

# "surrender"

## *LOOKING FOR DEFINITIONS*

I do want to write about "surrender".

I do have problems to define the kind of "surrender" I am interested in writing about in this essay.

1. vi to declare to an opponent that he or she has won and that fighting can cease

I am not interested in who is the winner or the loser, or in conquests or combats... I did not surrender to your victory, I did not capitulate, you did not invade me, you did not occupy me. No opponents, no fight. My surrender is not coming out of a war, and in it I am not losing my power, my place, my autonomy. An agreement. My choice. It is a playful choice. You did not propose me to do it; you did not fight or ask me to stop, to hold, to give out or to give in.

I was not defeated, we were not in a battle but exchanging positions and responsibilities towards my existence and presence, we enjoyed overcoming roles,

2. vt to relinquish possession or control of something because of coercion or force

You are strong and fast that is why I choose you, your arms can hold me tight, your legs can carry me further, you can throw me away, you could break me in five, you are faster, that is why I choose you...you could follow my instructions, you can interpret my needs, you question my petitions, you make more complex the theories of my body, you can redefine my definitions, that is why I choose you...but, you did not force me, you did not force me, you did not force me...other wise I would have never been able to surrender...

3. vt to give somebody a seat, position, or office as a courtesy or as a gesture of goodwill

I trusted you my body, I offered you the possibility to take my choices, and I would also be myself while reacting and becoming affected by your decisions. Accepting conditions, training the flexibility of my statements, softening the strength of my muscles to be molded. Am I afraid to get lost? I trust you my body, please break my rib only if it is totally necessary...

4. vt to give up or abandon something such as an idea or intention

I am not only who I construct in front of the mirror, I am not only the one who decides where I would start my movement from, I am not just who you read behind all my characteristics...I am trying to release my power, or this kind of power that is used to get established by "musculating" statements. I am trying to release the weight of the meanings, trying to erase death memories, old memories...not giving anything for grants, just happening in present continuous, updating my curiosity, not holding the image of myself, not choosing how I would like to be seen or read, no time to be established, insisting in my formation but never repeating...I am available and able to be redefined...

I would have never been able to swim in your deepest holes if I would have been still attached to my memories of what "being close to your vagina" means...now you could do a barbecue in between my legs without provoking a fountain because we realized together we can be something else we are supposed to be...I have discovered we can be more than what we are read for...

5. vi to yield to a strong emotion, influence, or temptation. Still wondering...
6. an act of willing submission to authorities. No victims, no master...

## *POWER AND RESISTANCE.*

Last year, if I would have to (after have talked and agreed with some people who knows or have seeing my work and way of working) I would have asserted that one of the main themes or repeated elements on my pieces and my way of working would be "Power relations".

"Aitana is a "pusher", she is a workaholic, and she is demanding a lot, she needs to have the control over everything"...

But now, Aitana, (wondering about what power means) talks: "...never imposing, always proposing, as a seducer, as a trigger, as a creator of conditions, negotiating, observing, in an horizontal relation..."

Lately I was starting to be more and more uncomfortable with these definitions, about power either in my work or in my research processes.

As Foucault said Power is not an act but it is "practice", an exercise, and it is expressed in all the relations not only through repression but thorough affection. In that sense I would say that, as in everyplace where two forces, energies or individuals meet, my function and goal as a maker, somehow, also deals with power issues. It is a negotiation between my desire to bring my performers to the places where I want them to be and theirs ways of dealing with these desires, by resisting them or following them, by understanding them or questioning them. And for that, to get " what I want" I have to try to use different strategies to convince them and to seduce them.

Also for Foucault "Power is what create subjects with its potential to affect, what make them signify, what proposed the conditions and the mechanisms under which ones they will be configured".

Maria Ines Garcia Canal in her essay about Foucault work " La resistencia y el arte de existir" ("The resistance and the Art to exist") explained that, for Foucault, Power Relations, through the obvious and the repetitive, inside of our daily life, have establish our way of thinking, have conditioned our bodies, rhythms and gestures, our feelings and sensations. She also affirms that Foucault main research and reflection is dominated by the question: who are we? And how we have been created inside of our society and that his try for an answer tended to reject "this kind of individuality which have been imposed to us since ages". Departing from this statement Maria Ines focus her essay in the "Resistance", the resistance as the response of the subjects to this Power who act over their bodies and over their actions. "The resistance as the art of existence, the resistance as a freedom exercise, the resistance as a will to persist."

*AN ALTERNATIVE TO RESISTANCE. A DIFFERENT WAY TO SUBVERT, TO QUESTION OR TO OVERCOME POWER.*

In the last year an important change have happened in my work, or at least an important change has occurred in my own way to perceive my work. Two new elements have appeared. In one hand my three last projects seems to be based in a common research which main element I have discover only some weeks ago, a new concept that seems to be nourishing my latest questions and physical researches: "Surrender" and in other hand, in the last period, my interests toward the act of performing myself have increased and I have felt the need to be physically involved, also as a performer, in my own work. I think it is not a coincidence that these two events have cross faded, myself wanting to perform and the word "surrender" appearing, suddenly, in my vocabulary.

*SURRENDER*

I would like to make a little trip through the concepts and formats of my last works to draw more clearly which are this common points where have pushed me to be talking about "surrender".

In "Do you want to use me " (project developed conceptually during the beginning of 2003 and still under construction) I looked for different makers and asked them to direct me and to create solo for me following my previous instructions. I was in this project interested in "new ways of communication and relation between the figure of the "choreographer-maker-master" and the "performer-dancer-directed". How was possible a constant collaboration based on exchanging roles, a "match point" where interests and responsibilities are in continuous transformation and shifting positions.

I proposed a beginning and a "theme" and then, after, I would totally surrender and follow the conditions, ethics and aesthetics that the other person will set for me."

My main questions were: "What is to negotiate, to accept, to trust, to surrender?"

What about the issue of ownership? What belong to me, to the other person (maker), or to "US" in this project?"

My main needs: " how to be affected, exposed and positively directed, how to bring myself to new points where I was never before, how to modify myself, how to be seen and presented from perspectives I did not know or could not anticipate...

How to redefine my body, interests, habits and ways of working, NOT as an investment in my biography or a way of feeding my egocentrism, but as a research about "process of creating identity", the limits of ownership, the limits of perception and representation and the capacity of being affected and being able to affect"

In "Sex me not", piece made for 6 dancers and where actually I am also performing, I wanted to apply sex languages (surrender, seduction, fitting together, penetration, desire, pleasure, coming.) into dance language and choreography to achieve a new physicality and performative state.

I was interested in how to surrender to physicality and to intimacy, by building confidence, how to surrender to a body without hierarchies, to the moment, by stimulating and updating curiosity, how to surrender to "the other", to the "sharing", to the intensity, by negotiating with limits and desires and by erasing memories and reconstructing new references.

I have done Sex me not 2 times; in the first process I was directing from the outside, the second time I was myself performing on it. It is a heavy and really demanding piece. The body is exposed to a trip where it has to be able to accept its visibility, even in moments related with surrender and intimacy

(The body is naked for half of the piece, together with other bodies, also naked, which touches, smell, taste and "penetrate"(movement wise) its positions. I wrote in my agenda after one of my last rehearsals: "I would have never been able to swim in your deepest holes if I would have been still attached to my memories of what "being close to your vagina" means...now you could do a barbecue in between my legs without provoking a fountain because we realized together that we can be something else we are supposed to be...I have discovered we can be more than we are read for...I have discovered my body can be just a skin extension, a continent"...

The body is also asked to be able to surrender to a strong physicality, to be able to survive to exhaustion, without thinking about the form or the images, not caring about the aesthetical result of his tiredness and confusion.

For "3Duets", my last project, still under construction, I wrote:

"Manipulate me,  
Move me,  
Carry me,  
Play me...  
Make me meaningful and meaningless...  
Both now just happening  
Deal with my weight and my surrender  
Transform me  
Affect me  
Justify my need of moving with your strength and commitment  
Then I will give you the whole responsibility of my presence  
I will not move, not triggering you, not seducing you...  
I have just decided I will trust you  
I will not fight now  
Needing you...  
I will enjoy losing the control this time  
Minimizing my reactions  
Redefining roles  
No victim no master  
Surviving to number 3"

In this piece 3 dancers move my body, which is totally motionless, one by one, repeating 3 times the duet format. The dancers, in charge to move me, are totally responsible of each piece (movement, meaning and time wise) they are articulating my body, choosing my motion, my positions, my grade of exposure, and playing with the different ways how a body (my body) can be read, they (through their strength, curiosity and imagination) justify my need of movement and bring me to places I was never before.

As a preparation in this process I gave to each of them the same instructions, they all shared the same "script" and the themes I wanted to deal with. After this first step I offered them my body and I totally surrendered to their interpretations and "manipulations".

"3Duets" seems to be the last and more consequent step in my new research. A research where "surrender" and "how to achieve different ways to be affected" are the main parts.

Surrender but not capitulation, surrender without being occupied, without winner or losers, without victims or masters, surrender as an agreement, as a way to release my power and to empower my vulnerability. Surrender as a "relation of forces", surrender to train the flexibility of my statements, updating myself, being available and able to be redefined and replaced. Surrendering to "forces that model flesh or shake it" in Deleuze words.

In a review made out of the Deleuze piece "Francis Bacon: The logic of Sensation" Andrew Feldmar wrote: "surrender means total experience: no defense, no critique, fully allowing oneself to be taken for a ride. Surrender and catch a sort of epistemology. Having giving myself over to a work of art letting it have its way with me, I come back to myself. Am I richer, Am I poorer, is it as if nothing really happened at all? The catch is the gift, the transformation the altered state of consciousness I returned with from my surrender to the piece".

Maria Ines Garcia Canal, nevertheless, in her essay about Foucault work "La resistencia y el arte de existir" wrote "The subject is born resisting and is, in this capacity to react, where he is constituted. He defends himself, reacting in a thousand of ways, against the forces that goes towards him. The resistance is the capacity of the subjects to react. (...) the resistance is the main technique to produce subjectivity".

Could also surrender be a strategy to build subjectivity as well as a critical action and reaction that could also question our patterns and way to establish meanings? Achieving an alternative way to extend individuality through affection? "Questioning what (or whom) holds the body property and interrogating what (or whom) sustain a movement's purpose"

#### *References:*

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