PHILOSOPHY OF DANCE

BODY, KNOWLEDGE AND SUBJECTIVITY

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Abstract

Traditionally, in the field of philosophy dance as art form has been neglected and is considered as under-represented in aesthetics. Possible reasons are the marginalized position of dance in the system of fine arts and in cultural institutions. However, in the second half of the twentieth century, a few philosophers have formed groundwork, which has fueled the increased scientific interest in dance over the last decades. Additionally, phenomenologically- and poststructuralist-informed dance studies demonstrate the significance of dance for understanding philosophical issues, such as embodiment, meaning, and subjectivity, to name but a few. (Bunker et al. 2013)

In cognitive science, dance has entered the scene in interestingly diverse ways. Firstly, fMRI studies are being done with dancers, contributing to the field of neuroaesthetics. Secondly, it is used by various philosophers as a metaphor for thinking, supporting embodied and enactive approaches of cognition. Thirdly, the growing number of researchers with a dual background (dance and science) as well as recent collaborations between scientists and dance artists show that the interest is mutual, and the encounters are enriching. (Bunker et al.2013, Brandstetter 2007, Noë 2008)

These developments can be understood as a profound challenge to our understanding of knowledge. Dance subverts a binary mode of thinking that poses body versus mind, emotionality versus rationality, and theory versus practice. By doing so, dance ultimately questions our notion of science (Brandstetter 2007).

By examining philosophies of dance in this project, I expect a refined understanding on how body, knowledge and subjectivity configure human being. I will draw on three French thinkers of poststructuralist stance in particular, Paul Valèry, Jean-Luc Nancy and Laurence Louppe. Their approaches represent a counterweight to phenomenological dance studies, and offer additional insights to the aforementioned question as well as to the philosophical study of dance.

On the long run, this project serves as preliminary investigation to a thesis on 'dance as a culture of knowledge' and its implications for conceptualizing cognition and (scientific) knowledge. (Brandstetter 2007)

I will give an overview of the status of the field also looking for possible reasons for the often cited neglect of dance by theoreticians of philosophy, therefore, creating a modest corpus of aesthetic theories of dance. Then I will continue with a discussion on the relationship between dance and philosophy and the possible questions that might arise when these two fields encounter. Subsequently, I will show why phenomenology in the line Merleau-Ponty allows for an aesthetic theory that is compatible with dance. In what follows next I will introduce Paul Valery, Laurence Louppe and Jean-Luc Nancy as philosophers of dance, and examine the implications of their writings on body, knowledge and subjectivity.

State of the Art

Traditionally, dance has been neglected by philosophers and is under-represented in philosophical aesthetics. (Bunker et al. 2013; Bresnahan 2016; Fischer 2010; Levin 1983; Sparshott 1983; Brandstetter 2007; Sheets-Johnstone 2015) It is certainly true that there has been a few reflections on dance in philosophy (Platon: Timaios, Augustinus: De Musica, Nietzsche: Also sprach Zarathrusta); however, dance as a philosophical object of investigation remained marginalized. (Alarcón 2006, pp. 7–8)

'Der Tanz war und bleibt ein nicht philosophischer Gegenstand.' (Alarcón 2006, p. 8) This statement from only roughly a

decade ago describes the situation straight forward. Dance is also referred to as 'the blind spot of philosophy,' (Cramer 2012) and Sparshott (1983) even states 'that there has been nothing for a philosophy of the dance to be about.' (p. 97)

Although the interest in dance has increased in the United States since the 1960's - mostly in the field of sociology and anthropology where dance is regarded as one of the most basic and ubiquitous art - there has been surprisingly little done in the field of dance aesthetics. (Sparshott 1983, pp. 94–95) Although Bunker et al. confirm the common claim that dance has been neglected within philosophical aesthetics, they add that in the second half of the twentieth century several contributions indeed have been made in the field of philosophy.[1] However, they do admit that - compared to music and literature - the corpus of philosophical investigation on dance is pauper. (Bunker et al. 2013, pp. 3–4; Bresnahan 2016; Sparshott 1983)

According to Miriam Fischer, a similar situation can be found in continental Europe. That is why she has dedicated her dissertation to the quest of laying a foundation for a philosophy that is capable to 'think dance.' (Fischer 2010, A7-A8) But what are the reasons for this neglect?

Sparshott (1983) suggests three possible reasons for the marginalization of dance aesthetics. Firstly, dance could be considered a female art that is misplaced in a patriarchal society. Secondly, dance as a corporeal art evokes the fear of the mundane in philosophers. As a third possible reason, he identifies the lack of dance notation and documentation that should make up for the often quoted ephemerality of dance. (p. 95)

Levin (1983) also identifies three similar reasons. Firstly, he likewise draws on the conflict between the Western patriarchal culture and the feminine principle that dance derives from. Secondly, Christianity - with its hostility against the human body and its mind/body dualism inherited by Judaism - also rejected the sensuous body, which is the ground for dance to emerge. Last but not least, he also attests a similar denial of 'the reality of the body's sensuous presence' by philosophers which comes forth of a deep misunderstanding of the nature of the human body. (pp. 86–90)

Another possible viewpoint can be identified when contextualizing the situation historically. Sparshott (1983) explains that specific conditions must be given to generate a philosophy of an art form. Either, should the art inhabit a central position in a culture, or, the ideology of the art must in one way or another fit the ideology that is prevalent in a culture. He underpins his thesis with the fact that vernacular literature possessed a central role in the rise of European nationalism and its discourse, and that poets were considered important as national representatives. This explains why countless theories of literature exist. (pp. 95–96) Concerning dance he states:

> But when we turn to dance we find, first, that for various reasons the ideologies available to the other arts have not been available to it, so that philosophers could not bring it into their general theories of the arts; and second, that dance has at no convenient time been a culturally central art. (Sparshott 1983, p. 96)

Having said this, I would now like to briefly touch upon the reasons why dance has not found a proper place within aesthetics, and subsequently, why phenomenology, especially Merleau-Ponty's account, plays a key role in a philosophical account on dance. In my opinion, these two aspects are interrelated because they prove that at the very bottom of the problem lies the ignorance of the body.

Dance and Aesthetics

In order to find reasons why dance has never occupied a prominent spot in aesthetics, Sparshott (1983a) analyzes the two prevailing

[1] For an overview see Bunker et al. 2013

schemata of arts: the system of Aristotle taken from the Platonic *Epistemis,* which has been further developed in the sixteenth to eighteenth century, and the system of arts put forward by Hegel, which has been used as a basis for writings in the nineteenth century. His assumption is that, these two systems, neither of them having assigned a place for dance, still influence our thinking today when it comes to art. He concludes that there simply has not been an 'available basis for a philosophy of dance.' (pp. 97–102)

Sparshott analyzes Hegel's aesthetics in regard to dance in much greater detail in his book "The Missing Art of Dance" (1983). Drawing on Sparshott (1983b), Bresnahan (2016) explains that Hegel's system of arts included 'only painting, sculpture, architecture, poetry, and music, prioritizing the first three for being able to symbolize and represent truth visually and the latter two for doing so aurally'. Hegel established a quite elitist notion of art, expecting fine art to speak to intellectual thought and knowledge, rather than to corporeal domains that were regarded as part of the low culture or the pre-civilized world. (Bresnahan 2016) 'Thus,' Bresnahan concludes, 'Hegel can perhaps be credited with what seems to be one underlying idea in analytic aesthetics – that for something to be construed as "art" at all it needs to be understood intellectually rather than responded to in bodily ways.'

Another important factor could be the focus of philosophers in the field of aesthetics. Traditionally they have concentrated on the problem of good taste (aesthetic judgement), therefore ignoring the subject of aesthetic perception. (Levin 1983, p. 91) Levin goes on arguing:

> Since the art of dance is, ontologically speaking, the art of the human body; and since what is most interesting about the human body primarily concerns perception and its ontology, we can readily understand the neglect. But we should not tolerate persistent blindness.' (Levin 1983, p. 91)

For investigating dance within aesthetics, I would like to propose the account of Johnson (2007) who explores the 'visceral origins of meaning' (p.6) in his book 'The meaning of the body. Aesthetics of Human Understanding'. His investigation led him to the insight that his approach actually dealt 'with aspects of experience traditionally regarded as the purview of aesthetics.' (p.7) In his view, aesthetics should not be understood in a narrow sense merely concerned with arts, but should be understood as 'the study of everything that goes into the human capacity to make and experience meaning. (p. 6) Thus, an aesthetics of human understanding 'should become the basis for all philosophy.' (ibid.) However, by attending to art, processes of embodied meaning can be studied, since in his view 'arts are exemplary cases of consummated meaning.' (ibid.)

He uses the term 'meaning' in a very broad sense, not in the narrow linguistic sense in which a word is the carrier of meaning. He grounds language in bodily processes and experiences and our bodily encounter with the world, thus, aiming to ground philosophy in understanding 'how we make sense of things'. (p. 7)

The Role of Phenomenology

Fischer (2010) shares the insight that a feasible philosophical account on dance is highly dependent on the underlying theory of subject. She readily shows on the example of Descartes' theory – with the notion of subject as divided into body and mind – it is not possible to derive an aesthetic theory at all. The same can be said about Husserl's account, even though he already sets the prerequisites for an understanding of the body as *Bedingung der Möglichkeit* for sense-making. It was only when Merleau-Ponty really acknowledged the essential role of the body for sense-making by lending a higher appreciation to the body, that a shift in conceptualizing a subject was made possible. As Merleau-Ponty revaluated the body and superseded the primacy of consciousness, *sensation* and *perception*

became phenomenological key terms referring to the capability of the body to 'think sensuous'. This understanding of a bodily subject allowed him to elaborate on a theory on art and art perception, which he explains on the example of painting. (Fischer 2010, pp.160, 284)

Levin (1983) has a similar view on the project of phenomenlogy explaining that '[…] phenomenology is unique in putting an understanding of the human body right in the center of its field of vision.' (p.90) However, in contrary to Fischer's account that grounds the philosophy of dance in phenomenology, Levin sees the causality differently. In his opinion the phenomenology of dance enables generating a philosophy of the body. He states: 'The phenomenology of dance ought to be viewed as absolutely fundamental to our philosophical understanding of the body.' (Levin 1983, pp. 90–91)

Sheets-Johnstone, the author of the ground-breaking book *The Phenomenology of Dance* first published in 1966, points out that 'phenomenological methodology provides the ground for exploring and charting movement and its primary sense modality, kinesthesia.' (2015, p. 24) Thus, her contribution is twofold: Firstly, in looking at dance, it adds to the understanding of the body as a *moving* body in the first place. Secondly, instead of inquiring pathological cases, such as Merleau-Ponty did for example with the famous Schneider-case, she orients her phenomenological investigation towards *movement experts and their expertise*. She also suggests to approach movement as thinking. REFERENCE THINKING IN MOVEMENT

According to Katan (2016) who proposes an 'embodied philosophy of dance' as a physical approach to philosophical investigation, 'the phenomenology of a dance is first and foremost a philosophy concerning the beauty that emerges from the physical intelligence of the human being. He continues stating: 'Intelligence that is physically embodied has a double meaning: first, human bodies enact processes of thinking; and second, a body's movements express the knowledge of its being. (p. 15)

There is one more aspect that shows how phenomenology serves a better understanding of dance. Fischer (2010) points out that understanding dance is for a great part a corporeal aesthetic experience. This makes the philosophical enquiry on dance a perceptual challenge in the first place. (Katan 2016, p.7) A phenomenological account considers – and a philosophical account should consider - *resonance* and *responsivity* as the keys to understanding the nature of dance. (Fischer 2010, p. 352)

Given the scope of the paper, I will not delve into the phenomenology of dance any further. For my aim it is sufficient to conclude with the insight that phenomenology has provided an understanding of the body that enables the integration of dance in philosophical thinking.

Status Quo of the Field

To finish this overview of the status of the field, let us take a closer look on more recent developments within academia that has led to a gained interest in dance. Bunker et al. (2013) explain that predominantly French poststructuralist and postmodernist theories had a positive impact in three different ways: firstly, in the field of dance studies giving rise to a 'new interest in the cultural history and politics of the body', and subsequently, to dance which in this framework could be approached and studied as an embodied practice. Thirdly, these theories also 'challenged the premises and commitments of study in many domains', such as 'the nature of knowledge, […] enlightenment values of reason, objectivity and progress, […].' This critique on 'the supposedly neutral approach of academic research excluding and suppressing certain domains as not worthy of attention' shed light on the marginalized position of dance 'opening a critical space in which new areas like dance studies could take a foothold.' (Bunker et al. 2013, pp. 6–7)

I will give some examples: in Germany since the turn of the 21th century dance studies have been established at several universities. Conferences and symposia are being held concerned with topics such as 'Dance and Cognition' or 'Dance as Field of Knowledge'. Finally, with the realization of the 'Tanzplan Deutschland' several activities on dance and education have contributed to a higher awareness of dance in society. (Traub 2012)

Institutional shifts have also taken place in the US and in the UK. The number of university dance departments has increased, and the focus of the offered academic degree programs is both practical and theoretical. This creates a quite different self-awareness of the scholars coming from these programs and being educated both as an artist and a scientist.

The call for interdisciplinarity within academia is also being followed in the fields of dance and philosophy. Collaborations between dancers and philosophers are highly *en vogue*: Mathilde Monnier and Jean-Luc Nancy performed together in *Alliteration* (2005). The artistic duo Deuffert und Plischke collaborate with philosopher Marcus Steinweg. Alva Noë is truly inspired by the works and thoughts of choreographer William Forsythe and the Contact Improvisation expert Lisa Nelson. (Traub 2012; Noë 2008)

What has also caught the interest of neuroscientists and psychologists, is the experience that dancers and spectators undergo in their respective roles during a performance situation. According to Brandstetter (2007) the experience of dance has become interesting for various fields:

> […] this productive, creative situation has recently become the topic of intense research. Neurophysiological research is interested in the relationship between movement and neural activity in the brain, in the concentration processes, in the link between affective and cognitive processes. Philosophy, in particular phenomenology, and from other perspectives Theatre and Dance Studies are interested in the theoretical and aesthetic problems in these situations of encounter and experience. (p. 44)

Dance seemingly is on its rise. Whether the dynamic forces of that movement will suffice for an academic career is still unknown.

Philosophy of Dance

> Der Tanz in seiner Flüchtigkeit, Vergänglichkeit und Körperlichkeit ist eine Herausforderung für philosophisches Denken, welches nach Wahrheit, nach dem ewig Bleibenden sucht. Was geschieht, wenn die Suche nach Wahrheit auf die Welt der permanenten Veränderungen trifft, theoretische Denkmodelle auf reine Körperlichkeit? Wo können sie sich berühren und voneinander berührt werden? Wo können sie beginnen, sich gegenseitig zu verstehen, zu begreifen, sich aufeinander zu bewegen, voneinander lernen und sich gegenseitig befruchten? (Ka op.cit. Alarcón 2006, p. 7)

The insight that 'dance as an art form poses unique philosophical questions' (Bunker et al. 2013, p. 1) has arrived quite late in the field of philosophy. In opposition to that, dancers understand dance as the ground for philosophy, which is proven by the circumstance that contemporary dance practices themselves are embedded in a philosophical imperative (Bunker et al. 2013, p.5).

However, this is not only the case in contemporary dance. The pioneers of Modern Dance, Isadora Duncan and Martha Graham, have been greatly influenced in their works and their self-image by the writings of Nietzsche. (LaMothe 2006)

In his philosophy, the use of dance images suggests that dancing is 'bodily symbol-making' and that it provides the 'experience of bodily movement as *becoming,* as a two-fold movement, and thus, as the medium in and through which *values* become real or incarnate.' (LaMothe 2006, p. 28) Dance demonstrates the performativity that is constitutive not only for dance, but for the process of life. The potential of what we know or can, comes into realization only by doing. (Cramer 2012) Thus, dance embodies

philosophical ideas that deal with the 'act of moving bodies in space and time' (Katan 2016, p. 9) and can be understood as 'a living process of shaping movement' (Katan 2016, p. 14)

Dance challenges philosophy because it reveals its 'thinking as a construction'[2] and confronts the philosophical endeavor of claiming eternal values with its inherent ephemerality and its constant changes. (Cramer 2012) Dance, by escaping a fixated designation of meaning, forces philosophy to assess self-critically how it can meet the demands of this dynamic and sensuous sense-making process. A possible consequence of this self-interrogation could ultimately lead to the insight that philosophy should expose itself in an art-like manner. (Fischer 2010, A23)[3]

Other questions arise from this encounter. What are the implications for subjectivity? In other words: how do we conceptualize ourselves as human beings? Dance undermines Cartesian thought which is known for its understanding of a machine-like body and the (conceptual) separation of body and mind. (Alarcon 2006)In order to generate a philosophy of dance that is capable of thinking 'dance', one has to overcome dualism in the first place.

Another important aspect that has to be rethought is the concept of mind and thinking. It seems that thinking is reserved only for the mind, and it is implied that thinking means *abstract* thinking. According to Alarcón (2006) a philosophy of dance should apply an extended notion of thinking. In her view, dance could be an important partner of philosophy in the search of multiple forms of rationalities or establishing a broader concept of thinking. (p. 9)

Fischer (2010) goes even further in framing this partnership. Dance unfailingly provides the insight that the body is capable of thinking (p. A23), and so she suggests that philosophy could - just like dance - be understood as a performative *thinking-in-bodies* that seeks for expression of truth. In this constellation philosophy and dance would not only be equal partners but fuse their different modes of thinking or *thinking styles*. Lecture performances (or performance lectures) would be the appropriate format for such an interdisciplinary project. (351)

Body, Knowledge and Subjectivity

Dance inevitably sets the spotlights on the body, and Fischer (2010) righteously points at the fact that dance demonstrates very convincingly that 'sense in the sensuous' comes into being through a body that is situated and performative. I have mentioned this aspect earlier, but will now consider the implications for the notion of subjectivity, since with the body subjectivity enters the stage.

Following Lepecki (2006), 'rethinking the subject in terms of the body is precisely the task of choreography, a task that may not be always subservient to the imperative of the kinetic, a task that is always already in dialogue with critical theory and philosophy.' (pp. 5–6) It is by the means of the body that subjectivity can be 'understood as a performative power, as the possibility for life to be constantly invented and reinvented […].' (p. 8) In his perspective 'choreography and philosophy share that same fundamental political, ontological, physiological, and ethical question that Deleuze recuperates from Spinoza and from Nietzsche: *what can a body do*?' (p. 6, my emphasis)

[2] Véronique Fabri *Danse et philosophie: une pensée en construction* (Tanz und Philosopie: Denken als Konstruktion, 2007)

[3] I would also like to mention a Vienna-based research project conducted by Arno Böhler, philosopher at the University of Vienna. In his FWF-funded project he has put 'Philosophy on Stage' in collaboration with the TQW and the University of Applied Arts. For more information, see: http://homepage.univie.ac.at/arno.boehler/php/?page_id=1244

What is important in Lepecki's account, is the fact that he includes many dimensions of the body. In a similar way Johnson (2007) suggests that whenever we want to understand the meaning of the human body, we have to take into account these various dimensions. He proposes the following levels of analysis: 1. The body as biological organism, 2. The ecological body, 3. The phenomenological body, 4. The social body, 5. The cultural body. This approach stands in stark contrast to the traditional one-dimensional Cartesian concept of the body as machine.

As I have mentioned earlier, Fischer (2010) convincingly shows that it is impossible to come up with a theory of aesthetics with the supposition of a Cartesian subject. She argues that a plausible aesthetics of dance has to be grounded in a subject theory which includes the sense-making capabilities of the body. (p. 284)

Levin (1983) likewise acknowledges the pivotal role of the body:

> If philosophers cannot even develop an adequate account of the human body, how can they be expected to say anything true and interesting about dance? Dancing is the fine art and perfection (or perfect presencing) of the moving human body. (p. 90)

By now it should be clear that the body is the ultimate point of departure for philosophy to tackle the question of dance, and, moreover, answer philosophical questions concerning 'embodiment, personhood, meaning, ontology, identity.' (Bunker et al. 2013, p. 1)

However, similar projects, directed at the body as the 'locus for cultural production' (Grosz 1994, p. 147 op. cit. Lepecki 2006, p. 5), can be found in philosophy as well. As I have laid out before, phenomenology is such a project in which the body is defined as 'the *precondition for the possibility* [original: Bedingung der Möglichkeit] of consciousness and intersubjectivity' (Fischer 2010, p. 100, my translation). This bears interesting implications for the notion of knowledge, since Merleau-Ponty understands the belonging of bodies to a shared world as the precondition of all knowing, including philosophy. To him the sensuous experience not only precedes the logical objectivity; it is its prerequisite. (Fischer 2010, p. 164)

In the field of cognitive science and the study of mind we can find another project consisting of various branches that can be subsumed under the term 'philosophies of embodiment'. The so-called four E's (Fingerhut et al. 2013) – embodiment, enactivism, extended cognition, and embedded mind - share the basic supposition, that the body plays a key role in cognition.

Finally, poststructuralist philosophers like Michel Foucault, Jaques Derrida, and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari put forward a philosophy of the body in which the body is not 'a self-contained and closed entity' but 'an open and dynamic system of exchange, constantly producing modes of subjection and control, as well as of resistance and becomings.' (Lepecki 2006, p. 5)[4] It is this account that I consider as fruitful for a philosophy of dance.

As I have mentioned earlier, understanding dance is to be regarded as a matter of *responsiveness* or *resonance*[5]; it offers a corporeal aesthetic experience. For a philosophical account on dance it implies, that 'philosophy becomes a perceptual challenge' in the first place, before it turns to 'the logic of linguistic argumentation.' (Katan 2016, p. 7)

In this chapter, I have tried to lay out how dance and philosophy relate to each other,

[4] The similarity of the vocabulary between the above-cited quote and the branch of enactivism is striking. I assume that more of such parallels can be found also in philosophy of dance, dance theory and cognitive science. Paul Valéry's text, which I am going to discuss, is one example.

[5] Fischer (2010) explains these notions taken from Bernhard Waldenfels and Jean-Luc Nancy in greater detail. (p. 352)

emphasizing issues such as subjectivity, body and knowledge. I would like to conclude with two arguments for an embodied philosophy of dance[6] that highlight what the investigation of dance could offer to philosophy and the cognitive sciences.

First, to deal with the embodied philosophy of dance is not merely to claim that dance conveys philosophical meanings. It is rather to claim, as Paul Valery already has, that *dance is philosophical*. Secondly, an inquiry into philosophical ideas in dance, which are physically embodied, can elaborate dance as a communicative act, but it also has the potential to *clarify tacit cognitive processes within understanding and thinking*. (Katan 2016, p. 7, my emphasis)

Philosophers of Dance

In what follows I will give an overview of the central motives of three French philosophers[7] of dance. Given the limitations of this paper, I will use the method of close-reading[8], focusing mainly on one specific text of these thinkers. In my reading I will concentrate on the relationship between body, knowledge and subjectivity in particular, and try to extract how this triangle is configured in the thinking of Paul Valéry, Laurence Louppe and Jean-Luc Nancy.

My decision for these three French thinkers is driven by several reasons. The general motivation came from my curiosity whether poststructuralist or postmodern thinking, which has taken its origin mainly in France, has been received in the cognitive sciences.[9] Up to this point, I have not came across any references to poststructuralist thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, Gilles Deleuze or Felix Guattari, to name but a few.[10]

Furthermore, there are several thinking figures of poststructuralist provenience that cannot be found in the phenomenological discourse on dance nor in the embodiment literature in cognitive science. These aspects concern the body as a site of inscription shaped by the power of discourse (Foucault), subjectivity understood as a process (Kristeva) driven by the constituting mechanism of submitting (Foucault), and the notion of poetics that considers art as a practice (Genette) redefining the roles of the artist and the art perceiver (Barthes).

One might think that the gap between the exact sciences that constitute a great part of the cognitive scientific domain, and the humanities that investigate poetic and artistic thinking, is simply to vast. However, it is exactly this tension that excites me, and in my perspective the humanities, literary studies, cultural studies and art criticism in particular, are more closely linked to interests in cognitive science than one might expect, since their 'research object' is the creative ability of human kind, investigated by different means.

In the first part of this paper I have presented several reasons why dance has traditionally been marginalized and identified the neglect of the body as a crucial aspect. However, Sparshott (1983) also presumes from his analysis that the 'objection [against dance, CR] was not to its physicality but to its lack of meaning.' (p. 97) According to him, philosophy too can only think within the prevalent ideology of a time and derives its significance

[6] This approach uses 'the physical act of dancing' and reflections on the bodily sensations to guide the philosophical enquiry.

[7] I refer to them as philosophers, even if they are not philosophers in the strict sense. However, they contribute to the philosophy of dance, which is why I decided to do so, following Bresnahan's (2016) proposal to also include works outside the domain of philosophy.

[8] Close-reading as a method of analysis is commonly used within Cultural Studies and Literary Criticism.

[9] This question arose out of the fact that in cognitive linguistics, Noah Chomsky is a very prominent and often quoted scientist, whereas his famous opponent, Michel Foucault, does not appear in writings on cognitive science, at all, according to my current state of knowledge.

[10] Poststructuralism is understood here as 'a loose association of thinkers'. (Schrift 1995, p. 6)

from it. (p. 102)[11] So, turning to Paul Valéry, I would like to pose the question: what allows him to address his understanding of dance, and, by doing so, designate meaning to it?

Paul Valéry (1871-1945)[12]

> You have to love dancing to stick to it. It gives you nothing back, no manuscripts to store away, no paintings to show on walls and maybe hang in museums, no poems to be printed and sold, nothing but that fleeting moment when you feel alive. (Merce Cunningham)
>
> Art is an unwanted gift. (Meg Stuart)

In his opening speech 'Philosophy of the Dance' ('Philosophie de la danse', 1936)[13] he positions the art of dance by introducing two plots: firstly, he puts it in opposition to a logic of utility and usefulness; and secondly, he contrasts dance against the backdrop of poetry.

However, he does not simply state that dance belongs to the realm of uselessness. He critically observes that both, art and science, 'tend to build up a kind of utility from the useless, a kind of necessity from the arbitrary'. (Valéry 1983, p. 58) He continues arguing that 'artistic creation is not so much a creation of works as the creation of *a need for works;* for works are products, a supply presupposing a demand, a need. (Valéry 1983, p. 58) Building a necessity from the arbitrary, in my view, can be regarded as sense-making. It follows that art – in creating the need for works – possesses the role of questioning the common sense.

So the utility of art (and science), and therefore their significance, lies not in an economic logic of supply and demand. To understand the significance for dance, he sketches an example of the *homo oeconomicus*:

> In the practical world our being is nothing more than an intermediary between the sensation of a need and the impulse to satisfy the need. In this role, it proceeds always by the most economical, if not always the shortest, path: it wants results. Its guiding principles seem to be the straight line, the least action, and the shortest time. A practical man is a man who has an instinct for such an economy of time and effort, and has little difficulty in putting it into effect, because his aim is definite and clearly localized: *an external object.* (Valéry 1983, p. 62)

In this logic a human being is limited to processing the input (sensation) and the output (action). The goal is defined and located external to that system. But dance follows a complete different logic: in Valéry's view, dance is 'the action of the whole human body […] *transposed* into a world, into a kind of *space-time*, which is no longer quite the same as that of everyday life. (Valéry 1983, p. 55, my emphasis)

The space-time of dance is not structured according to an external goal. Quite the contrary is being realized: time and space are being shaped, one might even say created, by the dancer, but in the next moment already gone. As Valéry puts it: 'a time that she engenders, a time consisting entirely of immediate energy, of nothing that can last.' (Valéry 1983, p. 59) Concerning space he writes: 'For the dancer is in another world; […] but one that she weaves with her steps and

[11] One could also argue that knowledge, which philosophy is in search for, is formed of *significant* information. If the body is neglected within the prevalent ideology, then dance – movements of the body – are insignificant in two ways: firstly, movement does not refer to anything, it only stands for itself; secondly, because of that, dance could not serve as bearer for what was meaningful within an ideology, in contrast to languages, music, or paintings that in different periods throughout the history of Europe have been put instrumental for a 'higher' idea, be it nationalism, monarchism or the belief of the Roman Catholic church.

[12] Of course, he cannot be considered as poststructuralist per se, but in his thinking he already engaged with some of the topoi that would be of importance within a poststructuralist philosophy.

[13] This speech was held before a performance of the Spanish dancer Madame Argentina in Paris. She was born 1890 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and died 1936 in Bayonne, France. She directed the Ballets Espagnole in Paris. (Fischer 2010, p. 302)

builds with her gestures.' (Valéry 1983, p. 61) Thus, what the dancer aims for, is creating a *state of mind* through her actions, and communicating an 'inner life', understood in a physiological, rather than in a psychological sense.

Thus, the need for dance, and therefore its significance, lies in sharing the experience of being in a particular 'state of mind' – a state that is distinctive from the experience of being in the everyday world. This sharing is possible by considering this 'inner life' as 'consisting entirely in sensations of time and energy which respond to one another and form a kind of closed circle of resonance'. (Valéry 1983, p. 62) By resonating with one another – the spectator with the dancer – can the sharing of the dancer's experience happen, 'so that we ourselves are virtually dancing.' (Valéry 1983, p. 62)

This is the moment where he draws on his understanding of poetry as an act:

> A *poem,* for example, is *action,* because a poem exists only at the moment of being spoken; then it is *in actu.* This act, like the dance, has no other purpose than to create a state of mind; it imposes its own laws; it, too, creates a time and a measurement of time which are appropriate and essential to it: we cannot distinguish it from its form of time. To recite poetry is to enter a verbal dance. (Valéry 1983, p. 63)

This comparison and the emphasis on the actions through which a work, be it poetry or a dance, manifests itself, implicitly addresses the essential role of the body as the medium of expression. Nevertheless, even though he argues that in all art forms it is the body and its actions, through which art comes into being (Valéry 1983, p. 63), the body seems to remain hidden in Valéry's descriptions of the actions of a piano player, a reciting poet, or a sculptor.

In dance, on the contrary, he doubtlessly conceives of the body as central, for 'the dance is an art derived from life itself, since it is nothing more nor less than the action of the whole human body […]'. (Valéry 1983, p. 55) This is why he considers dance as a fundamental art.

Up to this point we took a closer look on time, space and the actions of the body in dance. The same elements are also considered as fundamental for our use of language by the founders of the embodiment paradigm, Mark Johnson and George Lakoff. In 'Metaphors we live by' (2003) they have shown in their analysis of metaphors, how our use of language is grounded in our physical experience.

Paul Valéry does not exactly argue in such an elaborate way, but he takes a similar approach in suggesting that a metaphor is 'a kind of pirouette performed by an idea, enabling us to assemble its diverse names or images.' (Valéry 1983, p. 65) However, Valéry draws on poetry and not on the pragmatic use of language. To him, the use of poetic language, just as dance, opens up another 'universe' that is different from the practical world and its 'average notion of logic and common sense.' (Valéry 1983, p. 65)

He goes on comparing the realms of dance and poetry, using the analogy such that dance is understood as '*a poetry that encompasses the action of living creatures in its entirety*'. (Valéry 1983, pp. 64–65, emphasis original) In his attempt to compare dance with poetry, he observes that both dancer and poet – each one in their mode of expression, strive for transformations and metamorphoses that remove them from common reason. (Valéry 1983, pp. 64–65)

Moving or speaking beyond the realm of reason does not condemn dance (or poetry) to an illogic domain. This transposal into a different world by creating a particular state of mind, as Valéry puts it, might be understood as employing actions that serve *poetic logics*. [14]

[14] To read up on poetic logics, see: Hayden, White (1991): *Auch Klio dichtet oder Die Fiktion des Faktischen. Studien zur Tropologie des historischen Diskurses.* Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta. In the preface

By criticizing economic, rational logics, Valéry succeeds in arguing for the need and the significance of dance, emphasizing that dance is more than mere amusement that deserves as much value and attention than poetry does. He underlines the expertise of the dancer, her implicit and tacit knowledge of how to shape and engender time and space by her actions. However, he merely describes what is observable for him as a philosopher admitting that it is hard for him to discuss the aesthetic experience of dance.

What is important in his account, is that he acknowledges the ability of the dancer to create and share a specific state of mind. It is this incorporated and embodied knowledge that is shared on the physiological level, through resonance, with the spectator. This takes away the ocular centricity – ironically, the blind spot in which the visual sense is regarded as central, and which reduces dance to a mainly visual experience. This implicitly suggests that the recipient, which is a better expression than spectator[15], is addressed and engaged in its entirety.

However, he falls back into the body-mind-duality, reserving the body for the dancer and the mind for the poet. Even if he concludes with the statement that he cannot conceive of a contradiction 'between intelligence and sensibility, conscious reflection and its raw material' (Valéry 1983, p. 65), he denotes dance as belonging to the body (he even refers to the body as an object) and poetry to the mind. We can only conjecture if he uses it here rhetorically to make his point in the end, namely, that there is no 'contradiction' between body and mind, exposing a rather weak stance against Cartesian dualism.

Laurence Louppe (1938-2012)[16]

> Dance is movement, and its opposite, in time and space.
> (Cunningham 1965 in: Sheets-Johnstone 2015, p. 9)

Her book 'Poétique de la danse contemporaine' (1997) has become one of the standard works of francophone dance studies.[17] Although the title suggests that dance – just as in Paul Valéry's speech – will be examined against the backdrop of literature, it is not thoroughly so. She suggests that dance could be understood as a 'lyric of the body' (Louppe 2009, p. 15), however, she does not stop there. She goes further by importing poetics (which is the term for aesthetics in literary studies) into the realm of dance.

In her understanding, poetics encompasses not only an investigation of what moves us when perceiving art, but also of how art is created. (Louppe 2009, p. 13) It considers the procedure that precedes the art event as well as its perception that echoes in after effects post hoc. Therefore, the dichotomy between the acting and the perceiving entity is rendered superfluous. The communication is no longer considered unidirectional, rather art is positioned in the midst of the art *practice* involving artists and audiences alike in the artistic process. (Louppe 2009, pp. 13–14, my emphasis)

To her, any art work is a dialogue. (Louppe 2009, p. 14) The dialogue between dancer and recipient bears three distinctive

Reinhard Koselleck explains the notion of 'poetic logic' coined by Giambattista Vico who does not construct 'poetic logic' and 'rational logic' as an opposition, rather, he understands the poetic as the ground of rational and abstract logic. As we will see later on, Merleau-Ponty argues in a similar way.

[15] The use of the term 'spectator' in Valéry's speech already suggests that in the common understanding of his time, dance is understood as an art that is being *watched* in the first place.

[16] She has been a historian, art critic and writer. Her expertise included dance aesthetics, choreography, and fine arts.

[17] It was translated into German in 2009. I am referring to this publication, but will translate quotes when they appear in-text or in paraphrasing for the sake of a fluent readability. However, if I quote whole sentences or passages, I will use the German translation.

characteristics: 1) the encounter encompasses time and space, 2) the encounter happens in the now, 3) the encounter comes with a perceptual experience of time and space (since this experience is to be undergone). According to Louppe, the poetic approach enables the investigation of this exceptional dialogue of bodies. As such, poetics encompasses even an analysis of shared aesthetic experiences and their effects on sensuous perception on both sides of the art work. (Louppe 2009, p. 15)

As the root of the term *poiein* suggests, poetics enter the domain of *doing.* (Louppe 2009, p. 15) This implies that not only the knowledge of dance (historical and theoretical knowledge, for example) will be important to her approach: the dance practices will be of same importance. She explains that in order to understand the art of movement, one has to integrate and consider tacit knowledge, since the artistic process of creation already starts within those practices that dancers apply to educate themselves in these tacit realms. (Louppe 2009, p. 16)

Thus, for her, it does not suffice to consider the final product to understand the thinking of an art. In her analysis, she strives for including the procedures that are at work *in the work* itself. To master that she – the subject that analyzes – thinks of herself as motile as her research interest: moving between discourse and practice, between sensing and acting, between perception and action. (Louppe 2009, p. 17, my emphasis)

Likewise, the recipient is taken as dispersed: he or she will not be granted a static position neither. Moreover, the spectating subject is considered as *agens* that circulates between the aforementioned layers of perception. In that way the subject is 'embodied' by the means of its attention, as does the art work 'materialize' through its analysis. (Louppe 2009, p. 17)

This dispersion also concerns any possible interpretation that pours through all dimensions of experience. The spur of dance movements imprints in the body of the creator as well as of the receiver. This is why, Louppe argues, the poetics of dance should be located within these transitions, or rather be that space in-between in which the exchange of bodily states are negotiated. (Louppe 2009, p. 18)

She intentionally sets herself off from studies that are more concerned with dance in a sociocultural and historical context, since these anthropological analyses conceive of the body merely as a symptom of its contextual embeddedness and approach a dance piece rather as an object. She also considers her approach different from another group of dance scholars, who investigate dance not only as an object, but in addition to that, understand dance as a means of critically thinking about the political and social context, in which the dancing body occurs. (Louppe 2009, pp. 21–22)

In contrast to such approaches, Louppe focuses on the problematic aspects of dance that are raised within and through the work itself. One of these problems is the diversity and the intimacy of perception that a choreography or a dance performance has to offer. It is not the gaze that is of interest for her, but the kinesthetic impressions. Since these represent the modality from which the intimacy of perception arises. Drawing on Laban, she argues that the kinesthetic impressions address the sensuous and the emotional, which activate our understanding of the world in quite the same way as discourses do via 'denotative communication'. (Louppe 2009, pp. 22–23)

For her as a writer, this is of great importance, because It suggests that dance has an effect on the writer. To put it in her words: the totality of perceived, internalized and experienced movements or choreographies determine the locus of perception. (Louppe 2009, p. 23) These perceptions (in)form the body in a similar way as inscription and habitualization do.

As I have mentioned earlier, to choose a poetic approach also implies the investigation of the

resources of dance practices, namely the 'dance work'.[18] Louppe understands it as:

> […] das Vermögen des Körpers, aus seiner eigenen Materie die Quellen seiner größten Energie hervorzubringen. Wie bei der Arbeit des Gebärens, interessiert uns das Vermögen des Körpers, Lebendiges aus seiner eigenen Materie auszuscheiden. (Louppe 2009, pp. 24–25)

In her analysis she defines contemporary dance (taking into account its diversity) by common values: the uniqueness of the individuality of the body and a gesture, the idea of production in contrast to reproduction of a gesture, the work on the substance of the body and the self, the practice of *not* anticipating the form of movement, and the crucial role of gravity. She also mentions moral values such as authenticity, respect for the other body, the principle of non-arrogance, the search for a consistent solution, rather than a spectacular one, and the transparency of the applied processes.[19]

Besides these shared values, a general statement about contemporary dance can be made, namely, that it speaks of the agency and the consciousness of a subject in the world. (Louppe 2009, p. 36) It speaks with nothing less than the dancer's body, which is what marks and situates the dancer as a subject in the world. With this substance of the self – and only with that – the dancer builds a universe of significance, an imagined world that does not necessarily change anything in the outer world. (Louppe 2009, pp. 36–37) However, drawing on Foucault, she recurs on his notion of the body and its powers, stating that exactly these powers have been the motor of the historical development of contemporary dance. These suppressed powers of the body, located in the realm of the non-significant, could ultimately transgress and enter the symbolic realm through [Modern and later on contemporary, CR] dance. (Louppe 2009, pp. 41–42)

How to speak of this realm, this 'other stage' of the body in which a gesture is no longer a carrier of meaning in the linguistic-structural sense? In which the gesture no longer can be understood as a sign, composed of a signifier that refers to the signified?[20] Dance, considered as an empty gesture, is part of a language that arises from a place that neither linguistic elements nor any other code of knowledge can possibly invade. (Louppe 2009, p. 47) So, it is no wonder that it was through the practical investigation of the asemantic body parts (those which are not used for gestures) the forefather of contemporary dance, Delsarte, discovered a body that resides outside an already existing semantic map. On the basis of this new understanding of the body, it follows that movement is the only means by which it is possible to delve into and

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[18] 'Dance work' is used here as in the term body work. It does not refer to dance pieces, but to the work itself that dancers engage with in forming or preparing their body in order to be able to dance. Then again, this should also not be confused with 'training'. Although this term would be proper in the semantic sense, it should not be understood as in the term 'sports training', since the modality differs.

[19] The original text goes as follows: „[…] die Individualisierung eines Körpers und einer Geste, für die es kein Vorbild gibt, und die eine Identität oder ein Vorhaben ausdrücken, die durch nichts zu ersetzen sind. Die ›Produktion‹ (und nicht Reproduktion) einer Geste (ausgehend von jedermanns eigener Empfindungssphäre – oder einer tiefgehenden und bewussten Zustimmung zur Grundsatzentscheidung eines anderen). Die Arbeit an der Materie des Körpers, der Materie des Selbst (die sich in subjektiver Weise oder im Gegenteil über die Alterität vollzieht); die Nicht-Vorwegnahme der Form […], die bedeutende Rolle der Erdanziehungskraft als Antrieb der Bewegung (egal ob man mit ihr spielt oder sich ihr hingibt). Auch moralische Werte wie die persönliche Authentizität, der Respekt für den Körper des anderen, das Prinzip der Nicht-Arroganz, die Forderung nach einer Lösung, die ›stimmig‹ und nicht bloß spektakulär sein soll, die Transparenz und der Respekt für die angewandten Prozesse und Verfahren. (Louppe 2009, pp. 31–32)

[20] I am thinking here of so-called 'Handlungsballette': narrative dance pieces that would use gesture that stand for certain concepts or emotions, such as love, sadness, joy etc.

shape its universe, including this 'other stage'. Hence, this discovery of Delsarte is what Louppe also regards as the historical precursor for the rise of contemporary dance. (Louppe 2009, p. 48)

According to Louppe, being a contemporary dancer means relating to the world through the body and bodily movements. As such the body is the instrument for knowing, thinking and expressing alike. It means trusting the lyric nature of the organic without necessarily drawing on a certain aesthetic form. The neutral gesture or unstressed state of the body is considered of lyric quality as well, just like the gesture that is intentionally stressed. The focus of the dance work is directed at the preconditions of these poetic manifestations. (Louppe 2009, p. 51) The art of dance lies in creating a bodily state that is unique, and the process of developing this sensitive consciousness is never-ending. (Louppe 2009, pp. 51–52) It requires an exploration of the body in a highly concentrative, meditative stillness, in which the bodily subject seeks to discover itself. (Louppe 2009, p. 53)

In order to accomplish this 'invention of the body', the anatomy of the body and its functions had to be rethought by the means of displacements (a poetic procedure). This inevitably has led to the notion of a body, that is not given, but that needs to be discovered and, even more so, invented. (Louppe 2009, p. 55) Another poetic procedure that is deployed in this process is defamiliarization. It leads to a new configuration of 'asemic body parts' and 'semantic' body parts which infiltrates the ideal of classical aesthetics. (Louppe 2009, p. 55-57) Through these transforming procedures poetic bodies - meaning the diversity of all possible bodies - could arise, which have been erased earlier by glorifying one ideal. (Louppe 2009, p. 57) Thus, what Modern Dance, historically the predecessor of Contemporary Dance, primarily had to offer, were different perspectives: each new dance technique was an expression of a specific thinking of and altered perspective on the body. (Louppe 2009, p. 62)

Thus, in Louppe's account, there is no such thing as *the* body. Dance questions the essentialist conceptualization of the body as universal and unambiguous. It puts the absolute and the idea of naturalness into perspective by the means of its practices that involve the 'search for the becoming of the body'. (Louppe 2009, p. 66)

> Denn der Tanz arbeitet, auf der Ebene des Denkens und der materiellen Gestaltung, an der Erscheinung eines Körpers, der nicht von vornherein gegeben ist. Oder vielmehr arbeitet er an einer Vielzahl von Körpern, von denen jeder einzelne wie eine geheime Partitur die unermessliche Bandbreite seiner Möglichkeiten und poetischen Schattierungen enthält. (Louppe 2009, p. 68)

The body in dance is the complex and rich material that has to be refined, being thought and experienced. It is an extraordinary tool of consciousness and sensibility, that neither can be conceptualized as separate from thinking nor opposed to it. (Louppe 2009, p. 67) Within contemporary dance the traditional dualism has been clearly overcome: the body thinks and 'makes sense'. (Louppe 2009, p. 67)

Concerning subjectivity, the contemporary body is the site where the new search for the subject takes place. (Louppe 2009, p. 70) In the same way the body is embedded in this logic of becoming, so is the process of subjectivity. The 'I' in dance is constantly moving, since it is both object and the acting entity in the ongoing process of relating an inner impulse to the need of symbolizing (Louppe 2009, p. 82). Louppe draws on Laban who defined the factors of this 'circulation of relationships', and gives an extensional analysis on weight, flow, space and time.

Given the scope of this paper, I can only touch upon Louppe's analysis of the factors space and time in contemporary dance. The point that I am going to focus on in the following, is the 'subjectivity of time' (Louppe 2009, p. 152) and, what I would propose to call 'the

subjectivity of space' accordingly. I would like to suggest that time and space also are materials that can be shaped by the art of dance, just as the body. Louppe's poetic analysis shows that, in the same way as there are multiple possible bodies, there are possible modes of time and space, differing from the prevalent concepts of measurable time and Euclidian space. Or in other words: from concepts based on common sense.

As I have mentioned earlier, Louppe names three distinctive characteristics that mark the dialogue between dancer and recipient. For the convenience of the reader and to demonstrate the importance of time and space, I will state them once again: 1) the encounter encompasses time and space, 2) the encounter happens in the now, 3) the encounter is a shared perceptual experience of time and space.

What does this imply for the aspect of time? As the quote from Merce Cunningham describes, dance is not only movement in time and space, but also its opposite: non-movement in time and space. As we have seen in the description of the 'dance work', there is an equality between movement and non-movement. As a consequence, this is also a recurring theme in contemporary dance pieces: passages wherein barely some-body moves; stillness - both of body and sounds - that challenge the audience to stay present. At the same time, the audience is supported by the presence of the performer. Time is thus transformed into a poetic force (Louppe 2009, p. 127), since a dancer moves in the moment, but also shapes the moment by his or her presence. It is the presence that is one of the essential basics of contemporary dance. (Louppe 2009, p. 136) This quality of presence, both in movement and in stillness, is what makes dancers and audience alike appreciating the importance of the moment, arriving in the here and encountering the now. This moment inherently bears the potential for the unknown. Therefore, it is a precondition for making a new experience be it bodily, timely or spatial. (Louppe 2009, pp. 135–136) Presence is what I personally consider as the essence of what dancers share during a performance.

Concerning space, I would like to speak of 'subjectivity of space' following Louppe's suggestion of 'subjectivity of time'. In dance theory, one finds the common understanding that space is created by us, rather, than just related to. Space, in this account, is alive and motile, is being thought and able of thinking. Just as the body, space is not a mere fact, it is not a given. We have an impact on space in each and every moment, and this impact is reciprocal. (Louppe 2009, p. 157) To dance means to make space visible (Dupuy op.cit. Louppe 2009, p. 156). Space is also considered as one of the forces from which movement arises (Louppe 2009, p. 154), but at the same time it comes forth of the body (Louppe 2009, pp. 166), of the choreography. (Louppe 2009, p. 166) It is moldable material (Louppe 2009, p. 155); for Mary Wigman, space is even the concrete matter of her being. (Louppe 2009, p. 167) Last but not least, Oskar Schlemmer speaks of an inscription of movement in space. (Louppe 2009, p. 169)

To summarize briefly: in her poetic analysis, Louppe elaborates extensively on the body in dance, emphasizing that the body is not a given. Instead there are multiple possible bodies to be discovered through the dance work.

This practice simultaneously is the knowledge of a dancer, his or her expertise. By engaging in this process, dualism virtually has no ground to be kept as a concept. There exists an agreement coming forth from the experience of dance work that the body is a thinking body.

Furthermore, concerning subjectivity, time and space are two essential factors through which subjectivity is constituted. By using time and space as poetic material dance emerges, but moreover, the dancer 'appears'.

Jean-Luc Nancy (1940)

Jean-Luc Nancy is a French philosopher who has become very popular in the dance world.

This stems from the fact that the body is a central motive in his writings.[21] (Cramer 2015) The essay, that I will analyze in the following, is titled 'Alliterations', and is based on an exchange of correspondence between Jean-Luc Nancy and Mathilde Monnier, a French choreographer. It has been published in French (*Allitérations*, Paris: Galilée, 2005), and has been used as a basis for a dance piece of the same title presented in 2004 in France. The performers were three dancers, a DJ, Mathilde Monnier and Jean-Luc Nancy himself.

The essay revolves around two main topics: the encounter of bodies in a performance situation and the meaning of dance. While describing the bodily experience of dance in a performance situation, the relation between the (dancing) other and the (receiving) self is being revealed. He states that the other is another body in the first place. Despite the distance between these two bodies, the dancer echoes in the body of the recipient. Their relationship is thus characterized by resonance.

> Der Andere dort, nah in seiner Entfernung, gespannt, zusammengefaltet, entfaltet, auseinandergeworfen hallt in meinen Gelenken wider. Ich nehme ihn eigentlich weder mit den Augen noch mit dem Gehör noch durch Berührung wahr. Ich nehme ihn nicht wahr, ich halle wider. Hier bin ich gekrümmt von seiner Krümmung, geneigt von seinem Winkel, geworfen von seinem Schwung. Sein Tanz hat an meiner Stelle begonnen. Er oder sie hat mich deplaziert, hat mich beinahe ersetzt. (Nancy 2006, p. 89)

By considering resonance as the inevitable mode of relating to one another, it follows that a body is not a single enclosed entity. Rather, the bodily echo transgresses bodily borders in such a way that it is not clear anymore where the other begins. (Nancy 2006, p. 90) Ultimately, this leads to the question of where dance begins. (Nancy 2006, p. 90)

Nancy states that dance seemingly starts before it is sensorially perceived, even before we are equipped with sensory organs, and concludes that it is impossible to define the starting point of dance. (Nancy 2006, p. 90)

Nevertheless, in the receiving body begins a process that he describes as follows:

> Immer noch kein Sinn, kein Sinneseindruck, aber unmerklich löst sich ein Körper aus sich selbst heraus. Er entschlüpft seiner eigenen Gegenwart, er zergliedert sich, er desartikuliert sich. Ein Anderer artikuliert ihn neu, lässt ihn eine neue Sprache sprechen, eine Sprache, die so verändert ist, dass sie hinter jede Sprache zurückgeht. Er weiß nicht, wie ihm geschieht: es kommt aus seinem Innern zu ihm, als wäre jenes Innere das Entfernteste alles Außen. Unmerklich kommt zu diesem Körper das, was ihn nicht länger Körper mit sich selbst sein lässt. Er nimmt Spielraum ein. Er nimmt Abstand ein. Er beginnt, sich zu denken. Er tanzt sich, er wird von einem Anderen getanzt. (Nancy 2006, p. 90)

The 'desarticulation' and the dissection of the recipient's body, but also the displacement of its own presence, creates latitude and distance, so that the body can begin to think itself. The dancer's bodily presence – his or her embodied knowledge - takes over the recipient's body and transmits this thinking that analyzes the body. (Nancy 2006, p. 91)

Concerning the meaning of dance, Nancy states that dance cannot be accounted for as being directed at a particular sense, like fine arts are directed at the visual sense or music is directed at the auditory sense. Rather, dance is sense unfolding before senses are established. (Nancy 2006, p. 97) The meaning of dance cannot be captured, it is motile and multiple, it integrates and disintegrates meaning and bodies simultaneously. (Nancy 2006, pp. 96–97) The only concrete statement he makes in regard to the meaning of dance, is that it invites to dance here and now. (Nancy 2006, p. 97)

In Nancy's essay body, knowledge and subjectivity are closely intertwined. He emphasizes the encounter of bodies in a performance situation, and arrives at the topoi

[21] His most influential works on the body are 'Corpus' and 'Fifty-eight Indices on the Body'. The English translation by Richard A. Rand has been published in 2008, Fordham University Press.

of intercorporeality – a phenomenological term coined by Merleau-Ponty. The question of body and mind does not arise at all in his account. Rather, he elaborates on the relationship between the other and the self on the physiological level that includes embodied thinking. Even though the other can be easily discerned by his or her (other) body, the effects of resonance make it difficult to distinguish between the other and the self. It follows that even as we 'watch' a dance performance, the dance does not happen out there only. It also happens in the spectator's body and in the in-between. This is why the meaning of dance is rather circulating between bodies and between senses, and virtually cannot be pinned down. I think that this weighs more than the often noted ephemerality of dance alluding on the inherent quality of movement. In my opinion, it was the ephemerality of meaning that made it really difficult for traditional philosophy to account for dance.

Conclusion

In the following I will conclude with a synopsis of the introduced writings.

It seems that the chosen texts complement each other, since the emphasis differs. This concerns for example the position of the writer. While Valéry mainly describes dance from his outside perspective as a philosopher, Louppe chooses to position herself in the midst of dance and fills in Valéry's account in giving an insight on dance practices. Nancy, on the contrary, focuses on the recipient, taking the stance of a dancing philosopher who is himself involved in dance and perceives it accordingly.

Valéry's main points consist of elaborating an account why dance is significant. He succeeds in it as he compares poetry and dance that he both considers as an antithesis to common rational thought. This is achieved by actions that alter time and space, so that the dancer seems as if being transposed into another space-time. The goal of the dancer is to share a specific state of mind, or as I would propose to name it, another key of embodied thought ('key' understood on the musical sense), as it were.

Louppe fills in Valéry's account in focusing on the body and how dancers work with their bodies. Her poetic analysis sheds light on what Valéry refers to as 'state of mind'. She explains from a historical perspective how Delsarte discovered 'another body' existing outside a semantic map, and therefore laid the ground for Modern Dance to evolve. The various dance techniques that came up, are to be taken as different perspectives on the body, thus, different ways of thinking the body. It follows that the body is not a given, there are multiple possible bodies, as there are different modes of time and space. In her approach it shows that body, time and space constitute subjectivity in a reciprocal and complex way.

Finally, Nancy concentrates on intersubjectivity, or rather on intercorporeality as he describes the encounter of dancer and recipient. He fills in Louppe and Valéry in describing the process of sharing the transposed state of mind or perspective on the body. Both Louppe and Nancy consider kinesthetic impressions as being imprinted and leaving spurs in the body of the recipient. Nancy goes even further, implying that these perceptions are pre-reflective and stir the recipient's body inevitably. In a similar way, he considers the meaning of dance as pre-lingual. Considering the importance of presence, taken from Louppe and following Nancy's line of argument, I would suggest to speak of the meaning of dance as *pre-sense*.

Having said this, I would like to draw on Johnson's account to make sense of dance as an art form. As I have described earlier, he locates the origins of linguistic meaning in bodily experiences. If dance proposes different perspectives of the body, it follows that it also alters the semantic maps that are imprinted in bodies – both in the dancer as well as in the recipient. Thus, (contemporary) dance as an art form undermines our collective cultural understanding of the body (or as Valèry puts it: common reason). Dance confronts us with the

bodily origin of meaning pointing at the very moment in which meaning emerges.

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