

Ausdehnung and Plasticity from Freud and Kant: the Dancer through the Looking Glass/Looking through the Dancer

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Abstract

Looking *to* the dancer requires looking *through* the dancer. If a philosophical space intends to figure out and expand the real form and time of the corpus of the dancer, some movements of thought have to unfold themselves in an indefinite reflection, passing through the refraction of an obstinate looking glass. Indeed, the dancer's experience of the real of her body and of the spatiotemporal dimensions she inscribes with her configured movements, is always marked by the looking glass, mirrored, epitomized and reflected. In result, her real body remains untouchable or in-tact, however, split and crumbled into different bodies, levels and parts. This split prompts us with questions on the spacious unity of the real of the dancer's body. The time in where this body is a-life and moving, deciding on when, where and how to direct itself into a beautiful shape and blissful form, constantly ready to give and receive at the same moment, seeing what is coming without seeing, uncovers itself as *anticipatory*, autonomous and unconscious. Through the concepts *Ausdehnung* and plasticity, to be unfurled from a cordiality in Kant's and Freud's interpretation of sensibility and the unconscious, I will inform the form of the dancer so difficult to grasp, arguing strongly for the dancer as an anticipatory power: a moving corpus that is time and eternity as well as space and infinity in one.

Keywords : Dancer and her Body, Freud, Kant, *Ausdehnung*, Plasticity

1 Flame

If I look at the dancer and try to take hold of what I see, my consciousness should be in readiness for an explosive reflection. Since my movements of thought have to be *in touch* with the spirited movements of a body, a meditation on the possibility of reflecting its impact mirrors itself in the dance of my views and ideas, constantly slipping away and hovering over. What form has my consciousness perceiving a dancer – a grasp? What form has the body of this dancer – a glimpse? And finally, what form has the plastic process of performing artful movements – a formation/for-motion? How can we think these three different refractions deriving from one singular action, this 'grasping a glimpse of what is forming itself', a sensible action in space and time reaching out to a sensitive sphere beyond them? How can we catch a *flame*, because

dance is like a flame, without burning the glow of our soul in those moments of enlightenment we sense perceiving beautifully moving bodies? Can we mirror dance? In order to put the formless form (the flame) of the 'moving' character of dance into a philosophical outline, I need the light and horizon of two concepts: *Ausdehnung* and plasticity. The concepts are to be unfurled from a cordiality between Kant, anticipating Freud, and Freud, emulating Kant, in their respective interpretations of sensibility, corporeality and the unconscious.

2 Weiss Nichts Davon ?

Tracing the tips of their thoughts through my movements of the mind into the moving and living body of the dancer, I start with a rather ultimate *exemplum* of a reflection: the art of anticipating, inscribing and rehearsing thoughts into history. The *exemplum* at hand considers a short aphoristic phrase, the last of a larger note with four connected entrances, written down by Freud on a solitary page, the 22nd of August 1938, one year before his death. The phrase was reflected and cited by an excited Jean-Luc Nancy¹, in 1978, who was astonished, fascinated and captured by its words and admiringly called it a *brève mélodie*. He literally enrolled it into a philosophical song or, better, into a philosophical fugue.² He obstinately re-worked, over-wrote and un-scribed its words into a cascade (a stepladder) of ideas, constantly re-launching poetic refrainings, repetitions, imitations and emulations of Freud's lines, meditating on them and ventilating new thought-matter out of them. Twenty-two years after the melodic notes of Nancy, it was Jacques Derrida in his book on touching (*Le toucher*)³ who rehearsed the words and swunged around with them to re-read and undress their anticipated potential and to unfold from them, through his particular mirror, a new Milky Way of philosophical reflections. It is me now, eager to take part into this polyphonic play of stardust and infinity that started seventy-three years ago, who reinvests the shimmer behind the words of Freud. They show that Freud saw Kant fit for a dynamic dialogue. My search for a language in tune with the space-time-complex of the dancer in this text, aspires to shake hands with both of them, with their virtual brotherhood. I cite Freud's first three of the four sentences that make up the complete

¹ Jean-Luc Nancy (1940, Paris) is a French philosopher who, in his own eccentric way, articulates the grand themes of the history of philosophy through reflections and works on many important thinkers such as Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Heidegger and Lacan. Body, carnality, sensibility, corporeality and the unconscious form a large slice of the flesh of his thoughts, inspired by a.o. Jacques Derrida, Georges Bataille, Maurice Blanchot and Friedrich Nietzsche. He wrote a doctoral dissertation on Kant under the supervision of Paul Ricoeur (1973).

² According to Derrida in his book *Le toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy* (Paris: Editions Galilée, 2000), Nancy's fugue appeared first as 'Psyché' in *Première Livraison*, nr. 16, Paris, 1978. Later refrainings, re-workings and over-writings of this meditation on Freud's words are to be discovered chronologically in: *Le poids d'une pensée*, Québec: Le Griffon d'argile et PUG, 1991, p. 14 *et passim* and *Corpus*, Paris: Editions Métailié, 1992, p. 22, 83-84, 93 *et passim*. This last reference in *Corpus* was recited in a note the next year, in 'Différence', *Le sens du monde*, Paris: Gililée, 1993, p. 58. In this note Nancy declared this meditation as the unique theme of his book *Corpus*.

³ DERRIDA, J., *Le toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy*, Paris: Editions Galilée, 2000.

note on the respective page. I give the German words, followed by the English translation:

'22. VIII. Räumlichkeit mag die Projektion der Ausdehnung des psychischen Apparats sein. Keine andere Ableitung wahrscheinlich. Anstatt Kants a priori Bedingungen unseres psychischen Apparats. Psyche ist ausgedehnt, weiss nichts davon.'⁴

'August 22. – Space may be the projection of the extension of the psychical apparatus. No other derivation is probable. Instead of Kant's a priori determinants of our psychical apparatus. Psyche is extended; knows nothing about it.'⁵

Nancy's *brève mélodie* was unfurled from the last six words: '*Psyche ist ausgedehnt, weiss nichts davon*'. It is there where Freud himself repeats the word *Ausdehnung* (extension, *étendue*), already anticipated in the first sentence. *Ausdehnung* as concept is on its turn itself a powerful refraction breaking through the looking glass of the philosophical past. Descartes, for instance, lights up from this past spectrum, where he colored *in extensio* the idea of extension (*extensio*) as counterpart of the *cogito*, developing a notion of the material body as substance and essential attribute of the soul (which could be responding to the name Psyche). It is clear that the history of philosophy is a true counterpoint, a *contrepoint*, in all senses, structured through anticipation and relation. From the point of my interference here, my syncope in this encounter, I ask: what senses are being touched upon in Freud's phrases? What reflections does he rhythmize in his words?

It seems that he tries to define spatiality (*Räumlichkeit*). His words are dense and perhaps mere reference points to a larger argument, but they make clear that the 'spaceness' of space cannot be seen a-part from the (spaceless?) body of a Psyche, a body imagined as a psychic apparatus (*psychischen Apparats*). Spatiality, Freud says then, is the projection of the extension (*Ausdehnung*) of this apparatus. He continues, challenging Kant's *a priori* conditions whereto he probably means his *a priori* conditions for an apprehending instance: the conundrum space, time and the categories. In Freud's view these conditions are not known or conscious structures imparting and rationing the mind. What conditions the psychic apparatus is unknown to it ('*weiss nichts davon*') and bares no space nor time at all. It is a mere extension ('*ausgedehnt*') which develops the motion of infinite exchange between the conscious and unconscious into a spatial projection called *Räumlichkeit*. Following Freud's hints, I wonder whether the sensibility of a body, a living body in its carnality, would be the form or effect of that projection, seen as a spatiality dynamically constituted in correlation to Psyche's spaceless *Ausdehnung*? Is the body nothing else than the projection of its own psychic apparatus and functioning? And this apparatus in turn, can it exist a-part from the spatiality and temporality of the projected body? In his comment on Freud's phrase and as his echo and response to Nancy's *brève mélodie*, Derrida states that Psyche's

⁴ FREUD, S., *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. XVII: *Schriften aus dem Nachlass*, Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1941, p. 152.

⁵ FREUD, S., *The Standard Edition*, Vol. XXIII, London: The Hogarth Press, 1964, p. 300.

Ausdehnung is nothing more than the absolute exteriority of its own self, being the fold of an unfolding fold, surface of an outside of an outside ... without inside, generating an interiority through a disseminal divisibility that can never be touched, grasped or synthesized by the self and remains radically, cruelly, exactly intact⁶. It thereby does not know anything of itself, it is for itself and in itself the unknown (*'weiss nichts davon'*). It is the pure *spread* of the unconscious delivering itself into space without being spatial, covering an exteriority without being an interiority, becoming a body as a Psyche, forming a Psyche as a body, being all the time already in and out, as mere limit. A tactile self-consciousness of the unconscious is a paradox. It evaporates into a sphere in where space, time or concepts burn away and where the only determination (or touch) of its movement is the pure and blind presentation of a formative motion (a for-motion). This motion is nothing more than ex-tension in space and anticipation in time, both collapsing together in a sheer place of possibility. Why extension and anticipation are one, can be made clear through the plasticity of the artful moving body of the dancer.

Let us move on a little further along with Freud's Psyche and come nearer to the fascinating steps of the dancer. I give my word to Nancy and let him sing after Freud:

'Psyche est étendue, partes extra partes, elle n'est que dispersion de places indéfiniment morcelées en lieux qui se divisent et jamais se pénètrent. Nul emboîtement, nul chevauchement, tout est au dehors d'un autre dehors – chacun peut en calculer l'ordre et donner les rapports. Psyche seul n'en sait rien: point de rapports pour elle entre ces lieux, ces places, ces morceaux de plan.

*(...) Parmi ceux qui sont présents, certains cachent leur visage, d'autres gardent les yeux désespérément fixes sur le corps de Psyche. Elle n'en sait rien – et c'est cela que tous savent autour d'elle, d'un savoir exact et si cruel.'*⁷

The Cartesian expression *partes extra partes* presses on the extreme outside of the tension that pushes the movement of Psyche into her infinite *Raum*. It is an endless *partage* of an unlimited space, it is ex-tension: *Ausdehnung*. Nancy stipulates another note in the lines of his add-on melody, crucial for my approach to a reflection on the possibility of grasping the dancer's body: he says that every-body around Psyche is 'in the right place' to perceive her, to make calculations on her, give account of her and

⁶ This cruelty of remaining intact and unknown (like being the other of oneself) is counterbalanced by the cruelty of the exactitude of knowledge which is circling 'around' Psyche in the other, in the surrounding sphere of otherness punctuated in gazes, mirrors, calculations and reports owned by others perceiving, judging, writing and disciplining Psyche. Nancy's 'Psyché' and his melodic refraining of Freud's phrase has put a finger of cruelty on the spot of this dialectic knowledge/unknown, disclosure/forclusion, conscious/unconscious, perception/hallucination. See also my citation of Nancy on page 4 and 5.

⁷ NANCY, J. L. (1978); My own translation in English: *'Psyche is extended, partes extra partes. She is nothing more than a dispersion of places indefinitely crumbled into spaces who divide but never penetrate themselves. There is no enclosure, nor overlap, everything is at the outside of another outside – everybody can calculate the order of it and give reports. Only Psyche knows nothing of this: no ratio for her between her spaces, places, pieces of plan. (...) Amongst those who are present, some of them cover their faces, others keep their eyes desperately fixed on the body of Psyche. She doesn't know anything of it – and that's what all know about and around her, a knowledge so exact and so cruel.'*

report about her order, places, spots, parts, pieces, fractions, elements and crumbs. Only Psyche herself does not know anything of this happening: she does not perceive herself nor the knowledge of her, gathered in the others and their 'circumscribing' activities. I would like to push this idea into the body of the dancer. Where is the (self-)consciousness of the dancer, of the body of the dancer? Is the dancer like a Psyche, caught up in her own extension, unknown, unseen and unconscious to herself, while captured (or freed from) within the gazes, mirrors, perceptions and knowledge of others, around her? Or is the dancer conscious in another way, self-perceived in a manner that is curious enough for some fresh philosophical reflections?

3 A Freudian Transcendental Aesthetic for the Dancer

A good reflection often turns things around, inside out or upside down. So, let us look *to* the dancer by looking *through* her. Being a dancer myself, I sense that only through a phenomenological style and a reflective description of the experience of the dancer's own body, that the complexity and ambiguities of her troubled self-awareness and crumbled body-consciousness can be touched upon.

At first sight and contrary to Psyche, the dancer seems to know herself and her body with an extreme preciseness, an exactitude. Every muscle, tendon, tissue, nerve, fiber, fingertip, bone or vein is observed by what I call an inner 'discipliner'. The dancer's body is occupied by an over-consciousness that trains, rules, governs and detects this body until it feels like split into the functionalized compartments of a mechanically structured machine. The dancer's weapon to conquer this extreme body-knowledge and a powerful position of commandment over her body as apparatus ironically lies outside of herself, outside of her body and consciousness. It is the sharp cut of the mirror, the reflection of her infinite duplication, through which she divides and refracts herself into pieces of science and knowledge, through which she forms her inner perception in search of control. Working with and through the looking-glass makes a second body appear in front of the dancer's first. It is an object-like body that can be changed, formed, sculpted, shaped, corrected and perfected on command. It is a body as enemy opposed to the first, which is a subject-body, 'discipliner' and will. This 'discipliner' treasures impossible aspirations and is under the illusion of being capable to attain a radical, total power over the object-body which finally has to become one with it through systematized training, survey, obedience and a regulated comportment according to prefigured rules in line with (inhuman) dance-ideals. It seems that the dancer undergoes Lacan's mirror-stage over and over. She gains a self-awareness that is completely marked, inscribed and incised by the other: the otherness of the dancer's own self, her divided body, as well as the otherness of real others. Not only the mirror and its resulting division into a *doublure* of the dancer, but also the teachers in training classes, the observations of colleague-dancers who concur and compare, the judgments of choreographers in auditions, rehearsals and selections, split the dancer into different bodies, different levels and different parts she keeps hold on and employs in her own self-perception and (in)formation. The dancer clearly seems to be more of a Psyche than appeared at first, since her full body-knowledge is not in(side of) herself – as if it were

on itself, *an sich* – but is totally spread, divided and pushed (pressed) outside of herself, ‘around’ herself’. The dancer is extremely torn a-part, and never one but two⁸. The difference between the dancer and Freud’s Psyche is that Psyche knows nothing of it while the dancer fatally knows. The dancer is only there where she comes to an understanding of herself in relation to her outside, mistakes, shortcomings (gaps) and not-self, opponents of her disciplining body aspiring for totality, completion and perfection. It is painful for the dancer to be in front of the mirror every day, to depend on it but hate its picture, which is never the ideal she strives for. And it is exactly this dependence of an outside – the mirror – that has to be eliminated in order *to be* the ideal. Although the dancer knows (*‘weiss davon’*), and Psyche not, they look alike. In the end, Psyche’s knowing nothing of herself (*‘weiss nichts davon’*) circulates in this complex movement which Freud calls *Ausdehnung*, a blind movement that actually *sublates*⁹ itself and comes to itself in a self-generating process which projects its imperceptible motion as *Räumlichkeit*: as a space of touch outside of itself, as a body covering otherness, aboutness and ‘aroundness’. Psyche knows nothing but her projection or outside, her spacing being, ex-presses itself and opens itself towards the other, merges with its surroundings and the knowing of *tout le monde*. She thereby touches with her own unfolding limit the border of a form of consciousness or knowledge which is not inside of herself, but nevertheless *represents* her: the other, gathering and collecting her spread. Freud’s (but also Lacan’s) suggestion of this ‘coming into being’ (or form) points into space. This space seems to be very different from the Kantian idea of it. However, it essentially reaches up to a cordiality which abandons the opposition Freud-Kant. Following Derrida, I see the Freudian ‘plausibility’¹⁰ of *Räumlichkeit* as a tuning and refining of the Kantian *a priori* structure of external sense more than as a critique and correction of it. Freud tries to conceive of this structure from the complex dynamics of the psychic apparatus and from the plastic development of sensation of the self-consciousness of the body. Seen through this perspective, the *a priori* sense of sensibility is an anticipatory structure ordering and synchronizing itself with sensations. It is rather that which is being formed along with the formation of sensations than something already there, prepared, awaited and received in order to receive sensations. As conditions for the possibility of sensible intuition and as the founding elements of the form of external sense, the Kantian space and time are in fact constituted and generated by a spaceless and timeless movement

⁸ Later in this text I will make clear that the dancer is actually three, since a rather awkward third body comes into her battle, making her struggling with herself as a subject-will and object-enemy more difficult, disturbing her controlling, mastering and (per)forming of herself.

⁹ To sublimate can be understood (from a Hegelian angle) as: to negate or eliminate as an element in a dialectic process but preserve as a partial element in a synthesis.

¹⁰ For a closer reference to this expression, I would like to point at Freud’s Psyche-phrase and the last, rather suggestive words of it, where he states that *‘no other derivation is probable’* considering the projection of Psyche’s extension as spatiality. Freud does not say that it is clear, distinct, certain or true that spatiality is a projection of the psychic structure of a spaceless movement. He only presents his idea as a possibility, probability, plausibility, eventuality, as likelihood.

which raises a *touch*¹¹ of sense, space and time. This touch comes to itself and to its form (into being) through the plastic complex which is the *Ausdehnung*, the extension which was always already extending and ex-pressing itself beyond space and time but which was in need to meet a world, life, otherness, ... to find with or through them a conscious form of itself. A development of sense like this could be 'figured' in the anticipatory scheme of what I call a for-formation and for-motion¹²: an unperceivable motion, blind and immaterial, which raises its own conscious form in the process of a continuous, circular dynamics where a simultaneous giving and receiving of shape is at work, for instance in the reciprocal formation of consciousness through the unconscious, of an intuited body through extension and of performative movements through plasticity, where/when body, soul and their negation are mutually bound up in a synthetic unity of possibility and power. This scheme can be proposed as a Freudian transcendental aesthetic which takes Kant's implicit commitments to something as an anticipatory power into account, a power at work in the process of modeling sensibility through its potential or unconscious form. Adhering to this, I pose four questions which might be useful in the conceptualization of a Freudian transcendental aesthetic for the dancer. Firstly, when will sensations of movements become dance-movements and literally dance in space and time? Secondly: how are these movements perceived? Thirdly: what is specific about dance movements for the formation of the dancer's self-consciousness? And last: what philosophical language do I give the barely graspable spirit of dance? I will work this out through the last section in my text, occupied with the extensive extension afoot in the gymnastic gesture of plasticity.

4 Perfect !

Plasticity is a concept that perfectly fits art. I used it already several times in this text but did not yet give it its well-enough defined weight (so, I was anticipating *all the time*). In her beautiful book on Hegel, Cathérine Malabou¹³ came up with this concept. What I now take out of its rich elaborations easily can be bent from Hegel's case to Kant's. Hegel's definition of time as 'the pure form of sensibility' and as 'the same

¹¹ This touch literally touches upon the importance of the tactile sense and the extremity of the sensitive nerves of the skin (as limit and border of the body). Tactility is one of the five senses which is most neglected in philosophies of intuition and perception. Nevertheless, there is a 'haptocentric' tradition in philosophy (tactilistic) that reaches up to Husserl and is clearly at work in Kant. In his *Anthropologie* (1798) Kant privileges the faculty of touching through the example of the hand (of men), of the fingers and their extremity, and the nervous *papillae*, which all inform on something subtracted from objects and intuitions, namely *Ausdehnung* and *Gestalt*. The tactile senses touch upon the mere state of 'feeling' and press on the primordially of the soul (*Gemüthe*) as harmonizing hyper-*a priori* of sensations, intuitions and understanding.

¹² Both notions implicitly enclose the associations with the word 'before' ('be-for-formation' and 'be-for-motion'). 'Before' can be seen as a time-notion which is only revealed in retrospect and cannot be grasped but after the occurrence of facts. It thereby overcomes time and is clearly related to the idea of anticipation.

¹³ MALABOU, C., *L'avenir de Hegel. Plasticité, temporalité, dialectique*, Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. VRIN, 1996; English translation: MALABOU, C., *The Future of Hegel. Plasticity, Temporality and Dialectic*, London/New York: Routledge, 2005 (prefaced by Jacques Derrida).

principle as the I = I of pure self-consciousness' obviously is borrowed from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. According to Malabou this identity of time and the *cogito* cannot be reduced to a continuum of instants. It rather appears as a synthetic unity that is as what she calls a 'seeing of (what is) coming' without seeing, which functions through a 'sensible non-sensible' structure of self-consciousness¹⁴. This 'seeing of (what is) coming' is the temporal pulse of Malabou's idea of plasticity. It avoids any 'fall' into time and attains the form of anticipation. It operates through a movement that does not consist of any spaciouly ordered or dividable time but contracts in itself the mere originary *possibility* of separation into instants and spaces, intended towards the idea of a future beyond time. The form for this contraction of possibilities is a plasticity: a formative and auto-affective structure constantly ready to give and receive at the same moment. This structure has a subjunctive mood or is what is called tense: it is in touch with a suspended touch. It is the sensibility of what has not yet sense, a moving limit, like the power of the *Ausdehnung*. Both plasticity and *Ausdehnung* are up to some fuse: as figures of a coming into being or form, they schematize in a tangible way the spatiotemporal negativity of the still and formative movement of anticipation. They are the sensible shape of what is on its way. As I said, plasticity perfectly fits art. What is 'plastic' is always that which is at once capable of receiving and giving form and becomes embodied, corporeal, carnal and conscious through an indefinable formation (*körperlich, gestaltend oder gestalter*¹⁵). Malabou gave the examples of sculpting and the material of clay (clay which gives form and resistance but simultaneously is being formed and manipulated by an actor in the process of shaping, moulding and modeling), of architecture, drawing and painting, the 'plastic arts' whose central aim is the articulation and development of forms. By extension, plasticity signifies the general aptitude for development, the power to be moulded by one's culture and history, by education and raise, resulting in a rise of one's character (*Bildung*). Drawn from my experiences as a dancer, I add here that plasticity is an excellent notion apt for dance as well. So, let us go back to the dancer and her struggle to form and master herself. As I touched upon before, the dancer becomes radically split in order to gain a full control over her body. She is subject-discipliner and object-enemy. She is active and passive, giving and receiving, forming and being formed. Training the body is a plastic process. But, a difficulty adds on to this. The dancer is not only a training instance. In the end, austere training aims at the formation of a sensitive artist, a dancer who moves artistically and touches or 'moves' you. The training dancer is entangled in a struggle to attain perfection. She is two bodies: one with an ideal in mind and one which has to become this ideal. A duplication like this is painful but still in hand. Unfortunately, a third body comes in. This body is the living, autonomous and unconscious body. It just goes, does and lives its own way, escaping any possibility of controlling it, predicting it, having it in hand. It is the body of life, of pleasure and pain, of lust and affect, of mood and temper. It constantly slips into the split arranged between the willing and obeying body and totally messes up their master-slave-relation. Two reactions arise from this

¹⁴ See: MALABOU, C. (2005), p. 14

¹⁵ See the Grimm-dictionary.

being confronted with an unexpected intervener, from this being confronted with the inconsistency and caprices of life: there can be frustration and there can be art.

There is always frustration for the dancer, since the ideals of body and virtuosity she strives for are ever out of reach. They are a pulling force, attract and seduce her, but they are inhuman, known to be impossible. The dancer has to live with her imperfection, fight with her possibilities and what she has as herself every day. The strict demands of the professional world leave no space for such an awkward thing as her hungry, lustful, tired, unwilling, capricious and autonomous body in pain, fear, anger, excitement, ... Nevertheless, if the dancer wants to dance, she needs to give herself, hand over or surrender herself and her special talent to life and to surprise, to the unconscious and unpredictable, so that her trained body also becomes a performing body, spirited and impassioned, staging not merely skillful movements but truly artful and beautiful movements. Thus, for the *art* of dance and not just for the training, the third, intervening, disturbing and troubling body is the most crucial one. It is this body which escapes control but can give freedom and play to controlled movements. In answer to the question when the sensible sensations of a moving body become the sensitive sensations of a dancing body (a spirited dancer), I state that this transformation (transition) happens when the struggle and split between the subject- and object-body is overcome and when an indefinable third is allowed to open another space between them. This third brings them together, in harmony and balance, in a sort of unpredictable perfection not expected but anticipated. There is no rule for this happening. It simply befalls. For this befalling, there needs to be the openness of the artist-dancer, a true anticipatory power, and her courage to be not afraid of the strange, uncontrollable, autonomous body she also is. This third body is capable of pulling out from the tension between two fighting instances an already anticipated sublation at hand in this tension, a sublation which forms itself through that giving/receiving, acting/expecting play in between¹⁶. This is the spaceless place of the *Ausdehnung*, the non-sensible sensible of the plastic structure in touch with sensibility. It is the formative limit pulling senses, soul and otherness together. It presents the real of the body of a real dancer, giving more than a body, something beyond space and time, that is: art. This gift is a vibrant *touch* full of bliss and joy. The dancer expresses playfulness and freedom. She experiences liberation (*Erhebung*). There is no struggle when every step, gesture, jump or turn is right, without being commanded, ordered or expected. There is no fight when the total body is in harmony, being perfect as it comes and goes. The unconscious sensitivity for the precise decisions on when, where and how to move is completely released and plays freely in the body of the dancer, is seen as coming without ever seen or sought, is anticipated in the spaceless/timeless formation at work as extension and plasticity.

¹⁶ The harmonic unity between giving and receiving, between acting and expecting, between form and matter, has the analogous structure of that oscillating field of beauty, eminence, nobleness and glory which plays freely in Friedrich Schiller's notion of *Spiel* (play) as conceived of in his work *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen* (1801), (*Letters on the aesthetic education of men*).

How are these spirited movements perceived? Can we grasp those glimpses of infinity and eternity in space and time? Perhaps a sensible perception of this freedom asks for a plastic or playful consciousness as well, and for a reflective judgement in line with Kant's aesthetical idea's. But dance is something else than a painting, a verse or a sculpture. It lives, like music, and it is physical, like a body. It is like a flame, as I said before, and it can burn your understanding! The Psyche-complex does not work here: Psyche as dancer cannot be known, understood and recorded in a surrounding other. She remains ungraspable to her public. A dancer cannot turn into an object of science, analyzable in terms and definable in laws. Who is looking, fails to understand. The spirit of dance moves like the wonders of life, light, fire and freedom: mysterious, sparkling, indefinable. It can only be admired, beloved, savored. Fascination or a sort of *Ausdehnung* is the sole thing that takes its seat in the mind. This is how art works. Art tickles the unconscious by spreading all what is conscious into its ultimate corners and by opening unseen regions beyond. We have no concepts, rules or adequate words for these regions, except silence, responding art or an authentic surrender. Let's admit: we have to enjoy art's joy and contemplate it as a thing forever!

To move on, I will move into the dancer's body just a tiny little further. What power does the dancer get from the divine experience of freedom in her movements and what does this imply for her self-consciousness? This is not easy to say. The dancer's struggle with herself remains, no matter how many mystery comes into her body performing dance as art. However, along with Freud and through my own body-memory as a dancer, I found out that bodies do not forget. The body of the dancer is the ultimate of the body as a memory-machine. Indeed, everything which is lived and experienced is at the same time an inscription, pressed into the body like a little stamp or mark, leaving traces and stains, signs and seals. These traces reciprocally form new experiences. The dancer's exciting experience of freedom is never lost and remains a constitutive possibility – a true anticipatory power – in her spaceless/timeless formative body which is more activated than in most humans. The dancer's anticipatory power is present in her tense (al)readiness, in the always and not yet of her plasticity, *en acte* in her sensitive being a-life, ever in touch with the beauty of the unexpected and unforeseen slumbering in movements, gestures or steps. The dancer's self-awareness is pure attentiveness for possibilities, always half-conscious and unconscious, seeing (what is) coming without seeing, preparing the ear for the unheard, spreading its time into the future of the future of the future ... and yet not expecting any-thing.

5 Conclusion (through the Looking Glass)

A philosophical reflection on the specular mirror-play between *Ausdehnung* and plasticity shown through the dancer, and the formative power at work in the dancer shown through *Ausdehnung* and plasticity, is a complex movement of thought that passed itself through the infinite refractions of the looking glass. In my view, a philosophical language apt for a reflective description of the dancer's uniqueness in body and soul (or in spatio-temporal formation and consciousness) asks a phenomenological perspective built on the schemes at work in Kant's philosophy and

Freud's psychoanalysis. A Freudian transcendental aesthetic for the dancer is my proposal here, since it takes Kant's implicit commitments to anticipatory and unconscious structures into account, structures which enable an understanding of dynamical, generative movements operating in the plastic processes afoot in the *formation* of self-consciousness, sensibility and artistic sensitivity. The latter as reaching up to freedom – performing it – moves beyond consciousness, space and time but takes off in their structure. As a dancer I did not speak as a pure philosopher but also as a witness from the stirring front row. Seeing the dancer like a flame (as I do) sets limits to the directions of a clarification. An enlightenment of the dancer's bliss has to remain an impossible task, not asking for finitude or definitions but simply performing the fertility of a *movement of thought*. My text thereby does not define ultimately nor make certain positive knowledge out of the reflections it advanced. I merely hoped for a 'moving' text, generating a *touch* of dance as well as a philosophical feeler placed in correlation with it, a little bit like Wittgenstein's ideas on world and language mirroring each other through their analogical structure. I am convinced that this feeling and touching upon shows more or different things than can be said.

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