embryos of worlds.

*(...)it was easier to make sound, when the beginning of it was a part in my body (...) and for that place of me having been more woken, aware, conscious and sensed, listened to, thanks to the assistance of external pressure that was alive, another human and their weight, warmth and energy, sharing their space with mine. (Participant's written feedback)*

Another critical feature of this process was to set the tone of the encounter to be an affirmation of difference. It is vital to establish that there is no aim towards improvement, fixing or creating an extraordinary skill, but the intention is to hold the space for an extraordinary experience that enables connectedness. This demanded that I be very mindful when choosing words, exercises and feedback. I had to constantly stay true to this tone and to be observant of my teaching habits. Also, it presented the "sound threshold" as a possibility instead of a demand. It is in this shift of approach that radical pedagogy can contribute to a more horizontal use of power in the dance setting and an understanding of the learning process rooted in an interest for the other. By doing so we can remain consistent with the values that we want to perpetuate in order to better direct our endeavour towards creating the kind of world we dream of.

Dear reader, as you can see, this thesis work does not only depict my final research project but also the dramaturgy of my studies in the Dance Pedagogy Program. From powerlessly observing my own silence, to searching for a feminist approach to voice, to my first attempts at bringing this into dance practice, it was finally this project that

enabled a deep understanding of this practice. The context of creating a performance together with a neurodivergent group functioned as a scaffolding for my own development as an artist. At this moment when a global pandemic is taking place, I have had the privilege of being safe at home writing and reflecting. Not only a pandemic, but different social protests by the most marginalized people around the world are threatening the established global order. I must admit that this work has brought more questions than answers, opening many windows of curiosity and emphasizing the need to keep gathering in groups of people, exploring the event, discussing, finding and connecting with others. I have immensely enjoyed the writing process and I am willing to continue to cultivate the practice, the reflection and the writing further.

My hope is that, in case you have not done so before, you are wondering about the relationship with your own voice and movement. If you are willing to try, I would really like to meet you in a workshop and witness your exploration. Also, I wish that this reading has given you the kind of hope that this practice has given to me. Hope means the possibility of contributing to the larger project of working towards a fair society, where creativity is at the reach of every person and all voices and bodies are seen and heard and are equally free to express and wonder.

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## 8. APENDIX

<https://vimeo.com/449160307>

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