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Not just cock rock: body and affective male experiences in dancing rock

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ABSTRACT

This article proposes a sociological approach to rock music, taking into account affects, body and gender choreographies (Foster, 1998). Taking as the object of study the fact of listening and the particular form of embodied listening that is dance, I return to the approach and sensitivity of Richard Dyer's (1979-2021) precursor analysis of the sexual, material and affective politics of rock and disco exploring some aspects of rock eroticism. Based on an analysis of in-depth interviews with adult men about their dance experiences, it is shown how rock music enables other erotic and political possibilities in addition to the display of phallocentrism and hegemonic masculinity, pointed out by Dyer.

Keywords: rock; dance; masculinity; gender choreographies; embodiment

SUMMARY

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ON THE WAY OF RICHARD DYER

This article deals with the bodily and affective experiences of men who dance rock in that particular listening embodied in dancing. I return to Richard Dyer's (1979-2021) proposal of considering musical genres as "sensibilities": a combination of sound, behavioural, stylistic, bodily and value elements. They are forms of embodied knowledge that facilitate shared sensorial and affective orientations, which can be studied through the mobilized dispositions, the material, corporeal, intellectual and affective experiences that are generated in the music reception, and the resulting tensions. This research on men who dance rock attends to how the forms of reception affect and are affected in a network of senses that encompass meanings, sensations, feelings and orientations that emerge and are configured in particular musical experiences. I follow Dyer in paying attention to the forms of eroticism facilitated by musical genres, as well as to the transformative political potential of musical practices in relation to gender embodiments and bodily experiences, in this case regarding the male experiences of rock dancing and their relationship to the expectations and mandates of normative masculinity. This consideration allows us to consider different sound experiences without having to understand them according to a logic of signification such as that of language, but rather as generators of affects (Gilbert, 2006: 113). Music does not represent or encode an experience of the body, but is configured and transmitted by this experience, and can only do so by interacting with bodies. The corporeal experience of listening and of the particular listening of dance results from the interaction between sounds, the bodies of the participants, human and non-human entities (objects, substances, technologies). All this ensemble contributes to the production of that experience

and of the sound space that emerges on the dance floor or in the concert venue.

Dyer contrasts the whole-body eroticism of Disco with the masculinist and phallocentric eroticism of rock. Rock would then be a technology of patriarchal culture, "a mixture of clumsiness and drive" that grabs you and does not let you go. His analysis resonates with the pioneering text by Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie (1978) about popular music as an expression and regulation of sexuality, according to gender norms and expectations within normative heterosexuality. This text, influenced by the feminist criticism of the seventies, opposes rock to the pop for teenagers. In rock, a version of male sexuality would be displayed through a sexual iconography that uses guitars and microphones as phallic symbols, where loud volume and rhythmic insistence configure techniques of excitation and climax. This contrasting characterization of both kinds of music contributes to do gender and to reinforce binarism (Peraino, 2005). If the rhythm and percussion of rock and its electric guitars are representative of masculinity, then pop's lesser rhythmic emphasis and its use of acoustic guitars would be indicative of female sexuality. In reproducing gender binarism, these critical analyses fail to take into account the complexity of rock and its reception in terms of gender and body experience. They do not address either how rock's eroticism operates in the reception, and in the musical production of women and queer people, who are also rock artists and fans (Fast, 1999), nor do they account for the ambivalence and tensions in the performativity of masculinity of the rock stars they cite. The repeated references to musicians such as Robert Plant, Jimmy Page or Mick Jagger as examples of cock rock forget that their performances, dancing and appearance did not match the normative masculinity of their time and led them to be judged as androgynous and effeminate. As it had happened decades earlier with Elvis Presley and his hip movements, being the object of television censorship, as they were considered feminine and ambiguous, as well as hypersexualized and inappropriate for white men (Leibetseder, 2021).

I follow Dyer's example, who, unlike Frith and McRobbie, does not identify musical genres with genders or sexualities, but shows how bodies can be experienced in radically different ways depending on the affective processes in which they participate. This exploratory research asks whether rock sound spaces and the eroticism of dancing to rock music are only and always cock rock, and whether the reception and listening of rock by fans is limited to reproducing the masculine sensitivity of the musical, literary, performative and media contents of the so-called cock rock; and whether the body performance and dance listening, where the "volatility" of our bodies and their intrinsic resistance to "disciplining" (Grosz, 1994) unfolds, can destabilize rock's link with masculinity and phallocentrism. Besides, eroticism entails always a risk of instability for any kind of "centrism", as the experiences of our ordinary sexuality and its anxieties often reveal, though we do not discuss such matters that much outside intimate or therapeutic situations.

Following Dyer's research sensibility to answer these questions is a bit like using Dyer against Dyer. It also requires developing methodologies of listening, observation and analysis that do not focus only on the semiotic and discursive, on the analysis of lyrics, visual representations and iconographies, clothing and fashions, but on the affective and non-verbal elements that emerge in the physical and body experiences of listening and, in this case, dancing. Unlike a large part of the studies on the sociology of rock, it is a matter of not focusing only, or primarily, on the musicians, the press, the industry, the music criticism, on musical production in the narrow sense, but opening the focus to the interaction with reception, publics, fans, understood as a part of musical production as well, and not only contributing to the production of interpretations and meanings, but also to the making of music and the sound spaces that emerge from musical experiences.

Choreographies of Gender

Dance situations are examples of choreographies of gender (Foster, 1998). This notion underlines the

performative and relational nature of gender, as well as the reference to a script or set of rules and instructions about the reciprocal and embodied construction of femininity and masculinity, of what is considered appropriate or inappropriate for men and women. Erving Goffman (1987) is one of the first authors to point out the performative and choreographic nature of gender as a social organizational device articulated with other hierarchies and dichotomies, such as the public/private divide, in his analyses of the dramaturgy of everyday interaction rituals, as well as of the hyper-stylization of these gender conventions in advertising representations.

The notion of choreography foregrounds the relational, performative and scripted nature of gender meanings, mandates and expectations. It maintains the consideration of gender as repeated forms of performance that update norms, embodied by people in their relationships and interactions (Butler, 1990), also underlining the importance of the script, the set of instructions and orders that is updated, repeated, "danced." The choreographic metaphor allows us to understand gender performances and relations as translations and interpretations of norms and meanings, not only discursive but also corporeal, in the double aspect of interpretation: as a particular performance and as an attribution of historically and culturally conditioned meanings. The notion of choreography, like that of performance, includes the question of the sedimentation of these networks of senses, as meanings, sensations, feelings and orientations, related to femininity and masculinity, susceptible to change over time, where the necessary repetition supposes an opportunity for change, intentional or not. In gender choreographies, bodies are active and reactive, generative and receptive, inscribing and inscribed. In its focus on movement and on the theoretical and critical potential of body actions, choreography challenges the dichotomy between verbal and non-verbal cultural practices, pointing out how expectations and conventions regarding bodies and gestures are connected to political and social power structures. The relational aspect of gender choreographies concerns people and groups involved, but also other participants: objects, technologies, materialities, and also sounds and music, which also condition our gestures and movements, facilitating certain steps and hindering others. The notion of gender choreography also allows us to take into account the reciprocal configuration of positions, movements and gestures. How the positions of some determine or limit the movements of others and how stepping outside of these movements entails tensions, the risk of stepping on or pushing each other, literally or metaphorically.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

This article is based on a small exploratory research carried out during a time of pandemic and restrictions regarding contacts, concerts and dancing nightlife. The fieldwork includes ten in-depth interviews and the observation of online videos of rock dancing situations at festivals and concerts. This article focuses on the analysis of these ten interviews. Participants were recruited using the snowball technique, starting with announcements on social media, and to friends and acquaintances, seeking to interview adult male rock fans who were interested in talking about their rock dancing experiences.[1] This search for interested participants found fans and enthusiasts of rock and concerts, and also four men with a more professional relationship with rock: a dance teacher, a guitarist and singer of a rock group from the eighties and nineties and two amateur musicians. The interviewees range in age from 32 to 65, they are all white and have diverse occupations and places of residence: teachers (university, technical college), computer technician, car mechanics, farmer, civil service candidates or architects, in cities such as Madrid, Bilbao, Murcia,

1 The relevant variables for the selection of participants were: being male and rock fans to explore the dynamics between masculinity and dance, being adults to seek a certain experiential homogeneity and better correspond to the ages of the majority rock audience today, and being interested in this musical practice and in participating in research on rock dancing since our research experience tells us that the quality of research increases when we can count on interested participants.

Cuenca, Segovia, Santa Cruz de Tenerife or Arrecife. For this reason, in addition to the limitations of the pandemic, most of the interviews were conducted via video call in September and October 2021.

When I asked for help to contact them, the question arose as to what I understood by rock. I replied that whatever the interested participants understand as such, and then we would see in the interviews what music each person danced to.[2] Rubén López Cano, a musicologist friend, humorously observed the contradiction of dancing rock, since rock is not danced. My answer was similar: I consider dancing what the participants responding to the proposal understand, and then, in the interviews, we would see how, when, what and where they dance. In some interviews, this question came up explicitly, especially for those who dance different types of rock and in different ways. Tono, the dance teacher, wanted to know if we were going to talk about "Elvis-type" rock'n'roll or more modern rock "from The Who to Extremoduro". Other participants who also dance classic rock'n'roll, more often recognized as dance music, and modern rock with its labels hard, heavy, indie, Americana, pop-rock, etc., directly go on to describe how they dance the music they prefer without asking for more precision, comparing the different situations and dancing sensations. Some interviewees explicitly expressed ambivalence about whether rock is danced or not, stating both things at the same time or differentiating between dance and "body movements":

> Rock is not made for dancing,
> it may be made for people to bounce,
> the whole audience bouncing in waves.
> It is movement, it can be an expression of dance,
> it is a body expression,
> dance is that,
> a body expression from what music transmits.
> (Tono, 32)

In the interviews, we address corporeality in a conversation about how they move and what they feel when they dance. We recall particularly intense dance situations and compare dance situations in different contexts: concerts, festivals, bars, parties, home. Researching corporeality in dance requires, in addition to collecting and describing conversations about the body, the practice of listening to bodies in and through the participants' narratives exploring various levels of attention in the interview and in the analysis, both to what the words say about the body and to the way in which bodies tell the stories we collect in the interviews (Chadwick, 2017). Embodied experiences leave audible traces in these conversations about dance, as energy incorporated in the conversation and the narration of lived experiences, as Rachelle Chadwick explains based on Julia Kristeva's theoretical framework of the speaking body. The processes of meaning-making involve grammar, syntax, symbolism, as well as body and sensual rhythms and energies, embodied in intonation, rhyme, repetition and rhythms, which in turn pose a constant threat of disruption to the logic and coherence of discourse. It is therefore necessary to preserve body energies in converting words into text, in transcription and in analysis, as well as the embodied idiosyncrasies of speech as a vital performative element of meaning. In addition to producing transcriptions capable of transmitting the cadence, the viscerality and the emotions of speech,[3] Chadwick proposes strategies to listen to the corporeal excesses and contradictions in the speech of the people interviewed, since subjectivity comprises multiple competing, potentially contradictory voices, paying attention both to the use of the first person, the I voice, and to the contrapuntal voices, as well as to the manifest content

2 Estos son los grupos citados en las diez entrevistas: Screamin' Cheetah Wheelies, Black Crowes, Allman Brothers, Levon Helm, Neil Young, Mago de Öz, Platero y tú, Status Quo, Joni Mitchell, Les Innocents, Mano Negra, Béruriers Noirs, Rolling Stones, Nick Cave, Artic Monkeys, Garbage, Gossip, Radiohead, Placebo, Nirvana, Wet Leg, The Pretenders, The Smiths, INSX, Skunk Anansie, PJ Harvey, Juliette Lewis, Asian Dub Foundation, Ska-P, The Black Keys, Rosendo, The Clash, Ramones, Los Suaves, Barricada, Janis Joplin, Iron Maiden, Jimmy Hendrix, Deep Purple, Barón Rojo, La Polla Records, Elvis Costello, MClan, Screamin' Jay Hawkins, Queen, Triana, Santana, Creedence, Joe Cocker, JJ. Cale.

3 This is what also inspired me to make the transcriptions that can be read in this article.

of what is being told and to the background that interrupts and alters the clear and ordered meaning in moments of the narrative of excess, contradiction, ambiguity, and incoherence, which do not fit neat and univocal analytical interpretations, and which we often leave out of our qualitative analyses, that are more focused on detecting common aspects, themes, and continuities.

In the case of this research, in addition to paying attention to these ambivalences and inconsistencies, I try to listen in the interviews to notice whether the dancing body sneaks into the speech that describes the dance experiences, whether it acts in these men's words, whether the narratives are imbued with bodily joy, embodied pleasure, or with the anxiety and restlessness sometimes experienced in these situations. I also pay attention to the gestures that accompany the moments in which they describe the dance situations, when most of the interviewees move their hands and arms, and how, at certain moments, the gestures accompany and underline what is said. The movements become broader and more energetic, unlike other moments in the conversation. They close their eyes when they remember intense moments of ecstatic dancing. They close their fists and move them up and down when they talk about moments of energetic and visceral dancing. They open their hands and arms when they describe sensations of evasion, of gliding with the music. Other examples of corporality in the speeches are the outbursts of humming or singing, as Tono does with the chorus of the song Molinos de viento, by Mago de Öz, "drink, sing, dream, feel that the wind has been made for you", when entering into resonance with the memory of the concert, or when describing his taste for Ska: "it has the chumpa, chumpa, chumpa, chumpa that makes you get up". In other interviews, similar uses of onomatopoeia are found when describing the sensations and senses of listening and dancing, difficult to describe with words alone, in music that makes you feel "aaaarrrggg", you follow the rhythm "boom, boom", "I usually like an emotional melodic variety within the song more than when it is turutututu trutrutru or pumpumpum or anything very repetitive". The rhythmic cadences of the speech also reveal this corporality in speech, as in these two descriptions of moshing:

> I think that that particular dance
> has a lot to do with anger,
> has a lot to do with rage,
> has a lot to do with contained energy. (Saúl, 33)

> Memories of ecstasy,
> of having a lot of fun,
> of the pogo kind,
> in more concerts.
> With a very beastly energy,
> very euphoric,
> Circles are formed with the people,
> bouncing,
> you bump into people
> but you are doing your thing,
> with music,
> of pure euphoria,
> then I remember a Reincidentes concert where I feared for the physical integrity of two of my friends, because I saw them flying, literally. (Tono, 32).

In which the rhythmic cadence of the enunciation of the recollection of dance is broken when it goes from the description of dance to talking about the inconsiderate people at pogo.

Researching eroticism and eroticism of research

The questions about what they feel, how they feel, what emotions they experience, how it affects them..., are not always easy to answer; they are not issues they usually talk about, they take time to find the words, they use metaphors and clichés. But there is no refusal to do so; these are participants interested in talking about their dancing experiences, they are rock fans, or musicians. They had no qualms about telling how they feel when they dance: "I feel like I have a body", "El Drogas makes me feel".

Dyer proposes studying the different musical genres based on their eroticism, departing from the pleas-

ures and dispositions of body that they facilitate, taking into account that, in addition to pleasure and enjoyment, eroticism refers to a vital and sensorial intensity, to a mutual affectation of bodies among themselves and of the objects and sounds that surround them, which can also imply pain or displeasure. Eroticism implies an experience of rupture or interruption, a possibility for momentary desubjectivation, also of gender and masculinity in this case, which translates into the potential to undo or destabilize them. This research questions eroticism in listening to rock dance and attempts to mobilize the power of eroticism in research, understanding eroticism as the availability for contact and vital force for politics, as Audre Lorde (1978) points out, but also for research, insofar as it is a creative force that allows us to meet other people always understood as embodied subjects (Esteban, 2019).

Mari Luz Esteban invites us to consider the vitality of our research and presentations, and their potential to affect our audiences by generating a host of sensations. Esteban proposes three elements to feed eroticism in research, which I also try to include in it: the theoretical-methodological framework of body, from body and with body, not as a mere object of study; the feminist character understood as a political act and interactive relationship; and the autoethnographic perspective that blurs the boundaries between subject and object of study, putting the body in the research, rebalancing the power relations with the participants, so that the research can be considered as an active and creative positioning in the face of current ideological and moral disputes, where the conquests of social movements, feminism and LGTBIQ coexist with reactionary positions regarding body, pleasure and sexuality in churches, the media and recalcitrant right-wing parties.

We will now describe the participants' dance experiences from two apparently contradictory aspects that stand out in the interviews: the experience of feeling out of place and the connection with the environment and the others.

MALE BODIES OUT OF PLACE

The flexibility and volatility of bodies means that, depending on the situation, norms, expectations and spaces, they can be and feel out of place or in place. Body politics, sexual politics and gender politics involve the construction, learning and repetition of gestures, a style, a body presentation, which mark what is appropriate and inappropriate, what is in and out of place (McDowell, 1999; Grosz, 1994). Disciplining bodies and social choreographies produce the embodiment and reproduction of normality at home, school and the workplace, and can come into tension in places of leisure and dance, where possibilities of other gestures, movements and embodiments emerge.

The participants point out various ambivalent entanglements and tensions in rock dancing. Rock appears as a masculine genre (Frith and McRobbie, 1978; Martínez, 2003) in their own words or in those of their friends who tell them that "rock and guitars are for men". One of them also refers to the masculinity of rock when he talks about the absence of rock in gay bars and how rock music would be more appropriate for bars where the atmosphere is (hyper)masculine instead of the "drag race" type of music they usually play. He considers himself a queer gay and an outsider rock fan who connects with female rockers who laugh at stereotypes, and mock even their own male fans, making their own the gestures and the instrumental and musical skills that are supposedly reserved for men:

> I like garbage,
> it's not like an elder white male group,
> it's not surprising that I kind levitate around
> powerful women such as Chrissy Hynde,
> Shirley Manson, Hole as well, PJ Harvey,
> because there's this idea that women shouldn't
> have the permission to do these things.
> So, when you see they doing it (...)
> But, you know, blokes say they can't do it...

> These kinds of things
> in these kinds of contexts
> drove me in
> I love female rockers,
> I don't know why,
> maybe I tend to identify with them a bit more.
> (Tom, 49)

The conversations with all the interviewees show the ambivalence of the relationship between dance and masculinity and the experience afforded by dancing of feeling uncomfortable and out of place. In some cases, the tension between masculinity and dance is explicit, such as the possibility that dancing can lead them to other bodily gender experiences, of taking "a journey, even becoming another person of a different sex thanks to a song that I like or that excites me" or being a man "who connects with emotions that would be difficult to connect with otherwise". This tension is also pointed out by others, the friends who make jokes and quips because one dances or dances "too much", or by the stranger who approaches Tom in a club to tell him that he doesn't know how to dance. Tension is also present when Daniel tells how, when leaving a club, another young man asked him if he was a faggot because of how he danced, both a sign of curiosity and an insult. This memory leads him to consider that, in the past, it was frowned upon dancing if you were a man, and now this has changed. Although his story is full of current situations where he has received warnings, and even dancing bans, in bars and clubs, for being considered annoying and inappropriate. So that I could see his way of dancing, Daniel did some steps and sent me a short video of himself dancing after the interview. His way of dancing "weird", moving the whole body and experimenting with different movements, of different amplitude, is similar to that of Mick Jagger or Chris Robinson, the singer of the Black Crowes, who are also examples of the ambivalence of male dance, as they are recognized and celebrated among their fans for their way of moving, as part of their music, of their frontman skills, and their connection with the audience, while these movements are the object of mockery or, in the case of Jagger, attributed to a sexual ambivalence that generated attraction, discomfort and even moral panic (Peraino, 2005: 37).

Daniel's account describes the inappropriate nature of a man who "dances weird" (or could we say "queer") and therefore "stands out" and attracts the attention of other customers in bars and venues aimed at a heterosexual public. This attention is perceived as a nuisance that requires intervention by the venue's staff.[4] The gender asymmetry is evident, as women who dance in these same bars and clubs are not perceived as inappropriate, nor are they a nuisance or a problem for the bar owners, on the contrary. Although they also can "dance weird", as in my own experience.[5]

> And well, I have a bit of an eccentric way
> of dancing.
> I move my whole body,
> I move my whole body,
> I do footwork,
> on my knees,
> on my heels,
> whatever.
>
> And one in four times they kick me out of the club, because they say:
> "you're bothering the others",
> "you're taking up too much space".
>
> Sometimes I do things like that too,
> I interacted with the wall
> or interacted with objects in the room,
> a railing or things like that.

4 In a personal conversation with a nightlife worker in Madrid with experience in various clubs and venues, she confirmed these practices and was surprised by my surprise, as it seemed completely normal to her that it was not appropriate to dance in night venues where customers might feel bothered or puzzled by the presence of a man who dances in a flashy manner and that the duty of the owners is to make sure that these customers are comfortable and keep consuming.

5 The gender asymmetry also refers to who can expect assistance from the club's workers when they feel bothered, since these interventions are not so frequent when it comes to female customers bothered by various male behaviours in nightlife situations.

I go under the railing,
I hit myself,
I do silly things,
the rest is dancing on my little step
letting people go to the bathroom and such,
Because I am respectful.

[...] As I moved away from the normativity of
the dance movement,
I became like a spectacle,
like a figure of attention,
and I like that a lot,
I really like
the exhibition and being seen.
But it also makes me shy
and it can also restrict me.

I can be cooler or not,
you can like it,
but I also like not being the centre of attention.
[...] It may be that, at the place, they say to you:
"You are not creating the atmosphere that
interests us in this place and that's it".

Then, what they are going to check is that you
don't bother anyone,
as soon as you bother someone,
one or two people,
maybe they come to you and say:
"Sorry, you can't dance here".

They may say, right from the start, you have to
leave.
Or, more normally,
"if you don't stop dancing like that, I'm going
to kick you out, and that's it,
we're going to kick you out".

I understand that
and depending on how I am that day,
how drunk I am,
how excited I am,
if I have somewhere else to go,
if I feel like ruining that man's half hour,
and maybe putting on a little bit of a show,
I can have many reactions.

I can stop for a bit and start
dancing weird on purpose,
without bothering anyone.

But I'm going to piss you off as much as I can,
always keeping in mind that I don't want
anyone to hit me,
I don't want to hit anyone.
(Daniel, 43)

This story also shows the masculine ambivalence of his position regarding this exhibition when dancing, which the rest of the interviewees reject and avoid because it makes them feel ashamed and embarrassed. Daniel feels both things: the desire to stand out and be recognized, to be the object of the gaze and attention of others, and the shyness and shame caused by this attention. In the same way, while he develops a suspicious gender performance according to the masculine norm, he can respond in a stereotypically masculine way, at least within his account, to the calls for attention made by the employees of the establishments, displaying a more traditional masculine performance of defence of his status and power with arrogance and threat of aggressiveness included (García, 2010).

The experience of the body out of place is manifested in the rejection of the majority of the interviewees to dance in bars, where it is easy to "make a scene" and feel the weight of the gaze of others, or in clubs where, in addition, "you have to dance out of obligation". They want to dance when their body asks for it and the music deserves it, when they like the music and the performance. They are moved to dance by the aesthetic appreciation of what they hear, and not by the place asking for it, they say, responding to the modern masculine mandate of independence and autonomy (Kimmel, 1994; García, 2010).

Most of the interviewees prefer to dance at concerts and festivals, and in some cases also in the privacy of their homes, with the explicit, and also ambivalent, recognition of the shame experienced when they feel that they are the object of other people's gaze when they dance. With the exception of Daniel, they

prefer shared dance situations at concerts, where the visual, seeing and being seen, does not prevail, both to avoid the shame of feeling observed and inappropriate, and for the possibility of feeling a greater intensity in the tactile and kinesthetic relationships with the music, their bodies and the environment. They differentiate places where, if you dance, you are in plain view and attract the attention of others, such as bars and clubs, which cause discomfort and disorientation of the body out of place; and others such as concerts and festivals, where the spatial and situational arrangement to focus the attention on the stage and the musicians, allows you to share the presence and movements of others, to participate in a resonant physical listening, to feel the body in place, without being the object of the gaze of others, in an opposition between the visual and tactile regimes of different sound spaces of dance, also pointed out by Dyer.

The discomfort of dancing, the experience of a dancing male body out of place, is also found in the consideration of the majority of participants that they do not know how to dance or that they do not dance well, this alleged lack of skill being a sign of appropriate masculinity, so it is not embarrassing to admit it, on the contrary, with the consequent ambivalence in the words of the interviewees. Thus, they say they do not have many movements when they dance, "very little capable of representing the rhythm in an orderly manner, although this dysfunction will make me experience it in a very personal and non-transferable way". More than dancing, they say that "they move their skeleton", that they lack coordination, that they move "without leaving the tile", "it is discreet, it is not something to show off, that makes it easier, because you do not have to be doing it better than others". "I am not a good dancer; I don't give a damn". They think they do not dance well, "but my partner tells me that I do because she sees me in a good light". "It's jumping around the kitchen while I sing", they do not move their hips or their butt, or "just a little, jumping, less now than before because of their age".

> Now, more calmly,
> without being in front,
> I move my little leg,
> I follow the rhythm with my head. But you
> start to get encouraged
> and then you move your whole body
> practically,
> you have a route, as I say, of one square meter
> and you move at your own pace.
> (Julio, 46)

The discomfort of dancing as an experience of the male body out of place is also manifested in the need to disinhibit oneself in order to dance and the importance, therefore, of the agents that facilitate this disinhibition, from the "chemical technologies of pleasure" (Gilbert and Pearson, 1999) such as alcohol, to the presence of others who dance and contribute to defining the dance situation as appropriate, as well as to sharing and diverting the focus of attention. But, again, this is an ambivalent recognition, since it implies recognizing the limits to one's own autonomy when deciding whether to dance or not, and therefore conflicts with the mandate of independence and autonomy of appropriate masculinity: "alcohol helps", but "I don't need it", "it's very important that you feel that you are in tune, also because people are dancing, you feel that the focus is not on you".

> If you're in a bar and people close their eyes,
> the light is dim,
> you pay attention to where the music is
> coming from, the speakers, the ceiling,
> if people are in that mood,
> well, it makes it much easier for you to lose
> your inhibitions too.
>
> If you're dancing alone and no one is dancing,
> you have to have a lot of personality,
> confidence or be very crazy to dance,
> unless you're "in your element" with the
> music.
>
> I think it requires strength, or madness.
> (Tono, 32)

Thus, a whole series of elements and bodies, human and non-human, make up the choreography that inhibits or disinhibits dancing, where an ordinary object and something traditional like the wineskin, which Jesús usually takes to concerts and sneaks into festivals, becomes a crucial device for socializing and accompanying the dance:

> There with the wineskin in Azkena,
> the best invention in the world for going to festivals,
> you don't have to leave from where you are,
> they don't charge you a fortune,
> the wine gets you better, it comes out so little,
> you get into the mood,
> and on top of that you socialize,
> it's shocking and you can easily share.
> (Jesús, 50)

EROTICISM OF BODIES IN TUNE

Male ambivalence towards dance refers to the conflict between a modern Western conception of gender in which dance, emotions and body are feminine (Foster, 1998) and therefore cannot be appropriated by a masculinity that is defined as opposed to femininity (Kimmel, 1994; García, 2010), and the experience of connection with their bodies, of "feeling the body" with which dance provides them. On the one hand, they feel the discomfort generated by a practice that is not entirely appropriate and by the possibility of provoking something as unmasculine as attracting the gaze of others to their bodies. But, on the other hand, they also experience positive emotions and sensations, mediated by listening to music in rock dance, of connection with their own body, with the sound space and with themselves, therefore an experience of the body and of themselves within a place, in harmony with music and the environment. "You move, you don't even know how you are, happy with life", in sensations and feelings that do not refer to knowledge or meanings, in sensations and affections that recall the "whole-body eroticism" that Dyer finds in the experiences of disco music.

> I remember the feeling,
> I was happy,
> more than the specific situation.
>
> I remember because you force me to remember things,
> I remember sensations
> [...] I know I was moving because I am not able to feel that without moving
> (Jesús, 50)

In addition to the pleasure and happiness associated with movement, the interviewees speak of an intense connection with the music and the sound space: "you are very immersed in the concert", "the music makes you explode in some way, the drums grow, certain solos, certain riffs, certain choruses make you scream, make you dance, in a kind of crescendo"; and of the circulation of emotions and affections between music, the musicians, the space and the bodies of the others who dance. "I was brought to tears, all the people were in favour, close to the stage, you could see the good vibes of those who were playing, of the people around." Rock "makes it easier", "it short-circuits you", "everything flows". It is a "shared," "tribal" ecstasy, which is what they refer to when they talk about jumping when others jump, something that everyone does, or about "the energy and intimacy" of joining in a mosh-pit, a dance that half of the interviewees affirm to perform sometimes: "I am putting my body against yours, I am elbowing you, but at the same time it is an intimacy", it is "joy with energy," "very communal, vibrating energy and rubbing you, making a kind of contact". All the participants talk about the connection between rock and energy, and how that energy circulates through the sound space of the concert and energizes their bodies, as Silvia Martínez (1999) describes and analyses in her studies on heavy music and its fans.

This pleasure of dancing is felt as "moments of happiness" in common with what has been found in research on dance experiences of other music, such as electronic music (Lasén, 2003, Leste, 2020), and also as "being free, completely free", a freedom that translates into a complex articulation of connections

and disconnections, "dancing at a concert connects me with myself", while that connection can mean that "you forget your things".

> The difference for me is that rock is a feeling
> and you escape,
> you escape and dream at the same time,
> you're dancing
> there at the concert
> and you're thinking about your things,
> your dreams
> and your projects,
> and you're like flying,
> in quotes,
> and you let yourself go a little.
> It's a bit of an escape route for me.
>
> Even if you're with your companions, your friends,
> it's being alone,
> it's a feeling of being independent,
> quote unquote,
> or being on your own,
> and being fine with yourself alone
> because you're flying a little
> and thinking about your projects and your dreams.
>
> It relaxes me,
> it makes me feel good,
> it relaxes me,
> it makes me disconnect from the world
> and there I am, listening to the music,
> and I'm with my mates the same,
> but at the same time I'm somewhere else,
> somewhere floating wonderfully.
> (Julio, 46)
>
> I feel very happy,
> it's like a meditation,
> you don't think about anything,
> you don't see what's going on around you,
> you forget about your things
> and you only think about music,
> in connection with music and musicians
> (Mariano, 65)

Dancing involves a change in body disposition that leads to other sensations and emotions, as the interviewed men acknowledge: it changes your mood, it prepares you for something different. "You lose yourself in the music and you start to feel the music instead of feeling what you felt before [...] anger or stress dissipates with dancing"..

> AlSo listening to rock music, when lots people say it's aaarrrggh,
> for me I can go from feeling angry to actually feeling quite relax
> from being quite stressed to feeling happy and upbeat,
> that's maybe the reason why I dance [at home] when I can associate it with when I am preparing for something else.
> (Tom, 49)

Listening to music in dance orients oneself, in the sense that Sara Ahmed (2006) gives to this term in her queer phenomenology, affecting how bodies inhabit spaces, in this case the sound spaces of the dance floor, the concert, or the home transfigured by music and dance, and how spaces are extended in bodies, affecting social relations and gender choreographies.

The participants' stories exemplify the experience of eroticism according to Georges Bataille (1979), which responds to the interiority of desire and throws us outside of ourselves, which makes us experience being inside and out of place at the same time, causing a break. An imbalance, "in eroticism I lose myself," says Bataille, as our interviewees lose themselves and connect in rock dance. Eroticism leads to indistinction, to the confusion of different objects, to the substitution of the isolation of being by a feeling of profound continuity. Writing from a very different position from Bataille, Audre Lorde (1978) also foregrounds the inner character of eroticism and its power, "firmly rooted in the power of our unexpressed and yet-to-be-recognised feelings". But the mobility of bodies and subjectivities, as well as their relational character, make it not so easy or obvious to recognise the boundaries between interior and exterior, as we hear in our interviews. Eroticism

arouses nostalgia for the fullness and intensity experienced, which appears in the interviews in the desire and nostalgia to find oneself dancing again at a concert. Eroticism as an invitation to "live from the inside out", listening to desires, allowing us to let the power of the erotic illuminate our way of relating to the world, in an impulse that exceeds limits, including those of gender norms. Bataille's phrases resonate with the words of the participants.

> We talk about eroticism whenever a human being behaves in a way that is clearly contrary to the usual behaviours and judgements. Eroticism reveals the reverse side of a façade whose correct appearance is never denied; on that reverse side feelings, body parts and ways of being are revealed and make us feel ashamed.
> (1979: 115).

According to these authors, the power of eroticism, such as experienced when dancing, helps to free oneself from the suffering, self-denial, dullness and numbness caused by the normative order. In this case, the eroticism of rock and dance allows the norms of masculinity to be relaxed, as Eduardo Leste (2020) observes in men who dance to other kind of music in his research on the Madrid Neo-bakala scene, where the conjunction of dance, music, drugs, and partying suspends everyday roles and allows masculinity to be "relaxed" as well, suspending social differences and interconnecting participants.

For Dyer (1979/2021), the materialism of music such as disco or rock refers, in addition to the prominence of the materiality of the bodies that resonate and vibrate, to the acceptance and celebration of the world, which we find in these experiences of connection and mutual tuning-in when dancing rock. The immanence and insignificance of these kinds of music and their experiences are a condition of their politics, where the will to elicit pleasure, emotions and shared body experiences different from everyday normality prevails, instead of expressing transcendent truths. This conception of the utopian, political and combative dimension of the dance floor, as a space where other ways of doing, feeling and relating can be experienced, such as another performativity of the body and gender, is a common thread in the analysis of dance cultures (Gilbert, 2006; Gilbert and Pearson, 1999; Pini, 2001; Lawrence, 2006, Lasén, 2003, Leste 2020) as well as the centrality of the party and the dance floor as the future of revolt and dissent to sex and gender norms in queer strategies (Hamilton 2019; López Castilla, 2015, 2018; Peraino, 2005; Leibetseder, 2012).

CONCLUSION. QUEER POTENTIAL OF DANCING ROCK

Dance, like other actions and practices considered feminine, has received little theoretical and analytical, historical, aesthetic and sociological attention, which is necessary to be considered a significant social practice (Foster, 1998). This situation favours the articulation between feminism, gender studies and dance studies, since they all imply a critique of logocentrism by focusing on the body, as well as a critique of the sexist consideration of bodies and practices. Dance has the potential of changing places and changing the place, after its passage the site is unrecognizable, it is an example of a disruptive, agile and contingent strategy, an ad hoc tactic of resistance against hegemonic practices and expectations.

In this research, we find these aspects of dance in the male discomfort of the body out of place with respect to the normative attributes of masculinity, when dancing and being the object of the gaze of others, performing movements that draw attention to the body, with the risk of shame as a situation in which one feels, and is visible, as inappropriate (Kimmel, 1994). The observations of Iris Marion Young (2004) on the differences in the ways of knowing through touch or through gaze are also useful to understand this situation, both the positive sensations of dance described, as well as the discomfort of the body out of place. Since tactility joints together touching and being touched in the same action and experience, one cannot separate the passive from the active, nor the interior from the exterior, it does not allow the distance of the visual ways of knowing, nor the separation between

object and subject, challenging those oppositions on which gender is also based, the opposition between masculine and feminine.

According to Lorde, contact with eroticism makes women rebel against the acceptance of powerlessness and affective states such as resignation, humiliation, despair, depression and self-denial. If we extend this question to our research with adult white men, we must then ask what consequences the weakening of the gender norms — brought about by the erotic power inherent to the body experiences of dance — may have for them. What is destabilized, how it affects their normal and normative impositions and dispositions, and whether these situations of plenitude, linked not to control but to abandonment and to sensitive and affective intensity, provoke both pleasure and discomfort. The discomfort that seems to be the effect of rock dancing eroticism for these men.

Music participates in the configuration, conceptualization and representation of subjectivity and identity, in the normalization of subjects and subjectivities. But these power relations, which are experienced in listening and dancing, are also potentially destabilizing and facilitate moments of disorientation such as those we have described, in that discomfort and feeling out of place. We can call queer the emergence of these experiences, that strange and queer feeling when dancing or dancing weird, which question both the heterosexual norm and the binary gender and the claim of stability and naturalization of gender identities and subjectivities. Understanding queer as defined by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1993: 8): the open web of possibilities, gaps, interruptions, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning, when the constituent elements of gender or sexuality do not have, or cannot be made to have, a monolithic meaning.

Music as technique and as erotic has the potential to question gender, its categories and meanings, as well as sexual identities, thanks to its resistance to legibility (Peraino, 2005). The anxiety and ambivalences that music and musical practices arouse in relation to gender and sexuality, as well as the multiple moral panics about this relationship from the origins of rock'n'roll to trap, refer to this queer potential, this double character of making and unmaking gender and sexual norm. The instability of sexuality and gender contributes to music's appeal and cultural work, also as an opportunity for conflict between discipline and desire, for both performers as well as listeners and dancers. An instability acknowledged in the double effect of pleasure and restlessness, almost always inexplicable, by the participants in the research when describing their dance experiences, where they experience the disruption of the repetition of movements and bodily orientations considered masculine.

The discomfort of feeling inappropriate, out of place, disoriented, together with the ambivalent pleasure of getting lost and thus connecting with the body and the sound space make up the queer potential of the dance experiences described. Discomfort is a revealing sign of the potential political transformation of a practice for those in positions of privilege (Azpiazu, 2017). In this case, it would be a form of disorientation regarding normative heterosexual masculinity, which is not lived in a completely conscious and explicit way by these men. As Jokin Aspiazu reminds us, masculinity cannot be approached only from an aesthetic or identity point of view without dealing with the power and privileged position of men. A productive discomfort that questions one's own practices and transforms gender power relations requires that dancing be not only pleasurable and disorienting for men, but also a disempowering experience.

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