



The Meaning of Truth and Language in Pina: a creational study

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ABSTRACT – The Meaning of Truth and Language in Pina: a creational study – The work analyzes the concept of truth in Pina Bausch’s dance-theater, establishing possible approximations between the authenticity that Pina chased for movement and gesture in her work and Martin Heidegger’s idea of truth as unhiddenness. In this sense, based on interviews that Pina gave all over her life, we discuss what she understood as dance, taking it in the sense of a language and its possibilities and trying to sustain the interpretation that Pina Bausch’s *Tanztheater* does an enlargement of certain boundaries that even in contemporary dance are conceptually rigid. These boundaries name the notions of authoring, individuality, representation and after all, language itself.

Keywords: **Dance-Theater. Language. Truth. Pina Bausch. Martin Heidegger.**

RÉSUMÉ – Le Sens de la Vérité et du Langage dans Pina: une étude creationnel – Le travail analyse la notion de vérité dans la danse-théâtre de Pina Bausch, en établissant des approches possibles entre la valorisation de l’authenticité du mouvement et du geste prônées par la chorégraphe et la notion de vérité dans Heidegger. Partant des interviews accordées par Pina tout au long de sa vie, on a essayé de discuter quelques nuances dans la façon avec laquelle elle a compris la danse, au sens strict d’une langue et ses possibilités, en cherchant à supporter l’interprétation que le *tanztheater* de Pina Bausch propose l’agrandissement de certaines frontières qui sont rigides conceptuellement même dans la danse contemporaine. De telles frontières concernent les notions de paternité, d’individualité, de représentation et du langage.

Mots-clés: **Danse-Théâtre. Langage. Vérité. Pina Bausch. Martin Heidegger.**

RESUMO – O Sentido da Verdade e da Linguagem em Pina: um estudo criacional – O trabalho analisa a noção de verdade na dança-teatro de Pina Bausch, estabelecendo aproximações entre a valorização da autenticidade do movimento e do gesto preconizadas pela coreógrafa e a noção de verdade como desvelamento em Martin Heidegger. Por meio de entrevistas que Pina deu ao longo de sua vida, procura-se discutir algumas nuances de sua ideia de dança, no sentido estrito de uma linguagem e suas possibilidades, visando sustentar a interpretação de que o *tanztheater* de Pina Bausch propõe o alargamento de certas fronteiras conceitualmente rígidas mesmo na dança contemporânea. Tais fronteiras dizem respeito às noções de autoria, de individualidade, de representação e, em última instância, da própria linguagem.

Palavras-chave: **Dança-Teatro. Linguagem. Verdade. Pina Bausch. Martin Heidegger.**

Pina Bausch's name is always and immediately connected to the scenic language that she, in continuity to Rudolf Von Laban and Kurt Jooss' studies, has developed. Although she was not the first, nor the only one to work with this language, Pina is almost a synonym of *Tanztheater* in the twentieth century's dance history. She was the one who consecrated this approach, fundamentally characterized by an extinguishment of boundaries. This is not about, therefore, merging techniques and procedures from two distinct areas, thinking about each one as closed in itself, but exactly about comprehending the indistinct points inherent to each one, and in this case the idea of expression works as cornerstone.

In this article we intend to emphasize some aspects of this approach, taking it fundamentally in the sense of a language, and considering that this language is the result of the choreographer's understanding of the importance of expression. In other words, we seek to explore the idea that it is the fact that Pina considered expression as her primary objective that leads her to reconfiguring the dance concept itself. And that leads us to think about the matter of truth. Would Pina's approach, when it searches for the individuals' "truths", be an attempt to express "truths" that belong to all of us, in the field of emotions and feelings?

Pina has spoken about this more than once: "There are feelings that belong to all of us" (apud Climenhaga, 2013, p. 101). Would trying to express them be seen as a philosophical and political movement very different from other thoughts developed in contemporary¹ dance, that are less confident of the possibility of saying things *shared by everyone*? Could *Tanztheater* be, in that perspective, a countermovement, opposing to the well accepted idea that expressing is reducing oneself to the subjective meaning's sphere?

First, we must recognize that the concept of truth is the most complicated, not only to be applied to dance, but to be mentioned with a reference to any artistic language. In general, we think – deriving involuntarily from platonic parameters that the western culture carries – a very clear separation between art and truth. Truth belongs to the objectivity field, to the correspondence between language and reality, and ultimately, to representation. Certainly, it is not following this traditional concept that the idea of truth can be related to *Tanztheater*. It makes no sense to attribute to art the role of searching for convictions that belong only to that ancient proposal

that originated philosophy and science, that is to say, that mankind is capable of a safer knowledge through rationality.

On the other hand, leaving behind the heavy armor of philosophy's traditional thought, there is the possibility of understanding truth in other senses and, in this case, it could belong to art. There are many contemporary philosophers that move in this direction, and it is necessary, in the first place, to recall Nietzsche, whose philosophical trajectory was dedicated to criticizing the presumptuous proposition shaped from Platonism, in which truth is the result of a superior capacity of human beings. For Nietzsche, fundamentally, there is no difference between the discourses of philosophy and poetry, meaning one cannot have more truth than the other. Both discourses are equally created by humans, and the value that is assigned to each one come more from moral decisions than from epistemic reasons.

Nietzsche is, for that matter, a synonym of a very deep rupture with traditional thinking, and in great part because he was able to understand thought as something much more aesthetical, that is: to understand art not as an imitation activity, but something primordial and that points to the human relationship with life itself, from a creational point of view. Bringing up Nietzsche's name at this point intends only to establish an initial landmark, a point from which philosophy could not be thought in the same manner anymore. But clearly this is far away from closing the question. Contemporary philosophical questionings, either the ones coming from Nietzsche's thinking or those solely related to his historical moment, set an extensive discussion, for which there is no space in this brief piece, but that must be present as a background for the reader. Because it is in the consciousness of those two extreme points that we move when we decide to discuss the matter of truth in Pina Bausch's work. Truth is, in itself, an inexhaustible discussion and what is important for us is only to find some traces of how Pina understood this concept and if this can somehow characterize her path as a creator.

Pina has always used the word authenticity as an ambition in her life, the meaning of her dance, and the term of a never-ending curiosity. The many times repeated sentence *I am not interested in how people move, but in what moves them* might be seen as formulation of this stance. Seeking what moves a person and not how the person moves is a look that searches for some sort of *truth* of the individual. This *what moves someone* is about

something fundamental. Dance can say something very important, something that makes us move. The meaning of movement is also an amplified meaning. In an interview to Norbert Servos, dated February 16th, 1990, Pina says that “dance is the only real language” (Bausch apud Koldehoff, 2016, p. 140). Our first question concerns, therefore, to what Pina means by that.

And maybe a key to this answer is in the choreographic creation process proposed by her. Therefore, a second important question concerns to how she created this language. Maybe the answer to the second question will give us clues to answering the first one. Both are connected.

A source we can explore in the search for those answers is the analysis of Pina’s interviews and speeches, and also of her dancers’. Starting with those, it becomes possible to name elements of a personal methodology, which must be taken into consideration when we say that Pina was an artificer of great changes in what we understand as dance. Despite some differences along the time, it is possible to find methodological elements, that are maintained throughout distinct moments and also that may be considered *engines*, somehow, of each new elaboration that she has realized in the *Tanztheater*’s scope.

It is necessary to start with the fact that underneath dance-theater there is a change of mentality in relation to the purpose of dancing, in which Pina conforms very well to the idea of her master Kurt Jooss, that being: the idea that dance *is* theater. This statement may sound initially odd, but may be, at the same time, very simple. It is about thinking that dance is made for expressing, above all. All the elements that are in there, the forms, lines, the beauty of the choreographed movement etc. are not things with an end in themselves; they only can exist to serve a dramaturgy. Says Jooss (apud Sánchez, 2010, p. 10):

At the end I am a theater author. I think in theatrical terms and this kind of thinking genre is not easily discarded. I need librettos that suspend and impassion and must succeed in transposing in movement and emotions the dramaturgy of a libretto (author’s translation).

Of course, at a first glance, it is possible to think that dance has always worked this way. It is a fact that dramaturgy has always been a part of dance, but the relationship between movement and dramaturgy is different in each dance language we may analyze. In classical dance, for example,

dramaturgy is almost ancillary, whereas elements that are internal to dance, like the *virtuose*, or the meaning of lifting up from the ground itself, stand up per se, no matter what the main story might be. The meaning Jooss gives to dance as an expression brings a dramaturgy that expresses itself through the movements, the transposition of a story in bodily language. Dance and theater are not, so to speak, together, as has always been the case. They *are* the same, and this is the new perspective that characterizes dance-theater.

We want to raise the possibility of reading Pina's work in a very specific way, inside the history of *Tanztheater*. This is about a slightly subtler change of mentality, which is related to how one makes dance, to who knows how to make dance, and *to whom dance belongs to*. Pina demonstrates in various moments an understanding of dance as a language that, somehow, *overcame* her. To exercise the choreographer's role was not synonymous to *owning* a technique or applicable methodologies through which the desired result, to communicate with the audience, is achieved. Some of Pina's statements indicate the understanding that dancing is an overcoming of her as an individual, an attempt to say something *that is here*, more than something that she individually thinks or feels. This is the attitude that we want to approximate to some questionings inside philosophy's scope.

This does not have the intention of imposing different philosophical voices to the artist, but only to enlighten a possible approximation. Pina's relationship with art converges to something very close to what Martin Heidegger expresses philosophically in many parts of his work: the idea that language is not a mere tool that belongs to each individual. To Heidegger "language speaks" (Heidegger, 1982, p. 111.). Underneath an apparently ordinary statement, the philosopher seeks exactly to *remain* inside language, somewhere we have never been out of, and to emphasize the fact that it is not possible, nor it is necessary to define it. All parameters used to define language are already a limited part of language itself. And what he underlines is that this language that speaks transcends individuals. As we speak, we do not own the language as traditional philosophical parameters might understand it. To this author, from a phenomenological and hermeneutic point of view, language and reality are similar terms. In this aspect, the relationship with language must be one of belonging (which entitles a certain listening and availability) and not of domination.

If language is what speaks, and not just the individuals, we must think that, as human beings, we are born into something that overcomes us, into an existence imperative that we did not choose and cannot avoid: and that means speaking all the time (because all our thoughts awake or asleep, are language). Says Heidegger: “Language speaks. Men speak as they correspond to language. To correspond is to listen.” (Heidegger, 1982, p. 118) Such concept results from the fact that this philosopher questions limits that were established by philosophical tradition, which restricts itself to thinking as representation, acknowledging the notions of subject and object as tight realities, and of the knowledge relationship itself as a *correspondence* in language. But representational thinking is only one of the possibilities of language. Before that, in the simple fact that we exist, we already exist as language and, for that matter, defining language or thinking entails to a cutout, so to speak, from infinite possibilities. So, it would be necessary a fair amount of caution not to be misled but the subtle features of these cutouts; that means, after all, not ignoring that those are cutouts.

We do not want to say that Pina saw life through his philosophical perspective. This would only be possible if she had said that at some point. But we are merely suggesting that there are many similarities between what Heidegger acknowledges as art and things that Pina has stated as being important to her art. That being, among others: the availability to listen to something that might come from an unexpected place and the necessity of not letting reasoning lead this search for truth, because this is not about intellectual work. In the following quote, Pina shows her understanding that many things may be dance, beyond what is primarily considered, and that it opens to us a kind of non-intellectual knowledge:

Of course, it was very hard at the beginning. The word ‘dance’ was related to a very particular number of ideas. It was hard to comprehend that dance could exist in a very different way. Because dance does not consist of one particular technique. This would be highly arrogant, thinking that many other things are not dance. And I believe only a great dancer can perform something very, very simple. Everything is very delicate. I never ask anything private, I ask a precise question. When a dancer answers, it’s with something we all share. Something we know – but not in an intellectual way (Bausch apud Servos, 2008, p. 230).

Pina sounds actually mysterious in her comprehension. As in Heidegger, the possibility of perceiving something that rationality does not

reach emerges, acknowledging rationality as only a part of the human being as an existence. Something that is not always clear in words and that might have a better translation in art. Says Pina:

[...] we are trying to put our minds to something very precise, something that was always understood. This is the only real language. Same things happen always in the same moment with the same music. It is something precise, but not something that can be seen (apud Servos, 2008, p. 232).

This very precise something, this something that was always understood, that is, something that is somehow in the humanity's *memory*, relates, in Pina, to very fundamental subjects that all of us somehow adhere to, things we seek, feelings we share, etc. But that also does not mean any kind of objective and unique truth, in traditional terms. Beyond this language notion arises, therefore, another question postulated by Heidegger as fundamental, that is: *what is truth?*

Heidegger's interpretation to phenomenology relates consciousness and language, coming from there his concept of *dasein*, that is, the existing human being as the one that projects him into the world, and does it by speaking, thinking, existing in language. But historically we have built ourselves inside a tradition in which a privilege is given to a very restrictive understanding of language, which is the representational thinking, in which truth is seen as *an adequacy between intellect and being*. This language concepts primacy is harshly attacked by Heidegger, for many different reasons. One of those is the fact that, when we move only inside representational thinking and take *propositions as correspondent to things*, we treat those things as *simply given beings*, as idle objects and not as events, as *being*. We also unbind them from an entire context to which they belong, and without this context, the thing would have no meaning to us human beings. We de-world [*entweltlichen*] them, like if it were possible for us to be aware of something outside the human world. Summarizing, for Heidegger, finding the place of truth in the proposition is always insufficient, because truth cannot be anywhere else than in the happening of reality itself, and here we cannot do without the idea of temporality.

When Heidegger publishes *The Origin of the Work of Art*, in 1977, this criticism is sufficiently established, as well as his concept of truth as uncovering, which is the translation to the Greek word *aletheia*, to which Heidegger resorts to when trying to explain truth as happening, appearance,

inside the scope of *being* (understood here as a verb). With this proposal, Heidegger tries to overcome dichotomies inherent to traditional concepts and emphasize the idea of the *giving* of being, denying that truth might be restricted to propositional reasoning.

And it is in the context of such perspective that Heidegger will discuss art in the abovementioned work. The starting point of this text consists of pointing out what the author considers limitations of philosophical aesthetics. For Heidegger, aesthetics seeks to analyze the work of art through concepts, and concepts carry problematical interpretations throughout its history. And by that, he seeks to demonstrate that our concept of art is conditioned to philosophical concepts which are deeply ingrained in the western culture, so much that we do not realize they come from certain interpretations of reality proper to philosophy, but they could and should be questioned. Concepts such as essence and appearance, matter and form, subject and object are pillars of theories that turn into, ultimately, an aesthetic notion that, for Heidegger, is closer to science than to art. For this author, art cannot be reached by those aesthetic theories, since art is a usage of the language that escapes from those parameters.

Art is, in this perspective, the setting-itself-to-work of truth (Heidegger, 2002, p. 30), as art *speaks*, beyond all of those apparently unquestionable judgements and concepts. If we think of truth beyond representational reasoning, art is the field where we can see truth emerge in manners that nor science neither philosophy could reach. Truth, in this respect, takes place in language. And, being the art the place where this language is free, it opens the possibility of the unexpected. In this case, the artist does not own the truth, does not design it in a complete form. The (much contested) example that Heidegger presents, using the work *A pair of shoes*, by Vincent Van Gogh, seeks to show the presence of the unexpected. The work may express more than the artist himself had intended to.

The artwork opens up, in its own way, the being of beings. This opening up, i.e., unconcealing, i.e., the truth of beings, happens in the work. In the artwork, the truth of beings has set itself to the work. Art is the setting-itself-to-work of truth. What is truth itself, that it happens, at times, as art? What is this setting-itself-to-work? (Heidegger, 2002, p. 30).

Truth has, along this path, a poetical character. The aesthetical theories of philosophy do not work with this perspective of truth; therefore,

they do not reach, according to the author, the actual meaning of art. And it is also not Pina's intention to discuss this matter philosophically, but if we think about truth in this perspective, the motivation to turn human issues into dance seems justified, that is to say, this is the reason we sustain that *truth* may be the driving force behind *Tanztheater's* work. Norbert Servos seems to have made a good summary of that power.

Dance-theater developed towards something that could be described as a theater of experience, a theater that transcribes reality aesthetically, via direct confrontation, turning it into a physical fact experienced by the body. By getting rid of the shackles of literature, while making its abstraction concrete, dance becomes attentive for the first time in history, raising its consciousness and taking the means of expression into its own hands (Servos, 2008, p. 20).

It is also interesting to understand, through this look, what Pina says in an interview with Ingrid Seyfert, dated June 1987: "Our source is reality, life, not art. Things are born because I do not want to speak something very controlled" (apud Koldehoff, 2016, p. 124, author's translation). To say that the source is life sounds ordinary, but the strength of this statement lies in denial: "not art". Pina means a position, compared to other artistic movements, that overcomes dichotomies, just as the very content of dance-theater does.

In relation to classical ballet, as an example, Pina Bausch has always demonstrated genuine respect, although she treats it with humor and criticism in her plays². However, as a creator of a new perspective of dance, she does not look at it under generally valorized optics, that is: neither as an unequalled conquest nor as a symbol of struggle. Norbert Servos brings this to our attention, with great propriety:

Dance-theater diverges enormously from the momentum of the 1968 and later movements. It does not seek to confront; it seeks to go to the bottom of things. It does not teach; it engenders experiences. It does not try to change; it allows change to take place (Servos, 2008, p. 13).

Perhaps the only thing we can put forcefully is that Pina is averse to the idea of art for art's sake, which means the affirmation of the importance of *content*, which a large part of the contemporary movements proposes to deny. When Pina says that the important thing is not art, but life, she also says that to make art is also to assume a certain demand of meaning, of clar-

ity in what is being said to the public. The imperative of expressing, which escapes a dichotomic logic, that is, neither is it reduced to a subjective truth, which no one else can reach, nor can it claim to mean something objective, which is not the task of art.

In the same interview, Ingrid Seyfert suggests that apparently Pina's works are about the deepest issues of men, childhood and death, love and hate, remembrance and oblivion, deformations and sorrows in the relations between men and women. And that this seems distressing, but does not depress us, on the contrary, it appears with extreme beauty and solidarity. To which Pina responds:

This is the theme. But not in the sense that I own it and can chronicle it. It is in me, in us, in this much delimited time. At the time of the searches we are not dancers and choreographer, but human beings. We do this as manual labor, and none of us play any role. I do not want to tell any story if we cannot get behind it to become anonymous. Our themes and motives have to do with desire. Consequently, with the fact that we all want to be loved. When I in the 1980 piece ask: what you are afraid of, it is because we are all afraid of something. [...] Words and questions, therefore, come from all of us. They are born in several languages, in several hours and days, because they want to express something very precise. That is in every moment different (Bausch apud Koldehoff, 2016, p. 124, author's translation).

Escaping, as we have said, a dichotomic logic, Pina realized and was always marveled at the capacity that dance had, in the way that she was forging, to speak of things that affects most of the people, things with which people from different parts of the world identify themselves. As if she could speak, by other means, *universal* things. We emphasize the term because it should not be read with the philosophical burden that it has, that is, the burden of a tradition that sought to achieve truths beyond time and human life. This is not the case with Pina.

Royd Climenhaga very aptly formulates the question when he states that in both classical ballet, whose ideal is the flight and the denial of gravity, and in modern dance, where the dancer's body needs to be worked in connection with the ground, the same logic rules:

The implications of these two different approaches have long range, but technically and metaphorically, both reflect the view of the dancer's body as material to be manipulated to reach the desired condition of expression. This leads to an attitude in which the dancer's body in motion is thought of

as the basis from which dance is able to represent reality (Climenhaga, 2013, p. 129).

For the author, in Pina there is a rupture with this posture, far beyond the postmodern precept of dance that seeks to leave the dancer's body in motion as the primordial expressive element on stage, avoiding any other accessory element. In Pina, the body of the dancer effectively ceases to be a matter in which representations can be shaped. In *Tanztheater*, says, "[...] the human subject is held responsible as present in his body, rather than as a means to achieve a quality of illusory beauty through a developed technique" (Climenhaga, 2013, p. 130). And, at the same time dancers are removed from the condition of objectified movers, the "[...] choreography is reoriented beyond the sequence of steps to become the general condition of the piece and the implicit body engagement of the dancers in the event" (Climenhaga, 2013, p. 130).

In this sense, Pina Bausch's dance-theater assumes a certain breach of traditional logics that follow the concept of language itself. The dancer's body is thought of as the raw material of the choreographer, analogous to the painter's ink, and both results, that is, both the picture and the choreography are representations of something that the author wanted to state. All those small boundaries are shaken by dance-theater: in a quiet way, it is true, but vehemently, they are shaken. Because if we think these concepts in an inflexible way, we will see that they end up losing their sense against Pina's way of thinking about her art. In Pina, these words exist, but in a much more open and flexible way. Norbert Servos underlines, speaking of the fact that Pina did not create a simple style but a way of thinking dance:

In dance-theater, no one knows more than the audience – neither the choreographer nor the dancers – and no one raise a finger to teach people lessons. We can only search together for navigable routes, feeling our way carefully and experiencing things. Dance-theater seeks nothing less than the total rehabilitation of poetry, not in the self-indulgent sense of *l'art pour l'art*, but through the connection of the real to the possible (Servos, 2008, p. 12).

In this understanding, what Pina calls experimentation can also be understood with an existential nuance. That is: it is not about improvising, simply, but to pour into dance language questions, words, and specific themes always concerning the strongest feelings of human beings. It is about expressing not the subjectivities, which concerns each individual, but

feelings that *would be shared by all*. That explains the audacity of Servos in the abovementioned quote, to call this a total complete rehabilitation of poetry. What Pina brought as a demand to her dancers – which, of course, came from a demand she always made to herself – could be understood, assuming here Heidegger’s point of view, as some kind of *poetry with the body*. But how does this happen?

Pina has always used a way of working that consisted of starting with questions. It seems that from the outset such dynamics worked for her. Gradually, she put it as a working method for the whole company. Pina asked questions and the dancers had to respond through their bodies. Along with this method there was a worldview that was expressed in everyday life and relationships, making it clear that dancers are not, as in other dance perspectives, objects with which an art is made.

“Sometimes you stand there feeling completely naked” (apud Servos, 2008, p. 219) That is how the dancer Heide Tegeder describes the rehearsals. Working with the method of questions entails activating memories and subjective experiences. But always, as Pina’s desired, seeking what overcame the merely subjective realm.

The ability to expose oneself, in other words, to be open and vulnerable, was and is the biggest challenge for the *Wuppertal Tanztheater* dancers. But whoever faces this challenge quickly realizes a personal source of strength. Anyone who pursues this path finds a truth that tears everything that is superficial and penetrates in the essential. Certain vitality is found and protected at the moment it is revealed. And it becomes clear that change happens very naturally, if we only allow it (Servos, 2008, p. 220).

From behind her desk, Pina would put herself as some sort of mirror to those *universal feelings*. Observing more than speaking, Pina had in mind what she once stated:

The only thing I can do, since I do not know ‘the audience’, is: ‘I am the audience’, when I create a piece. I am the thermometer. What I feel, I see, what makes me laugh and what I feel afraid of: this is what we show. What is interesting is that despite all the differences, the feelings are strangely identical (Bausch apud Koldehoff, 2016, p. 125, author’s translation).

Certainly, Pina was not naïve about the notion of identity of feelings. We cannot assign to this speech an intention to say that other people think and feel like her. To say, “I am the audience” means, in fact, to work from

her own sensitivity, attentive to questions that are not reduced to her own life experience, but problems that affect people in general. On the other side, Pina has stated several times that the audience was a part of the piece, in a sense that each one would see something in there under his own perspective and that was something the piece was made of, being all the truths inalienably relative – at no point of her life Pina would give up those principles. The success of the company has not changed the intention of her work. In her own words:

I think that's wonderful. But it's not about making judgments about choreography. It's about a kind of humanity. There are no special effects; there is nothing on stage that does not belong to it. Each object has a purpose. Everything else is left out. It's not that I could not do other things. We deliberately leave all this out (Bausch apud Koldehoff, 2016, p. 139, author's translation).

These ideas of just using what absolutely and precisely makes sense in the scene or not having anything on stage in an accessory way are working precepts that respond to that way of thinking about dance, of how dance is made and of whom dance belongs to. And they sound like Pina's thoughts that, somehow, shaped the environment in which she worked with her dancers. In this environment, the genuine exchange with the other, the ability to expose one's own vulnerability, the capacity of listening and accepting, and consequently the feeling of being accepted, foster the possibility of deepening the truths that appear in the form of movement (in the broadest sense, which may include words and all other forms of expression). It was in this way that Pina understood and worked with the idea of authenticity to create her works.

The idea of *not representing anything* can serve us here as a way of expressing what is difficult, beautiful and strong in the *Tanztheater's* work process. It is necessary to go beyond preconceived forms and comfort zones, and to express from the inner experience all that concerns to humanity. In some sense, Pina's method approaches Stanislavski's character-creation method, which triggers the emotions from the actor's experience. As Jean-Jacques Roubine puts it,

[...] the good actor, according to Stanislavski, should not practice at all a representation, based on one emotion. What he must do is to use his in-

nermost experience to find within himself a true emotion (Roubine, 1998, p. 161, author's translation).

But Pina gives to this approach an even greater depth when she proposes that the actor, in this case the dancer, become anonymous behind his own stories. There are stories to be told, but because of what they have of human, not of personal. Again, this fits in with Heidegger's thinking about art. For Heidegger, rather than the common idea of a self-enclosed subject, the artist is only able to speak because he lets himself be taken by language, by the human questions that are in language, and because he allows language to take place as art through himself. The artist makes the work happen, of course, but he overcomes himself, insofar as it is him who speaks, what he speaks of is nothing but the questions which concern all human beings.

Expressing herself in a language that is not that of philosophy (and perhaps a much richer one), Pina seems to have worked very closely with this understanding. As Norbert Servos observes:

Behind this lies an uncommon and unprejudiced view of the world, which observes every manifestation of human behavior. From this perspective it can be said that the world is, at first, everything that happens. But it is also everything that can happen. In the approximation of these two poles, the greatest care and caution are exercised. Nothing is put too short. Dance-theater uses a multifaceted, multi-layered language in which nuances and resonances are more important than pure description and naming (Servos, 2008, p. 12).

The uncommon and unprejudiced view of the world, which considers everything that happens and can happen as reality, also tells of a presence in time and openness to life that Pina transformed into the work philosophy and source of her dance-theater. And the best way to understand this seems to be, above all, Pina's testimonies and those from people who worked with her. They speak of something very strong and special created by the way the *Tanztheater* happened. It is worth reproducing here a fundamental speech of the dancer Josephine-Ann Endicott, who accompanied Pina for almost four decades, telling us the experience of dancing the chosen one in *The Rites of Spring*.

A few years later, I was given this immense role to play. But it was difficult for me. I was very light on the ground. I could see that Pina was not par-

ticularly fascinated by this 'chosen one'. Neither was I. My classic training meant that I had very light movements. I had to get rid of the lightness. Try to bring all the heavier movements, pulling down, down, and not trying to reach high as you do in classical dance. The solo was not really exhausting enough for me, and I was not really dead at the end. What I mean to say is that I had to perform all movements much bigger, I had to fight harder, stretching the most I could. I had to push my limits. Forget the steps and dance. Just listen to the music - become one with Stravinsky and the fight against death. You have to die, not in the sense of 'a dying swan'. And this is a tormenting feeling to all that danced *The Rite*. To have been a part of it, whether it's dancing the role of the chosen one, or the choir, is incredibly significant. Even just the sensation of dancing on the earth, of lying down and listening to the silent and soft earth. To hear the others breathing, to feel bodies trembling, to hear bodies breathing, getting dirty, feeling the fear of others, suffocating within a group, body to body. Every dancer has to push their own limits. That's the only way it can work. Half an hour before the performance begins, the earth on stage has to be carefully inspected. It cannot be very wet, because we can fall, or too dry, because we would breathe dust that would make us cough. Once, when the earth was very dry, I coughed for weeks (apud Pina Bausch Foundation, 2013, back cover).

The passage illustrates the reading we seek to establish here, that is, that truth is a fundamental idea to understand Pina Bausch's work, not in the pretentious sense of something superior to be achieved or recommended, but in the sense of an authenticity that can only be achieved by a work that is dedicated to what is at the same time, very intimate and personal, but also very human and open to the feelings shared by all. This has an undeniable force, which speaks of the importance of art to human life, and which Heidegger expresses very well when he says: "The greatness of a work consists, in fact, that the poem can deny the person and the name of the poet" (Heidegger, 1982, p. 113). Pina was able to bring to the body the poetical experience understood in that sense.

Notes

- ¹ Defining *contemporary*, no matter in which field, is always a more philosophical than historical task. In a very broad analysis, we use the concept of contemporary or postmodern dance to name different aesthetics and sensitivities developed through experimentation by the generations that followed the first revolutionary creators of modern dance. That is to say, if the modern dance

pioneers, in each different strand, worked to break away from the classical dance's pre-established language and to turn dance into a free movement possibility, we name contemporary dance the generations that came after them, those who have deepened and diversified this possibility.

- ² In the same interview she says: "Constantly there are still classical dancers who suddenly provoke an extraordinary feeling, through a gesture, of their musicality. Anyway, we know so little about it ... I think that in classical dance too many fantastic things can happen when something comes together, when this sudden is answered" (Koldehoff, 2016, p. 127, author's translation). The play *Viktor*, from 1986, portrays a very interesting moment from this mix of humor and criticism towards classical ballet when the dancer presents a piece of meat and then uses it inside the pointe shoes, in the same way that one usually uses protective pieces.

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