

**Sara Gómez (2018)**

Dear Paz,

When I read your text before the workshop, I had many questions and a kind of suspicion about the proposal. When imagining it so difficult to be performed for real or –as I like to call it–, in “material terms”, I thought: how is it possible to “call for a dance without a choreographic order”? Because with theory it is easy to talk about the transience of all dance (or movement), but how to do that for real, how does it happen in a dance practice?.

I will pose some questions I had. You will see that during the workshop I could find answers, reconcile with them. I'd just like to mention that although some ideas I had about dance and choreography were different, I am amazed how you have woven such a congruent body of work, it is admirable.

## **Questions**

On the one hand, the essay [you sent to us before the workshop] seemed to have a clear argument regarding the questions on the use of choreography or dance in a functionalist economic system. But, much has been said about dance as an art that graciously opposes that system either by its poetic quality, or by its non-narrative abstract movement; but it is always done at the level of the metaphor, for example dance as a metaphor for a political gesture that cannot be fixed anywhere (to a system or law) or not for a long time, etc.

**a)** How then is your proposal –which speaks of the dancer,– talking about a practical reality of dance, which is not metaphorical, or not entirely? How can dance oppose this system, how can it hijack it or outsmart it?

Knowing that my own research is still not up to yours; it nevertheless allowed me to think from it, answering or asking yours from my own questions. In my doctoral thesis I am thinking about choreography regarding politics today, its contributions more than its obstructions; and I was wondering how an activity, a dance event, that does not fix anything, or catch anything, that does not capture anything could contribute something to the domain of politics. What ethical commitment (if every political position has one) does this dance have that does not propose “anything new that replaces the destituent”? Is it a pure destitution?

**b )** I really like this phrase: “Separating the dance from the value system that welcomes it”, and of course, it opens up a possibility for possible futures (another aspect that interests me in the thesis, which I also found thanks to Agamben); but

that possibility does not satisfy you. Perhaps you want to make it clear that there is something more transgressive, or less naive; that is why you want to think of dance as what "initiates the exit of capitalism" and not a false promise of the future. You say "the opening of a performative gap in which the dancer dances them with a vacuum, while seeing them with the problem - and also with the potentiality - of what she cannot understand yet, of what she does not even understand." It seems that this phrase is related to the politics of movement proposed by Agamben (in his interpretation of Schiller); but yours is not exactly the same, since you consider the impossibility of determining that future, while in Agamben the action of suspending the sense of language -or of a use-, has to do with appropriating it again, to endow it with something new, which responds to a specific need. Therefore, the suspension in your proposal is not about generating a state of agency (clearly not the dancer's agency), or recovering or recreating meaning but also it is not just to contribute with a lack. I am very interested in the idea of an appearance of possible futures thought through poetry, art. In my thesis I talk about the idea of art as an enhancer of futures which are not imagined, but possible, which also commits us to those futures forward. Despite this, I understand the problem of a theorization without a pragmatic realization, without a concrete example of its effectiveness, and I'm interested in what you propose, the idea of the neutralization or an undoing of an economic-political logic before the prediction of another.

**c)** In the text you mention the form not as choreographic, but as "an appearing of dance". Choreography is "form" for me, and it is written in the dance event even without it being repeated or without it being able to be written on a more durable medium. Maybe I don't understand what you mean exactly with form.

## **Binnacle/ bitácora**

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## **22-10-2018**

I was very grateful at the end of the first day for having talked more than 3 hours, for giving us the time to think together, to ask, to contribute. That day you listened carefully to all our questions and contributions and considered them all very valuable. What fascinated me was that there was clarity in the ideas, and reasons to do what we were about to do the next day. It had been a long time since I had so much interest in moving, in dancing again in a project that was not mine.

## 23-10-2018

*How do you make use of the use of the body?* Today, between the talks and the practice I understood that we were there to make way for a dance to happen, in a practical way, performing the theory we read the day before. Somehow, between practice, between feeling the instruction in the body, discarding the idea of exploring it with tasks or commands and letting the body work, be surprised for its motor and functions capacities, to let it assimilate and again be surprised. In the midst of all that, I understood that I am not running away from anything, I am not avoiding anything, I am not denying anything, but I am putting everything I have: technique, coordination, practice or experience and attention at the service of the dance, that is: *to let her introduce herself*. That is my goal, and everything I have that relates to it will be useful for that purpose. Before dancing, instead of looking for the premises at play, I imagine that I assume a commitment to dance, and I cling to it, bearing in mind that other ways of working, other practices, other narratives cannot interrupt that task. Then, it makes sense to *let the body do what it knows*» and "a blur so that it is still nothing" but that "gives body to a potentiality", that potentiality of art, of the movement that suspends to destitute, and to open possibilities forward, as Agamben puts it.

## 24-10-2018

If there is no improvisation nor task exploration, what happens is that each plane (density, texture, articulation...etc) "pre-organizes the body", so it can be said that there is a kind of "promise" about the apparition of this dance's presence. I sense it, I perceive it, I listen to it; I let her out, sound, but she is immediately mine, it's my dance, Sara's dance, so I let her go and make noise again and so I let her appear again.[...] I am focused on the apparition of everything that can be considered dance in a movement of my arm, it singles out for a few seconds, however I will not let it be ordered, so I change, and again everything that this dance can be, all its chances of being, pour back into my leg in a singular brief movement ... then change.

## 25-10-2018

Joints, articulations. This plane along with volume, is the plane that helps my purpose the most. I don't know where to direct the look. It was commented that it is not a trance look. Neither is it an ecstatic or a moved look, it is not an inward look; It is only an attentive look at what happens with the body in its attempt to be a vehicle of dance.

Yesterday we saw the video *El Ocaso Del Miedo* [The twilight of fear], to talk about a peripheral look, such as a wide angle, a fisheye, a look that "defines its route based on what happens", depending on what is found.

This afternoon Oscar, Lucia and the others came to see us work. We have lost our concentration and the dance has escaped. I think that to be seen, we are again, [...] the event is again something that is read, understood, and the bodies are the bearers of a meaning. Thus we have lost that steamy dance, which shows only its existence. We have tried it twice. I got tired like never before and only for seconds could I relive the experience of the previous days, letting the dance appear. It's weird, I never saw myself from outside to know if this dance appeared or not, but I can know when I experience it. Hence, I find this research so interesting, so congruent in its two facets, text-practice. But it is very fragile. I do not see the latter as a weakness, but as something very valuable that we must try and take care of.

## **26-10-2018**

Before arriving at La Caldera, I read again some passages [from Paz's essay], now they are very clear, I have no doubt that they are fully materialized. I mean, I no longer think that they are separated from what we have experienced in the workshop. Whether they work or not, I do not know, but it is clear to me that they are congruent with the practice, the exercises let's say, what we have done.

There is, however, a feeling that all this is an act of faith, but this is something that always happens in art, and it is in the interstitial that I like to be, in this tightrope in which you want it to happen, to let a dance happening, to throw oneself without knowing very well what will happen, although committing for it to happen completely. What it happens is that "interrupted choreography" that threatens the distribution and consumption system of dance, at least.

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## **Last comments**

I am excited to think, that what you are creating Paz is a dance practice; an exercise not only of resistance to the value system that hosts the dance, but also a way of practicing it: of exercising leaks, the exits, escaping from that which can stop or catch us. That is why the day we chatted in La Poderosa, [after having seen *ECLIPSE:MUNDO*], I saw how people's questions were trying to understand what you were looking for with the work. That is: they did not ask for a narrative, for a scenic objective, but how they could name what they saw; they wanted to have the codes to talk about the "activity", the event they had seen in the Mercat de les Flors. For me that was very significant, a symptom that reflects that your proposal is more than a way of dancing, another way of doing/creating dance entirely. And if you allow me, I would also like to comment on this [*ECLIPSE:MUNDO*] practice's theatre presentation format.

I dare to think that your research is a three-part being: the text, the performance or

aesthetic object and the laboratory, and that is how it makes full sense: I saw myself totally imbued in the laboratory, making connections, metaphors, materialisations of your essay, believing that I had understood the place where some ideas had come from, your ways of approaching concepts while moving and looking for the elapse of the dance. And when I saw the performance *ECLIPSE:MUNDO*, I understood that you had to do it, but not because it had to be socialised or taken to the theatre to show itself as all art –or not only–, but because that elapse, that event of a dance becoming its own form and no other, becoming endless, infinite, is something that can be seen, or perhaps, is it looking to be seen? Just to verify that it is becoming, to make clear the fact, make it indubitable.

If there is something I could point out, –allowing me a license that you have not granted me–, I would say that some “performance winks” (such as the headphones, the music, the remoteness, the Italian theatre) generated deviations from what interested me most in your proposal. The distance seemed too hard regarding the fragility of the form, the appearance of the dance, the work of the bodies becoming dance. The headphones put me in another place, which was not seeing what was happening, but like seeing through a cloud, something else happening ahead of what you were doing. Has this happened to me only? Is that something that interests you? For me, the performance's proposal is three-dimensional, you have to see it everywhere, from the outside and inside maybe, but the latter is perhaps because I have the experience of the laboratory.

I thought that from a distance, at times, what was happening was confused with a group of people having a great time, without us being part of you, as if the doors were closed. The remoteness also annulled a little the nuances that I believe show the transience of the forms; I mean, that the idea that something appears and you let go, and it appears and you let it and so on ... does not always occur in the whole body, but perhaps in one arm, and then goes to the neck, etc. (I speak from the experience I have had in the laboratory, I understand that you may have worked on it differently at other times). Yet due to the way the practice is presented, it perhaps does not happen with a performing intensity (theatre and dance have emphasized and trained for a long time to amplify the gestures for the forum); instead, yours is a modest, soft intensity; so suddenly what happened could be hard to see. I must clarify that this did not happen all the time; it happened a little yes; however in general, there were moments where everything made sense to me.

Well, all that made me think more strongly that your work has three heads, three organs; [...] That it is complex and that you can travel from one organ to another: from performance to book, from book to workshop, from workshop to performance, and so on. How to have this tripartite approach? I have wondered. You may not agree, but I mention it. But, then I have asked myself something else: if you expect from this project a spectating, or perhaps you are not interested in it being a finished piece that people are going to look at the theatre, the museum or wherever, or maybe yes. Perhaps you are interested in a work in which its elapse, its happening is imposed as how it is, with its sole purpose: that of occurring, above anything else, above not only the dancers (so to speak), but of the

spectators, of the programmers, etc. Or, not above, but *in spite of* ... If so, I had to rethink what happened in the performance, which is -out of the three organs- the stadium which opens up the most questions for me.

### **End of the end**

I would like to finally answer this question you have asked us: Was there any kind of transformation in your way of moving through this practice? Could you explain what that transformation consisted of? There was a transformation. First of all, it helped me get rid of the idea of improvisation as a tool to explore dance, and it has helped me to approach a listening to dance that is partly in my body. Secondly, it generates a new freedom to dance, it helps me to forget the way I hope my body produces, to give way to the form of the dance, to the configuration that its activity produces; great difference between one and the other, because your practice interrupts the expectation of a result based on a specific aesthetic (the lines and the grace of a dancer's body) and opens the way to an indefinite, imprecise, unpredictable dance. I do not expect from it a precious aesthetic dance, - although perhaps it is the case and it could be-, but it would be thanks to the fact that it is a practice busy being ephemeral, intangible, appreciable and fleeting, promising. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your work, and for the generosity with which you have shared it.

See you soon,

Sara Gomez