

# DIALOGUE IN BALANCE

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## INTRODUCTION

### Prologue

Participants in the dialogue

Why, about what and for whom does this dialogue take place?

How and why micro-performance and immersivity is used

## MAIN PART

The appearance of different roles and how their performance influences the self and others

Connection in dialogues and everyone's responsibility for it – how to develop trust

The challenge of unpredictability – improvisation and the necessity of training

(Cracked) immersivity and (intrapersonal) role clashes

## CONCLUSION

What can we learn from all that to create balance in a dialogue?

The dialogue about this dialogue

## INTRODUCTION

### Prologue

I am one and many at the same time. I am constantly playing being me on the stage of everyday life. Which side of myself I perform depends on the current space and people around me.

My approach is to make these shifts perceptible to myself as well as to the readers of this text. Following that, my research is about how to use the ability to perform different versions of myself in a conscious way and about the potential which lies in that to create balance between the participants of a dialogue. In doing so, I examine my research topic through writing a dialogue happening between different internalized roles of myself. As I perform daily dialogues as a student in art education, as a video creator, and as a Tango dancer, these are the fields my research will touch. I want to literally bring all the characters together and see how they interfere.

A layering starts permeating my work, it gets immersive, do you see it? Don't worry if you now and then get confused about where you are. Be sure that it is always just "you" and "me".

### Participants in the dialogue

Me as a student in Art Education

I'm experimenting. I try to bring together different acquired and inherited resources I own in order to explore my rather ephemeral topic: stepping into and creating relationships in the moment of dialogues. My challenge is to hold this dialogic exchange in a sensible structure and suitable flow in order to hopefully find some responses to or new insights into the question of how to create balance in a dialogue. I'm also ready to learn from the referenced theorists and artists and make connections to my own experiences as a teacher, artist and researcher in different settings.

### Me quoting theorists

This role dissolves in the findings, ideas and perspectives of theorists in fields related to my research topic of acting in dialogues, which are trust and improvisation research, dance studies, education in and outside of the arts, roles and performances in everyday life, body and readability, immersion and immersivity, and perspectives on dialogues. In this role, I don't achieve to give an overview of the research fields, but rather to give ideas about which fields could be relevant in the current research process. My task is to let the theorists speak without already judging or censoring them. I try to take an unbiased perspective that nevertheless carefully selects appropriate texts and quotes. I'm the one who reads them and chooses the fitting moment to throw them into the dialogue. In trying to be as objective as possible, I show that it is impossible to be objective.

### Me as a video creator

I stand for the materialized part of this research, the one which goes beyond words. My interest is to find out how to visualize findings of the research process. My focus is video creation in the moment, video-making as live performance. I am not keen on telling stories like movies in the cinema. My narratives rather lie under the surface, are fragile and metaphorical, poetic in a way. And they are meant to relate to the audience, making them an active part, or at least, making them actively think about what they might see or encounter.

I often experience that there is a basic interest in my VJing-performances because people wonder how I'm producing them. This first-sight-fascination opens a space to get in touch with the audience. And it makes me aware of the fast big impression videos can make. People are very used to see moving images and speedily and easily connect to them. But they are not practiced in reading their visual language in detail.

### Me as a Tango dancer

Dancing Tango radically changed a particular part of my life. That's why I've chosen this role to be present in this dialogue. I am speaking from my own perspective on Tango and my own experiences. It is not the purpose of this role to show Tango as a whole, scientifically based construction.

Almost everyone has heard about Tango, as music, as a dance style, and as globally acknowledged cultural heritage. As someone in the Swiss Tango scene who also travels to other countries for Tango, I often hear prejudices about Tango which might be, or were, true. It starts with the assumption that it is not questioned that men take the leader's role and women the follower's, and ends with the (nostalgically) lived traditions of the first half of 20th century Tango with their hierarchies and codes. But exactly because of these explicit issues, some movements developed in Tango manage to reveal unquestioned states in social behavior which, from a feminist and queer perspective, have to be changed, not only in, but also beyond Tango. Tango contains this potential because the biggest part of its communication happens nonverbally through the body and movement. For this reason, I can explicitly see and experience things which stay invisible and imprecise in other contexts. Exactly because Tango is not said or thought, but felt and embodied, it shows comfort, discomfort and vulnerability in a very intensive way. It gets intimate in a straight way because it requires touch, communication from body to body. "In dance there is nothing in between myself, my body and what I express" (New Kyd, 2026).

Last but not least, Tango is a space of joy, playfulness, and freedom. Every Tango-dancing person, maybe except organizers and professionals, engage in it voluntarily. It is a place to experience personal boundaries and experiment with them, a place to be someone else without consequences, which educational spaces actually should be as well. Maybe I can learn from that. I am sure Tango is not the only place which offers these benefits. The reason why I have chosen it here is my personal engagement with it.

### Could it be that you idealize Tango a little too much?

I allow myself to be idealistic about Tango because it is my community and it helped me to see my roles, my behavior and what it does to others much clearer. Tango became an internalized part of myself, and I strongly believe that what helped me in Tango could help others too. To focus on that, I choose to ignore some controversial parts of it. For that, I have you as a counterpart.

### Challenge accepted!

Me quoting NeoTango lyrics

This role developed in the research process of this project. While using NeoTango songs to underline my video sketches, I discovered the lyrics of these songs as interesting source for producing video content. Furthermore, they allow me to gain insights into the feelings, longings and desires of humans, which perfectly relates to my research topic of relationships in dialogues. If I see lyrics as research material, I have not just the words of the songs, but also the melodies and the accompanying music for providing nonverbal, sensorial information. The lyrics' poetic character also makes a difference in dealing with them compared to dealing with research texts of theorists.

The frame for my lyrics research is the genre of NeoTango. I encountered different definitions of NeoTango. For me in this dialogue, it refers to Tango music of the 21st century, which is characterized by the combination of traditional instruments such as bandoneon, piano, violin and double bass, and electronic sounds and drums. I know from many passionate Tango dancers that lyrics are a very important part of their Tango life. Dancers connect their dance closely to the songs they dance to. They are seen more as storytelling than just some phrases in a song. However, I feel that this is mainly true for the lyrics of the well-known, traditional Tango songs, which contain a kind of nostalgia. People care less about lyrics in NeoTango, although these lyrics deal more with actual topics. In NeoTan-

go, musicians often cover old Tango songs or reuse parts of their lyrics to express them in a new way. But there are also newly written songs that are of particular interest to me. They interest me because they try to master a similar challenge that I face in this work: to try making experiences in Tango useful for life outside of Tango. NeoTango songs still are Tango, but they try to adapt to the 21st-century environment and what people are concerned with nowadays. This could help to bring my Tango perspective and my perspective as a student in Art Education together. In this role, I allow myself freedom in artistic interpretation.

### Why, about what and for whom does this dialogue take place?

I see dialogues as a basic way of communicating. I want to emphasize that in my research. Intrapersonal dialogue is of great importance alongside interpersonal dialogue. What all dialogues have in common is that they require relations between beings. Dialogues can be verbal, nonverbal, or embodied, for example in dance, between internalized roles of myself, or in educational situations. That is the place where my work is positioned: exactly in these relations, in the way they arise, develop, deepen or become potentially risky.

Emilio Fantin asks "how [...] a pedagogical approach [might] produce a sense of harmony by balancing different roles people have within the community" (Fantin, 2016, p.77). This implies that it is possible to practice the behavior in relational situations to improve the balance between the participants.

I like the term "balance" that Emilio Fantin uses, because it is exactly what is a basic requirement in Tango to make a dance possible. While it matters in a very physical way in Tango, it is less visible in dialogues.

I'm convinced that a dialogue should only be called dialogue if there is a balance between the participants. I'm thinking dialogues as social situations between at least two entities who want to share their interests, knowledge, and thoughts and especially want to develop themselves further. It

can be interpersonal or intrapersonal. To make the dialogues useful, deep, and exciting for everyone, I follow the idea that everyone should have the same amount of "space", which consequently holds the dialogue in balance. With that, I do not necessarily mean that I want to erase all hierarchies, but that everyone is seen and sees the others as subjective beings. Thus, my main research question is how to perform consciously in a dialogue to create balance between the participants.

When I say everyone needs to have the same amount of space, I mean it in a very existential way. I imagine that if everybody gave as much space as they "take", there would be space for everybody. In today's reality, some people are hoarding space, consciously or unconsciously, and others are in danger of disappearing as subjects because they do not receive space. In my work, I therefore look for space-giving behavior in dialogues. Further, my research asks how to deal with the given space to reach more balance. In doing so, I follow my personal experience of connection to others as a crucial but fragile part of feeling safe and comfortable, which in turn allows me to show myself as a whole and vulnerable being. I am researching and writing for students, teachers and all people who share the interest about how to deal with relations between beings.

This text is supposed to consist of a dialogue because it is about dialogues. I try to keep my characters in balance as an attempt to show how my findings could look in practice, so I'm writing about creating balance in dialogues while producing a hopefully balanced dialogue. Hence, I'm using the method of "didaktischer Doppeldecker". The reason why I have chosen this method is that I want to show my findings instead of just explaining them. Knowing that "didaktische Doppeldecker" usually make everything more complicated and difficult, I take the risk of failure.

I mentioned in my introduction that I learned a lot about myself and others in relational situations through my experience as a Tango dancer. I want to explore if these learnings could also be useful for me as a student, researcher, and teacher in arts.

## How and why micro-performance and immersivity is used

I have chosen the term of "micro-performance" for people's behavior in dialogues because I assume that all social situations in life require a role to play. This "role-play" is often not consciously enacted and is not comparable to playing a role in theatre or in a movie. It is much more unobtrusive. I'm talking about slightly different behavior in different contexts of life and in the presence of different people. In these cases, I do not act as someone else or as something I am not, but as different version of myself, often unconsciously. I emphasize the general performativity of speaking and acting and go a little beyond that, because I suggest using the existing performativity consciously as a tool to shape social situations.

As Joanna Bucknall describes, "micro-performance [...] reframes the everyday through engaging its audience in shallow play with the hope of generating new, radicalized primary experience" (Bucknall, 2016, p. 56). She further describes that the presence of micro-performance creates a space between daily life praxis and performative codes. For her, it is a space of reduction and focus on what is performed and thus allows for a deeper understanding (see Bucknall, 2016, p. 56).

Joanna Bucknall describes micro-performance as an artistic practice. What I like about that is the playful character of it. It is an important point of view for me to see my research as a playground. It is my personal safe space to experiment and to never get bored in my curiosity and fascination. I would nevertheless urge seeing micro-performance as a social practice as well: as such, it reaches into everyday life experience. It is where I would like to go with my research. I want to explore if I can integrate micro-performance into my everyday life and what it does to me. This is an undercover act, as others do not know that I am consciously "performing". That is what distinguishes my understanding of micro-performance from that of Joanna Bucknall. And it is also the point where the question of immersivity comes in. I assume that human beings generally experience their everyday life as very immersive, whereas in artistic performances it looks quite different. There is a certain distance between the audience

and the performer. It requires effort on the performer's side and willingness to engage on the audience's side to make it an immersive experience. If I now wish to examine undercover micro-performance in my project and play with the in-between space between everyday life and art, immersivity becomes important.

I recommend using the term "immersivity" as Florian Freitag and his colleagues do, as "the immersive potential of designed spaces". They further suggest that immersivity, understood in this way, could help to understand atmospheres. Referring to other researchers such as Marie-Laure Ryan, Mark Wolf and Oliver Grau, they declare that "immersive objects, media, and art forms engender experiences or feelings" (Freitag et al., 2020, p. 2f).

I use video as a medium to create possibly immersive spaces. The term "immersive projections" is commonly used for video projections which surround people. This is a very literal and technical definition, but it shows that video seems to be conventionally recognized as a medium for creating immersivity. But I suppose that the immersivity of video projections not only depends on the number of covered walls, floors, and ceilings, but also on the video content itself, which influences the degree of immersivity. There must be more. I believe that I can evoke feelings and intensive experiences more through the video content than through the number of projectors. That's why I distance myself from the technical definition in this research and instead wish to strive for video content with high immersivity in the sense that is mentioned before in Florian Freitag's definition.

Another part of immersivity is revealed in Joanna Bucknall's text, although she doesn't use this term. She describes that immersive theatre and performance invite their audience to enter a fictive world and play, and to become part of the fiction. In this space, relations change, especially compared to the conditions in the everyday world. People can act in an environment experienced as safe without fear of consequences reaching into real life (see Bucknall, 2016, p. 54f). Joanna Bucknall recognizes and

writes about immersive performance: "The participant leaves the performance with a changed perspective that may well generate real-world consequences but it is the

lack of direct real-world consequence that provides the space for play and, paradoxically, the possibility for real-world implications." (Bucknall, 2016, p. 58f)

I see a parallel between immersive theatres and social dance in Tango. I experience Tango spaces as kind of fictive, because they allow me to leave everyday life.

I agree. It is what Kathy Davis says: «ein sicherer Raum, um die eigene Alltagspersönlichkeit hinter sich zu lassen und sich spielerisch in einer Weise miteinander zu beschäftigen, die fremd, manchmal sogar exotisch ist und doch zugleich unheimlich vertraut (a safe space to leave everyday personality behind and playfully engage with each other in a way that is extraneous, sometimes even exotic, yet at the same time eerily familiar).» (Davis, 2020, p. 54)

In the case of my research, it might be exactly the other way around: micro-performances come from a fictive world into the real world. They have to survive there, mask themselves as everyday behavior. Consequences are real, except when the micro-performances get revealed as artistic or research practice, or they manage in another way to make the setting safe.

## MAIN PART

### The appearance of different roles and how their performance influences the self and others

I would like to begin with one of Jorge Luis Borges' texts, "Borges and I", which was present at the very beginning of this research and therefore opened a number of lines of thoughts. The text offers a perspective on Borges written by the creator of the figure of Borges, who is ultimately the being called Jorge Luis Borges. The author struggles to draw a line between Borges and himself, also Borges, and questions whether he really exists outside of Borges, the figure he created (see Borges, 1962, p. 1).

The construction that Borges builds in his text implies that he is writing about different versions of himself. Borges the writer and Borges the human being become two separate entities.

I would like to add the perspective of Miguel Di Genova and the lyrics of the song "Los Ojos de Borges". It is interesting to see how other artists engage with the figure of Borges. In the line "De un Borges soñado por Borges (Of a Borges dreamed by Borges)"; Miguel Di Genova also distinguishes between different Borges', as he uses the name both for the oeuvre and for the person of Borges. In doing so, he reveals how he himself perceives Borges, and perhaps his own internalized roles, too.

This becomes particularly clear in the final sentence of "Borges and I": "I do not know which of us has written this page". (Borges, 1962, p. 1)

True. And it tells me even more. I find the part about his fear of disappearing, or perhaps of not even being someone, particularly interesting. I think he reveals here a very inner aspect of being, who one is when one is not playing a role. I question whether such a state even exists. This question is closely intertwined with the one whether I can be someone without being in relation to others. I am quite sure that whenever I enter in relation with someone or something, I play a role, I perform. When I am in a dialogic situation, I cannot escape the relationship between the par-

ticipants. This means that I take on a role according to my position within the group and the expectations of the group. This usually happens quite automatically. My proposition is that when I rely on this automatic response, I act blindly. It therefore seems to make sense to reflect on my role, since I consider it as the basic material of a dialogue. By choosing my role **consciously**, I can shape the dialogue, because the role I take on matters and strongly influences the dialogue.

An important perspective comes from bell hooks, who writes: "I think that so many progressive political movements fail to have lasting impact [...] precisely because there is not enough understanding of "praxis." (hooks, p. 48). It is not enough for individuals to change the way they think. They also need to live, act, and perform according to their thoughts.

bell hooks makes it clear that it is not done just by choosing a role. I must also perform it. This is where the micro-performance comes in. My chosen role has to be translated into embodied behavior and **action**. I propose that each role has an immersive potential in relation to the person performing it. The higher the immersivity of a role is perceived, the more convincingly it can be performed. This also effects how I am perceived in my role by others. There is another dimension of immersive potential. I must immerse my role into everyday life as firmly as possible. This requires a shift in perspective. I have to put myself in the other person's shoes. I wonder **how you deal with this in Tango?**

My dealing with that starts in my bedroom in front of my wardrobe. I think about who I want to be today. Do I want to lead, to follow, or both? Do I want to stand out or stay in the background? Do I want seriousness or fun? According to my decision, I choose high or flat shoes, trousers or a dress, dark or rainbow colors. Through carefully choosing my outfit, I can partly control the reactions of my fellow dancers, whether I get their attention or not, whether they ask me to dance or not and sometimes even how the dance will proceed. Furthermore, I can lead myself as well, my attitude, my way of talking and dancing, and my way of feeling. With that, I allow my role to immerse itself in me. I am able to act like that because

of **training** and experience, which means exact observation of others and myself and playing with the findings of my observations. While I am performing, I regularly and **consciously** remember my role and my expectations on what the situation should do to me. That helps me to feel more independent of the things happening around me in Tango. I feel empowered.

I see, your preparation of incorporating a role is much about creating your external appearance. This resonates with the medium of video, which is a visual one as well. Meaning is created through seeing. How people understand it is a matter of **readability** and their literacy of visual content. Visible things are ingrained with prejudices and connotations and can't simply get rid of them. They can be good or bad or wrong or right. No matter how they are, I can't avoid them. I can only try to change them. This could happen by counter-performing them, by not fulfilling the expectations.

Regarding counter-performing expectations created by external appearance, Nora Landkammer gives an interesting report about the role-taking of the art educators at documenta 12. She writes about the deconstruction of stereotypes and expectations to which young female colleagues in particular are exposed. In her case, they themselves embody and overact the stereotypes and thus make them transparent. The stereotypes fall apart and vanish, in the best case. These acts were closely connected to the dressing and appearance of the art educators (see Landkammer, 2009, p. 153f).

**But that is a balancing act. It can be dangerous, no?**

It can, as Nora Landkammer notes in the end: "Auch wenn wir bewusst eine Rolle spielen, konstruiert sie uns mit. (Even when we **consciously** play a role, it concurrently shapes our selves.)" (see Landkammer, 2009, p. 154)

**That means, if I perform someone I don't want to be, I run the danger of nevertheless becoming a little like that and being perceived that way. Conversely, if I perform someone I want to be, but maybe do not yet feel like I already am, it can help to become that person.**

Exactly, sometimes I pretend to be someone and I feel the effects both on myself and on the others, for example my dance partners. You could call it self-manipulation.

**I see the potential for personal development, but also the necessity of very small micro-performances, to keep myself, the people around me, and the space safe. I should never forget that I act in real life with real-life consequences.**

### **Connection in dialogues and everyone's responsibility for it – how to develop trust**

I find the text by Franziska Schutzbach about the letters of Rahel Levin Varnhagen and Pauline Wiesel very interesting, because it shows a special kind of **connection**. She writes that it sometimes took weeks or months until they received their letters, and that they met in person only a few times. I would like to highlight the role of **time** in this example. Furthermore, Franziska Schutzbach quotes Silvia Henke, saying that Rahel's and Pauline's friendship was characterized by inconstancy and discontinuity. It was, among other things, caused by the historical circumstances of the slow delivery of letters and the little opportunity to travel. They didn't take anything they had for granted. There was always an uncertainty about the existence and form of the relationship which allowed them to really see and feel each other. It was also based in their overcoming of traditional roles and identities. This constant negotiation of what they had together developed over time and was permeated with desires and longings (see Schutzbach, 2024, p 53-61).

**I gather from this that it is beneficial to have **time** in relationships: time spent together, but also time to think and to reflect, just as one is often more precise in writing a letter than in a spoken conversation. This part of waiting is missing in most of today's relationships.**

I had a similar experience recently with my dear friend Roberta, who lives in Buenos Aires. Our friendship has grown over time without much face-to-face contact. We have only met in person about ten times. It has now been more than a year since we last met, and our contact is limited to voice messages on WhatsApp. It is maybe one or two messages a month. But it is constant, despite the **distance** between us. Not too fast, so that I can appreciate, feel and incorporate each single message from her, taking as much **time** as I wish to respond. To be honest, the **connection** to Roberta feels more intense than some connections to other friends.

The song "Pulso (1000 mares)" by Bajofondo is about **distance** and the longing to overcome distance in order to find the self. In the lyrics it is spoken about how its words are dressed in a metaphorical way, such as "mis versos van vestidos de melancolia (my verses are dressed in melancholy)" and "vestida de la historia de mis padres (dressed in the history of my parents)". Thus, it is about how distance is experienced, through which eyes it is seen, and it implies that there are many ways to experience distance. In this song, it is expressed in a rather negative and, as it is explicitly said, melancholic way. But I remember that I once read about melancholy as the basis of artistic thought. That leads me to see an inspiring moment in the song.

In the example of Rahel and Pauline and in the friendship with Roberta, **distance** is experienced in a positive way, but I feel some melancholy in it as well. I think that here distance is turned into a potential of the absent, which leaves a gap for dreams and desires of what could be.

**Distance** affects me, too. A video cannot leave its frame and is therefore always physically distant. That does not mean that it has to be emotionally distant. For me, it is an important question how to deal with this distance. Playing with the absent seems to be an interesting thought in this regard. To weave in melancholy would mean reflecting on these physical limits of videos.

"Pulso (1000 mares)" also shows that it does not always help to cross **distances**: "j'ai traversé le ciel y mil mares (I have crossed the sky and a thousand seas)", but "es otra pajina otro cielo otro día hoy (it's another page, another sky, another day today)", "c'est la vie (that's life)". I like the metaphor of "1000 mares" to visualize the existing distances between people and what it means to cross them. It is always a risk, because I do not know what awaits me on the other side.

Or, as Emilio Fantin says: "Rather than entering into the space of others, it is necessary to leave a free space that can be filled with interpretation and imagination." (Fantin, 2016, p. 73)

It means that we shouldn't cross **distances** blindly, because we never know what is on the other side. We may waste their potential for imagination and dreams. With that, I don't want to say that closeness is harmful to trust, on the contrary. It might be a sign of trust not to cross all distances, but it is also important to find and cultivate common ground.

In Tango, I experience closeness and **distance** physically. In this sense as well, I agree that distance shows respect and creates **trust**. Trust that allows closeness, if I wish so. Dancers who come close too fast fail to create trust. The trust that allows closeness arises over **time**.

bell hooks says that dialogue is a suitable way to cross borders and bring differences, or **distances**, into a positive relation. One chapter of her book consists of a dialogue between her and Ron Scapp, a philosopher, a white man, and a teacher. There, she experiences how important it is to understand their different locations to build a professional solidarity between them. She also describes this as an indispensable framework for creating a space of **trust**, intimacy and regard for one another (see hooks, 1994, p. 129ff).

That shows that it might be less important to cross **distances** than to recognize where they are and acknowledge them, the same applies to commonalities. Therefore, knowing more about someone usually increases **trust**, because you know who is standing opposite you. You know

where the things they say come from and how they are connected to each person's background. It gives words context and helps to understand how they were meant by the speaker. Too often, people do not literally say what they mean.

That is a well-known problem in Tango. You may have a specific idea of what you want to do, but you are not always able to communicate it in a readable way. It requires a lot of training and is different with each dance partner. Dialogue partners are like dance partners: the better you know them, the better the dance or dialogue flows.

In this context, bell hooks' notes about the split between **mind** and **body** in the classroom could offer new insights. She describes how, in educational settings within institutions, the body has to be erased in order to remain unnoticed. Our feelings and passions are expected to be situated in a private space after class. However, she recommends entering the classroom as a whole person, not as a "disembodied spirit" (see hooks, 1994, p. 191f). At this point, I want to include Judith Butler, who argues that there is a cultural association of mind with masculinity and body with femininity. We should therefore be aware of the implicit gender hierarchy that this distinction produces (see Butler, 1990, p. 17).

**Readability is reduced if a person tries to remain neutral and hide their background, experiences, and feelings. Showing these aspects as a person in a powerful position is challenging but unavoidable, because it is impossible to completely separate the **mind** from the **body**. As soon as personal experiences and feelings enter in a social encounter, people make themselves vulnerable.**

There is an article in the "Journal of Trust Research" in which the authors relate trust and vulnerability. They argue that when someone takes the risk of sharing their feelings, thereby making themselves vulnerable, it is an act of trust (see Nielsen, Nielsen & Jørgensen, 2025, p. 206f). Furthermore, trust is negotiated precisely in these situations and depends on how vulnerability is handled (see Nielsen, Nielsen & Jørgensen, 2025,

p. 216). The authors also note that "[trust] is constructed and negotiated locally, based on the encounter's moral, institutional and relational conditions." (Nielsen, Nielsen & Jørgensen, 2025, p. 217). This can be connected to the role I am currently performing, which has its own conditions.

**My experience confirms this. I believe that in the same moment, showing more than a neutral mind increases one's immersivity in relation to the community. For me, the person stops being a "teaching object" and transforms into a subjective human being. When I experience this change in my teachers, it enables me to connect with them, because I experience them as individual human beings, just as I experience myself.**

**I would like to add another perspective on the **mind** and **body** split which I discovered in a phrase from the song "Amor o Nada" by Otros Aires: "Quitarse el cuerpo de a poco, sacar a brillar el alma (Removing the body little by little, bringing out the soul to shine)". I would like to consider the possibility that there is a different kind of disembodied self than the one you are talking about at the moment. I recommend to call it the soul, like Otros Aires does.**

**Yes, I could call it the **soul**. For me, that is the place for imagination and dreams. It is invisible, but made of and filled with feelings and fantasy. I also think that the soul is connected to the **body** and the body to the **mind**, but I am not sure whether the mind is connected to the soul without going through the body. However, I assume that the greater the balance in which the three parts manifest themselves is, the higher is the immersivity.**

These are well-known questions in dancing Tango. When I had my first lessons, my **mind** was 100% on and I tried to learn and memorize all the steps that were taught. But to memorize the steps, I had to bring them into the body, to repeat them again and again with different partners and alone. There is a point where the **body** knows more than the mind. As soon as I managed to stop thinking while dancing, I was able to feel the dance and fill the dry steps and the music with my own stories. The **soul** came

in. I remember when that first happened. It was at an afternoon Tango event in September 2022, four months after my first Tango lesson. I had been at a concert the night before. After only two hours of sleep, I had to take a three-and-a-half-hour train ride to reach the Tango event. I arrived there more dead than alive, and then the magic happened. The tiredness somehow turned my brain off, and I danced like I never had before, just in my body and my fantasy. Unfortunately, that remained an exception in my early Tango experience, but it showed me where I want to go. This makes my thinking that in the context of Tango, the mind and the soul cannot be present at the same time, whereas the body has to be present all the time.

I have another analogy to add: If a documentary is the **mind**, artistic non-linear moving images are the **soul**. They are the materialization of affects, of feelings I'm unable to express in words. This is what they can add to a written work like this dialogue: they can express the affective layer. But it is a whole **language** to learn in order to be able to **read** these visuals. It has to be separated from words and also from what we take from our everyday seeing; it has to play with connotations coming from there. It is closely connected to fantasy and imagination, and to the awareness that potentially everyone could experience it differently.

Here I quote Jules Sturm, who quotes her own book "Bodies we fail" in the text "Literacy embodied": "[W]hat happens with the visual stimuli that we do not understand? Many of these, I suggest, unsettle the viewer, since they cannot easily be attributed to some other, foreign **language**: it is not commonly believed that there exists more than one visual sign system." (Sturm, 2021, p. 33)

Let me quote the song "Slippery Sidewalks" by Bajofondo, because it fits very well here: "I don't know what's playing deep in my emotions. [...] I step on slippery sidewalks. I'm slowly moving along." This is exactly what the exploration of an affective **language** of videos is, a field of insecurities, and it is very much about oneself. I recommend always being aware of that.

I agree that such a task can only be done from one's own perspective, but also that one should be brave and try it. Do you have an idea where the **body** comes in in your analogy? Or is it not part of it at all?

It is there as soon as I show it in the videos. The **body** has an affective language that I can use in my videos. I can choose how my body is seen, in contrast to how it is perceived in everyday life. This goes hand in hand with the **responsibility** of how I make bodies visible.

In my case, it is **responsibility** for how I see people, because they already make themselves vulnerable by letting me see their bodies. In many cases, they do not do that voluntarily, but because there is no alternative. They cannot escape their bodies. It is inevitable that the body forms the first impression when I meet someone. From that moment on, I bear the **responsibility** for the **trust** offered through this vulnerability. Of course, the **responsibility** is mutual, since I show my body as well. This demonstrates that it is not possible to relate to others as a neutral being.

We have determined that **trust** makes one open to showing one's embodied self. This can easily be misused, with serious consequences. One example is described in Olave Nduwanje's text "Do not read this body". This trust is misused when desire, lust and hunger are directed more toward the body than toward the self within it. She writes that this makes her run out of her body and destabilizes the **connection** between herself and her body (Nduwanje, 2021, p. 18).

There is a song by Electrocutango called "Sin Piel" that presents another example of what happens when people take advantage of someone who shows vulnerability. Julia Zenko sings that after she felt the pain of loving and "de darme sin medir (giving myself without measures)", she carefully encapsulated her feelings and needs in a box she will never open again. It was "la hora de archivar el corazón (the time to archive the heart)" and "de matar los sueños (to kill the dreams)". She continues her life "sin detenerme a mirar una flor (without stopping to look at a flower)" and beating "al compás del reloj; como una máquina fiel igual que un robot: sin piel! (to

the rhythm of the clock; like a faithful machine, just like a robot: without skin!). I very much like the metaphor of the skin in this song, because the skin is the main medium through which the **body** touches other beings and things. "Sin piel (without skin)", it becomes impossible to ever touch another body again. One becomes unassailable, and therefore incredibly powerful.

I would say that this really is a way of becoming powerful, a kind of rejection of one's own individuality. In some roles that people perform, showing vulnerability is considered a weakness. When they act, or rather riot, according to this view, they prevent any attempt to build trust with them. But as we see in these examples, it is rarely their fault; rather, it is a consequence of having been misused in a deeply existential way. Our task should be to offer these people a sense of safety again.

Olave Nduwanje offers a subtle way to approach this by considering the way we see **bodies**. She asks the following questions: "Do you also feel the violence of eyes that read? Eyes that will dissect, assemble, categorize and archive?" (Nduwanje, 2021, p. 9). She further notes that "our bodies form a static of intuitive information, projections, assumptions." (see Nduwanje, 2021, p. 14). That is consistent with Jules Sturm's recognition that the act of looking is communicative (see Sturm, 2021, p. 33). Jules distinguishes between "visuality (What do I see?) and epistemology (What do I know?)" in relation to bodies and sees particular potential in the incoherences between them, in "the failure of making sense of bodies", as a way to **read** bodies differently. For that, Jules refers to Nora Sternfeld's concept of "unlearning" to challenge knowledge that is unconsciously ingrained in us (Sturm, 2021, p. 27-30).

I see that this topic concerns me, because video is also a visual medium and requires knowledge to be **read**. Video can present narratives in which it is possible to reveal incoherences. Playing with these could be a helpful tool to activate unlearning.

This may be connected to taking **responsibility** for how we see. Or perhaps we should momentarily suspend seeing and activate other senses in order to learn what we do not see or what we misperceive. Or, more realistically, to train my way of seeing and, with it, my ability to **read** visuals.

Exactly how Olave Nduwanje writes: "Now that you can't see me, will you hear me better?" (Nduwanje, 2021, p. 14)

I believe that video is a medium for seeing differently without not seeing at all. There is a connection to the real world, because if I want to make videos, there is no other place than the real world to do so. But they can be changed, manipulated, placed in new relations, and combined with digital animation. They can evoke and inspire imagination and fantasy, because they are full of **soul**.

This fits with Alessandro Bertinetto's definition of imagination as "the capacity to make present in an image what is absent, and as [...] the ability to show something [...] by means of the perception of something else. [...] [Imagination] makes it possible to visualize different realities or to see actual reality differently." (Bertinetto, 2013, p. 67). Imagination thus seems to involve a visual **language** rooted in the **soul**.

Miguel Di Genova also plays with Borges' blindness in his later years. I feel that he suggests that this inability to see the real world opens up a space for Borges to perceive and touch his dreams and the world from an external perspective, to see more clearly than a seeing person could. This idea echoes in the line: „Soñando como hay que soñar, un hombre es todos los hombres. (Dreaming as one must dream, a man is all men.). For me, this is summed up in the German line "Die Rose ist ohne warum; sie blühet weil sie blühet. (The rose is without a why; it blooms because it blooms). It is a radical reduction of the need to make sense. Borges "sees" clearly.

All of this means that I am talking about unlearning pre-trained modes of seeing in order to reduce the dominance of visual impressions and their connotations when I meet other people. Instead, I should sharpen my senses to focus on the whole of a person: **mind, body and soul**. I should

also think carefully about which version of mind, body and soul I want to perform in my current role. In this way, I create immersivity. A fully realized role needs to include aspects of all three in order to be **readable**. By doing so, I could increase **trust** between myself and others and improve the **connection**.

### **The challenge of unpredictability – improvisation and the necessity of training**

Everyday life is unpredictable. I never know what will happen today. I can have a plan, one or many roles for the day, but it will be interrupted and challenged as soon as I find myself in relation to others. I often have to **improvise**.

Alessandro Bertinetto writes that “[i]mprovisation is typically a kind of making something without previously knowing what to do, i.e. by **imaginatively** anticipating the unknown, which nonetheless remains unpredictable.” He notes that in such cases, there is no time to plan one’s actions or compare different possibilities. He further says that “[o]ur success depends on the ability to find, in a moment, a structure in chaos, discovering or inventing a way of proceeding by spontaneously performing it, and seeing if it works”. (p. 78)

In any case, I will perform in one of my roles, both with and against my plan, in relation to all the unplanned events. Each small action is a decision I make, most of the time automatically and unconsciously, because it is pre-trained. This is what shapes my behavior. These automatisms can be questioned and trained. To develop ideas for this, I suggest exploring moments in which **improvisation** and its **training** occur consciously. Where and how does improvisation take place, and what are its effects?

There is a song by Otros Aires, “Allerdings Otros Aires”, which is not classically improvised on stage, but contains interesting elements of improvisation. The entire lyrics of the song consist of a moderator’s voice from a concert by Otros Aires in Germany. They recorded the moderator and

used its original voice to create the song. Improvisation here is expressed through working with this very limited material, which was spontaneously collected, rearranged in new orders and contexts, and ultimately transformed into a song. It may not be a classical improvisation, but rather a sustained response to a specific situation, one that involves openness, creativity and imagination. People who attended this concert will likely connect specific memories to this song.

I would like to include the text by Michael Kimmel, Dayana Hristova, and Kerstin Kussmaul on contact improvisation. As the name suggests, contact improvisation is based on improvisation. In the text, the real-time character of improvisation is emphasized (see Kimmel et al., 2018, p. 15). The authors also note that in contact improvisation, intentions do not follow a specific plan, rather, they speak of micro-intentions: “These micro-intentions are precisely in sync with the dynamic and never reach ahead more than would endanger this fit” (p. 29) They propose “an intentionality hierarchy across timescales where micro-intentions take shape situationally under constraints provided by higher-timescale intentions such as scores, themes, or preferred task types.” (Kimmel et al, 2018, p. 29f) This can be seen in parallel to micro-performances in dialogues. The micro-performances are influenced by the role I choose for myself in a certain situation.

**Improvisation in video is only possible in live creation. In this way, I am able to react on the audience and to engage in communication with them. This initially requires technical skills and equipment, as well as a detailed plan of the setting and timeline of the performance. All material has to be instantly available. Only when this is internalized and automated can I concentrate on improvisation. This may seem contradictory, but I think it is a meaningful example for micro-intentions in relation to higher-timescale intentions.**

In my understanding of dancing Tango, improvisation happens in every single step in social dance, it has similarities to contact improvisation. You never know what comes next, not even as a leader, because you let yourself

Flow with the music. The music and the Tango codes frame the higher-timescale intentions. Tango becomes boring when it turns into an automatically executed choreography. Sometimes I invent new steps simply by doing them, without thinking. In the next moment, they are gone, and I am unable to recreate them. There is no time to think, there are only micro-intentions. At the same time, it is important to recognize that you cannot simply step into a Tango event and start improvising. Improvisation in Tango requires **training**, for example in steps, posture, and appropriate behavior in social dance.

**What does this mean for dialogues? As I am in relation to others, I have to improvise based on their actions. In doing so, I need to be aware of my position as perceived from the outside and of the role I intend to perform. These are the higher-timescale intentions. At the same time, I have to perform the micro-intentions. I am able to improve my micro-performances through training.**

I continue with ideas by Michael Kimmel, Dayana Hristova, and Kerstin Kussmaul on how to **train** contact improvisation. They state that “[i]t is true that novices may at first train “ready-mades” to learn deeper principles of [contact improvisation].” (2018, p. 5) This refers to training with pre-created examples. Furthermore, they explain that improvisation presupposes educated attention (see Kimmel et al., 2018, p. 14). This raises the question of what and how I perceive, and what these perceptions might mean. Another perspective on how to train improvisation comes from Alessandro Bertinetto. He writes that “there is no pre-established rule as to how to solve problems in a spontaneous way, because each situation calls for different solutions”, but that the more experiences someone acquires in a specific field, the better one becomes at “act[ing] and react[ing] spontaneously in a satisfactory way.” (Kimmel et al., 2018, p. 79) It therefore also seems to be a matter of experiences. The more improvisation I have practiced, and the more these experiences resemble the current situation, the better my improvisation may become.

Improvised content is a way to express my in-the-moment imagination. For me, **training** means finding visual expressions for my imagination and practicing how to work with them in a VJing setting. This often results in recordings of improvised scenes that I layer with new improvisations, because ad hoc improvisation without prepared material in advance is very limited in its possibilities. On the other hand, improvisation based on an already prepared setting can go beyond the imaginations I had before. In this case, it is kind of ad hoc improvisation, but built on something that already exists, like micro-improvisation. Nevertheless, I believe that there is a special quality in spontaneously recorded and improvised videos compared to carefully planned films. It can reveal more of my role as an artist, which allows for a deeper **connection** to the audience and the setting I am in.

**These ways of training improvisation address the difference between the conception of a role and its performance in real time. I think some of these training methods could be adapted to dialogues. However, for this, something like dialogue training classes would have to exist. As you also mention, the audience can perceive you more clearly because the performance happens spontaneously, and you therefore cannot carefully plan what you reveal about yourself and what you do not.**

Yes, the mask falls. It is similar to the experience of dance where there is nothing between my body and the audience. In live performances, there might also be nothing between my soul and the audience. They see the video, they see me performing, and they might notice glitches, which is simply honest. **Mind, body and soul** become visible in my role as a live-performing artist. As we have already established, this increases **connection and trust**.

**There is a rather playful moment of improvisation that occurred at a concert by Gotan Project. In 2008, they released a live album of this concert, on which this moment is captured. After performing the song “La Vigüella”, which includes a sung part in which the voice is distorted by a sound effect on the microphone, they express their gratitude to the audience**

using the same microphone, which still distorted the voice. For me, this seems to be an improvised action that nevertheless reveals an intimate insight in how "La Vigüela" is performed. Although it disrupts part of the particular magic of live performances, it also makes me curious about what such a performance of an electronic song actually involves behind the scenes. The people and technology behind it become visible, which allows for a certain **connection** to the band. The recording of this live-performed song is thus transformed into something embodied by a real person.

Another example of the relationship between **improvisation, connection and trust** is a situation I experienced with the visual artist Eva Esmann Behrens. It was our first joint performance, in which I assisted her. In the beginning of the performance, Eva's live camera broke. Because her videos were mainly based on live camera input, we had to improvise in the very moment of the performance. We ended up with many different ideas, attempts, and samples that we created almost in real-time. Furthermore, we got to know each other well and developed trust. The trust developed because we had no choice but to rely on each other in this precarious situation, and because this eventually led to success.

That means that when **improvisation** works well, it increases **trust**. This is another reason to try to master the performance of my role.

#### **(Cracked) immersivity and (intrapersonal) role clashes**

When I think of my behavior in dialogue as a micro-performance, I should not forget what I mentioned at the very beginning: I experience everyday life as very immersive, while it requires a great deal of effort to make an artistic work feel immersive. Micro-performances, as I use the term in this text, are more than everyday behavior, which means that they are not automatically as immersive as everyday behavior. I note that I experience a role as immersive for myself when it is connected to the **mind, body, and**

**soul**. I also assume that immersivity increases the more the role is performed with **mind, body and soul** in connection.

As I described in an earlier chapter, bell hooks recommends in her book "Teaching to Transgress" entering a classroom as "a whole", not as a "disembodied spirit". She means that **body** and **mind** should not be separated (see hooks, 1994, p. 198). That supports what you are saying.

I would say that you can never show yourself as the whole person you are, with all your roles. But you can perform the whole of each of your roles. In bell hooks' text, this would be the role of a teacher. Each role has a **mind, body and soul** layer. If all the layers are defined and made visible, this is how I understand bell hooks' term of "the whole".

While you are saying that showing the whole of a role in a dialogue is highly immersive, it seems to be a special power of video to narrow the view and highlight details. The audience can almost never see the whole within the flat frame of a video. Would the whole be a view of the set where the videos are filmed? I suppose not. This might rather be a metaphor for the whole of all roles of a person, without any secrets anymore. But videos also live from their secrets. What you mean by the whole could be the story and its visual translation in a video project. It might be that this is what makes videos immersive: the story (**mind**), its translation into visuals (**soul**), and the possibility of connection (**body**) through showing artefacts of the real world such as bodies, clothes, and places, which set the video in relation to the audience. And still keeping the secrets of the making-of, so as not to destroy the **imagination**. And, not to forget, time. Time is a condition for seeing a video as a whole, literally. Because, as I mentioned before, the video frame is always narrowing the view.

If you say you do not want to destroy the **imagination**, this could be seen as a parallel to the **fictive** world described by Joanna Bucknall in immersive theatre and performance (see Bucknall, 2016, p. 54F).

Yes, and this **fictive or imagined** world can be disillusioned by revealing parts of the self or the set beyond the current role or video project. This is

what I describe as role clashes.

I have an example of this. The “fiction” of Tango is based on the idea that people in the space have no other connections such as being colleagues at work or having teacher-student relationships. It happened that I met one of my teachers at a Tango event. It felt strange. Here, I think you can clearly see a role clash. We both found ourselves in between our roles as Tango dancers and as teacher and student. For me, there were two ways to deal with it: either ignore each other or seek dialogue. It was not possible to have a usual Tango encounter under these conditions. Here, it is not just a disillusion, I think, but something more. We both unintentionally presented each other with an additional role of ourselves and now know each other in two roles. These two roles consist of very different hierarchies and forms of relational behavior, and at the same time it became difficult to separate them. It required a lot of time to negotiate how to deal with it.

I had a similar experience when I was working in the wool shop and, on one occasion, a teacher of mine and, on another occasion, a close friend entered the shop. It was a disruption of my role as a salesperson that made me feel uncomfortable. However, it did not require any negotiation after the encounter, and I did not have problems mixing the roles. It seems to depend on which roles clash.

When I think about role clashes, the song “Much Messi” by Otros Aires comes to mind. It is an experimental song with a very distinctive feature: almost nobody is able to understand the text. One characteristic of the music of Otros Aires is that they use many different languages. The idea behind this is that the songs are accessible and understandable to as many people as possible. In “Much Messi,” the lyrics consist of fragments of different languages. There are always only a few words in one language, and then the language changes. I recognize one or two German words and some in English and Spanish, and many in unknown languages. But I cannot really understand what the song is about. I think that when I am speaking about roles and many visible roles at the same time, it could end like this song: small parts are **readable**, but the overall meaning gets lost.

It helps me to see everyday life not as one single reality, but as a series of rather **fictive** settings. In each situation, I perform a role depending on the setting and on the people present. At the same time, the setting is constituted by my role and the roles of the others. Because a role depends on more than one factor, role clashes are possible. And because they impair a person’s **readability**, they reduce the possibility of immersivity and trust. The whole of a role can no longer be seen.

To become aware that each role is constructed and developed by ourselves, it helped me to consider Olave Nduwanje’s questions: “What is true about you? What do you know about you?” And further: “Would you plagiarize to be relevant? [...] Would you steal storylines, plot twists, and characters to belong, to be valued, to be seen?” (Nduwanje, 2021, p. 16). Roles help to be **readable** and to structure situations, but they also **reduce** the self. They can also be completed by parts that may not really be me, but that meet expectations.

Different roles of one person can consist of contradictions. I think they can be pretended because of expectations and adaptations, but they can also be real. And they help to survive. They are kind of fictive versions of the self, just as everyday life consists of **fictive** situations. This is a **reduction** of reality and of the whole self (which is not the same as the whole of a role) in order to give orientation and to at least have plans for how to perform in certain situations. As I evaluated in an earlier chapter, everyday life and dialogues are situations of unpredictability and therefore of **improvisation**. That means that even when I perfectly prepare the role I wish to perform and make a plan, it is no guarantee of safety. But it definitely helps.

And, as Marc Vanzwoll shows in his Tango lessons, the training to improvise in Tango follows the same strategy of **reduction**. By narrowing the possibilities, the focus increases, the training becomes more specific, which makes it effective and adaptable to different situations.

## CONCLUSION

### What can we learn from all that to create balance in a dialogue?

This might not exactly be my field, but I encountered the animated video “**Balance**” from 1989 by Christoph and Wolfgang Lauenstein (see Lauenstein, 1989). It shows collectively built balance as a crucial part of survival. In the film, five people are standing on a floating platform. As soon as one of them changes position, the others have to do so as well, because otherwise the platform tips and everyone would fall down. I think it is a very enlightening metaphor for behavior in dialogues and also in dance.

Obviously, **balance** is important in Tango. As it is shown in the animated video, it is physically important to prevent falling, but also metaphorical. For me, Tango becomes interesting when the roles, typically leader and follower, flow into one another. It is not just action-reaction, but it continues as action-reaction-reaction-reaction... It is all about reacting in relation to each other and to the music, with as much respect as possible for everyone's balance. It is everyone's **responsibility** to hold their own balance and to give **space** so that others can do so as well. Otherwise, the whole dance becomes unstable and dangerous. I could get physically hurt. That is why it takes **trust** to engage in a dance. Furthermore, dancers have to be **readable** so that I am able to react without losing balance. This construction is what I mean when I say that Tango reveals certain issues in social behavior which often stay unseen, through its radically embodied communication.

I see that in Tango, **balance** and **space** are closely intertwined. To maintain balance, a specific amount of space is required. To give that space and to show that you need it requires clear action; I have to be readable. And for that **readability**, I have to perform my role as a whole, as I elaborated in the previous chapter. Some of the other things you said are very satisfying to imagine. But to be honest, reality in Tango looks very different.

Yes, you are right. There are only a few dancers with whom I am able to dance like that, I mean with a metaphorical **balance**. But the basic prin-

ciple must be fulfilled in order to be able to dance: the balance has to be maintained. Staying in physical balance is the first thing I have to make sure of when I dance; otherwise I fall and the dance is over. But especially in the leader's role, it happens that I bear full **responsibility** for the balance, what makes the dance unpleasant for me.

That means, we are talking about an ideal state of **balance**. I found this idea and the belief that it is far removed from everyday life today in the song “Diferente” by Gotán Project. “Diferente” is about an imagined humanity in harmony: “Porque puestos a sonar, fácil es imaginar esa humanidad en armonía. Vibra mi mente al pensar en la posibilidad de encontrar un rumbo diferente. (Because when we dream, it is easy to imagine that humanity in harmony. My mind vibrates when I think of the possibility of finding a different path.)”. The idea of balance is best shown in the line “Qué bueno che, qué lindo es reírnos como hermanos. (How good, how beautiful it is to laugh like brothers)”. For me, being like siblings means closeness and balance, with no hierarchy, at least in an ideal state. “Diferente” reveals, as the title implies, an imagined world that is far removed from how things are today.

This should not stop people from showing ways in which they can come closer to achieving **balance** and creating **space** for everyone. In the text about contact improvisation, the authors write that dancers should “explore, respond, and, in doing so, **scaffold** each other over time, rather than one dancer being strongly initiating” (Kimmel et al., 2018, p. 15). I suppose I can use this sentence directly for balance in dialogue.

Yes, and the term “**scaffolding**” is meaningful too. As a primary school teacher, I learned about the didactic concept of scaffolding. It means providing students with assistance to help them manage a specific task. However, I do this from the background and do not tell them the solutions. I just provide tools and hints, and give them **space** to develop their skills. This creates **balance** in a hierarchical situation. However, it seems to be less about hierarchies in dance. There, it seems to be more dynamic and mutual. Scaffolding each other means reacting in a supportive way

when someone performs a micro-intention, like I described it in a previous chapter.

It is also about teaching from the background, as Marc Vanzwoll says he does in his classes. He takes the lead and assumes **responsibility** only when he perceives that the participants are currently unable to do the tasks. It is a kind of a moderation. It could be helpful to have such moderation in dialogues as well, or as a method of dialogue **training**.

Furthermore, it is very much about perceiving and listening carefully in order to be able to provide useful **scaffolding**. Michael Kimmel and his colleagues say: "The less predictable we are, the more we have to listen to each other." (Kimmel et al, 2018, p. 9). With that, I am back to **improvisation**. Listening well is an important skill for improvisation according to the situation.

This reacting in the very moment is a big topic in VJing, especially if my visuals have to follow music or performers. The **scaffolding** I do for that, actually for myself, is the **preparation** of the show, but also the preparation of alternative scenarios or emergency scenes. I have to be very well prepared, because if something fails, there is nobody to save me. I am in the middle of a live show, and my behavior switches between my plan and **improvisation** according to the setting. With that, all the **space** is mine. I don't know how to share it.

Dealing adequately with **space** in this situation could mean taking **responsibility** away from you. In doing so, I paradoxically give you space, although you already have a lot of space. But you need this space to be able to give space to others, because giving space requires free space. The space you have is not free.

You mean that you give me **space**, for example by taking over the live camera input, and at the same time you take space for yourself. But for me, it is not possible to give you this space, because I am in a live setting that uses all my space; the space is not free. It seems that sometimes one has to take space instead of waiting until it is given. And that not all space

is free. In a live show, I do not have much free space, but if someone gives it to me by taking over, I have free space from which I can create more free space to share, because I have **time** to prepare that.

Alright, it is getting quite complicated now. It seems that sometimes creating free space requires time and effort; it requires **preparation**. Dialogues or dances are comparable to live shows. Preparation of the role, the questions I would like to have answered, or the material I would like to present in a dialogue can improve my **improvisation** skills and space-giving behavior. But it is always a relational question depending on the other person's plans, performance and improvisation skills.

It seems that VJing performances require the highest precision in terms of **timing**, even more than dialogues. But I am not sure about that. Finding the right moment for taking or giving **space** in dialogue is hard. It is exactly as real-time as VJing performances.

Yes, I should always keep that in mind in dialogues. Like in video performances and Tango, my performance depends on the others' performances, but I can also help them to perform.

There is an implicit, and in some cases explicitly stated rule in Tango: in social dance, you are not allowed to correct or instruct others unless you are asked for feedback or advice. It does not matter if you are much more experienced than others. This rule could be helpful in dialogues to take and give **space** and, with that, to reach more **balance**.

There is a statement in "Teaching to Transgress" which underlines this. bell hooks quotes Paulo Freire, who says that we can only grow together in a group when we help each other mutually: "those who help and those who are being helped help each other simultaneously". In this way, nobody is dominant and everyone has **space** (see hooks, 1994, p. 54).

And **responsibility** is shared. If we think and **act** like this, if everyone could potentially help everyone, we can meet each other more without bias and maybe with fewer prejudices. The rule lowers the hierarchy, and it becomes easier to see everybody as an active part of the group, which

is also important for creating an immersive space. Participants have to actively ask for feedback. By doing that, they agree that the person is in the position to share ideas without becoming too powerful. Holding back and waiting until being asked may also keep the dialogue within the desired frame, because people have to ask specific questions. They also need to focus more on themselves instead of over-advising others. It prevents people from becoming too dominant. But how can I bring these theoretical considerations into practice? Social codes have to be negotiated before they can be practiced. Some already exist in dialogues, for example not interrupting each other while speaking. But since dialogues are a very open format, the codes are rather loose and changeable, they develop within the dialogue itself.

I suppose that this requires **training** in how to behave in a dialogue, just as I train my dancing and behavior skills in Tango in order to perform appropriately in social dance. We were talking about the importance of training in an earlier chapter. And it is also about negotiating rules in the moment of the dialogue, because there are not many fixed codes. Training and practice are often inseparable.

That seems to be an appropriate ending for this part of the dialogue. I need **training**, and I can train in every dialogical situation. I **prepare** a fitting role and **perform** it according to the situation. To do that, **improvisation** skills are required. I train them through experience. My goal is to create **balance** in the dialogue. For that, I have to built **trust** between me and the participants. I can do that when I perform my role as a whole, with **mind, body** and **soul**. In doing so, I am **readable** for the participants, which is a valuable condition for trust. More listening and less seeing is also required in order to be trustworthy. I should be careful in balancing closeness and **distance** and in giving **time** and **space** to everyone. This becomes easier when I prepare my expectations of the dialogue and have a plan. But I should be ready to go against the plan, because dialogues are **unpredictable**.

### The dialogue about this dialogue

While writing this dialogue, I felt immersed in myself, in a world consisting of different roles of me. I was kind of the master, but at the same time curious about what the others would say. I felt this especially when I was stuck. It helped a lot to change perspectives through the different roles. The perspectives were very clear through the roles, which made the change between them easier.

Yes, you are right. I was happy to just have the role of quoting theorists in the dialogue. The separation from that to other thoughts was helpful in structuring the difference between what theorists say and what the other roles say. Through the dialogically written work, I was able to make the connection to dialogical self theory, which is very relevant for my research question. I don't think that I would have found that without participating in such a dialogue. It shows that new things appear in choosing this dialogical form of research and let innovative roles be part.

Such as me, I suppose. It was interesting for me to integrate the lyrics of NeoTango songs into this dialogue. Lyrics communicate in a very different way than scientific texts. They are artworks and require different skills to read them. There is always an affective moment involved. Lyrics can make the reader experience the topic from another perspective. And it was also an interesting journey for myself. I know many NeoTango songs, but more the melody and the ambiance rather than the lyrics. By focusing more on the lyrics and trying to find fitting ones, the melody, the ambiance and the lyrics also entered into a kind of dialogue. I mostly used the words as references, but my interpretations were also shaped by the melody and the ambiance. I think that if I continue working on this, I could get more out of it.

I also feel that this dialogue was just the beginning. I tried to make my experience in Tango useful for the research question and was able to share some situations that showed similarities to the theories. It helped that Tango is very physical, embodied and close, which makes things visible

and understandable. I am not sure if my contribution can be understood by people without Tango experience. I should think more about how I explain my experience. It seems to me that text is not the right medium for that. Maybe next time I should be present through pictures or videos instead of text. This feels more fitting to my role in the dialogue, and it may be clearer and show more for people who are not familiar with Tango. You can see that I learned quite a lot about my own representation in this dialogue.

I had quite a similar task to you: I tried to make connections to the work with videos. Sometimes it helped as a metaphor or as a physical manifestation. But I am not sure yet how much this dialogue helped me to form a visual version of the topic, which was one of the goals of doing this. But your idea that Tango could be present more visually could help me. It seems that some things could be visualized through Tango. Tango as a visual language. But here as well, I am not sure how it affects people outside the Tango context. But back to my experience here: I think that in some moments my physical and visual presence helped to make things clearer or to find connections to other aspects. But for me as well, text does not feel like the right language. As it was the first time I participated in a dialogue like this one, I am quite satisfied. But I have not reached my full potential yet.

It is very interesting for me what you say, and it helps in my research. Here is one last thought from me about participating in this dialogue, connected to the writing process itself: while writing this, I am constantly improvising. At the same time, I am constantly practicing in order to improve my improvisation skills and make the dialogue better. Writing is basically an improvised practice that is re-improvised every time I go through my text again. To create a satisfying or new text, I have to free myself from my conditioned practices of scientific writing. Here, I was not interested in writing a scientific text, but an artistic one. One challenge I face is allowing myself to be visible in the text, because every single construction in it is ultimately mine, and no one else would improvise in the same way

that I do. People have to see and acknowledge that. This is something we all managed in this dialogue. We were engaged and honest and tried to show ourselves in our roles as a whole. This dialogue was quite well balanced, I would say. You all had your space and were not too dominant. Of course, there are things to improve as well.

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Otros Aires: "Much Messi"