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Spiritual corporeality: towards embodied gnosis through a dancing language

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CHAPTER 5

Attuning: orientations for corporeal consciousness in dance

Through embodied gnosis towards a dancing language

In the previous chapter on the subtle body, the [*intermezzi*](#)^{*} are written from the first-person perspective of my dance practice ([*corporeal theory*](#)^{*}) and they respond to theoretical landscapes ([*discursive practice*](#)^{*}) outlined in the main text of chapter four. This chapter inversely mirrors the previous chapter. It departs from my dance practice as main text, while theoretical *intermezzi* respond to ideas and concepts based on dance experience through other fields of discourse. The *intermezzi* present different takes on the relationship between the metaphysical and the physical from the perspective of other dance practices, esoteric forms of thought and scientific/philosophical speculations such as the Pauli-Jung conjecture. *Corporeal theory* and *discursive practice* thus switch roles in these two chapters. Through a continuous back and forth movement, a clear distinction between them will gradually dissolve. Where both blend into each other, intuitive dimensions of knowing-being emerge, suspended - like a dance- between the physically sensible and the supra-sensorily intelligible. Different kinds of discourse and avenues towards knowing enter in dialogue with each other through a [*dancing language*](#).^{*}

Both chapters (chapter four on the subtle body and chapter five on attuning the dancing body) respond to the overarching questions:

Is it possible to gain new perspectives on the relationship between the physical and the metaphysical through a *dancing language* that weaves together corporeal and verbal discourse?

How can a dancing body be attuned to act as an interface between the metaphysical and the physical through which I can investigate and communicate a sense of proximity with a creative source?

In this chapter, I will focus specifically on intentional orientations for attuning the dancing body towards the idea and experience of [embodied gnosis](#).*

In dance, [levity](#)* can be experienced by opening the body to peripheral forces and by imaginatively expanding one's spatial awareness. Opening awareness towards a larger periphery can expand the sense of self beyond a limited frame of subjectivity enclosed underneath the skin of the body. The psychophysical texture of movements becomes more subtle and light. Focusing on [gravity](#)* on the other hand, contracts the perception of the self towards an innermost sense of singular subjectivity. The psychophysical texture of the movements becomes denser, heavier. In my approach to [dance language](#),* I communicate nonverbally through a spectrum of subtle, light, dense and heavy textures of movement. I process and distribute these qualities through my dancing body and project them into the space.

In analogy with this dance-based logic of expression, the written text of chapters four and five embodies variations of [languaging](#)* that range from conceptual density to suggestive lightness. The conversation between the perspectives gained through the various types of languaging is intended to evoke open ended potentialities for knowing.

Dynamic movements of thought gradually accumulate layered meanings of the key concepts [spiritual corporeality](#)*, [altered states of knowing](#)*, and [embodied gnosis](#)*.

Verbalized thought moves along a spectrum of [matter-consciousness](#)* that ranges from the concentric pull of deep subjectivity to the peripheral pull of speculative theory that gravitates towards objective forms of knowledge. The dialogue between both directional forces becomes a knowledge process where the epistemological and communicative potential of navigating in-between spaces is explored: between gravity and levity, between the physically sensible and the intuitively intelligible, between deep subjectivity and elusively shifting speculative objectives of truth that are relative to the field of knowledge from where they are posited.³⁴⁵

³⁴⁵ The idea of knowledge processes that develop through an interplay between different regions of subjective and objective realities is implied in the notion of "levels of reality" according to Werner Heisenberg. In Nicolescu, *From Modernity to Cosmodernity*, 2014, 206.

Unfolding movements of thought from the dynamic tensions inherent to these in-between spaces parallels the process of entering and deepening the state of knowing-being described as *embodied gnosis*.

The state of *embodied gnosis* directs attention to a region of experience where deep subjectivity can gain the quality of an objective of truth, or where objectivity can be intuited as resonating with a subjective quality.³⁴⁶

Attuning the Dancing Body

[Attuning*](#) is here understood as intentional orientations for corporeal consciousness. *Attuning* allows the dancing body to recognize and to stabilize its ability to perceive and to communicate profound dimensions of experiential reality. *Attuning* stands for creatively transforming polarities of forces that condition the logic of expression of a dancing body as I experience it.³⁴⁷ *Attuning* is an orientation towards a unifying state of being, that blends and transcends opposite ends of a spectrum. It is an orientation towards a region of experience that participates in both aspects of a polarity pair yet overcomes their strict distinction through *altered states of knowing* towards *embodied gnosis*.

Embodied gnosis is suggestive of a metaphysically transcendent, yet also physically immanent layer of an experienced reality that underlies and connects apparently contradictory facets of experience. This unifying quality of experience is here targeted at as an ideal source of movement origination and purpose for danced movement. It can be intersubjectively shared

³⁴⁶ This also relates to Pauli's vision that "(...) The development of 'microphysics' has unmistakably led to a remarkable convergence of its description of nature with that of the new psychology: While the former, due to the fundamental situation known as 'complementarity', faces the impossibility to eliminate actions of observers by determinable corrections and must therefore in principle relinquish the objective registration of all physical phenomena, the latter could basically complement the merely subjective psychology of consciousness by postulating the existence of an unconscious of largely objective reality." Quoted from a letter from Pauli to Jung in Jung's supplement to *On the Nature of the Psyche* (1969). In Atmanspacher, "Notes on Psychophysical Phenomena," 2014, 185.

³⁴⁷ For example: the polarities between gravity and levity, between the inside and the outside, between moving and being moved, between the performer and the spectator, between the self-conscious "I" and the yet unconscious depths of the physical body, between spirit and matter, between being and knowing, between the empirical and the meta-empirical, between the physically sensible and the intuitively intelligible.

depending on the ability of the dancer to create and to communicate it and on the receptivity and inner disposition of the spectator or co-performer to understand it intuitively.

Attuning is not meant as a technique in the sense of mastering something in order to control it. Rather the opposite: it is intended to prepare the body to receive and to synthesize corporeal textures of consciousness that allow it to radically open itself towards the unknown, with trust. *Attuning* can then facilitate an inner movement of surrender and of consciously maintained humility towards an unspeakable unknown and creative source. *Attuning* is meant to make the dancing body receptive to cognize and to investigate possible relationships between the metaphysical and the physical. *Attuning* allows the dancing body to learn to know these relationships intimately, so that a spiritual-corporeal intuition of proximity with a creative source can be experienced, communicated and shared.

In the following, I will elaborate attunements for the approach to dance that I am developing. The frame of this dissertation allows me to discuss only a limited selection which I consider most relevant to this study. With the attunements I tentatively describe psychophysical foundations for the state of knowing-being in dance, which I refer to as *embodied gnosis*. The verbal description of these attunements is based on a retrospective analysis of the complexly layered performative states that I engage with during the dance. They consolidate extensive immersion into dance and intensive research into how to make implicit knowledge embodied in dance explicit. They textually incorporate dance-based knowledge from an individual subjective point of view. I am not making assumptions about the art of dance in general. I describe the knowledge of dance according to how it informs me. That some of this knowledge can resonate with the experience of other dancers is possible and intended, but not claimed.

The attunements are also meant to trigger resonances with *embodied gnosis* in your [corporeal imagination*](#), dear reader. Just like the dance seeks to trigger resonances with *embodied gnosis* in the spectator(s) of the dance.

To verbally describe intentional orientations for dance experience (*corporeal theory*) and to expose them to theoretical speculations from other fields of knowledge and experience

(*discursive practice*) becomes an attuning process in itself. It is an open-ended trajectory dedicated to generating potentialities for knowing, while maintaining the intentional disposition of a radical opening towards the unknown.

Attuning

For Dance: let it pass through you

Altered states of knowing

For dance, the body needs to be available to let movements of energy pass through. I experience the energy generated and transformed through dance as coming both from the inside as well as from the outside of the human body. From the inside, I consider for example will, feeling, intention, inspiration, intuition and imagination as subtle physical factors that influence the energetic signature and the psychophysical textures of the dance. I understand muscle strength, effort, joint articulation and coordination of the limbs in space through various velocities and mobile architectures as concrete physical transformers of subtle impulses that trigger the body to express itself through dance.

For aspects of energy that pass through the dancing body from the outside, I consider physical factors such as the architecture of the surrounding space and the material texture of the ground underneath the feet. But also, the radiations and frequencies of information a body may receive from our planet and from the cosmos without being consciously aware of them. Non-physical or subtle physical factors such as the gaze of the spectator, gravity, levity (or whatever force it is that aligns and orients our spines vertically) and anything that lives in the unseen contribute to a large degree to the transfer and communication of energy and information that takes place during the dance. As a dancer, one of the foundations of my work is to make myself available to let the movements of energy from the inside and from the outside pass through. That a creative transformation of these rather raw and undefined movements of energy into communicative articulations of movement can occur, is based on this availability.

What specific kind of information is mediated through the dancing body can become more and more conscious, yet also remains to a large degree unconscious, unknown. The process of articulating a non-verbal *dance language* allows me to become more conscious of how my body interprets what passes through it during the dance.

It seems to me that my body knows more about what passes through it than I can be consciously aware of. There is a dichotomy between my conscious self awareness and that part of myself that resides unconsciously inside my body. They are complementary to each other and form together a whole the possible nature of which I am exploring.

With my approach to dance, I try to understand on a more conscious level what is unconsciously processed by the corporeal intelligence of my body; to learn something about the unknown by intentionally delegating choice making in movement to the deeper strata of my body, which I cannot yet access consciously. By developing a *dance language*, I learn to speak about what I encounter in the dance through the language of dance.

Intermezzo

Altered states of knowing

Energy can be understood in a broad sense as “dynamic quality”, a “positive spiritual force” or “a fundamental entity of nature that is transferred between parts of a system in the production of physical change within the system.”³⁴⁸

In contemporary physics, the classical concept of matter as substance has been replaced by more subtle possible facets of matter: “substance/energy/space-time/information”. The reductionist emphasis on substance changed by understanding it as only one of several possible attributes of matter.³⁴⁹ Energy is one of these attributes.

³⁴⁸ “Energy”, Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, accessed 27.3.2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/energy> .

³⁴⁹ Nicolescu, *From Modernity to Cosmodernity*, 2014, 190.

*In contemporary discourse on dance, energy or *energeia*, has been conceptualized as an “aesthetic force field”.³⁵⁰ It relates to the ability of movement to transform bodies and the spaces of performance.³⁵¹*

Theatre scientist Erika Fischer-Lichte for example, describes the particularity of experiencing performance as “blurring distinctions between artist and audience, body and mind, art and life”. Fischer-Lichte laid the foundations for a “new aesthetics” of the performative³⁵². She describes performativity as related to the transfer of energy in the context of the theatre understood as an event space.³⁵³

Dance and theater scientist Sabine Huschka describes knowledge about energy in dance and choreographic performance as mostly implicit.³⁵⁴ It oscillates between experiential certainty and an explicit not-knowing that is articulated as a dance-specific take on epistemology. This implies that not-knowing can be an intrinsic part of dance’s ways of knowing and that uncertainty can function as a possible motor for movement.³⁵⁵ According to Huschka, knowledge about energy in dance also oscillates between aesthetic intervention and utopian longings³⁵⁶.

Energy and its expenditure, exhaustion and regeneration are often at stake in dance performances that require intense physical effort and mental presence. Embodied and implicit knowledge about energy in dance performance often includes - more or less consciously or explicitly - metaphysical dimensions. A non-calculative giving of self through generous energy expenditure is characteristic for many dance professionals.³⁵⁷ Dancers are often trained to push through their effort thresholds for the sake of the dance. Without being able to grasp rationally or intellectually where a felt imperative for energy expenditure in dance comes from,

³⁵⁰ Huschka, “Aesthetic Scenarios of *Energeia*: Bodies as Transformational Fields of Force,” 2019, 60.

³⁵¹ Ibid, 57.

³⁵² See for example Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance, A new Aesthetics*, 2008.

³⁵³ Huschka, “Aesthetic Scenarios of *Energeia*: Bodies as Transformational Fields of Force,” 2019, 57, Footnote 2.

³⁵⁴ Ibid, 56.

³⁵⁵ See for example Chauchat, “Not-knowing: mobility as a state of unrest”, 2018, 131-138.

³⁵⁶ Huschka, “Aesthetic Scenarios of *Energeia*: Bodies as Transformational Fields of Force,” 2019, 59.

³⁵⁷ “This relationship to energy expenditure is a fundamental aspect for dance. There is an almost metaphysical dimension, something gratuitous about this ‘worthless’ expenditure that neither ‘counts’ nor ‘calculates’.” Contemporary choreographer Boris Charmatz quoted in *ibid*, 58, footnote 4.

it is a fundamental factor that determines the transfer of energy in the context of a performance.

*The Greek root of energy, *energeia*, can be translated as “reality, activity”. According to Aristotle, the name *energeia* (reality) is derived from work (*ergon*) and aims towards completion (*entelecheia*).³⁵⁸*

Altered states of knowing

Through my dancing body I intuit that the creative transformation of energy through dance includes regions of reality beyond the physical space and beyond the fleeting moment of the performative event. The idea of energy as “positive spiritual force”³⁵⁹ comes close to what I perceive to be one of the main motivational engines for dance. My dancing body can regenerate movement again and again, even beyond the experiential edges of deep exhaustion. This regenerative energy appears to not only come from within my physical corporeality but also from an extracorporeal, metaphysical region of being, that somehow works through the physical body. I perceive dance as a vehicle for grounding non-verbally articulated forces or patterns of consciousness that matter, without being able to rationally grasp how, why and what for they matter. Based on these corporeally inspired intuitions, I investigate how esoteric ideas and practices could enlighten my not knowing of what actually is happening through the body when it mediates and creatively transforms energy through dance.

Intermezzo

Spiritual corporeality

A spiritual-corporeal ontology of the human body can inform a deeper understanding of the energy transfer that can happen through dance³⁶⁰. Regardless of whether the subtle body

³⁵⁸ “Energeia”, Metzler Lexicon Philosophie, accessed 4.8.2020, <https://www.spektrum.de/lexikon/philosophie/energeia/557>.

³⁵⁹ “Energy”. Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, accessed 27.3.2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/energy>.

³⁶⁰ From the context of spiritual research, teachers such as Julie Redstone offer quite explicit and clear definitions of a spiritual-corporeal ontology. Redstone’s work aims to unite “all religious

schemes developed in esoteric forms of thought are scientifically verifiable, they can trigger a fundamental re-imagining of human corporeality embedded in a scenario of cosmic evolution. A scientific method for “measuring” what kind of energy is transferred between the dance as a creative agency and dancers, between dancers among each other and between dancers and the audience appears to be for now out of question. To initiate a trans-disciplinary research project that brings together frontier areas in psychology and scientific research on mind-matter relations as promoted by for example Harald Atmanspacher,³⁶¹ dance researchers and energy workers experienced in working with subtle body physiology and energy would be an adventurous starting point. Yet this is future music and falls beyond the scope of this dissertation. It is a suggestive idea, a potentiality for knowing.

Towards embodied gnosis

I can activate my body in dance with the speculative idea that it is interpenetrated by an energetic body which is both physical and spiritual. This speculation is based on an insisting corporeal intuition, informed and at times confirmed by esoteric forms of thought. I can imagine that my body in motion resonates with layers of being that encompass a multidimensional idea and sense of self. The energy expenditure involved in dance can then be seen on a larger scale as a labor of self-realization, incarnation and manifestation. Dance thus activates and non-verbally communicates qualities and textures of ***matter-consciousness**** that are both physical and spiritual and that affect several layers or dimensions of being.

traditions under the umbrella of the One that is the Unity of Life.” Redstone works with the idea of an “energy body” which she defines as: “The physical-spiritual body that exists within human beings in levels or layers of vibration that link the physical being with the higher dimensions of its own self. All levels or dimensions of energy interpenetrate each other and are not separate.” See “About Gurujima”, lightomega.org, accessed 27.3.2022, <https://lightomega.org/about-light-omega/about-gurujima/> and “Glossary of Terms for a New Earth,” lightomega.org, accessed 31.10.2021, <https://lightomega.org/introductory-guides/glossary/> .

³⁶¹ Harald Atmanspacher is associate fellow at the Collegium Helveticum ETH Zürich and a faculty member of the C.G. Jung Institute Zürich. He also works at the Institute for Frontier Areas of Psychology and Mental Health in Freiburg. From back cover Atmanspacher and Fuchs, *The Pauli-Jung Conjecture and its Impact Today*, (2014). Atmanspacher is also the president of the Society for Mind-Matter research. *Society for Mind-Matter Research*, mindmatter.de, accessed 17.8.2022, <https://www.mindmatter.de/index.html> .

Preparing the canvas

Altered states of knowing

My body tends to accumulate psychophysical debris such as for example tensions resulting from self-protection, deeply rooted fears, forced working efforts etc. This debris creates dense spaces within the corporeal texture that obstruct mobility, fluid articulation of movement and the creative communication of energy. Corporeal density can be self-diagnosed (to a certain extent) throughout the entire body: in the joints, in the muscles, in the tendons, maybe even in the bones, in the nervous system, in the brain etc. Numbness of sensation, stagnated energy and limited mobility can be easily observed by scanning the inner landscape of the body with focused awareness. Bringing movement to these places of density and limited mobility can liberate the stagnated energy and allows internal communication between the numbed cells and their far and close neighbors to be re-activated. Not all areas and systems of the body can be accessed consciously through inwardly focused sensing. We often do not feel our bodies unless we are getting signals of discomfort or pain. Bringing tensed and numbed areas into motion, and through motion towards a more conscious relation between the body and the surrounding space, influences states of being in different ways than equanimous observation of sensations in a still posture as is done in many meditation practices.³⁶² When there is no direct access to specific areas of the body, they can still be accessed by patiently practiced and anatomically informed imagination. Yet there always remains an undefinable space in the inner landscapes of my body. I also refer to this space as the unspeakable unknown. Cleansing the body from psychophysical debris seems to be an endless task whereby the edge of the unspeakable unknown keeps receding further and further into limitless depths of the inner space of the body.

³⁶² For a Tibetan Buddhist meditation method that aims towards “awakening the sacred body” and that involves bodily movement, see for example Rinpoche, *Awakening the Sacred Body. Tibetan Yogas of Breath and Movement*, 2011.

Intermezzo

*The term “psychophysical” is used in the dialogue between Jung and Pauli. The main target in their joint investigation was the relationship between mind and matter, the “psychophysical problem”. They attempted to gain a better understanding of the transitions between the physical and the mental and questioned the kind of reality on which it could be grounded.³⁶³ They speculated about a “psychophysically neutral” reality (*unus mundus*) that would lie beyond the categories of mind and matter as well as mediate between them.³⁶⁴ This psychophysically neutral reality is conceived of as “radically holistic, without distinctions” and as “discursively inexpressible”.³⁶⁵*

Altered states of knowing

I believe dance is able to create an experience of blending and unifying opposite forces. In dance, a unity of mind and body can be almost self-evident. It can become an experiential reality that draws together contradictory forces at play in dance into a unifying whole.³⁶⁶ What may appear during regular waking states as strict dichotomies between the inside and the outside or between conscious self awareness and the unconscious of the body, can blend during an altered state generated by dance towards an experience of an all-encompassing unity. Referencing Jung and Pauli’s terminology, the quality of this unifying experience could also be described as a “holistic” experience. Here, distinctions between mind and matter, inside and outside, psyche and physis appear to be dissolvable in a sense of unity of being. I associate the experience of unity of mind and body in dance with the “psychophysically neutral” domain of Jung and Pauli. It is somewhat paradoxically beyond the distinction between mind and matter while at the same time mediating between polarities of forces that I associate with the physically sensible and the metaphysically intuitable. Rather than

³⁶³ Atmanspacher and Fuchs, “Introduction: The Pauli-Jung Conjecture,” 2014, 1.

³⁶⁴ Atmanspacher, “Notes on Psychophysical Phenomena,” 2014, 184.

³⁶⁵ Atmanspacher, “The Pauli-Jung Conjecture and Its Implications for Exceptional Experiences”, 2018, 3.

³⁶⁶ For another voice on the experience of the unity of mind and body in dance see for example Pieter C. Scholten: “(...) it is an ongoing way of exploiting intuitive movement, a movement which passes through the memory in a split second, generating a unity between mind and body, a consciousness which evokes the next movement. The mental state is a physical state, and the physical state is a mental state (...)”. Quoted in Magnini, *Inspiration. Emio Greco | Pieter C. Scholten. The Multiplicity of Dance*, 2015, 115.

experiencing dichotomies between contradictory forces, the dance experience can unfold along a continuum of very dense and very subtle materialities – from cracking bones to almost imperceptible impulses that initiate movement.

Intermezzo

Altered states of knowing

The historical origin of the psychophysical problem begins with Descartes' "substance dualism" where the mental (res cogitans) and the physical (res extensa) are attributed with distinct ontological difference. Closer to Jung's and Pauli's worldview is Spinoza's view on what is known in the philosophy of mind as "dual-aspect monism". As an alternative to the mind-body problem the mental and the physical are here described as epistemic aspects of a single underlying reality. Jung and Pauli related their views also to the psychophysical parallelism of Leibniz.³⁶⁷ The dual-aspect monism in Jung and Pauli's speculative theory brings together an ontic monism referring to a "psychophysically neutral background reality" and an epistemic dualism where the mental and the physical provide different epistemological perspectives on the underlying ontic reality, which Jung described with the term "unus mundus".³⁶⁸ The adjective "ontic" refers to something of real existence distinguished from phenomenal appearances.³⁶⁹ In Pauli and Jung's version of dual-aspect monism, aspects are dependent on epistemic contexts; they are not an a priori given. In principle, there can be a limitless amount

³⁶⁷ Atmanspacher and Fuchs, "Introduction: The Pauli-Jung Conjecture," 2014, 1.

³⁶⁸ Atmanspacher, "Notes on Psychophysical Phenomena," 2014, 181.

³⁶⁹ "Ontic," Lexico Online Dictionary, accessed 26.3.2020, <https://www.lexico.com/definition/ontic> .

of aspects as much as there can be a limitless amount of contexts. So called “epistemic splits”³⁷⁰ generate the distinction of aspects from an unseparated unitary underlying realm.³⁷¹

Towards embodied gnosis

In this research, two different yet **complementary*** ontological and epistemological perspectives are brought in dialogue with each other: the perspective of the non-verbal, first-person dance experience and the perspective of its verbally discursive contextualization. Through this dialogue, different ideas about possible relations between the metaphysical and the physical unfold. Both perspectives can be interpreted as hinting towards an *ontic* dimension of reality. They circle around what I intuit through dance as something **real*** that underlies and passes through the phenomenal world.³⁷² In my approach to dance, I search for this experience of the *real* in the inner/outer landscape, which I refer to as the unspeakable unknown, or the hypothetical area of being where the somatic and spiritual unconscious converge.

³⁷⁰ Harald Atmanspacher and Wolfgang Fach discuss the mathematical principle used in theoretical physics referred to as an “epistemic split”. They relate it to a “primordial principle in every epistemology.” They specify this statement with: “In somewhat more abstract terms, distinctions can be conceived as symmetry breakings. Symmetries in this parlance [referring to the *unus mundus* and mind-matter relations in dual-aspect monism] are invariances under transformations ... Symmetry breakings are a powerful mathematical tool in large part of theoretical physics, but we do not know better than by pure speculation which symmetries must be ascribed to the *unus mundus*.” In Atmanspacher and Fach, “Mind-Matter Correlations in Dual-Aspect-Monism According to Pauli and Jung,” 2015, 223, note 12.

³⁷¹ Atmanspacher, “Notes on Psychophysical Phenomena,” 2014, 181.

³⁷² As an experimental analogy with dual-aspect monism of Jung and Pauli, we could say that the epistemic context of my non-verbal dance language is dance. The epistemic context of the complementary discursive contextualization of this **dance*** is threefold: discourse derived from the danced experience articulated in its own terms (retrospective dance writing, attuning/intentional orientations for corporeal consciousness), esoteric forms of thought and related body based practices where mind and matter are differentiated on a spectrum that ranges from gross to very subtle forms of “matter-consciousness”, and the Jung-Pauli conjecture that posits mind and matter as complementary aspects of a larger unifying whole which is supposed to be shared by both aspects yet at the same time transcends both of them. Both perspectives can be seen as aspects that depend on their respective epistemic contexts. Continuing to adopt the Jung-Pauli conjecture as an analogy for the meta-frame of this dissertation project, we can see it as bringing together a non-verbal *dance language* and its verbally discursive contextualization as aspects of an underlying “unifying whole” that takes part in both yet transcends both through a *dancing language*.

Embodied gnosis implies envisioning the possibility to experience something *real* in dance. This experience also resonates with Jung and Pauli's speculative description of the *unus mundus*.

I understand cleansing the body from psychophysical debris as a preparation for the [psychophysical resonating space*](#) of the dancing body to experience *embodied gnosis*. It enables it to penetrate regions of experience where something *real* can be touched. The preparation happens by consciously mobilizing accumulated densities that seem to resist this experience.

Intermezzo

Altered states of knowing

For Pauli and Jung mind and matter are complementary epistemic aspects that are mutually incompatible. At the same time, they emphasize that both aspects are necessary to describe mind-matter systems. The reason for their incompatibility according to Jung and Pauli is the non-Boolean³⁷³ (meaning non-binary in the sense of true or false, 0 or 1, or yes or no) nature of the reality that ontically underlies the epistemic dualism between mind and matter.³⁷⁴ Although they could not find a direct causal pathway between the mental and the physical, Pauli and Jung speculated about indirect influences via this underlying domain.

³⁷³ "Boolean," Merriam –Webster online dictionary: "of, relating to, or being a logical combinatorial system (such as Boolean algebra) that represents symbolically relationships (such as those implied by the logical operators AND, OR, and NOT) between entities (such as sets, propositions, or on-off computer circuit elements)." Accessed 2.5.23, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Boolean>. In the language of theoretical chemist Hans Primas in an article on Mind-Matter problems: "The conceptual structure of modern quantum theory suggests to use complementary Boolean descriptions as elements for a more comprehensive non-Boolean description of a world without an *a priori* given mind-matter distinction. Such a description in terms of a locally Boolean but *globally non-Boolean* structure makes allowance for the fact that Boolean descriptions play a privileged role in science." Primas, "Non-Boolean Descriptions for Mind-Matter Problems," 2007, 7.

³⁷⁴ Atmanspacher, "Notes on Psychophysical Phenomena," 2014, 182.

I am far from being an expert in the field of knowledge where physics and psychology meet to gain new vistas about mind-matter relations and about the nature of reality. I experience and investigate mind-matter relations in and through dance. I see the Pauli-Jung conjecture (and its contemporary elaboration by among others Atmanspacher), as an intriguing additional perspective on possible relations between the metaphysical and the physical.³⁷⁵

Intermezzo

Altered states of knowing

With Harald Atmanspacher (in line with the dual-aspect thinking of Pauli-Jung), the physical and the mental are aspects or perspectives through which we can see what the world is made of. What the world is really made of is described as the psychophysically neutral domain, which is neither mental nor physical but something else.

*What is called the psychophysically neutral domain in the language of physics since the 20th century can be equated with what Spinoza referred to as the Divine in the language of philosophy during the 17th century.*³⁷⁶

³⁷⁵ To elucidate how the Pauli-Jung conjecture relates to this dissertation project, I quote Atmanspacher at length. I present his thoughts as a potentiality for knowing, because they can inform ideas about possible relations between the metaphysical and the physical related to yet unknown types of perception. That these thoughts are articulated from a different epistemic context than dance research I see rather as an asset than an obstacle. "In the Pauli-Jung conjecture, the psychophysically neutral domain is apprehensible only indirectly, by its manifestations in the aspects. Their dual-aspect monism is a metaphysical position including both epistemic and ontic elements. Although large parts of the 20th century witnessed an often-pejorative connotation with metaphysics, insight into the nature of reality is in general impossible without metaphysical assumptions and regulative principles. The metaphysical nature of the Pauli-Jung conjecture implies a lack of concrete illustrative examples, which is not due to missing imagination but represent an important feature of their approach. This alludes to the situation in quantum theory, repeatedly expressed by one of its main architects Niels Bohr (1934): '...we are concerned with the recognition of physical laws which lie outside the domain of our ordinary experience and which present difficulties to our accustomed forms of perception'." Atmanspacher, "Notes on Psychophysical Phenomena," 2014, 182.

³⁷⁶ Loosely transcribed from "The Mind/Matter Problem with Dr. Harald Atmanspacher | The Lex Files, accessed 18.8.2022," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HpV_6Bxakek, min. 22:40 – 23:39.

Towards embodied gnosis

As already suggested above, I associate the experience of unity of mind and body during the dance with the idea of an undifferentiated “psychophysically neutral reality”. I equate the intuitive perception of something ontically *real* through the dancing body (understood as a creatively mediating interface between the metaphysical and the physical) with the experience of proximity with a creative source. I investigate, communicate and describe this experience through a *dancing language*.

Opening to a dialogue with the real

Altered states of knowing

Through my dancing body, I sometimes perceive a dimension of being that appears to mediate between my conscious awareness and the unconscious depths of my body in motion.³⁷⁷ This dimension of being appears to me to live within my body while connecting it at the same time with a larger whole that extends far beyond it. A larger realm of being that might encompass the concrete physical space of this planet as well as invisible metaphysical dimensions of life. I need to consciously open my entire being towards this idea, to actively participate in it, for it to be able to be perceived and communicated through the dance. It is the intuitive intelligence of my body that entices me to know this larger dimension of being through experience. This corporeal intuitive intelligence is personal in the sense that I perceive it inside of my body, as well as impersonal, in the sense that it seems to be in touch with impersonal, objective laws of being.³⁷⁸ It is both *my* corporeal intelligence as well as *a* corporeal intelligence that carries an accumulation of genetic information from uncountable

³⁷⁷ With Jung, these unconscious depths are related to the somatic or spiritual unconscious and to the subtle body. See chapter four, 172.

³⁷⁸ To give more epistemological gravity to this personal experience I refer here also to a statement by choreographer and dancer Emio Greco in relation to what intuitive intelligence of the body can perceive through dance. He describes this as “essential physical laws that are understood by the body.” From my unpublished notes of a conversation with the artistic directors of ICK and the curators of the exhibition *Imagine Intuition* at De Lakenhal Leiden, 23.2.2022. The explicit addition of the metaphysical dimension to the intuitive intelligence of the body is specific to my approach here.

generations. When being in touch with this dimension of experience through the moving body in dance, a subjective sense of separated selfhood can dissolve into an experience of an “objectively” given oneness of the dancing body with the entirety of the surrounding space. “Objectively” given here refers to a quality of experience where a state of being is perceived to be *real* in an *ontic* sense. It seems to me that the subjective mind inhabiting a singular human body needs to be attuned to this dimension of experience to be able to perceive this “objectively” given scenario. In this case, the scenario is a state of inseparability and “oneness” of the human body with its physical and metaphysical context. The physical and metaphysical context of a dance does then not stop at the walls of the building where the dance takes place. It rather extends itself towards infinite space.

This experience of oneness with the space can also become a sense of oneness with other dancing bodies, or with the spectators. It is an expanded awareness that can come into being when I reach out towards it, when I consciously attune my corporeal consciousness to the possibility of its occurrence.

Considering an “epistemic split” between the aspects of the mental and the physical in relation to dance, it seems to me that it is the faculty of imagination that can mediate creatively between a mental intention and a physical movement.

In dance, there is a continuous back and forth traffic of information/energy that passes between a movement infused with intentionality and a backlash from the movement of the physical body towards the conscious mind. This back-and-forth dialogue between conscious intention and corporeal movement needs an inner process of translation that I perceive to happen by means of infusing the body with [corporeal imagination*](#). *Corporeal imagination* can at times unexpectedly flip over to experiencing something *real*. As if the body can realize, manifest and anchor something elusive as imaginative thought. The entire body in motion can metamorphose through intentionally focused imagination. At the same time, the dancing body can trigger different ideas and images from the bottom up – from the physical to the mental. It speaks back. When I encounter a sense of the *real* during the dance, it triggers in me also the idea of a potential humanity, something we can become, but not yet are.

Not always is there the possibility for imaginatively mediated communication between an intention to move and the movement of the physical body. The body is the first place of resistance to the dance.

Often there is much more information coming back from the body than I had consciously intended or expected. This information can be overwhelming. It can be experienced as something like a primal matter of pure potential that stirs light and darkness and that awaits being shaped and molded into expression. These kinds of experience also make me curious about what the body has to say, if I don't predetermine or domesticate its expression through choreographed, intentionally designed movement trajectories. Or what it may be able to mediate towards my conscious awareness from other realms of being that evade the grasp of my conscious mind. To become more conscious of what my body mediates through dance, I intentionally give space for choice making in movement to these unknown depths of my corporeal being.

Intermezzo

*In Pauli's and Jung's description of the psychophysical problem of how mind and matter are related to each other, indirect influences from the underlying psychophysically neutral background reality can act on the mental and the physical. Supposed relations between the psychophysically neutral, ontic domain and the mental and material epistemic domains are seen as bidirectional.*³⁷⁹

Altered states of knowing

How might subjective intentionality and corporeal communication in dance, mediated by imagination, relate to the ontic domain of Pauli and Jung?³⁸⁰ What is a *real* movement and when can it resonate beyond the phenomenal with the *ontic*?

To me, the ontic points towards a realm of causation beyond the phenomenal world of experience. In the epistemic context of dance, it could point towards an otherworldly realm of causation for intentional and unintentional movement in thought and body. This world could lie beyond the individual self yet simultaneously reach deeply into the dark depths of the yet unconscious matters of my body. I am curious about this realm of causation, and I

³⁷⁹ Atmanspacher, "Notes on Psychophysical Phenomena," 2014, 185-186.

³⁸⁰ I warmly thank Sher Doruff for asking this question.

explore it through a search for movement origination from what I call (with Jung) a dimension of knowing-being where the “somatic unconscious” and the “spiritual unconscious” converge. Jung associates this realm with the [subtle body*](#), which according to him is not scientifically graspable as it transcends our known categories of space and time. In Pauli and Jung’s speculation, the *ontic* realm is psychophysically neutral, meaning neither mental nor physical.

Seen from the perspective of being immersed in a dance, I associate this realm of causation with a higher wisdom and benevolence beyond my comprehension. Could an all-encompassing ground of being beyond the distinctions of mind and matter be intrinsically benevolent? Or does it depend on the human being to which axiological³⁸¹ value direction it is being polarized? Whether the association of an intrinsic benevolence with a ground of being is my own irrational projection, my rose-colored glasses of faith or a true or false interpretation of intensely experienced bodily intuitions, I don't know. If I ask my body, it says it might true. At times it communicates to me through showers of inner shivers that seem to get triggered by vibrations of profound meaning and truth of a distinctly benevolent nature. But again - this might be nothing more and nothing less than a question of interpretation. In any case, I infer that the experience of something *real*, immanent and transcendent, is somehow related to the faculty of creative *corporeal imagination* which I activate through the poetic experience of dance.

I propose to not cage these speculations into Boolean true or false categories. Can we let them be non-Boolean potentialities for knowing?

Towards embodied gnosis

For the dance and music performance SEI, I started to work from an intermediary zone of awareness. Conscious movement choices interact here with unconscious movement patterns that emerge in the moment, searching for a state of being in touch with an unknown *creative*

³⁸¹ “Axiology,” Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary: “the study of the nature, types and criteria of values and of value judgments especially in ethics,” accessed 12.8.2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/axiology#:~:text=%3A%20the%20study%20of%20the%20nature,value%20judgments%20especially%20in%20ethics> .

source.³⁸² Moving from this intermediary state can trigger the experience of being in corporeal proximity with something, which I cannot grasp or understand consciously.

I intuit it through some kind of bodily intelligence. A state of knowing-being that realizes itself as belonging to an infinitely larger realm where mind and matter, or psyche and physis (one's own body as well as the body of the surrounding space and other bodies in the space) appear to be in intimate, indivisible and creative proximity with each other, or simply one.

When I let movement emerge from this state, or when being immersed in dance brings me to that state, the dancing body can become a mediating interface through which impulses for movement can express themselves. A danced movement can become a *real* movement.

This state of knowing-being may be related to an ontic as well as to an epistemic domain: my dancing body perceives some kind of proximity with a dimension of experience that mediates information/energy between my conscious mind and the intuitive mind of my body in motion. I speculatively relate this dimension of experience to an ontic domain because it is not based on sense perception, but on a corporeal intuition. With Jung, I understand intuition as not based on sense perception, but as emerging from the unconscious. Jung associates the somatic/spiritual unconscious with the subtle body.

The *epistemic split* born from this dance-specific ontic context (the hypothetical subtle body), could be related on the one hand to the state of conscious decision-making and on the other hand to the state of allowing movements to emerge in the moment from the intuitive mind of my dancing body.

Through experiencing, observing and interpreting the exchange of information/energy between both states, and through the dialogue with other fields of research, I become more consciously aware of the possibility that both states of being can be seen as emerging from a larger unifying whole. Just one side of the epistemic split is conscious, and the other side is unconscious, or so far maybe only corporeally conscious.

Where conscious awareness hits the ever-receding edge of the unconscious, it can start a dialogue with what may be addressed as the ontic or the *real* underneath or beyond phenomenal experience. This is the space, place or realm of causation for movement that I am curious about. I explore it through a *dance language* that bridges the abyss between the unconscious self that resides in and outside of the body and the becoming consciously aware

³⁸² On the relation between the dance, music and dance language see chapter six.

of it. The creative process towards this dance language awakens a slumbering potential of embodied being. It creates the conditions for this potential to make itself knowable - to me and to others - through dance.

Intermezzo

Altered states of knowing

*The underlying reality Jung and Pauli speculated about, brought Pauli to consider that a science of the future would not treat this reality as being of a psychic or physical order, but rather as something that belongs in a way to both and neither of them. Pauli understood mental and material aspects as complementary aspects from where the one reality can appear.*³⁸³

Relating to the metaphysical issues raised by the Pauli-Jung conjecture, Atmanspacher and Christopher Fuchs³⁸⁴ acknowledge, that their contemporary vision on the Pauli-Jung conjecture might be seen as perpetuating the historical schism between the ontic and the epistemic realms. Yet Atmanspacher and Fuchs propose to focus on the interface between these two discourses, which would inevitably need to be defined from both ontic and epistemic perspectives:

Since the frontiers of knowledge have never been rigidly fixed, this interface cannot be defined as a static wall behind which empirical access is outright impossible.

What may be ontic from one point of view may be epistemic from another. For a future more refined version of the Pauli-Jung conjecture we envision a metaphysics

³⁸³ In 1952 Pauli wrote: "For the invisible reality, of which we have small pieces of evidence in both quantum physics and the psychology of the unconscious, a symbolic psychophysical unitary language must ultimately be adequate, and this is the far goal which I actually aspire. I am quite confident that the final objective is the same, independent of whether one starts from the psyche (ideas) or from physis (matter). Therefore, I consider the old distinction between materialism and idealism as obsolete." Atmanspacher and Primas, "Pauli's ideas on Mind and Matter in the Context of Contemporary Science," 2006, 24.

³⁸⁴ Christopher Fuchs is a senior scientist at the Quantum Information Processing group of Raytheon BBN Technologies in Cambridge and adjunct professor of physics at the University of Waterloo in Canada. From back cover Atmanspacher and Fuchs, *The Pauli-Jung Conjecture and its Impact Today*, 2014.

*that distinctly acknowledges participating and committed observers – ‘both spectators and actors in the great drama of existence.’*³⁸⁵

Towards embodied gnosis

Extending these lines of thought further into my exploration, I refer to the place or space of movement origination in dance that I “locate” at a hypothetical interface between the spiritual and the somatic unconscious, as they are differentiated by Jung.³⁸⁶ Jung relates this area of being to the *subtle body*. The idea of *embodied gnosis* is then a non-verbal corporeal and a verbally discursive approximation towards this space or place of knowing-being.

Embodied gnosis understood as an intermediary zone of knowing-being can also be understood as a kind of *interface*, a mode of cognition enabled by the body in danced motion, that touches on both ontic and epistemic domains, on being and knowing.

³⁸⁵ Atmanspacher and Fuchs, “Introduction: The Pauli-Jung Conjecture,” 2014, 6. The quote referring to the ‘great drama of existence’ is from Bohr, *Atomic Theory and the Description of Nature*, 1958, 81.

³⁸⁶ Carl Gustav Jung and James L. Jarrett, “Winter Term January/March 1935,” *Nietzsche’s Zarathustra: Notes of the seminar given in 1934 -1939*, 1988, 442.

Tuning the psychophysical tonality

Altered states of knowing

I understand “psychophysical tonality” as encompassing the state of the psyche as well as the state of the body. If I would consider only the physical aspect of the human being, it would be possible to work with a term such as muscle tonus. To be truthful to my experience, I need to also consider the subtle materialities of thought, feelings and intentional disposition towards movement, that communicate with and through the physical body. The inner spaces of the body resonate with movement impulses that infuse the entire body with conscious and unconscious movement intentions.

If the psychophysical tonality of the dancing body is too tensed, inner liquidity of motion that traverses the entire body and connects everything with each other is not accessible.

Imaginal* movement streams that I experience as mediating between mind and matter - or between intentionality and movement quality – have difficulty to pass through the body if it is too tense. Conscious will may direct the body to move in certain ways, but the body – where also an unconscious will resides - is then not available to receive this information.

If the psychophysical tonality is too relaxed, the articulation of movement becomes sloppy, unreadable and weak in expression. I see the ideal state of attuning the psychophysical tonality of the dancing body as a neutral, active/passive state of being. I associate psychophysical tonality also with the corporeal voice of the soul. It speaks or sings with and through the matters of the body. The body resists, until I manage to attune it to the sweet spot where it can start to speak, or even sing. Like tuning an instrument, the dancing body needs to find an ideal balance between tension and relaxation so that its movements may resonate expressively in and with space. This ideal balance is constantly changing, as are the psyche, the body and the circumstances of life. If both aspects are in good health, they are naturally able to adapt to whatever is needed in the moment.

Towards embodied gnosis

The accumulated *matter-consciousness* of these kinds of knowing is a synthesis of direct cognitions of the conditions that frame the logic of expression of my dancing body. The intentional orientations for corporeal consciousness listed here, identify and describe aspects of this materialized consciousness, which always remains incomplete and open-ended. I experience it as intrinsically non-verbal. This means that the cellular configuration of its corporeally crystallized memory happens by a corporeal kind of understanding and intelligence. In my view, this corporeal intelligence has the potential to enable another kind of sense making than rational logic. It can facilitate meaningful communication between the psychological and the physiological inner spaces of a dancing body and the world of outwardly oriented sensorial perception.

With this research, I am working on understanding this idea and experience of materialized consciousness better and to make it more explicit. I also experience this corporeal intelligence as imbued with spiritual and consequently ethically oriented dimensions of knowing and being. For example, it may enhance a sense of community and interpersonal connection. It may also impart a supra-sensory intuition of some kind of transcendental, immensely powerful and radically humbling agency, which appears to me to be immanently present in the corporeality of the human being.

How this corporeal intelligence is informed by activating a dialogue at the edge between consciousness and the unconscious is here looked at through the [creative interface*](#) of the dancing body.

Intuitive corporeal intelligence can be activated by giving conscious attention to how the psyche and the body are attuned with each other and with the multi-faceted surfaces of each present moment. Attuning the psychophysical tonality during waking consciousness has also to do with a state of being fully present. In danced motion, the state of being present becomes more complex as the body needs to be navigated through space in a way that is radically different from sitting in a chair or from walking on the street. The directions that the limbs, torso and articulations of the body travel in space multiply exponentially. A multitude of living vectors of motion are experienced simultaneously. They traverse the fingers, the toes, the knees, the shoulders, the pelvis (...) perpetually creating expressive angles in the joints that

cannot but be in a cohesive and collaborative state of union in relation to each other. They can contradict each other, but they are essentially one.

In dance, I need to keep orchestrating all of this while simultaneously listening and responding to it. And the unconscious, the unknown, the unspeakable needs space to be there for the dance that I am searching for to be able to blossom freely.

Full performative presence in dance as I experience it also encompasses to a large extent the ability of being present to the unknown, of opening one's inner being towards the mystery of movement and to allow it to make itself present through dance.

Intermezzo

Altered states of knowing

Bio-Somatic Dance Movement Naturotherapy is a therapeutic practice developed by dance movement therapist and scholar Amanda Williamson³⁸⁷. This practice is grounded in what Williamson refers to as "Post-Newtonian anatomy and physiology". It foregrounds an experiential or "post-Cartesian" anatomy where the division of body and mind are integrated in a "holistic body-Self". With her "post-Newtonian" stance she integrates objective knowledge of western anatomy with subjective movement experiences in a conscious dialogue with gravity, imaginatively transcending the functional and mechanical approach of western anatomy.³⁸⁸ It is a contemporary approach to therapy that emphasizes bodymind awareness and the healing potential of movement.³⁸⁹ Embodied awareness is here prioritized over cerebral talking although developing language from subjective experience does play a constitutive part in the therapeutic process³⁹⁰.

³⁸⁷ Amanda Williamson is principal editor and co-founder of the Journal *Dance, Movement & Spiritualities* (Intellect) established in 2014 and visiting professor at Coventry University.

³⁸⁸ Williamson, "Post-Newtonian Anatomy and Physiology: The Gravitational and Parasympathetic Experience in Bio-Somatic Dance Movement Naturotherapy, 2020, 172.

³⁸⁹ For an example from the context of arts therapies where the role of aesthetic engagement in relation to resilience and mental wellbeing is highlighted, see Samaritter, "The Aesthetic Turn in Mental Health: Reflections on an Explorative Study into Practices in the Arts Therapies," 2018, 1–11.

³⁹⁰ Williamson for example describes how another quality of sense-perception and experience can be generated by re-languaging the vocabulary of traditional anatomy. She works for example with the

Williamson offers another perspective on the idea of “tuning the psychophysical tonality” by balancing the parasympathetic with the sympathetic nervous systems. The parasympathetic nervous system belongs to the autonomic nervous system (ANS) and usually functions underneath conscious awareness.³⁹¹ Participants of therapeutic sessions are encouraged to self-regulate and re-align corporeal misalignments caused by an overarousal of the sympathetic nervous system. This happens by bringing conscious sensory awareness to the unconscious life processes that traverse the body through the parasympathetic nervous system³⁹².

Altered states of knowing

The neutral active-passive state which I aim to attune to, can be physiologically grounded by balancing the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. The dialogue between conscious choice making in movement and intuitively emerging movements from the unconscious, can be associated with Williamson’s ideas about becoming aware of the life processes that happen through the parasympathetic nervous system as a movement towards integrative wholeness of “body-Self”. An experience-based intuitive knowing about a hypothetical convergence between the somatic and the spiritual unconscious could be explored in line with Williamson’s approach of integrating objective anatomical knowledge with subjective experiential knowledge.

expression “each vertebra floats on the intervertebral discs,” instead of with “the vertebrae stack or inter-lock on top of each other.” In Williamson, “Post-Newtonian Anatomy and Physiology: The Gravitational and Parasympathetic Experience in Bio-Somatic Dance Movement Naturotherapy,” 2020, 187.

³⁹¹ Ibid, 191.

³⁹² Interesting to note here is the importance given to the vagus nerve as an essential part of the parasympathetic nervous system. The vagus nerve literally connects the brain with the body and facilitates a bidirectional flow between the brain and the guts (the stomach and intestines). In Williamson’s words “... a client can tune into the brain-gut axis” by consciously accessing the vagus nerve. In Williamson, “Post-Newtonian Anatomy and Physiology,” 2020, 183-185.

Spiritual corporeality

When being immersed in a dance for a substantial amount of time, I start to experience a psychophysical state of “inner liquidity” that becomes the experiential ground for movement origination. This “inner liquidity” enables integrative communication between subtle inner movements of personal and possibly universal aspects of the psyche or the mind and the more solid reality of the body. This state changes the experience of my corporeality. “Inner liquidity” can be looked at from the perspective of relational fluid systems that operate underneath the threshold of everyday consciousness. In conversation, Williamson expressed her view based on many years of working and teaching in somatic movement education, that the presence of the “spiritual” inside of the body seems to her to be physiologically rooted in these relational fluid systems.³⁹³

Towards embodied gnosis

To synthesize my insight into the concept of *embodied gnosis* so far:

This research differs from somatic approaches to dance where the first-person subjective perception of corporeal sensations is foregrounded by exploring the suprasensory dimensions of danced experience. I am asking questions about a possible dimension of being that is not directly perceivable through the senses as we know them, but intuitable from a yet unconscious level of experience. For Jung, intuition is not related to sense perception but to the unconscious.³⁹⁴ He associates the spiritual and the somatic unconscious with the *subtle body*.³⁹⁵ The hypothetical interface between the *somatic* and the *spiritual unconscious* and the *subtle body* so far thus appear to be the key areas to look at with my questioning about the relationship between the metaphysical and the physical.

So how can I attune the psychophysical tonality of my dancing body towards being able to investigate the subtle body at the edge between the somatic and the spiritual unconscious?

³⁹³ This conversation took place at the conference “Cultural, Intercultural and Transnational Dialogues in Dance and Spirituality” organized by Moving Soma, Centre for Embodiment and Bio Somatic Dance Movement Naturotherapy, Cheltenham UK in August 2019.

³⁹⁴ See for example “Sensing vs. Intuition,” Personlity Hacker, accessed 19.09.2014, *YouTube* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W9Fw-YpHoU8>.

³⁹⁵ Jung and Jarrett, “Winter Term January/March 1935,” 1988, 441.

With Steiner, the etheric body (a supra-sensory layer of consciousness beyond the physical body) bridges the abyss between inner perception directed towards the consciousness of the self (“soul oriented”) and outer perception by means of the senses. Steiner states that the path towards inner perception loses itself in the unconscious and does not directly connect with perceiving outwardly through the senses.³⁹⁶ The edges of this abyss have captured my curiosity, and I associate them with a metaphorical double-edged sword of gnosis. It slices in between on the one hand the limits of conscious awareness of my corporeal being and on the other hand the place or space or dimension of experience where the unconscious begins.³⁹⁷ Through artistic means, I can speculatively interrogate ideas about the subtle body gathered so far. With the help of *corporeal imagination** I can perform a dance with the intention to move as if my body is receiving information from the vast periphery of a cosmic “I”.³⁹⁸

I can invite movement to come from a place where my conscious awareness encounters an edge of perception that leads towards my inner being, or to something like a yet unconscious will that I intuit to reside somewhere deep inside of my body. I can corporeally imagine that there is a path from my inner being towards the outer world enabled by a subtle kind of corporeality, and I can study – together with the observers of the dance - how the movement language generated by this speculative scenario speaks.

The place underneath sensorial perception that I am curious about, the *ontic* domain, or the unspeakable unknown might as well be nothing more than the unconscious areas of my body that I cannot access consciously. Whereas Williamson’s perspective on the unconscious residing in the parasympathetic nervous system informs my intuition about a subtle kind of corporeality linked to the state of *embodied gnosis* from the anatomical, inwardly oriented side, Steiner’s perspective on the etheric body also includes a bridge between the unconscious inside of the body and the unconscious cosmic outside. An insight that I can

³⁹⁶ Fors, *Geschichte der Eurythmie im tanzhistorischen Kontext 1912-1930*, 2015, 50.

³⁹⁷ I also relate this edge to the “cut” between consciousness and the unconscious that according to Pauli needs to be positioned by the experimenting researcher, wisely (my addition). See also chapter three, 90.

³⁹⁸ With Steiner, the etheric body is associated with a counterforce against gravity and with peripherally informed movement (as opposed to concentrically condensed movement). It is supposed to provide the inner body (with Steiner also the astral body) with elements/substance/information that the etheric body sucks out of the cosmos, out of the cosmic “I”. Steiner, *Das Johannes Evangelium, Ein Zyklus von zwölf Vorträgen, Hamburg 18.-31. Mai 1908*, Rudolf Steiner Online Archiv, 4. Auflage 2010, 207.

derive from the various perspectives on subtle corporeality in combination with my experience is that human corporeality can be intuitively experienced as spiritually informed although it is yet unconscious and largely unknown to us.

Even though some of these perspectives are not compatible with a materialist knowledge paradigm, I can explore them artistically. As a dance researcher embedded in an academic context, I maintain a suspended position between “naïve materialism” and “naïve idealism” by considering both the anatomy based (Williamson) and the spiritual science-based (Steiner) perspectives on the human body in developing my own views on the subject matter.³⁹⁹

Activating Axis of Reverence

Altered states of knowing

Imagine standing right in front of something awe-inspiring: maybe a gigantic ancient tree, or a baroque Cathedral, or an Egyptian Pyramid - something that wordlessly radiates supreme authority, wisdom and significance, just by being there.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁹ I am referring here to Geoffrey Samuel’s work on a scientifically grounded understanding of the meaning of subtle body concepts as described in chapter four on the subtle body. To reiterate here for the convenience of the reader: Samuel highlights the major limitations of “naïve materialism” (i.e., scientific reductionism that is incapable of accommodating religious and supernatural phenomena) and “naïve idealism” (an uncritical appropriation and acceptance of subtle body phenomena as “real”). Samuel hints towards understanding subtle body concepts as “a kind of view of the brain and central nervous system from within,” as something “relational and constructed” but nevertheless “real”. He further states that ideas and hypotheses about the subtle body could eventually be grounded in latest neurophysiological research. Samuel, “Subtle-body processes. Towards a non-reductionist understanding,” 2013, 53-57. I do not mean to imply here that Williamsons’ and Steiner’s work are in any way to be considered naïve in a demeaning sense. On the contrary, I highly respect their work. I am situating their work here on a spectrum between practices primarily grounded in the physical anatomy of the human body (Williamson) and practices that emphasize the subtle body and its metaphysical connotations such as Steiner’s Eurythmy.

⁴⁰⁰ I am aware that this description may activate an association with the discourse surrounding the “sublime” and questions about its relation to the “numinous”. German Lutheran theologian and scholar of religion (1869-1937) Rudolf Otto equated the “numinous” with the “sublime” in his famous work *The Idea of the Holy*. Poland, “The Idea of the Holy and the History of the Sublime,” 1992, 176. In recent research in the field of social psychology, spiritual experiences have been categorized in a typology that unpacks these mental states into numinous experience (numinous, revelatory, synchronicity), mystical experience (unity, self-loss, aesthetic nature, aesthetic art) and paranormal experience (paranormal known, paranormal unknown). Yaden and Newberg, “Types of Spiritual Experience,” 2022, 161. In this research, I am referring in the first place to “numinous” experiences in dance which enticed me to develop the notion of *embodied gnosis*. Associations with the “sublime” are possible but I refrain here from including discourse on the sublime in the thematic scope of the *discursive practice*. It is a large field that I cannot do justice to within the scope of this

In such a moment, a subtle movement of my inner being urges me to remember reverence, to remember humility. This impulse appears to me as something naturally human. The inner stirring to remember humility does not happen because of religious indoctrination, which I have not been subject to. What matters to me, is that this subtle inner movement happens. If I perceive it, the body will express this impulse either by bending my torso downwards, starting from a softening and emptying the area of the center of the chest, or by sliding the distribution of my weight on my feet slightly backwards and upwards along my spine, almost growing vertically from inside *with* the experience of magnitude of significance of what I encounter. It is as if my body knows how to carry itself when faced with the awe-inspiring. Energetically, there is a clear difference in how I carry myself when my central vertical axis is inclined in such a way, that my weight is distributed in a casual manner on my feet, or whether I carry myself with awareness of an imperative to humility caused by an unknown origin. When the attitude of humility spreads through my body vertically upwards instead of downwards by bowing down, the distance between the vertical poles above my head and below my feet increases. The spaces between the vertebrae of the spine open ever so slightly, the psychophysical tonality of my being is attuned to a higher frequency of oscillation. I then stand in readiness of something beyond measure, in relation to something invisible yet most real. I refer to this embodied state as being aligned along an “axis of reverence”. I do not often encounter things, events, people or other beings that evoke deep reverence in me. These moments are rare yet keep resonating for a long time.

With attuning the dancing body to be aligned along an “axis of reverence”, this state can become temporally expanded by solidifying it into *matter-consciousness*. It becomes an intention infused cellular configuration of a corporeal attitude. I inscribe it into my corporeal memory. This helps me to remember to stand in readiness in relation to an unfathomable unknown. It helps me to not take anything for granted and to remember the bigger picture. It supports my dance to participate in it, by remembering physically how to carry myself with respect towards it. Dancing being aligned on an axis of reverence also refers to an alignment

investigation. It is important to note that I am not only exploring a mental state (as mostly referred to in research on spiritual experience) but a *psychophysical* state, and I emphasize the reality of the *dancing body* as constitutive to the experience of *embodied gnosis*. In relation to the typology developed by Yaden and Newberg, *embodied gnosis* could be mapped across the specified areas of numinous and mystical experience.

between conscious personal will, unconscious will and an impersonal objective will. The process of blending and aligning these aspects of will in relation to each other can lead towards the experience of an [artistic truth*](#) in dance.

Intermezzo

Spiritual corporeality

In her work on dismantling the conceptual dichotomy between “religion” and “dance”, which contributed to western Christian hostile attitudes towards dance traditions across the globe, Kimerer LaMothe extensively mapped “the generative interdependence of phenomena that appear as “dance” and/or “religion”⁴⁰¹. In “A History of Theory and Method in the Study of Religion and Dance”, LaMothe presents the n|om dance of the Kalahari Bushmen as one of these phenomena. N|om stands for a universal life force which the elders of the bushmen describe as “receiving God’s love”⁴⁰². In non-bushmen terminology N|om can be described as a “spiritual energy” generated by an altered state of consciousness induced by a communal dance experience. For the bushmen N|om is not experienced as a “material” body being filled with “spiritual” energy.⁴⁰³ The bushmen do not distinguish between the spiritual or the material, the profane and the sacred. Their experience of dance brings all these aspects together.⁴⁰⁴

Altered states of knowing

When n|om is first invited and then “heated”, dancers become able to “send arrows of n|om into other people” bringing about an “experience-shift to love”.⁴⁰⁵ The participants become

⁴⁰¹ LaMothe, “A History of Theory and Method in the Study of Religion and Dance, Past, Present, Future,” 2018, 1.

⁴⁰² Ibid, 91.

⁴⁰³ Ibid, 94.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid, 89.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid, 98.

movement⁴⁰⁶, there is no distinction between mind and body, the bodily sense of self becomes a “vibration of love.”⁴⁰⁷ For the bushmen “God is movement” and dance is a “rope” to being and becoming God, a way of participating in God.⁴⁰⁸

LaMothe emphasizes the sensory awareness and quality of knowledge induced by participating in the dance and its ability to “catalyze the creative potency of one’s bodily becoming.”⁴⁰⁹ She states that “...dancing n|om knowledge is not an intellectual belief. It is love. It is a knowledge that exists as real relationships that occur between and among those in the dance.”⁴¹⁰

Towards Embodied Gnosis

Once the alignment with an *axis of reverence* is experientially solidified - meaning clearly inscribed and memorized in the intention infused corporeality (or *matter-consciousness*) – this axis can be oriented towards multiple directions. An *axis of reverence* is most easily accessible from a vertical standing position. It can also be tilted and bent towards any direction while moving through the space. As with all the attunements listed here, they may gradually recede into the unconscious during the dance. Yet the experiential basis of an axis of reverence stays solidly incorporated as a baseline throughout dance experience.

Participating in the axis of reverence through danced movement (alone or with a community) can eventually generate an “aesthetic forcefield”⁴¹¹ of love. When this field of love is experienced by the participants of the performative event (dancer(s) and spectators) as tangibly generated by the dance, a dance may be said to move in the

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid, 94.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid, 99.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid, 101.

⁴⁰⁹ LaMothe suggests that the words used by the bushmen to verbalize their experience must again fold back into the experience of dance. She states that the words don’t refer to a nonverbal realm that exists independently from the words. The names given by the bushmen to their experience in dance “point to realities that the experience of participating in the dance allows people to think and feel and know viscerally as true.” Ibid, 101. This also relates to the gap between wordless corporeal language and verbal discourse thematized in chapter one.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid, 102.

⁴¹¹ Huschka, “Aesthetic Scenarios of Energeia: Bodies as Transformational Fields of Force,” 2019, 60.

direction of becoming a vehicle for an *embodied gnosis*. A vehicle for a visceral experience of an **artistic truth*** of a dance that conveys a sense of proximity with an unspeakable creative source.

Euthus Body

Altered states of knowing

During the creative process of the performance SEI, conscious choice making in movement based on already known/written movement materials became less interesting. This happened, because I experienced more creative freedom in exploring the other side of the *epistemic split* between conscious choice making and immediately emerging movement. To let emerge movement from an expanded sense of corporeality that extends its limbs towards the metaphysical, lured me more convincingly into proximity with the unspeakable unknown. The undefined open space of movement without a predefined choreographic score created a condition to encounter the unspeakable unknown in every moment of the performance - if I open myself towards the unknown with trust. To allow movement to emerge immediately during each moment of the performance without premeditation, allows me to experience an immanent transcendence that loosens and liberates the resistance of the materiality of the physical body. That the movements that appear are not empty or meaningless is related to the implicit incorporation of the other attunements as described above. This means that the aim to perform *real* movements has somehow already inscribed itself into *matter-consciousness* without having to consciously evoke it time and time again.

Spiritual corporeality

“Euthus” is a Greek term translatable as straight, immediately, upright, true, sincere and straightforward.⁴¹² The idea of an **euthus body*** came up during a dialogue with Eurythmist

⁴¹² “Euthus,” Biblestudytools, <https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/euthus.html>, accessed 9.8.2022. In his article “How soon is ‘immediately’ in Mark”, former New Testament Honorary Professor at the University of Aberdeen Paul Ellingworth (1931-2018), notes that the Greek adverb “euthus” appears forty-two times in the Gospel of Mark, which is a high amount

and poet Gail Langstroth.⁴¹³ She invented the term during a conversation about the different bodies of Steiner⁴¹⁴ and how they are worked with in Eurythmy. We concluded that the *euthus body* could be a contemporary creative adaptation of Steiner's bodies. We understand it as a multilayered body of the now. A body of immediacy that includes the layers of the physical, etheric, astral and physical body as well as the "I" as core of the soul, which directs all the bodies in coordinated motion. "Euthus" carries not only a temporal dimension in its meaning, but also an ethical dimension.⁴¹⁵

I work with attuning to the *euthus body* by observing how sincerely I stay aligned with an undefined yet at the same time very specific (suprasensorial) sense of intimate proximity with an *artistic truth* during each moment of the dance. This sense is related to orchestrating a dialogue between my personal will and the quest to align an unconscious will inside of my body with an immanent and transcendent objective and impersonal will.

Towards embodied gnosis

The kind of knowing that speaks through the *euthus body* can in principle be experienced by everybody. To me, the *euthus body* communicates that:

The dancing body can be a home for a creative source to speak through movement. This creative source is infinite, and I can make myself empty, receptive and non-resistant towards it. That it can be experienced more fully has something to do with spaciousness inside of the body, which is intimately linked with spaciousness inside of my psyche or my soul. It requires my participation in it, and there is a choice to do so or not. There is a living presence in the

compared to rest of the New Testament. Pondering its significance and possible translations, Ellingworth unpacks several possible meanings of "euthus". Considering its position in the context, he suggests not always translating it as "immediately". "Euthus" may also be understood as marking a new beginning or a transition, as highlighting a first event in a story or as a catalyst towards a climax or a conclusion. Ellingworth, "How Soon Is 'Immediately' in Mark?", 1978, 414–18.

⁴¹³ Next to performing and teaching Eurythmy and to writing poetry, Gail Langstroth followed an anthroposophical priest training where philology and the study of ancient texts of the Bible play an important role in living faith.

⁴¹⁴ To recapitulate Steiner's bodies: physical body, etheric or vital body, astral body, I as core of the soul, spiritual self, lifespirt, spiritual man as transformed physical body. Rudolf Steiner, *Theosophie*, 1955, 59.

⁴¹⁵ In the context of the Bible, the adjectives upright, true and sincere are "measured" in relation to God. "Euthus" refers as well as to the "right" and "straight" way from "God's point A to God's point B". "2117.euthus," Biblehub, accessed 4.4.2023, <https://biblehub.com/greek/2117.htm>.

movement of dance. This presence is independent from being attributed with meaning beyond movement as such, or not. It just is. It instills in me an imperative towards humility. I can move within a spectrum of polarities in a way that they can be experienced as a continuum rather than as dualistic forces. *Corporeal imagination* can cross a threshold towards an experience of something *real*. Dance ignites my intuition of something real, sacred and truthful that extends beyond the boundaries of the physical body to become another kind of body, towards another kind of experience of time and space.

To be fully present during a dance as I experience it, encompasses to a large extent also the ability of being present to the unknown, of opening one's inner being towards the mystery of movement by means of traveling with it through the infinity within and without, to allow it to make itself present and knowable through dance.

Intermezzo

Towards embodied gnosis

Seyyed Hossein Nasr is an Iranian philosopher and spokesperson of traditional Islam. Nasr is one of the few scholars (as among others also Basarab Nicolescu), who includes a spiritual dimension in his view on science⁴¹⁶. His life and work are aligned with the school of Traditionalism and Perennialism. This esoteric school is characterized by a belief in a primordial Tradition of other than human origin received by humanity. It focuses on the shared principles of various religious and metaphysical traditions and is largely incompatible with Modern Western culture, science and civilization. Subscribing to the mission of keeping alive the core of this Tradition in contemporary times implies for Nasr to fully embrace fundamental Traditional values.⁴¹⁷

Nasr has worked on rejuvenating and defending the notions of traditional science and scientia sacra in relation to contemporary global culture based on his firm belief, that these

⁴¹⁶ Widiyanto, "Traditional Science and Scientia Sacra: Origin and Dimensions of Seyyed Hossein Nasr's Concept of Science," 2017, 250.

⁴¹⁷ Hanegraaff, "Traditionalism/Perennialism", in *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, 2006, 1132.

approaches to knowledge contain a perennial and universal wisdom.⁴¹⁸ According to Nasr, a human being can be liberated from all limitations by means of scientia sacra, the ultimate aim of which is the infinite. This is possible because the human being is imbued by the Sacred. A condition for achieving deliverance is that a human being needs to fulfill this knowledge with the entirety of his or her being, involving will, psyche and intelligence. Scientia sacra can be seen as a liberating and unifying science with an axiological function of achieving a state of deliverance and union with the Sacred. The ontological foundations for scientia sacra are based on the ideas that there lives something within the human being that bears similarity with God, that God is a Pure Being that is by its very nature infinite and that the essence of a human being is spiritual and thus time- and space-less.

The physical body is understood as limiting the freedom of a human being. Therefore, a human being needs to be attentive to the physical desires of the body to find deliverance and to be able to return to an original state of limitlessness. To be able to know the Divine through the Divine in the human being, the soul must be purified and virtues such as charity, humility and truthfulness need to be upheld.

Seen from the perspective of scientia sacra, true reality is to be found in the immaterial world, the reality of God is seen as concrete reality while other realities are considered as its abstractions, as a theophany and manifestation of a Divine Essence. Scientia sacra is not defined as theoretical knowledge of reality but as practically significant in helping the human being to attain the sacred. Scientia sacra leads to the transformation of the human being toward realizing gnosis by opening the human mind to perceive higher orders of reality.⁴¹⁹ Gnosis here is related to the principle of “knowledge by presence” which is “self-evident, self-present, and self-objective – which means the consciousness and the cognizable reality are the same.”⁴²⁰

Towards embodied gnosis

In the introduction, I state that by questioning and working with the notion of *embodied gnosis* in dance, I am performing an experimental inversion of the Hellenistic idea of gnosis

⁴¹⁸ Widiyanto, “Traditional Science and Scientia Sacra,” 2017, 251.

⁴¹⁹ Widiyanto, “Traditional Science and Scientia Sacra,” 2017, 263 -264.

⁴²⁰ Ibid, 262.

(understood as disembodied knowledge based on religious experience) by positing the body in danced motion as a potential catalyst for the embodiment, or speaking in religious terms, incarnation of consciousness (or psyche, soul, mind and spirit). I also state that this inversion stands for a performative attempt to re-embody the ancient idea of gnosis through a contemporary dancing body situated in the post-secular era of the 21st century.

Including the description of gnosis in Traditionalism in the parade of perspectives on relations between the metaphysical and the physical, invites for a more nuanced elaboration of my introductory statement on the idea of *embodied gnosis*.

The Traditionalist idea of gnosis is related to direct experiential knowledge of the sacred by presence. It aims to reconcile various religious expressions by defending and consolidating their shared essence. The aim of scientia sacra is a realized gnosis that transforms and liberates the human being by a unification with God. The human body is seen as a limitation to that freedom based on its desires. These desires contradict and resist the spiritual essence of time- and space-less infinity within the human being.

I also state in the introduction that I don't attempt to grasp or contain the unspeakable unknown by means of culturally pre-determined filters of rational reasoning, religious dogma or aesthetic codification.

Instead, I am searching for a way of speaking of the human dancing body as having an intrinsic spiritually corporeal proximity with its creative source by its very nature. I also posit that dance appears to be one possible pathway to amplify the experience of this intuition.

Some ideas from Nasr's perspective resonate with how I verbally describe dance experience. I recognize terminologies such as the idea of direct experiential knowledge, spiritual realization and a sense of an overlap between immanent and transcendent infinity. A major difference between my and his position though is that Nasr speaks from the perspective of an ancient and timeless wisdom tradition whereas I am speaking from the perspective of a contemporary dance practice. Although Traditionalism open-mindedly aims to connect various religious traditions through their shared essence, it still obliges a commitment to fundamental religious principles and to a battle against the materialist, rationalist and disenchanted principles of Western culture. This reversal of Western ideas is striking and an endless cause for intense culture clashes. It implies that the ultimate reality is to be found in the immaterial world, that the reality of God is seen as the only concrete reality while other realities would only be abstractions or manifestation of a Divine Essence.

I do not make claims about the true nature of reality, but I suggest that it is possible to get a glimpse of an experience of something *real* and sacred through the dancing body understood as a creatively mediating interface between the metaphysical and the physical. This happens through an experience of proximity with an unspeakable unknown creative source. I encounter this unspeakable unknown from within the experience of my body when engaged in danced motion and I speculate about how the dancing body can be seen as an interface that allows to perceive an intrinsic connection between the human physical body and a metaphysical realm. An ethical dimension is intrinsically hooked up with this experience because it ignites a thorough re-consideration of what it means to be human with respect to each other and to cosmic evolution. The imperative in Traditionalism to “purify the soul” could be related to the idea of “cleansing the dancing body from psychophysical debris.”

I agree that the mirror of the inner awareness of the dancer needs to be as “clean” as possible to be able to perceive something real in the dance.

I outlined in this chapter how the physical body is the first place of resistance to movement but also the enabler of knowing through movement. I described some aspects of how it can be attuned towards encountering a sense of proximity with a creative source.

When attuning the dancing body to become an *euthus body*, the dance can transport me towards an experience of artistic realization. Artistic realization can be read as a modulation of spiritual realization. It is disengaged from traditional religious contexts yet dialogues with them through the perspective of a contemporary dance art practice. To explore the idea of *embodied gnosis* in dance and in written text, is then also a post-secular project to explicitly re-enchance a secularized art practice. In my view, dance has never lost its ability to enchant and to open new vistas on what a human being embedded in a cosmic context is and can become. Perhaps it is rather the reading of it, its reception, that seems to me to be in need of acknowledging the human value and cultural significance of this ability. With this research, I do not intend to reverse the merits of dance as having gained independence from representing unambiguous meaning and linear narratives during its post-modern and contemporary phases of evolution. But I do intend to include metaphysical dimensions of *matter-consciousness* in questioning and re-defining the ontological, epistemological and communicative potentials of dance in the 21st century. A movement towards one possible future of many other possible futures of dance is enacted here through a dialogue between

the intuitive intelligence of a dancing body and various other perspectives on the relation between the metaphysical and the physical.

Intermezzo

Towards embodied gnosis

Steiner equates what he calls the “astral body” with a faith body [Glaubensleib]. The “etheric body” or the “life body” is equated with the love body [Liebeleib]. Steiner posits the “I” in the center of the human being, as a central kernel. This “I” is enveloped by the faith body [Glaubensleib], and the faith body is enveloped by the love body [Liebeleib]. Steiner describes the power of love [Liebekraft] as a life force that resides even deeper within the human being than faith. Those forces that act from within the depths of our body through the etheric body are expressed by the ability of the human being to love, on all levels of existence.⁴²¹

Towards embodied gnosis

The idea and experience of an *euthus body* incorporates the conceptual culmination of experiences of various dimensions of being in dance. These dimensions can come into conscious awareness, when its edges leading to the inner depths of the human body are continuously shifted towards the spiritual/somatic unconscious of the dancing body. What then can dwell upwards from within, can be interpreted as forces of faith and love. Steiner provides a possible spiritual ontology and vocabulary for forces that I also experience as naturally immanent to the human body. This does not mean that I claim to be able to prove empirically that the etheric body or the astral body exist. I can only testify to having witnessed the emergence of these forces from within, triggered through the dance. That they are activated through dance might have to do with the deep engagement and revolution of the inner landscapes of the body that are needed for dance. Maybe poeticized motion can trigger some of these forces in a different way than everyday functional activities. Dance can also

⁴²¹ Steiner, *Das Esoterische Christentum und die Geistige Führung der Menschheit. Dreiundzwanzig Vorträge, gehalten in den Jahren 1911 und 1912 in verschiedenen Städten*, 1995, 174-175.

trigger the opposite of these forces (such as fear and destructive forces). I perceive it to be a matter of choice, which direction of force is chosen and amplified in a dance creation. The play of forces becomes then the dramaturgical substance for the *dance language*. Dancing and speaking with the *euthus body* then also imply to artistically transform a battle between polarizing forces into a language of a unity of being. The “I” of the dancer is then in charge of how, for whom and to what purpose these forces are projected into space.

Intermezzo

In Steiner’s vision about the evolution of the human being, Christianity needed to first be a matter of faith [Glaubenssache] and only gradually begins to become a matter of knowing [Wissenssache]. “Es wird eine Wissenssache werden”.⁴²²

Towards embodied gnosis

When faith in the *artistic truth* of the dance that my body invents through an experience of intimate proximity with a creative source becomes a matter of trust based on direct experiential knowing of its being, the *euthus body* can mediate an experience of *embodied gnosis*.

⁴²² Steiner, *Exkurse in Das Gebiet Des Markus-Evangeliums. Dreizehn Vorträge, Gehalten in Berlin, München, Hannover Und Koblenz Zwischen Dem 17.Oktober 1910 and Dem 10.Juni 1911, Und Eine Fragenbeantwortung Vom 18. Dezember 1910*, 1995, 61.

Conclusion

Inversely mirroring the previous chapter, this chapter presents in the main body text a limited selection of intentional orientations for corporeal consciousness in dance (*attuning*). These intentional orientations are articulated from the first-person perspective of the researching dancer (*corporeal theory*). In the *intermezzi* some of the vocabularies and concepts used to describe the attunements are looked at through a range of different fields of discourse and practice that share a focus on the relationship between the metaphysical and the physical (*discursive practice*). The epistemic contexts touched during the *intermezzi* are either based on scientific/philosophical speculations about relations between mind and matter or on esoteric forms of thought and related body-based practices.

As in chapter four, the key concepts *spiritual corporeality*, *altered states of knowing* and *embodied gnosis* enable communication between diverging perspectives from different fields of discourse. Fields of convergence between *corporeal theory* and *discursive practice* emerge throughout the text. They are suspended between the physically sensible and the intuitively intelligible whereby a strict distinction between them gradually resolves (*dancing language*). Through the dialogue between the different perspectives, the three key concepts are enriched with accumulating layers of potential meaning. They trace vectors for future research and potentialities for knowing. At the sections gathered under the header of “*towards embodied gnosis*”, newly gained vistas on *spiritual corporeality* and *altered states of knowing* are synthesized and incorporated into an artistically grounded language and logic.

In this chapter I focused mainly on the question of how the dancing body can be attuned to act as an interface between the metaphysical and the physical through which I can investigate and communicate a sense of intimate proximity with a creative source.

More concretely speaking, this implies questioning how the dancing body can be attuned to the idea and experience of *embodied gnosis*.

In the following, I will briefly recapitulate and summarize the intentional orientations for corporeal consciousness (*attuning*) that I elaborate in this chapter in response to these questions.

With “For Dance: let it pass through you”, I described how the dancing body mediates and transforms energy that passes through it. I focused on how my approach to *dance language* is informed by dynamic exchanges between conscious awareness and the unconscious. I proposed to look at how spiritually informed ontologies of the human body might possibly enlighten contemporary dancer’s not-knowing about the nature of energy exchange in performative events and might give meaning to some of their utopian longings. In the movement towards *embodied gnosis*, I suggested that embedding the labor of dance in a cosmically oriented and metaphysically informed corporeal ontology could expand the significance of dance to larger scales of self-realization, incarnation and manifestation.

With “Preparing the canvas”, I focused on cleansing the inner landscape of the body from *psychophysical debris* to prepare the *psychophysical resonating space* to be able to creatively mediate between mind and matter. The term “psychophysical” was unpacked from the perspective of the Pauli-Jung conjecture and with reference to their speculative venture to solve the psychophysical problem of the relation between mind and matter. I briefly visited Pauli and Jung’s worldview of dual-aspect monism which brings together an ontic monism (a psychophysically neutral background reality) and an epistemic dualism where the mental and the physical enable different but complementary perspectives on the underlying *ontic* reality. Moving towards *embodied gnosis*, I connected the ontic realm with an experience of something *real* beyond the phenomenal world.

In “Opening towards a dialogue with the real”, I described how I perceive intuitive corporeal intelligence to hint towards a larger dimension of being that can be experienced as bearing subjective as well as objective qualities. In the movement towards *embodied gnosis*, I explained how this intermediary state of knowing-being is relatable to the *ontic* domain, because it is based on a (suprasensorial) corporeal intuition rather than on sense perception. At the same time, this intermediary state becomes an epistemic domain through the *epistemic split* between two performative states that enables the description of an intermediary state. I introduced the idea of an interface between ontic and epistemic realms according to Atmanspacher and Fuchs and related it to conceptualizing the dancing body as a creatively mediating interface that enables an altered experience of knowing-being.

In the “Tuning the psychophysical tonality” a somewhat neutral, active-passive state was described as an ideal state of tuning the psychophysical disposition to enter a dance. I elaborated on the idea of intuitive corporeal intelligence understood as *matter-consciousness*. I described it as being able to “make sense” in other ways than rational logic. This happens for example by enabling meaningful communication between the psychological and physiological inner spaces of the dancing body and outwardly oriented sensorial perception.

Moving towards *embodied gnosis*, I explained how I speculatively synthesize and balance anatomically informed and spiritual science informed ideas about human corporeality artistically.

In “Activating Axis of Reverence” I explained how aligning along an axis of reverence is related to harmonizing personal will, unconscious will and something like an impersonal objective will. I associate this alignment also with an experience of *artistic truth*. Another perspective on psychophysically aligning with a “spiritual energy” was introduced through the n|om dance of the Kalahari Bushmen for whom dance is a way to participate in God. I concluded this section towards *embodied gnosis* by pointing to how attunements can materialize inside of the body as an incorporated memory or as *matter-consciousness*. I further adopted the bushmen’s “field of love” and associated it with an “aesthetic force field” which connects performers and spectators in a shared uplifting experience.

The [euthus body*](#) was presented as a conceptual and experiential culmination of this journey towards *embodied gnosis* so far. In the movement towards *embodied gnosis*, I roughly summarized the kind of knowing that can speak through the *euthus body* – and potentially to everybody - according to my current capacity of perception and cognition. To close the circle of excursions into esoteric forms of thought that include both Christian and Islamic variations, I introduced the idea of “scientia sacra” in Seyyed Hossein Nasr’s school of Traditionalism. I sharpened my idea of *embodied gnosis* in dance by juxtaposing it with Nasr’s perspective. I further defined *embodied gnosis* in dance as a post-secular project of re-enchanting and re-valuating a secularized art practice without dropping the merits of having gained independence from meaning and narrative conquered during the post-modern and contemporary evolution of dance. To this end, I included potential metaphysical dimensions

of *matter-consciousness* in questioning and re-defining one of the possible futures of the ontological, epistemological and communicative potentials of dance in the 21st century. I concluded this section with Steiner's visionary idea about an evolutionary movement from matters of faith to matters of knowledge and I transposed this idea towards an artistic proposition: When faith in the *artistic truth* of the dance that my body invents through an experience of intimate proximity with a creative source becomes a matter of trust based on direct experiential knowing of its being, the *euthus body* can mediate an experience of *embodied gnosis*.