

**Jaime Llopis (2019)**

## **IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, GO TO THE BODY**

How does a trained and disciplined body, controlled by a policing subject that enforces "having-to-be in order to count" in the established value system, open up to a liminal state of experience thus enabling other types of virtualities that do not obey the logic of production?

How can a body without subject practice itself?

How can a body make experience without being subject-to?

How can a body practice a subject not subject to itself, not subject to its identity or to its self-construction geared to identity-marketing?

How can a body come to terms with the old empiricist theory that dilutes the subject in a multiplicity of decentred forces?

How can I remove the body from the power game so that its potential is restored?

How can the body remove itself from the power game and open up to the play of potential?

The last question seems to be a repetition, but there are differences in nuance between the two formulations. In the first, the subject acts upon the body: it makes it act (removes it from one place so as to restore it to another). In the second, the body acts on its own behalf.

### **To Put/Allow**

To put the body in motion or allow the body to move?

This choice reveals two attitudes that express different libidinal economies. Attitudes as different distributions of the forces that comprise, flow through, and activate the body; its desire. And whether the desire is expressed in one way or another will determine the distribution of the sensible (its partition), which is simply the expression of our way of being in the world. The world.

How does this ontological plan come into play in the studio?

What is at stake in laboratory practice?

The laboratory approach thus springs from an archaeology of desire, and it plays on the attitude that enables the emergence of new “perceptual characters”. It is an experiment based on the plasticity of the perceptive faculty that emphasises the complicity between ways of doing and modes of perception. What we are doing in the world determines how we perceive things, but our perception of things determines our world making. How does the body become the pivot in this complicity? The body as a crossroads, a pivot that blurs the categories of active-passive in constant movement without beginning or end (without a plan or objective). Perception as passive activity, or active passivity.

It is difficult to talk about attitude and desire without the body and its ways of thinking once again filling up with the will and the subject. But we are referring to attitude in the sense of *disposition* rather than position. Disposition: prefix dis- (in or into pieces), root *positus* (placed, situated), suffix -ion (nouns of state, condition, or action). As a result of the separation into pieces announced by the prefix, the position of the subject is empty. There is no position for a subject as synthesis, as a place of projection. Instead there is disposition: the constant distribution around the place-void-gravitational-field of the multiplicity of forces that run through it. Libidinal flow.

When we decide to *allow the body to move rather than to put it in motion*, the first rule of our perceptive adventure comes into play. The first direct instruction (task) is: “the body is always in motion”. But just as the body is already put there, it is already moving. And it is the redundancy of the instruction that makes it the only direct instruction that has a place in our experiment. By “direct instruction” we mean a statement that in the form of an order that applies to the body, a command. One that follows the outline of a plan of action step by step in order to achieve an objective, and operates on the body through the logic of productivity. The body in action as a means of exploitation for a subject. This attitude or way of doing finds echo in a subject that, dominated by the productivity virus, makes of his doing a making of self, constructing the self as identity, as a means of exchange, as a position of power in the framework/market of identities. Thus we see that the problem of attitude (disposition) that is at stake here is inextricably linked to methodological attitude. How can we leave it up to the body to act if we are still governed by the logic of intervention, manipulation, control, and exploitation? So, we approach play as a non-task.

Only indirectly and obliquely does the body gain access to this space of complicity between action and passion, to the liminal state in which it forgets the structure that guides its action and its way of seeing-thinking things. Only thus does the body forget its position, vacate the centre, and become periphery in the form of dispositions.

So, it is impossible to put the body because the body is already there. But it is something else altogether to put oneself on the side of the body... hahaha!... we are already on the side of the body, the subject is body too. It is not a cardigan that you put on and take off. This false paradox invites a change of attitude: to turn attention elsewhere and in a different way. The subject that I want to get rid of, the “myself” that runs through the body, is also sentient body. So that “ceasing to be” can only take place indirectly and obliquely. Otherwise we would continue to be governed by the same police-logic of “having to be”, ... now repeated in the formula “having to cease to be”. We stop being a certain thing when we start being some other thing, not against what we were, but beside it or elsewhere. There is no open battle against what we are, police against police. It is more like a trick, a pretending. The subject will fall by its own weight, it will be pushed aside, left behind, it will be forgotten. That is when the eclipse occurs. Only that in this case the superposition of bodies occurs in a single body. So this eclipse has the form of oblivion... attention is turned elsewhere and in a different way.

### **Dis-positions: Floors. Levels. Layers (Rules of Play)**

Dis-position as regards the body.

Putting oneself on the side of the body.

We were saying that it is impossible to put the body somewhere because the body is already there. But bodies have different ways of being there, of disposition. The boundary of a body is not in its skin (which is just one of several ways into it) or in its contours. Many bodies run through a body. It forms part of other bodies, and many other bodies form part of it. The police is body, discipline is body, the social is body, politics is body, history is body, space is body, time is body, and love is body too. What is outside is inside, and what is inside is outside. The boundary is mobile, blurred, permeable. The body becomes boundary, it is that boundary. Infinite surface, traversed by that multiplicity of bodies-forces. Chattering of the flesh as a sentient, living, body. Bopping. Differences dance, but who can say that my body is not already Arantxa's body... that my hands are not already her

buttocks?... or that Ricardo and Oihana are not already body in Paz. Impersonal movement? Anonymous dance?

### **Disposition as regards space**

Space is not the frame in which the body is inscribed. It is not a background on which the body draws, transmits its message, expresses its identity. It is not the frame of reference in which a discourse unfolds. It does not predate the body. Space is not given to the body as a stage or a podium or an altar. Not necessarily. Space is body, and the body is already space. The body creates space, ...it can of course create a stage, but not necessarily. What is it like, the dance that, when danced, does not confirm and establish space, but rather creates and modifies it? ...is it a matter of putting oneself in space, or of being there with space, of being ever-changing space?

### **Dis-position as regards time**

Time is not the baseline (past-present-future) by which the body navigates or on which it takes up position. Time is not outside the body, it is not something that the body must chase. How is the linear conception of time expressed in the body? As anxiety? Debt? Urgency? Isn't this linear conception of time perfectly in tune with the logic of productivity? How does it affect the mechanics of doing? Bodies indebted to the future, to having-to-be, forced to constantly create value, to create novelty. Not necessarily. Time does not predate the body. The body is untimely, adaptation does not define its relationship to time. The body does not chase time. The body creates time, it makes experience out of time. Time is body and experience. There is a temporality for every experience that is made.

### **Dis-position as regards play**

In his phenomenological analysis of play, H. G. Gadamer noted its autonomy. Like a reality that transcends us, play does not primarily depend on the participating subjects (the players), but rather on what keeps them in the game. A player never completely masters the game, because it would then come to an end. The players are not the subject of the game, they are the means by which the game achieves expression. The mechanics of the game are a kind of constant movement with no particular objective, no end to be reached. Rather, the game comes into being through constant re-playing. The execution of the

movement is what matters, rather than the identity of the subjects who play. The subject of the game is the game itself, the execution of that movement. Something plays out, ...play happens (impersonal). The mechanics of constant movement always implies a responsive alterity that is introduced into the dynamic. A game is never solo, there will always be a ball, some cards, or a plane of reality that plays with the player and responds to his or her movements with other movements.

There is something about play that situates it on the margins of reality, in a kind of fictional plane... it is only a game! But at the same time, a game only exists if the players play for real, if they feel it involves them personally, if they are caught up in the game, in what is at stake. It is like being truly at stake, but not with the truth.

Although they refer to a praxis, all of these dispositions still appear to be theoretical images, ideas about bodily modes, about attitudes, about ways of thinking the body, about the body's ways of being-there. But how does the body become these dispositions? How are these attitudes embodied? (it is important to emphasise the impersonal construction.) Images do not operate as instructions here, as something to be reproduced or reconstructed by means of the body's mirroring. The image (the idea) is just the way in, the bridge, the point of contact with sensory experience. The image here is a doorway, an entrance, not a way into the body (because we are already in it), but into its becoming. Into what is already happening. Libidinal flow, constant movement, passive activity, active passivity. A flow-pivot that transforms the very images (doorways) that it turns. Images that plunge into the body and emerge again renewed or multiplied in their constant becoming. The contact between images and sentient things also takes place in this space, in this flood-pivot, in the sentient body. (This contact –this relationship– cannot take the form of a mirror, of a direct reflection of the thing in the image (idea), but the form of the oblique movement of the pivot).

We were saying: to turn our attention elsewhere, and in a different way. That is where we turn our attention: to the flow-pivot that is the sentient body. To what is happening there. And we do it in a different way, that is, in accordance with those dispositions. But this “turning-of-attention” is not the same as “looking” at things. In order to look at things I must put myself outside of things. By turning-attention we mean putting ourselves on the side of things. Being with things, among things, being-thing-with, being part of, being a sentient thing, being a sentient body. Being thing first, then person. The lover eclipses the law

enforcer. The body receives everything that runs through it. Everything that there is, but nothing more than what there is.

It appears that the easiest, most direct way into the sentient body, into the flesh, is through physical images. Doorways that lead the body into itself. Weight, volume, texture, surface, articulation. Layers or levels of the physical. It appears that in this shift in attention, the body follows the *modus operandi* of science, which tends to situate the ultimate essence of things in their most physical aspect, and then climb towards more complex levels of reality. The body behaves as though seeking a certain sensory honesty, ...to prevent the imagination taking flight (speculating!) to keep it there, attached to things in their most actual reality. Immersed, caught up, in the flow-hinge. It is all there. All we have to do is join it, embrace its inclinations, become part of the becoming it is part of (play down the subject).

But... is it possible to isolate the sense and experience of weight from that of volume or surface? We feel the weight of the volume of the body (its mass) when its surface comes in contact with the surface of the ground, revealing the force of gravity as contact, as pressure. What part of this experience, what sensations, belong to weight, volume, or surface? Animate weight, the weight of a living body, the weight of flesh, varies along a spectrum ranging from horizontal (the body lying down) to vertical (standing up) and beyond: the leaping body losing contact with the ground. That's not all: the images in contact with materiality are allied to the images in contact with the body's transformation, its becoming, its change. The body can also come in contact with its sensory side through images arising in time. How is the thing happening? We turn our attention to the behaviour of the body and of things, to their way of doing. Doing/leaving undone are images (ideas, levels) that we can derive from time. The experience of time is no less physical than the experience of weight. A body that is perceived through the filter of productivity is always perceived in anticipation mode. The experience will always be charged with a certain urgency, that of the future product. I perceive anticipation in the muscles, in the articulations, in the weight, in the sentient body, in the logic of its action.

Some images of entryways are easier than other others, but they not purer or truer. They have all been cropped, they are all mediated. And they all pass through the pivot of the sentient body. It is a matter of trust, absurd really, because without a body there is nothing.

How can this practice be viable on stage? How can we continue this practice inside the theatre-machine?

By dancing while facing away from the audience.

But.. facing away in what sense?

I do not turn my back to the audience to ignore it, but to align my back with their backs. As if to form one huge back, one huge body. A common body. There is no confrontation. My body does not face the audience like a communication hub or a screen for expression, like a subject of enunciation, a model identity. It faces away, like a hole through which to fall. There is no reflecting mirror, there is a hole through which to fall into a huge body. I turn my back as an invitation to turn attention elsewhere and in a different way.

The distinction between affect and effect is often used to differentiate the unidirectional causal relationships between an active and a passive agent on the one hand, and on the other, the relations of complicity in a general sense, involving a multiplicity of elements of great complexity, irreducible to the causal model and its rigid formalisation. So I do not ignore the affect of that set of bodies (the common body) that makes up the audience, I ignore the effect of its gaze. The effect of a gaze constructed by the theatre-machine: institutionalised and institutionalising device that has shaped a certain economy of the gaze, driven by interests like the identification, appropriation, and profitability of what happens on stage. The back produces the eclipse, the forgetting of that libidinal economy of the gaze. We cannot do the looking for others, but we can forget their expectations. An invitation to a common body rather than a public body. Commonality, as that which we all already belong to, as opposed to the public, as that which belongs to all of us by tacit or explicit agreement. To disorient the gaze, expand it, make it disinterested. Leave the spotlight, abandon it. Reduce the distance: what I see is not outside; I am common body, I am also anonymous body.

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