

# ***My body is here. My body is not here.***

***-A conversation between the hard surface and the liquid interior-***

*"It seems that the spiral takes us with **(by?)** its hands together." Gaston Bachelard, *La Poétique de L'espace*, 1957<sup>1</sup>*

The present text was constructed by Renato Osoy and Camila Fernández using blocks of conversation during the experience within **(inside?)** the spatial intervention of Hellen Ascoli and James Sullivan on their investigation *My body is here / My body isn't here*. These talks were held while moving between the sculptural, audiovisual and performances set within the confines of the garden-space of Concepción 41 in Antigua Guatemala, during the months of December 2016 and January 2017. The conversation transcribed is composed of **three-armed** blocks--between movement, reflection and experimentation.



## **Preface**

A body will converse with another body as the snail converses with substances, hard shell with liguous drool. The body becomes the space of conversation, after all it is the body that speaks. As for the space; its exposed organs cause us to treat it like a body. "Body incomprehensible, penetrable and opaque body, open and closed body, body

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<sup>1</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 1957

utopian."<sup>2</sup> We feel among the rocks. Shadows are doors. When one enters space, space also enters.

In conversation silence is an infinitely open space. "The speaker sinks the memory of his spirit in the words, looking for ways in which they open to the listener."<sup>3</sup> It is a coming out,

it is a coming in, it is a looking for those

forms with which to open. "It is natural that life, the cause of forms, forms

living forms."<sup>4</sup> Bodies-spaces talking with spaces-bodies. The conversation takes shape as language begins to extend its extensions, to articulate with other bodies of other languages. Because the listener is an articulator and the speaker is a joint in movement. "Speak to be converted"<sup>5</sup>



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<sup>2</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Utopian Body*, 1966 (Translation of Radio Conferences, France-Culture)

<sup>3</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Metaphysics of Youth*. Ediciones Paidós, 1977-1980

<sup>4</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *La portique de l'espace*

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. *Metaphysics of Youth*

## Conversation Block I: The contemplation of dust

"To make us **also** unrecognizable.  
To make imperceptible, not to  
**us (each other?)**, but to everything that makes us act,  
to experiment, to think. And also because it is  
nice to talk like everyone else and say  
"the sun rises" when we all know it is **(just)** a  
way of speaking. Do not get to the point of  
not to say but to that point where it is no longer  
of any importance to say it or not.  
We are no longer ourselves. Each  
one will recognize his own. They have helped us,  
breathed, multiplied<sup>6</sup> (this is a text that has already an English translation, but perhaps they  
are doing a self translation)

*We are here among the stones.*

*The encounter with space cannot have a  
place nowhere. The meeting with  
space takes place anywhere.*

*Between the stones. Recognizing us.  
That shadow keeps you, I only see the entrance.*

*We are seeing a dual creation. But I don't know if it's  
dual. Everything has its multiple  
personae, many voices, many hands,  
many men and women. It is impossible to say  
which were only one of the two. Who did this, who  
Did that? It is a multiple composition.*

*They are bodies. We are seeing the  
bodies. **Each (this?)** body is here*

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<sup>6</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*. Introduction: Rizoma, 1980  
(Translation by José Vázquez Pérez, Editorial Pre-Texts, 2002)



*Clearly, this multiplicity is perceptible in what was done. But there is something else ... something linked to this multiplicity: There are spaces within the spaces.*

*Bodies are imagining watching.*

*I'm watching. Each mass occupies a space, creates a space, politicizes its space. Each opens to another space. If you enter you already have a regulation of space. When penetrated a space is penetrated by the hierarchy of space. There is a government of space. One enters a snail and does not leave, until it is gone. The voice here becomes a spiral.*

*As if the sensitive skin of the eye will rub  
against the contours of space.*

*The gaze is stimulated through  
transparency*

*Is transparency one of the organs of the imagination?  
There is a softness in this body that I want to play with and  
something so hard...*

*Penetrating these spaces I realize  
which are much broader than they  
appear to be*

*As soon as I enter them it seems that  
I can take them with me.*



*An infinite loop. A portable space and  
gigantic time. Imagination can*

*invent many ways to travel within  
this **such a?** space.*

*Space-time. Time-space. They cross.*

*The history of space **moves** through time.*

***History; without time, is distant in the stone.***

*The weather of the sun.*

*Water is mixed with the earth. Dry mud is the  
fossil of something else*



*The **snail (shell?)** is the house. When you enter  
here you enter the house. In the adobe house  
you want to enter and never leave.*

*(It has been seen, it has been understood, it has been said, everything is closed, and it is necessary to find a particular image to give life back to the general image. (...)... rolling on itself, the snail has made its ", So the whole house of the snail would be a stair case. ")<sup>7</sup>*

*From the layers of space and time arise  
our members. From the mud of time  
and space we mold a language.*

*And you enter a place, a point of perception.*

*Our organs spinning inside the flesh,  
to the right or to the left?*

*You enter through the door that leads  
nowhere and still you want to  
continue penetrating.*

*How do the organs maintain their form as if they  
had tried it? You enter and you live.*

*(The dreamer has entered the domain where convictions are born beyond what is seen and touched.)<sup>8</sup>*

*Or that fabric that hangs and swells with the wind blows, turns around, and  
that...?*

*My tongue is heavy in my mouth. It is spilling, and now  
what?*

*Exactly that is the point; that the point of*

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<sup>7</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 1957

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

*perception is stimulated. And after 'what then?'*  
*Then everything starts to happen.*

*It's a fight. Now it's a battlefield that's popping up.*

*A ruin.*

*A body:*

*All construction is a battle. Architecture against earthquakes.*

*Here, that is the struggle. Matter against matter.*

*The world that moves and structures that collapse  
and rise and collapse again.*



*What happens to the structure when its surface  
is undone?*



*It is now inside what is only perceived inside, ...*

*... the stone was organized into walls and walls into enclosed spaces. Before, there was stone, free, moving in the mud. Even though it seems motionless, it is moving. Then stones crushing men, and before that too.*

*... something that is not perceptible to the naked eye, is the interior of what can not be seen.*

*When one walks into the structure one is going through the invisible.*

*Those who traveled in boats were hands, not stones.*

*The sun is approaching. Now that the sun is rising or the way it gets. The light, until it does not appear does not manifest all that other.*

*The hands are still impregnated in the stones. Hands have learned to last.*

*The invisibility and the visibility in this composition of elements, of sounds, it? stays.*

*The stones do not go unnoticed since they proved that they can collapse.*

*With the light appear those images that are always there but that until they are not illuminated they are not made evident.*

*And when the light is missing everything shrinks.*

*it recoils.*

(... "the very existence of 'things' is modeled on {one's own} inner expectation as to strains, directions, and limitations of {one's} felt actions.")<sup>9</sup>

*Between the blocks: Movement and life.*

*Conversations between bodies:*

*"Are you there?"*

*My body is here. My body is here.*

*Are you there?*

*My body is here.*

*Are you there? I can't feel you.*

*I can see you. I can sense you.*

*Are you there?*

*Can you feel me?*

*My body is here.*

*Can you feel me?*

*I can touch you.*

*Can you feel me? I can see you. Can you feel me?*

*My body is here.*

*My body is here.*

*Where is your body? My body is not here.*

*I can, I can see you, I can feel you. I can, I can see you, I can feel you.*

*Where? Where are you? Where did I go?*

*I can hear you.*

*My body is here, where are you?*

*My body is not here. My body is not here. My body is not here.*

*My body is not you.*

*My body is not your body:*

*My body is here. My body is here. My body is here. My body is here.*

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<sup>9</sup> Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art*, 1953 (New York, Scribner's)

*My body is here. My body is here. My body is here.  
I won't stop touching you.  
Where are you? Where are you?"*<sup>10</sup>

*Conversation Block II: Humidity and Kneading*

*Bodies begin to walk between spaces and the intersection of spirals. The deeper you are in a space, when you have begun to see your invented entrances and their exits, the deeper you are penetrated by that space. Is it still the same snail, the one that comes in and the one that comes out, the one that pours out and the one that is built up, the one that collects and takes to the smell and the one that is savored?*

*("... he is saved in eroticism, his eyes are turned down, he wants to see and hear and to take possession of the one who looks and listens.")*<sup>11</sup> *One part moves more pronounced than the other. In this movement "as soon as one dreams in a house it grows in the same measure as the body that inhabits it grows."*<sup>12</sup>

*Every step is a landscape that opens spaces in  
the body:*

*Seen among the thickets a body penetrates  
the structures.*

*Bones leave their shelter within flesh to make  
themselves shelter.*

*We are talking about a square,*

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<sup>10</sup> Hellen Ascoli and James Sullivan. Transcription of audio performance, *My body is here/My body is not here*

<sup>11</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Metaphysics of Youth*

<sup>12</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*

*geometric structure, rigid by iron  
at the same time softened by the fabric that covers it.  
It is hard and soft at the same time.*

*The one that falls apart is in stone, the one that  
is flesh is stone.*

*Hard and soft at the same time.  
These structures are a moment of sexual excitement,  
an excited breast, soft and hard at the same time, an excited penis,  
soft and hard at the same time.*

*There is a certain softness and hardness in  
seeing.*

*And the person enters, penetrates and inhabits  
that place. It is a sexual penetration.*

*Stone can crush me and penetrate me. I will  
bury my hands and carry clouds of dust between my  
nails, remnants of all that was here, its shape lost.*

*It's like putting a finger in your mouth; at that moment  
the finger dwells in the mouth ...*

*The structure with that small cavity to enter the  
depth of the adobe.*



*... is of infinite depth.*

*("My head, for example: what a strange cavern open to the outside world by two windows, two openings!" And the gaze of the one who keeps silence slides over him looking for the silent one who is approaching."<sup>13</sup>*

*In battle I am looking for a space to take refuge. The first movement upon entering is that of a spiral. I'm inside.*

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<sup>13</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*

*Come in, turn left and you lose sight of it;  
You appear to be entering an infinite space.*

*I want to enter further, to curl myself up.*

*The structure asks to be seen.*

*I do not want to get up, I want to stay here  
rolled up.*

*The structure asks to be crossed.*

*I prick the bone that retains its shape. I  
surround the structure contemplating the moment to  
throw myself on it  
and cover it with my flesh.*

*The structure is invisible.*

*There are any number of combinations of  
how to walk around this structure.*

*("And it is in that ruined shell that is my head, in that box that I do not like that I will have to show myself and walk, through that grid that will have to talk, to look, to be watched, under that skin. It is the place to which I am condemned without recourse.")<sup>14</sup>*

*Clearly it is not the same to see as to be. Only  
until one approaches and dwells  
can one make sense of experience.  
Although to look is an experience.*

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<sup>14</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Utopian Body*



*If there is an up, a down, a left and right,  
a back and forth, a here and a there,  
they are from this body:*

*I'm looking for a term that refers to traveling inside  
... How will a blood cell actually travel  
through the venous duct?*

*My shadow reproduces as I penetrate.*

*It is a journey without a straight line to follow,  
a way of flowing organically through things,  
clashing and rubbing against one's walls,  
with hardness, with softness.*

*How could it be said? ... that way  
of perceiving and being in places.*



*Now I'm inside here. Engaged in a recess with  
fully rounded corners, which allows me to  
travel, move, exit, enter, flow.*

*Walking from one point to another,  
without following a straight line but  
walking as it gives the whim of the moment.  
Without any direction defined but the attraction  
towards the other structure.*

*The shadows here are spaces for snuggling.*

*I am traveling from one structure to  
the other with an unknown purpose.  
I penetrate where it pleases me  
when it pleases me*



*You are being penetrated and you are pleased  
and so you continue  
to enter.*

*I turn back back, I walk again forwards,  
I go back in where I have just left, I leave  
where I have just entered, I am inside,  
I am outside, I pass  
dodging structures and forms.*

*Spaces demand to be incorporated  
in their perceptions.*

*And then I notice someone watching me.  
One has the feeling of being seen.  
The spaces ask to be able to see.*

("After all, one of the oldest utopias that men have told themselves, is it not the dream of immense bodies, disheveled devouring space and dominating the world?")<sup>15</sup>

### **Conversation Block III : The reception of the mud**

*What you look at and what you do not look at.*

*Standing on that stone, someone watching asked me what the  
experience was up here.*

*"The unproductive man asks for revelation (within silence, between active individuals, thinkers and women)."<sup>16</sup>*

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<sup>15</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Utopian Body*

<sup>16</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Metaphysics of Youth*

*When you are inside it is impossible not to  
to be carried away by space.  
But, how do you know if you are inside?*



*If something is in motion it is possible.  
The rock attracted the body or the  
indifferent body caused the jump of the stone ...*

*The structure may go unnoticed, may not be seen.*

*How does it turn, to which side?*



*It is the articulation (attention?) to intensities of perception  
that allows you to see and not see  
parts of this composition.*

*They are the joints in movement ...*

*You enter and you see structures, you go up  
and you see these fabrics ...*

*It is arriving at different times of the day;  
it is entering and leaving the structures,  
it is fixing in the light and the wind,  
it is through the conversations that are made possible  
in space ...*

*In the bowels, under the earth, it is made  
and falls, on the surface, between the hands,*

*in the space to snuggle;  
it is being done and being undone.*

*... it is then that something is visible,  
but that has always been here. Invisibility  
is for the one who wishes not to see.  
You can be and not see. And when you see ...*

*It smells, it feels, it is heard, it is, it looks,  
it is perceived, it touches, it leaves, it moves ...*

*To be able to enter from inside. More interior,  
more inside and at the same time on the earth,  
and here, on the ceiling.*

*Their organs are not recognizable,  
and in spite of that, space induces us  
to treat it as a body: **To feel the actions with  
it and with it to feel the forms.***

*I feel the rock.*

*Tangible feelings are being triggered.*

*Feel the shapes.*

*It is space taking body*

*It is playing with the ends of the spiral,  
but if it is in movement it is possible.*

***They are doing this;** and it all begins  
with a spin, they spin and are falling apart.*

*Activated by the turn.*

*As constant as the fingers, the snail is present*

*in all bodies. That structure,  
and if it were identical to yours?*

*Isolating the vertebrae, there in that  
intersection of snails, how not to worry?*



("That body has a shape, that shape has a contour, that in that outline there is thickness, a weight, in short that the body occupies a place.")<sup>17</sup>

*And the stones do not stop moving.  
The stones are resurrecting, they are reproducing.*

*A hidden space to cuddle, a space that germinates  
with loneliness, or a space  
that carries the germ, the spin.*

*I am a space huddled in itself.  
As long as it does not last, it lasts.*

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<sup>17</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Utopian Body*



*The stone ball that is the planet,  
all the time is moving or is being accommodated.  
You would have to ask a stone  
how you see the other stone move.*

*It would have to imagine like stone.*

*It would have to be like stone.*

*She is ready to fall, to crush us.*

*Nobody knows if the stone fell or if  
the stone wanted to throw itself **down?***

## **Epilogue**

It is not formed, it is forming, it is not deformed, it is deforming.

"Once again, for such dreams, form is the room of life."<sup>18</sup> The memory of space flows through the crevices of bodies. Conversation is the memory of the stone. In the stone substances talk. It could be said that every space will someday be a stone: the space of silence becoming a body, "capable of physiological experiences, not only as a material space but alive and in motion."<sup>19</sup>

The provoking organs of space are invisible like those of the body. Every step that is taken is decisive for form, what a decision! The rock is reversing. The blocks of conversation have become intimate spaces. Life is the form.

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<sup>18</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*

<sup>19</sup> Steven Meyer, *Irresistible Dictation: Gertrude Stein and the correlations of writing and science. "The Physiognomy of the Thing: Sentences and Paragraphs in Stein and Wittgenstein"*, 2001 (Stanford University Press)