

In the intimacy of the dancing body: an anthropology in feeling, moving, touching

Summary

This research project aims to explore the topic of intimacy, combining perspectives from anthropology, dance studies and philosophy. It will build upon practical knowledge of dancing bodies to enrich theoretical hypothesis, and surpass the dualism between theory and practice. Experimental methods of “research-creation” and “auto-ethnography” will contribute to shed light on the experience/definition of intimacy.

Drawing on current researches in social sciences, intimacy has become a familiar notion (Adis Tahhan 2010 ; Gauthier and Mercier 2017 ; Perrin 2012 ; Strasser 2017). Intimacy has been closely connected to the individual (Marar 2014) or the interrelatedness with others (Gauthier and Mercier 2017). However, intimacy has lacked a thorough analysis and definition in most studies (Register and Henley 1992). I take intimacy to mean this hidden sensory part of the intimate body, but assume that the intimate body is also collective/social because intrinsically related to others. Since dance is a sensory experience, it is an accurate domain to investigate intimacy which has been underanalysed.

Building specifically on contemporary dance, this research will bring an innovative understanding on intimacy. I will offer a new vocabulary which can precisely describe the intimate body. Investigating my own body as well as in relation with other dancers, I will consider intimacy in three venues: feeling, moving and touching. I argue that such “practical” research on the intimate body can bring insights in social theories on the body, as well as offers different ways of writing. The final objective will be to disclose a living knowledge (in the dancing bodies) that has not found any linguistic translation yet.