

## The Dance Between Us: The Emergence of Dance from a State of 'Suspension' Between Gravity, Pathicity, and Atmospheric Affordances

By Serena Massimo\*

*The aim of this paper is to present an example of the dialogue and potential mutual contribution between dance and philosophical aesthetics, thanks to a dance that emblematically shows the essential link between the affective dimension and the management of gravity, and thus the relational and transformative nature that characterises the experience of dance. The dance to be analysed is La Spire (2017), created by the French choreographer Chloe Moglia. At the beginning of the 2000s, she invented a dance practice called 'suspension'; at the crossroads between dance and acrobatics, this dance revolves around the creation of a state of suspension, where alertness does not lead to an 'absolute control' of movements, but to the experimentation of a risky, but always joyful and playful way of being together, of connecting, in this 'suspended' dimension. This choreography will be analysed by returning to the concepts of 'pathicity' and 'tonicity' developed by the psychologist and phenomenologist Erwin Straus, to the reflections on the relationship between gravity and dance gestures led by the movement analysts Hubert Godard and Christine Roquet, and to the categories developed by Hermann Schmitz's 'new phenomenology' to characterise the 'felt' dimension of our experience.*

### Introduction

I'm someone who prefers to 'in-finish' rather than define. But if I had to choose a word, I'd go for 'suspensive', because my practice is not based on spectacular numbers – which, incidentally, I don't bother with, despite an undeniable relationship with risk and danger – but on thought and reverie, paying loving attention to the world, which sharpens the acuity.<sup>1</sup>

It is not surprising that the choreographer Chloe Moglia, who is used to spending hours on a tightrope, many metres above the ground, exploring the effects of gravity on her body, does not find herself in the stabilising confines of a definition, but rather positions herself in the 'non-finite': the never-ending process of something always on the verge of giving itself away, like the movements and sensations she discovers in the course of her 'suspended dance'. Dancer, acrobat, trained in martial arts, Moglia is the inventor of a practice, that of 'suspension',

---

\*Adjunct Professor, University of Ferrara, Italy.

1. [http://liberation.fr/culture/scenes/chloe-moglia-haut-perchee\\_0210721\\_NLBU7OCK\\_TREQJPXV42ZDAKFUZE](http://liberation.fr/culture/scenes/chloe-moglia-haut-perchee_0210721_NLBU7OCK_TREQJPXV42ZDAKFUZE). Accessed: 31 August, 2024.

which lies in the space between these three disciplines. In fact, the choreographies performed by Moglia and the dancers – all women – of the group ‘Rhizome’, founded by Moglia in 2009, are very peculiar, devoid of any representational or narrative intentions, and at the same time irreducible to circus ‘acts’ aimed at demonstrating the physical abilities of. The peculiarity of this practice lies precisely in the different attitude that Moglia and the other dancers adopt towards the danger, which paradoxically ‘disappears’ as the state of alertness required by this very situation of danger increases:

To go up there is to know that there is danger, so it increases the level of alertness, so it is to withdraw the danger. It’s a place, going up suspended is a place to develop this very fine awareness and that’s why you enjoy it more because it opens the sensory sphere... It opens the sensory axis and so it reduces the danger in terms of vigilance.<sup>2</sup>

The state of vigilance therefore dilutes the sense of danger, while maintaining a state of ‘alertness’ that sharpens sensitivity, the ability to listen to one’s own sensations and the way in which one’s surroundings affect them. This is how the movements of Moglia and the dancers of ‘Rhizome’ move.

It is precisely this peculiar dynamic that we want to make the subject of our reflection, which we want to carry out from the perspective of philosophical aesthetics, taking as a case study the choreography *La Spire* performed by Moglia and the other dancers of ‘Rhizome’ in 2017. The investigative tools we will use come from a phenomenological and neo-phenomenological approach; the notions of ‘pathicity’ and ‘tonicity’ introduced by the psychologist and phenomenologist Erwin Straus will be related to movement analysts’ reflections on gravity, and then, thanks to the ‘alphabet of felt-bodiliness’ provided by Hermann Schmitz’s ‘new phenomenology’, we will deepen the role played by the affective dimension within this performance.

Our intention is also to demonstrate the efficacy of a methodological approach that examines the experience of dance by putting the dancers’ own words into dialogue with the analytical tools of philosophical aesthetics. The latter is not understood as rigidly imposed categories aimed at ‘explaining’ to the dancers what they are doing, but on the contrary, as ‘heuristic tools’ that could enrich the dancers’ own ‘research’ providing them with a new angle from which to interrogate aspects of their own experience. The methodological challenge at stake here is that there can be a reciprocal influence between dance and philosophy, in that if the former can reorient the philosophical gaze, the latter can in turn provide philosophers with a new perspective on key aspects of their experience.

---

2. <http://www.radiofrance.fr/franceculture/podcasts/l-invite-e-de-la-dispute/la-circas-sienne-chloe-moglia-9727639>. Accessed: 31 August, 2024.

### *La Spire*: A 'Suspended' Community

The choice of *La Spire* as a case study to examine Chloe Moglia's suspended dance from an aesthetic-philosophical perspective stems from the fact that it seems to be one of the most emblematic examples of the kind of research that Moglia undertakes in her practice of 'suspension'. The latter can be studied from a philosophical point of view, not only because Moglia herself recognises the link between her research and the philosophical study of man's way of being in the world – a transient being subject to gravity throughout his life – but also because it effectively illustrates several essential factors underlying the dance itself. First of all, the peculiar attitude towards the force of gravity, which emblematically represents the distance of the dancer's experience from that of a person who moves in order to achieve an external goal, but also from that of an acrobat. Like the athlete, the latter also subordinates everything he feels to the growth and exploitation of certain physical abilities, whereas for the dancer the latter seem to be a 'secondary effect', albeit essential, in relation to a 'search' that is more concerned with feeling, with feeling in space. *La Spire* is a particularly significant example of this, since it even takes precedence over the avoidance of movements that increase the risk of falling. On the contrary, the risk of falling is a source of artistic inspiration. In fact, Moglia states:

I work without the intention of telling who knows what or transmitting anything; what is transmitted is completely beyond my control. I am here to set up what I call a series of constraints within which people will have to struggle to stay alive.<sup>3</sup>

At the centre of the performance is a 'sculptural structure' made up of three circles, each seven metres in diameter and eighteen metres high. This creates the image of a spiral, which is at the origin of Moglia's conception idea of this performance. The idea conveyed by the three successive circles is precisely that of the cyclical processuality inherent in the very notion of a spiral; the lines connecting one circle to the next are in fact what leave space 'for another day, another action or another inhaling and exhaling'.<sup>4</sup> The path up and down the circles of *La Spire* by the five dancers refers precisely to this idea of something that evolves thanks to the motor responses that are given, each time in a new way, to a situation that presents the same constraints, but which, encountered in a different space-time, inspires different sensations and motor patterns. *La Spire* stands out because it is both an individual and a collective exploration of these affective-motor responses; indeed, it is collective because, as one dancer points out in an interview, although 'there are meeting points between point A and point B, you are free, and what I experience in the spiral is that I walk on all fours, then vertically, then diagonally, then

---

3. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=avHCiOwuCBM>. Accessed: 31 August 2024.

4. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGa-x5ot6vc&t=5s>. Accessed: 31 August, 2024.

horizontally...'<sup>5</sup> At the same time, *La Spire* was born from the desire to be 'at the bottom of the sky and in a common space', to be 'connected', each time in a new way, thanks to what one of the dancers refers to as 'crossing boundaries together, brought about by the sound [music]'.<sup>6</sup>

The passage from one circle to the next is like a threshold, which symbolises the fact that each encounter with the dancers is a place of meeting and exchange, and thus a transition, an obligatory 'metamorphic' passage that leads to the discovery of ever new ways of 'making community', under the unifying effect dictated by the feeling of sharing a dangerous situation. On the one hand, there are many constraints so that the movements performed are always also a response to the need not to fall into this precarious situation and are therefore subject to a high degree of vigilance and control. On the other hand, no one – above all the choreographer – has control over what these movements will do or what they will convey to the audience. In this respect, it should be noted that Moglia does not explicitly speak of improvisation. Of another performance, *Aléas* (2014), Moglia says

I don't really like to talk about improvisation, because it's like letting yourself go a bit on stage... On the other hand, I have a lot of constraints, but on the other hand there is also a certain chance, there are problems that intervene, little incidents, unforeseen events, and this increases the level of alertness to sharpen all this and to play with it, and it's the unforeseen that I'm hunting and this requires the greatest possible mastery, but it's in order to... summon up the unforeseen.<sup>7</sup>

Moglia shows that she has a concept of improvisation that is more linked to a 'freedom' from constraints, and therefore to something more left to chance, whereas for her it is important to create a framework from constraints, whose unexpected responses, instead of proposing themselves as answers to accidents, acts as junctions that allow the performance to articulate precisely in the way intended, i.e., that favourable to the creation of a 'suspended community'. In fact, it is precisely this idea of provoking unexpected responses through the creation of conveyed frames that makes it possible to grasp an inescapable improvisational component in Moglia's works, if one follows an aesthetic approach to improvisation.<sup>8</sup> This seems to be reflected from an experiential perspective; in fact, the search for *alea* is identified with one of the aspects that most characterises the improviser's experience, namely the fact that they give access to an experiential dimension of 'vitality', of presence: 'When I put forward 'unfeasible' ideas for something to

---

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. <http://www.radiofrance.fr/franceculture/podcasts/l-invite-e-de-la-dispute/la-circas-sienne-chloe-moglia-9727639>. Accessed: 31 August, 2024.

8. Cf. at least A. Bertinetto, *Eseguire l'inatteso. Ontologia dell'improvvisazione* (Il glifo, 2016); Bertinetto, *Estetica dell'improvvisazione* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2021).

happen, I have the impression that I am in contact with the vivant, the real imposes itself on me, and this gives me great joy'.<sup>9</sup>

La Spire, created three years after *Aléas*, seems to present this aspect in an intensified way, in that the constraints imposed by the precarious situation in which the dancers find themselves accentuate the impact on their emotional state of the different heights and movements in suspension. This is also conveyed by the unfolding of the music, originally that of a saxophone, which accompanies the acrobats' 'walk' with a musical text with an 'elastic' unfolding mode, as if it were a rope stretched out as a support, but a support that dynamically adapts to the dancers' needs. In this way, the dancers have both a sense of risk and confidence in their ability to adapt creatively to this dangerous situation; in this way, the thrill of being in a precarious state is transformed into a feeling of 'being alive'; it is, in fact, through suspension that one can 'observe the vivant at work in great detail'.<sup>10</sup>

### Suspension as a 'State of Play'

An effective characterisation of the 'vivant' of which Moglia speaks can be provided following Anne Boissière's analysis of the experience of playing, which is associated with 'spontaneous movement' – which constitutes the 'primitive form' of playing.<sup>11</sup> The peculiarity of these movements lies in the fact that they are performed with one's own feeling as the only guide, namely the feeling of grasping, as a drive to get out of oneself and express oneself in a space that is suddenly experienced as alive, dynamic and involving. It is a space in which everything seems possible but which, precisely because it has an activity of its own, cannot be mastered; this is the space of suspension which, however, instead of making the dancers feel threatened by not being masters of their own movements, makes them feel free to leap out of their preconstituted ways of moving and let themselves be guided by the movements that the dynamism of this space inspires in them.

The whole performance is therefore imbued with this 'playful' spirit, which encourages the dancers' individual and collective discoveries of how to turn imbalance into an opportunity to experiment with new ways of reducing suspension. It is the case when a dancer, standing at the top of one of the circles, detaches her hands from the scaffolding and uses her pelvis as a point of support; she discovers this autonomously, but it is as if she is encouraged to discover it thanks to the 'support' given by the complicity of the gaze of the dancers around her, who look at her

---

9. <http://www.radiofrance.fr/franceculture/podcasts/l-invite-e-de-la-dispute/la-circassienne-chloe-moglia-9727639>.

10. <http://www.radiofrance.fr/franceculture/podcasts/l-invite-e-de-la-dispute/la-circassienne-chloe-moglia-9727639>.

11. A. Boissière, *Le mouvement à l'œuvre, entre jeu et art* (Sesto San Giovanni: Mimesis, 2018), 13.

between fascination, amusement and the joy of being together, without anything preventing them from this shared moment of experimentation.<sup>12</sup> The lightness that seeps out of these moments suggests that such experimentation is encouraged by the state of suspension, and would be hindered if it were on earth: 'Sometimes on the ground you lose control and up there this is not there' [...] 'Yes, it really is a form of freedom in the air [...] You move with a slowness that gives others the impression that it is easy'.<sup>13</sup>

It is this sense of playfulness that animates the dancers, that makes their movements seem easy, and that makes them, despite the real difficulty of their execution, not be stopped by the danger of the situation. The 'state of play' in which they find themselves actually allows them to take the constraints of this danger as a creative cue; the sense of danger, instead of blocking the creative process, encourages it because it keeps them in a state of tension that sharpens their sensitivity to all the details of the situation in which they find themselves; constraints aren't but keys to discover unexplored ways of feeling and moving. This explains the need of keeping the sense of risk alive throughout the performance; Moglia speaks of it as a 'right to intranquillity, which is a cousin of uncertainty, which is this thing that teases a little; I think I like to train it'.<sup>14</sup>

The state of 'intranquillity' is a way not to get used to the situation in which one finds oneself, and thus to remain in a state of alertness to all the elements that can contribute to changing this state and, with it, to teaching new ways of moving and feeling. The dancers' education and training leads them to grasp, in the precarious situation in which they find themselves, an aspect that is latently present in this situation but is usually overlooked because it is replaced by the desire to escape: the possibility of changing the status quo, a repetitive and mechanical way of being. The instability that danger represents is the condition of possibility for responding to the context in an unfamiliar way and thus creatively reinventing one's way of acting, being, and thinking.

### **Liminality and the 'Transformative Power' of Not-doing**

The state of suspension is thus configured in such a way that it can be compared to what the anthropologist Victor Turner calls the 'liminality' that he believes operates in the performing arts. The latter are 'thresholds', 'liminal phenomena' that mark a reversal in social flow by 'putting everything in the subjunctive [. ...] Just as the subjunctive mode of a verb is used to express supposition, desire, hypothesis or possibility rather than to express real facts, so liminality dissolves all

---

12. Cf. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWm2quyFd0o&t=1102s> (Accessed 31 August 2024), from minute 22'29 to minute 22'50.

13. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGa-x5ot6vc&t=5s>. Accessed: 31 August 2024.

14. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOtGCoWM\\_B8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOtGCoWM_B8). Accessed: 31 August 2024.

positive systems [and opens up] all positive systems of the world, and thus the liminal state of the world. Just as the subjunctive mode of a verb is used to express supposition, desire, hypothesis or possibility rather than to express facts, so liminality dissolves all positive systems [and opens up] to what might be.<sup>15</sup>

Suspension is the 'middle ground' in which the habitual way of acting in the face of danger is 'put into the subjunctive' questioning the attitude to 'save' energy minimising physical effort and reducing the motor potential to the minimum necessary to escape the risk situation. The heightened alertness caused by the situation of danger leads the dancers to expend energy in movements that explore the effects of suspension from the ground on their way of feeling and moving. This happens because the state of suspension has marked a departure from the habitual way of acting:

Suspension is a situation in which the fact that our hands are busy (we can't do anything), that our feet are no longer on the ground [,] takes us out of the flow of agitation, of doing this or that. So it is something that is really of the order of suspension, it is to be suspended from one's functions, it is to suspend agitation.<sup>16</sup>

To enter the state of suspension is to leave the state in which one normally moves on earth, in everyday life, characterised by purposeful action, an action carried out according to the 'economic' principle of achieving maximum results with minimum effort. Suspension is a parenthesis of productive action, emblematically represented by manual action; it is a process of 'inoperative' abandonment of action, in the words of Giorgio Agamben. The latter characterises the non-instrumental nature of gesture through the notion of 'inoperosity': as an activity or power that consists in deactivating and rendering inoperative human works, thus opening them up to 'a new, possible use [...] Inoperosity is not another action alongside and beyond all actions, nor another work beyond all works: it is the space [...] that opens up when the devices that bind human actions in the combination of ends and means [...] are rendered inoperative.<sup>17</sup>

Inoperability thus appears as that which opens to liminality, to that 'in-between' space in which 'everything seems possible', to use Donald Winnicott's term for the 'space of play'<sup>18</sup> Dance, like other performing arts, does not merely propose movements that are 'different' from the usual ones, but gives access to the very condition of possibility that can generate such different movements. This is why floating dance takes place entirely in movements that are not codified by any dance technique, even ordinary ones (twisting, dangling, stretching the legs, embracing...), which it empties from within, so to speak, stripping them of their

---

15. V. Turner, *Antropologia della performance* (1988) (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1993) (my transl.)

16. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOtGCoWM\\_B8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOtGCoWM_B8). Accessed: 31 August 2024.

17. G. Agamben, Karman. *Breve trattato sull'azione, la colpa e il gesto* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2017), 138-139.

18 Cfr. D. Winnicott, *Gioco e realtà* (1971) (Roma: Armando, 2019).

component of 'productivity'. Therefore, in the 'suspended' contortions and poses in which the dancers find themselves, there is no need to resort to the spectacular, extraordinary 'numbers' of the acrobat, hence the elimination of the trapeze:

When one withdraws [from the trapeze] the more acrobatic part this gives back to this situation its surprising, vertiginous character, where when one works as a trapeze artist it is more normalised; I have tried to 'peel' this situation to arrive at what it poses as suspension.<sup>19</sup>

To eliminate the trapeze is to increase the degree of instability of the situation and, at the same time, to emancipate it from a pre-established course of action; it is part of an operation of 'peeling off' that is intrinsic to the action of rendering the gesture 'inoperative', of depriving it of its productive dimension 'from within', so to speak: 'With each performance of another show', says Moglia, 'I have the impression of withdrawing even more than in the previous show'.<sup>20</sup> It is precisely this act of subtraction that 'creates space', that is, access to the 'playing' space in which 'everything is possible'.

The importance of eliminating rather than adding is also emphasised in another context, that of Argentine tango – a dance form that also has an improvisational component – where Marito Olsson Forsberg points out that when there are aspiring dancers who tend to rationalise too much, the teacher tends to focus them on the image of 'not doing'. Indeed, he emphasises that this helps them to get out of the imperative of 'doing well' or 'doing something special'. Instead, the image of not doing helps them to see that in dance, much of the work is in the doing:

Not in doing, but in letting do and feel [...] The extra-daily body of tango is not built by adding to the daily body an extra 'doing', an extra tension, an extra demand, but by taking away from it: by doing less, but feeling more; by paying more attention.<sup>21</sup>

Olsson Forsberg's reflections emphasise that 'not doing' is not an 'absence of action', a state of mere passivity, but, on the contrary, it is a 'doing' that is not subject to the law of instrumentality and productivity with a view to an end. It is a 'poetic' (from ancient Greek *poieo*, which means 'to create') and thus a creative doing that is accomplished not by virtue of an action that is previously deliberated by a subject and actively performed by him, but by what the action of 'not doing' provokes: the sharpening of one's own sensitivity, i.e., of listening capacity to one's own and other's way of feeling and affecting each other. This is what inspires the ability of discovering together the possibility of a variation of the present situation,

---

19. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOtGCoWM\\_B8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOtGCoWM_B8). Accessed: 31 August 2024.

20. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bz4S\\_ftXkF8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bz4S_ftXkF8). Accessed: 31 August 2024.

21. M. Olsson-Forsberg, "Construire l'état de danse à travers l'empathie kinesthésique. L'exemple de l'apprentissage du tango argentin," *Staps* 102, no. 4 (2013): 100.



a creative variation in the sense that it enhances the affective-motor and relational dynamics that are developing.

Olsson-Forsberg stresses this aspect by focusing on the effects of ‘not doing’ on the physical body: the release of tension marked by this image translates into the release of muscular tension of the superficial musculature. In this way, the conditions are created for an increase in proprioceptive and kinesthetic perception, which leads to a ‘kinesthetic empathy’ that allows one to understand, at an exclusively physical level and starting from the partner’s management of his own weight, his motor intentions and therefore the best way to respond to them.

### **To Do Less to Feel More: Pathicity, ‘Lived Rhythm’, and Tonicity**

This phenomenon seems to be better understood if we appreciate the link between the release of muscular tension and the cessation of the performance anxiety of ‘doing well’, which in *The Spire* can instead be identified with the fear of falling. The cessation of this fear seems to occur precisely because the increased sensitivity associated with ‘not doing’ opens a dimension that we can characterise, with the German psychologist and phenomenologist Erwin Straus, as ‘pathicity’. The latter designates our ‘original communication’ with the world, marked by the way in which one perceives what one experiences rather than the object of perception. Pathicity is linked with the phenomenon of feeling ‘grasped’ (*Ergriffenheit*) already mentioned as the distinctive characteristic of the experience of ‘playing’. Straus’ explanation of pathicity, however, refers to the experience of listening. The latter, in fact, is characterised by the fact that we cannot escape it: the sound has, in fact, ‘an activity of its own, it rushes towards us, seizes us affectively, takes possession of us’.<sup>22</sup> To hear a sound is therefore to be in the grip of what is happening to us and, through the perception of the sound itself, to access, together with it, the opening up of a space completely different from the physical space. It is the ‘acoustic’ space, the space in which we do not move when we are directed towards a goal, but the space that arises from the very sound we hear and in whose movement we feel immediately involved, almost in spite of ourselves, as soon as we hear that sound. This gives rise to spontaneous movements, which, in Boissière’s case, are typical of the experience of playing, but which are also at the basis of artistic practices such as dance, which Straus defines as ‘presential’ movements, because they are dictated by the feeling of being ‘alive’, ‘present’: hearing a sound is a reminder of belonging to this living space, and thus of participating in the dynamics that animate it. For this reason, the movements we

---

22. E. Straus, “Le forme della spazialità. Il loro significato per la motricità e per la percezione,” in E. Straus, and H. Maldiney, *L'estetico e l'estetica. Un dialogo nello spazio della fenomenologia* (1930) (Eds. and Transl.) translated by Pinotti, Milano: Mimesis, 2005, 46 (my transl.)

make when we allow ourselves to be 'grasped' by what surrounds us are movements that arrange us according to 'certain laws', but not as if they were movements imposed from outside. On the contrary, these movements are an integral part of the very movement of grasping and, with it, of the giving of this 'disposition',<sup>23</sup> which is nothing other than the establishment of a communication between us and that by which we are grasped, whose way of giving and communicating itself to us we discover cannot be separated from our way of communicating with it and, therefore, of influencing it.

The movements one is induced to make under the effect of grasping are, in fact, entirely self-generated movements, unpredictable and therefore the cause of unexpected variations in the very manner in which the grasping itself takes place. Straus characterises this phenomenon with the term 'lived rhythm', understood as 'the living experience of self-movement'.<sup>24</sup> What we are affected by does not merely provoke a motor response in us, but causes us to generate our own movement, to 'set ourselves in motion', so that the action of what we are affected by is expressed in movements that we are the ones who are declining. Straus illustrates this phenomenon with the example of a column of soldiers walking in a line, who, when they hear a march, change the whole dynamic of their step, which suddenly 'comes alive': 'The rhythm' – says Boissière – 'is characterised by a dynamic that sets the whole in motion; exaltation and lightness correspond to the animated, tense tempo of the music'.<sup>25</sup>

What emerges from Boissière's words is that the 'dynamisation' of the step is in fact only the partial expression of a dynamisation that involves the entire body, which is 'put under tension'. In fact, what happens is the effect of a sudden increase in tone. The origin of the word 'dance' – as well as 'Tanz', 'danse', or 'danza', to name but a few – is, in fact, the Indo-European root \*tan, meaning 'attention' and 'tone', as if to emphasise the close connection between the state of heightened attention – the 'vigilance' of which Moglia speaks – and the 'tensing' of the body. Among the meanings of the ancient Greek word *τόνος* is 'tension', understood as 'putting under tension' (of the strings of a lyre, for example, or of a rope) and the related idea of power, energy, conatus. Moglia's entire 'suspended dance' can be considered a choreography of the interweaving of the 'tensing' of bodies with that of suspended ropes. Every gesture and pose of the dancers in 'Rhizome', in fact, releases the processual and iterative nature of 'tensing'. It is a movement of stretching, of relaxation, which does not culminate in the attainment of a state – and, with it, a stasis – but, rather, with the maintenance of such a state of 'tension': a state of 'alertness'. The dance figures, in fact, do not exhaust the effort and energy required

---

23. A. Boissière, *Filosofia del sentire, spazio, ritmo* (Sesto San Giovanni: Mimesis, 2023), 110.

24. *Ibid.*, 107 (my transl.)

25. Boissière, *Chanter Narrer Danser. Contribution à une philosophie du sentir* (Sampzon: Delatour France, 2016), 83-84 (my transl.)

to perform them; rather, they convey their renewal by giving, as it were, a new impetus to that one movement of 'tension' underlying them.<sup>26</sup>

Pathicity opens us up to listening to ourselves, puts us in 'tension' towards the affective action of what surrounds us, which is manifested through the 'energising' effect it provokes in us. The grasping sensation we experience when we focus on the pathic dimension of our experience does not simply cause physical movement, but gives us the urge to move, to 'set ourselves in motion'. This is what Straus calls 'tonicity', which refers to the sudden increase in tone, understood as energy, vitality, that we feel when we are struck by something, which translates, on a physical level, into an immediate release of muscle tone that makes room for something new, for a kind of stretching movement: a reinvigoration that opens every possible motor potential. All this is part of the phenomenon of grasping: 'The energy of movement, in 'being grasped', is not of the order of a push, but rather of a 'pull'.'<sup>27</sup> It is in this pulling that the complicity between the movement of what is in the space around us and the movement induced by the grasp, of which the dance movements are only the continuation and development, takes place.

---

26. The link between dancing and this act of stretching also emerges when we look at the ancient Greek verbs from which the word 'dance' derives: *τείνω* and *τανύω*, both of which denote a general sense of stretching, both in the active and passive senses; this refers to the meaning of *τόνος* mentioned above. The specificity of this action is effectively manifested in Alcman's poem *Nocturne*, where the compound noun *τανυπτερούξ* (formed by combining the noun *πτέρουξ*, 'wing', with the adjective *τανύς*, 'stretched') seems to refer to the unfolded wings of birds ((I am grateful to Maria Roberta Marchese for pointing out the connection between 'dance' and *τανύω* and for the valuable reference to Alcman's poem). The active-passive state of the wings in flight describes exactly what Straus means by 'pathicity': a state in which one is the initiator of a movement on the wave of a driving induction coming from an action external to oneself, but which only takes place thanks to the movement to which it has given the driving impulse. The act of unfolding the wings is inextricably linked to the movement of the current of air in which the bird is immersed, and which thus becomes a support for the bird which, precisely because he unfolds its wings, does not yield to the force of gravity. This is the state of oxymoronic 'vibrating inertia' that Paul Valéry speaks of about the sphingids, which characterises precisely the 'stall': a state of 'tension' maintained over time, self-sustaining (P. Valéry, "Filosofia della danza (1936)," in *Opere scelte* (Ed. and Transl.) M. T. Giavieri (Milano: Mondadori, 2014), 1213-1214). This is the state of the dancer, whose 'muscular tension' is nothing other than the physical counterpart of an attitude of openness to the affective action of what surrounds him, which is the guarantor of the very maintenance of this attitude, since it allows the dancer's receptivity to 'keep itself open'. The dancer is thus in a constant state of 'alertness', ready to be 'tensed' by the affective demands of the environment. This state of alertness is maintained precisely because dancers experience ever new ways of exposing themselves to and responding to such solicitations; it is in the variation of their responses to such solicitations that they maintain this state of alertness, and through it the capacity to discover new ways of feeling and moving.

27. Boissière, *Filosofia del sentire, spazio, ritmo* (Sesto San Giovanni: Mimesis, 2023), 42 (my transl.)

## Embracing Gravity, Gaining Momentum from Imbalance

In 'La Spire', this is manifested in the movements with which the dancers respond to the effects of gravity on their bodies; the dangling of a leg is transformed into the movement of a pendulum or gives the impulse to cling to the scaffolding with a twist or allows them to amplify their movements and use their limbs to rub against another dancer. This can only happen, however, if the dancers rely on their perceptions and distinguish between the immediate reactions of muscular stiffening, which inhibit movement, and the 'invigorating' effect. The latter connotes tonicity and is related to the way dancers are affected by the scaffolding, the music, the touch of the other dancers, but also by the looks and reactions of the spectators. One of Moglia's observations seems to confirm the importance of muscle relaxation in the creation of new movements:

when I am about to release one hand to take another. I feel this area contracting, this other one contracting where it is not necessary so I release it because there is no need. I feel that I'm perceiving something, then I notice something I hadn't seen before, I hear a noise here [...] There is an amount of events taking place every second that is immense provided that the focus of attention is opened to these kinds of events.<sup>28</sup>

Here is an example of how Moglia carries out this 'peeling' operation; the latter consists in the reduction of excessive tension that space is made for that attention to all that surrounds the dancers, with an attitude no longer dictated by fear but by the search for creative resources. Moglia does not give up on holding on, nor does she throw herself into reckless acrobatics; it is simply that the desire to experiment leads her to listen with pity to all the 'events' that are happening around her and that she would not have noticed otherwise. She continues to feel in danger, but creatively exploits the search for motor or stabilising solutions, as it were, taking advantage of her unstable state to open herself up to the affective stimuli that prompt her.

This requires not fighting this instability, but allowing it to pass through us, in order to better understand the spatial orientation the body takes in order to cope with the imbalance, and how to follow it in a way that is both safe and creative, capable of guaranteeing a kind of intensification and development of the movements correlated with the states that accompany this particular moment of instability in this position. The dancers' relationship with gravity in *La Spire* seems to be emblematic of what the movement analyst Christine Roquet identifies as the primal moment at the origin of dance: the acceptance of gravity.

An imbalance that underpins our relationship with the world. It is not a question of constructing a solid, fixed orientation [...] but of finding internal supports (above all that of the inner ear, also known as the 'sense of subjective weight') that allow [...] a

---

28. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOtGCoWM\\_B8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOtGCoWM_B8). Accessed: 31 August 2024.

dynamic reorientation of one's own [...] In order to move [the] zones of lift and to vary the articulation of the gesture, we must therefore accept a kind of primary otherness, accept the other in me [...] in this complex living phenomenon, the force of gravity, the only invariant of the system, plays the unique role of absolute referent.<sup>29</sup>

The dynamic reorientation that Roquet is talking about consists of supporting and amplifying the 'pre-movements': the micro-shifts of weight that take place in our deep muscles in the form of micro-contractions and micro-expansions to counteract the force of gravity. This alternation of contractions and expansions – what Steve Paxton, the inventor of 'contact improvisation', a dance entirely based on weight shifts between partners, calls a 'small dance' – reflects how what affects us influences our relationship with our weight. As the movement analyst Roquet refers to, Hubert Godard, points out, our postural response to the way we are affected by something already encapsulates the expressive charge of dance movements, which, as Roquet points out, is already manifested in our 'posture'. Our posture is, in fact, emblematic of an orientation, a way of disposing ourselves towards the affective action of what surrounds us, which essentially depends on the way and extent to which we put our weight on the ground, on who or what surrounds us:

Weight – says Roquet, quoting Wilfride Poiollet – is a direction that makes possible an impulse [...] What dancers call 'weight work' implies the bringing into play of a force of reaction to heaviness, doubled by an attentional tension. In the upright posture, and regardless of the displacements, the acceptance of gravity, which trains us towards the ground, is inseparable from the management of another force, this force, which we will call 'orientation', is different from the anti-gravity reaction force, which reacts reflexively to the force of gravity [...] Perceptual arousal and the force of gravity are interdependent," explains Erwin Straus [...] Perceptual arousal, which brings our senses into play in an orientation perspective, [...] allows the individual to situate himself in relation to the external world and to orientate himself in his environment [...] What happens on the vertical axis of foot orientation in motion is [...] coloured by what happens in the interaction.<sup>30</sup>

Once we stop experiencing gravity as a force to be countered by an equal and opposite force, trying to reduce the pre-movements as much as possible, and start listening to them, we experience how they influence the management of our own weight. Depending on how much we rely on who or what surrounds us to manage it, we understand not only what kind of relationship with the environment we are involved in, but also what we can use to vary the conditions of this relationship.

The 'unbalancing' operation performed by the dancers of *La Spire* leads precisely to this orientation; in fact, the state of stillness in which this operation places them leads them to perceive the unbalance not as something to be feared,

---

29. C. Roquet, *Vu du geste. Interpréter le mouvement dansé* (Pantin: Centre National de Dance, 2019), 189-190 (my transl.)

30. Ibid, 64-65 (my transl.)

but as a source of inspiration, since, by opening themselves to the pre-movement, it also becomes a revelation of the type of orientation that finds its way into the posture they assume and, with it, the type of motor options that most favour the ability to create connections between them. The release of excess tension causes them to lose any form of rigidity and thus to open up to tonicity, to that impulse that they gain precisely when, abandoning themselves to the pre-movements, they grasp from the dynamism of this 'small dance' the motor induction that, 'energising' them, 'set themselves in motion'. The orientation they perceive through them is in fact 'a magnetisation of perception towards space and towards others'.<sup>31</sup> It is precisely a reversal of the direction of their reaction to the force of gravity, which they no longer oppose vertically, through a stiffening that causes them to oppose an equal and opposite force, but rather horizontally, from the moment when their movements emerge as a continuation and unfolding of the 'oscillations' that the 'pre-movements' give rise to. It is through them that the dancers not only perceive what is taking place around them, but also participate in them recognising the potential for transformation of these 'events'.

### **The 'Felt-bodily' Nature of Dancing**

To understand this better, it seems crucial to examine the nature of the 'felt' space in which they move and from which they receive the affective and motor stimuli that inspire their creative responses to the challenges posed by the state of suspension. We will analyse the notion of space through the characterisation provided by Hermann Schmitz, author of the 'New Phenomenology'. This approach, which emerged with the intention of enhancing the involuntary, spontaneous dimension of our experience, is based on the notion of the 'felt body'. The latter is 'that which someone feels in the vicinity (not always within the boundaries) of his material body as belonging to him and without recourse to the senses of sight and touch, as well as to the perceptual body schema [...] derived from the experiences made with the senses'.<sup>32</sup> The felt body is characterised by a 'felt-bodily' dynamic that consists in the alternation of the tendency to contract and the tendency to expand; our affective states arise from this oscillation, characterised by the predominance of the contracting component now – as in the case of fear – and of the expanding component now – as in the case of relaxation. We experience the way in which this dynamic is formed when we are affectively affected by something in a particularly intense way (as when we suddenly feel pain, or an unexpected noise breaks the silence and makes us jump). When this happens, we

---

31. *Ibid.*, 64 (my transl.)

32. H. Schmitz, *New phenomenology. An introduction* (Milano and Udine: Mimesis International, 2019), 65.

collapse under the pressure of the threat of the unexpectedly sudden new, which tears apart The smooth flow of his life and places him in the confines of a present that is as much temporal as spatial: temporal as the torn-off suddenness, spatially as the narrowness into which he is forced by collision.<sup>33</sup>

The affective action of something is therefore immediately manifested in the form of a feeling of sudden contraction: we are thus trapped in this absolute dimension of space-time, a 'primitive' present/presence that leads us not to perceive ourselves as distinct from what is happening to us. The experienced contraction, however, evokes an expansive response (such as the cry of pain or the act of flinching, according to the examples given). Such an expansive response in turn provokes a contractive response; thus, contraction and expansion are linked, and the body dynamic is formed. Body movements are in fact felt-bodily movements, i.e. they are part of the expansive response to the contraction experienced when we are affected; according to Schmitz, dance movements, in which moments of pause alternate with moments of gliding momentum, exhibit precisely the basic antagonism<sup>34</sup> between contraction and expansion, which is also at the origin of the movements themselves. The interrupting movements show the sudden intrusion of the 'new', which for Straus is grasping, while the gliding momentum is the spatial representation of the expansive reaction to this intrusion, which is not perceptible on a temporal level, since the event of the intrusion of the new is, as it were, reabsorbed by the flow of temporal duration. On the contrary, dance, which makes use of movements performed in space, shows the development of the irruption of the new: the emergence from primitive presence through the dynamics of the felt body.

Dance reveals the unfolding of this dynamic, i.e. the appearance of the alternation between contraction and expansion outside the individual's felt body; this phenomenon, defined by Schmitz as 'encorporation', is what characterises our relationship with the world. It is, in fact, 'a kind of interplay'<sup>35</sup> that also occurs with a non-human communicative partner.

If we consider dancers, we speak of a unilateral antagonistic incorporation with regard to the relationship that is established with music: the latter is, for Schmitz, a 'realm of 'motor suggestions',<sup>36</sup> understood as the prefigurations of movement that we experience in our felt body and in the forms that we encounter, qualities that therefore act as a bridge between what we experience and our own body, mediating the encorporation that is created. This has to do with the kind of

---

33. H. Schmitz, *Der Leib* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 2 (my transl.)

34. cf. H. Schmitz "Leibliche Bewegung auf dem Grund der Zeit," in *Philosophie des Tanzes. Denkfestival. Eine interdisziplinäre Reflexion des Tanzes* (Eds.) M. Fischer, and M. Alarcón (Freiburg, 2006), 15-26.

35. H. Schmitz, "Hermann Schmitz, 'the new phenomenology'," in *Phenomenology worldwide. Foundations – Expanding dynamics – Life – Engagements. A guide for research and study* (Ed.) A. T. Tymieniecka (Dordrecht: Springer, 2002), 492.

36. H. Schmitz, *Der Leib, der Raum und die Gefühle* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2015).

space in which one moves when dancing; it is not the measurable space of physics in which one moves when orienting oneself towards a goal by relying on the senses for orientation – Strausian ‘optical’ space – but it is a ‘felt-bodily directional’ space. Unlike Straus’ ‘acoustic’ space, it is not ‘homogeneous’, but is characterised by the presence of motor suggestions; real proprio-corporeal directions that can be directed to the physical body (as in the case of music) or from the physical body to the amplitude. This is the case with gestures:

Every gesture, even gesticulation [...] has a bodily and perceptible shape that, unfolding out of the confines, takes up space and often goes far beyond the visibly executed movement. A short push of the outstretched time finger can pierce space as a felt gestural figure.<sup>37</sup>

The example of music and gesture makes it possible to understand, first, the ‘affective’ nature of motor suggestion and our communication with the world and, second, that, from being requests for a single, punctual, self-contained motor response, motor suggestion rather suggest a way of feeling, which translates itself in a specific way of moving, of placing the limbs in succession also opening to the variation of the way of moving suggested. In the case of music – and all inanimate objects such as stage costumes or shoes, but also the floor or props – the resulting incorporation is ‘unilaterally antagonistic’: such entities take over the contracting pole of one’s own felt-bodily dynamic in a stable manner, provoking an expansive reaction in the dancers. In the case of gestures, on the other hand, one enters a dimension of reciprocity: the negotiating pole of the felt-bodily dynamic passes from one communicative partner to the other, giving rise to a mutual antagonistic communication. This is manifested in the couple dances, where the kinesthetic empathy between the dancers, their ability to feel the motor intention arising from the relationship with their partner, is activated as soon as one experiences the sensation of contraction in the partner as one’s own and responds to it with expansion. In this way, the ‘we felt body’ is created, a superordinate intercorporeal entity that transcends the physical boundaries of the partners’ bodies and coincides with a third felt body entity that encompasses them without being reducible to the mere sum of their felt bodies.

In *La Spire*, where no movement can be separated from contact – in any part of the body – with the spiral scaffolding, it seems to condition all other forms of incorporation (that between the dancers, that with the music, that with the spectators, whose glances are themselves motor suggestions, or that with the music). Thus, the mutual antagonistic incorporation between the dancers, which can take place both in the case of physical contact and in the case of its absence – think of the play of glances that creates that affective state of complicity that urges the dancer to dare to explore a weightless support on the scaffolding – always depends on the way in

---

37. H. Schmitz, *Der unerschöpfliche Gegenstand. Grundzüge der Philosophie* (1990) (Bonn: Bouvier, 2018), 125 (my transl.)



which the dancers respond to the motor suggestions coming from the scaffolding. These motor suggestions change according to the position of the dancers along the three circles. The spiral conformation in fact causes an alternation of concave and convex forms, thus creating a 'rhythmic' alternation between contracting and expanding movements. When a pair of dancers hangs from the concave part of one of the circles with their hands outstretched and begins to perform the oscillating movements of a pendulum, inspiring the dancers on the opposite circle to do the same, they use the sensation of contraction it creates to keep their bodies straight and taut, while at the same time responding to it in an expansive manner. Their constitution as straight and taut blocks is in fact what allows them to use the oscillating and regular movement like that of a pendulum.

### **Atmospheric Affordances and Atmospheric Resonance**

To better highlight the fact that such motor responses to motor suggestions are an integral part of the dynamics of enacted affective involvement, it seems particularly effective to characterise them, with Tonino Griffero, as 'atmospheric affordances', understood as 'invitations to feel'. Griffero, author of a neo-phenomenological 'atmospherological' approach, borrows the notion of 'affordance' introduced by the American psychologist James Gibson in his ecological theory of perception. According to Gibson, what we perceive is never the physical properties of the environment, but the qualitative properties that result from the encounter between our characteristics and those of the environment in which we find ourselves in a given situation. They refer to

to both the environment and the animal in a way that no existing term does. It implies the complementarity of the animal and the environment [...] If a terrestrial surface is nearly horizontal (instead of slanted), nearly flat (instead of convex and concave), and sufficiently extended (relative to the size of the animal) and if its substance is rigid (relative to the weight of the animal), then the surface affords support. It is a surface of support [...] it is stand-on-able, permitting an uptight posture for quadrupeds and bipeds. It is therefore walk-on-able and run-over-able. It is not sink-into-able like a surface of water or a swamp, that is, not for heavy terrestrial animals. Support for water bugs is different.<sup>38</sup>

From a Gibsonian perspective, Griffero's interpretation of the notion of affordances retains the focus on their qualitative and relational character; however, his 'pathetic' and 'non-activist' approach means that he does not identify in them invitations to act, but invitations to act, in line with the neo-phenomenological idea that acting is an integral part of the dynamics of affective involvement. The notion of affordances

---

38. J. J. Gibson, *The ecological approach to visual perception* (1979) (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2015), 119.

emphasises the fact that our experience is essentially characterised by the authority with which atmospheres are imposed on us. Following Schmitz, he identifies in them our affective states, which, far from being internal states projected outwards, are “quasi-things”: ‘half-identities that, because of their intrusive expressiveness, affect us like partners’. Our felt body is a true ‘sounding board’, a ‘perfect seismograph of the emotional situation’<sup>39</sup> that floats in its peripheral space and with which it cannot avoid resonating.

Our emotions coincide with this resonance, which manifests itself in the activation or formation of ‘felt-bodily islands’. Identified by Schmitz as what probably mediates between the felt body and the physical body, they are ‘felt-bodily’ areas corresponding to anatomical areas, but irreducible to them; some are more stable (the chest, the oral cavity, the soles of the feet), while others remain for the duration of the sensation (the area of the arm affected by the tingling sensation when stung by an insect). When Moglia affirms the importance of releasing the excess tension present in certain parts of the body, this means that she has made use of active, focused attention.

The latter is the form of attention which Undine Eberlein – in line with a neo-phenomenological approach – identifies as being directed to the individual sensations of one’s own felt body; it can become ‘passive’ when directed to our overall affective state, and then ‘peripheral’ when directed to an activity we are performing rather than to our body. The kind of attention we have when we dance is, for Eberlein,<sup>40</sup> ‘suspended’ attention, part of a broader attitude of dynamic balance between tension and relaxation. Excessive focused attention would, in fact, interrupt the ‘motor flow’. In fact, the latter seems to be only interrupted when focused attention returns to a controlling and planning attitude that is oblivious to our pathic dimension. If Moglia and the other dancers were to adopt this posture, they would not be releasing the excess tension in certain parts of their bodies; on the contrary, they would be further stiffening them thus dissolving many of their felt-bodily bodily islands and becoming a single block of muscles, rigidly and vertically opposing the force of gravity. The ‘peeling’ operation they perform and their access to pathicity, which is constantly renewed thanks to the state of stillness they enter, sharpens the dancers’ attention precisely because of the atmospheric affordances in which they find themselves resonating. In this way, they grasp the dominant type of resonance, or the one that most enables them to develop their exploration of the forms of corporatisation that are emerging with everything around them. For example, a very strong wind might urge them to favour a contractive configuration of their postures and movements, or it might inspire movements that lead them to exploit the expansive sensation that the wind gives them, allowing themselves to be swayed by the way it moves their clothes and hair.

---

39. T. Griffero, *Being a lived body. From a neo-phenomenological point of view* (London and New York: Routledge, 2024), 157.

40. U. Eberlein, “Aspekte leiblicher Intersubjektivität,” in *Körperskandale. Zum Konzept der gespürten Leiblichkeit* (Eds.) S. Volke, and S. Kluck (Freiburg and München: Karl Alber, 2017), 39-57.

The forms of atmospheric resonance that seem to take place in *La Spire* are both those identified by Griffero: a 'syntonic' resonance, in which there is a sense of well-being that 'momentarily prevents the emergence of certain islands or promotes their harmonious alignment with external reality',<sup>41</sup> seems to take place when the dancers transfer their weight to another dancer, or even when all five of them stand still in the same position (hugging the scaffolding in a crouched position), perhaps exchanging glances of complicity. Conversely, when they engage in movements that explore the effects of gravity in new ways, dangling, balancing on one foot, or creatively intertwining, so that the embrace becomes a springboard for experiencing a different way of feeling gravity and its effects on their way of clinging to the scaffolding, they seem to experience a 'discrepant' resonance. This is the inhibition of 'fluid bodily behaviour [which] can induce [...] contractions and stimulate the emergence of felt bodily islands previously unknown to the subject'.<sup>42</sup>

*La Spire's* dancers seem to be able to experiment always different ways of 'making community' in suspension because the pathic state they enter lead them to abandon an attitude of control and give way to listening to the kind of resonance in which they are involved. Thanks to this change of attitude, they do not feel fear and the consequent desire to escape – as they would if they were in this situation of precariousness and instability in their daily lives – but instead their curiosity is stimulated, also encouraged by the sharing of this condition, which promotes access to a 'state of play' dominated by complicity and mutual encouragement. The state of danger they experience can only increase this sense of community and sharing, which is not a communal coping with danger, but rather the excitement of discovering together unprecedented ways of exposing themselves and responding collectively to the atmospheric affordances around them.

### Conclusion: Dance as Emergence

Thus, at the end of this analysis, it seems possible to identify in Chloe Moglia's 'suspended dance', emblematically represented by *La Spire*, one of the most effective testimonies to the emergent character of dance, closely linked to its 'affective' character. This can be deduced from Erika Fischer-Lichte's characterisation of 'emergence' in the theatrical context:

---

41. Ibid, 59.

42. Ibid. Such forms of resonance also seem to emerge in the audience. Those who are familiar with Moglia's works, or those who are dancers or even acrobats themselves, seem to share with the dancers the moments of syntonic and discrepant resonance. On the other hand, those who have never attended Moglia's choreographies, and/or who suffer from vertigo, seem to enter a state of discrepant atmospheric resonance precisely at the moments of syntonic resonance experienced by the dancers. The atmospheric resonance between dancers and spectators only can be mentioned here but I will develop it further.

the unpredictability of new phenomena [...] There is a discontinuity, a break [...] The perceived element appears to be present in a particular way and with a particular intensity [...] Insofar as causality and intentionality are considered decisive for the course of events and the execution of actions, events and actions appear to be largely predictable. This means that people can direct their own actions according to such predictions and thus influence, even determine, events. In this sense, they have considerable agency [...] For if events can occur unpredictably, so that they cannot be countered by planned action, this requires a willingness to be determined by them and not just to want to determine them.<sup>43</sup>

What happens as soon as a controlling and predictive attitude is abandoned in favour of a 'pathtic' attitude, of openness and acceptance of the affective and motor potentialities suggested by the atmospheric affordances, is the abandonment of the agency mentioned by Fischer-Lichte. This abandonment gives access to a dimension in which one allows oneself to be determined by what happens, in search of a movement that arises neither in oneself nor in the other, but in the intermediate space between oneself and that with which, independently of one's will, one is already in contact. As Romain Bigé says: 'Dance does not begin in us: it begins between us – between movers, lights, sounds. It is not in me, or in the music, or in my partners that dance happens, but in the relation that we have to each other'.<sup>44</sup>

The dancers of *La Spire* show in real time the emergence of dance from this state of suspension, of a very particular tension towards the atmospheric possibilities that surround us, like a waiting 'without expectations' in which one makes oneself available for the transformations that the encounter with the other will bring about in oneself. In this way, the dancers of *La Spire* show that dancing begins when one discovers oneself involved in an affective-relational dynamic, which nevertheless indicates a direction, an orientation. The latter acts as an impetus for a movement yet to be discovered, in concert with the surrounding human and non-human entities that, which are themselves interwoven in felt-bodily forms of communication. These are the 'events' that happen around us and with which those who dance cannot help but discover that they are participating in their own creation, as in an emergency process that takes place between, through and with the dancers themselves. The latter is the process of the emergence of relational configurations with which the world itself is 'made' and which, through art, takes on a creative unfolding. This is thanks to the emergence, through arts such as dance, of 'threshold' spaces, liminal areas in which the configuration of both the world and art itself can be questioned, come into existence and reappear in new forms.

---

43. F. Fischer-Lichte, "Emergenz," in *Metzler Lexicon Theatertheorie* (Eds.) D. Kolesch, and M. Warstat (Berlin: Springer, 2005), 89-91 (my transl.)

44. R. Bigé, "How do I know when I am dancing?," in *Perception, cognition, aesthetics* (Eds.) D. Shottenkirk, M. Curado, and S. Gouveia (London and New York: Routledge, 2019), 328-330.

*La Spire* makes us understand that this reappearance is a new form that can only emerge from the collective confrontation with uncertainty, because it reconstitutes, each time anew, the fabric that keeps alive not only the relations between existing humans and non-humans, but their very possibility of existing.

## Bibliography

- Agamben, G. Karman. *Breve trattato sull'azione, la colpa e il gesto*. (A Short Treatise on Action, Guilt and Gesture.) Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2017.
- Bertinetto, A. *Eseguire l'inatteso. Ontologia dell'improvvisazione*. (Performing the unexpected. Ontology of improvisation.) Il glifo, 2016.
- Bertinetto, A. *Estetica dell'improvvisazione*. (Aesthetics of Improvisation.) Bologna: Il Mulino, 2021.
- Bigé, R. "How do I know when I am dancing?." In *Perception, cognition, aesthetics*, edited by D. Shottenkirk, M. Curado, and S. Gouveia. London and New York: Routledge, 2019, 319-332.
- Boissière, A. *Chanter Narrer Danser. Contribution à une philosophie du sentir*. (Singing Narrating Dancing. Contribution to a philosophy of feeling.) Sampzon: Delatour France, 2016.
- Boissière, A. *Le mouvement à l'œuvre, entre jeu et art*. (Movement at work, between play and art.) Sesto San Giovanni: Mimesis, 2018.
- Boissière, A. *Filosofia del sentire, spazio, ritmo*. (Philosophy of feeling, space, rhythm.) Edited and translated by S. Massimo. Sesto San Giovanni: Mimesis, 2023.
- Eberlein, U. "Aspekte leiblicher Intersubjektivität." (Aspects of Bodily Intersubjectivity.) In *Körperskandale. Zum Konzept der gespürten Leiblichkeit*, edited by S. Volke, and S. Kluck. Freiburg and München: Karl Alber, 2017, 39-57.
- Fischer-Lichte, F. "Emergenz." (Emergence.) In *Metzler Lexicon Theatertheorie*, edited by D. Kolesch, and M. Warstat. Berlin: Springer, 2005.
- Gibson, J. J. *The ecological approach to visual perception* (1979). New York: Taylor & Francis, 2015.
- Griffero, T. *Being a lived body. From a neo-phenomenological point of view*. London and New York: Routledge, 2024.
- Olsson-Forsberg, M. "Construire l'état de danse à travers l'empathie kinesthésique. L'exemple de l'apprentissage du tango argentin." (Building the Dance State through Kinesthetic Empathy. The Example of Learning Argentine Tango.) *Staps* 102, no. 4 (2013): 89-102.
- Roquet, C. *Vu du geste. Interpréter le mouvement dansé*. (Seen from the gesture. Interpreting the dance movement.) Pantin: Centre National de Dance, 2019.
- Schmitz, H. "Hermann Schmitz, 'the new phenomenology'." In *Phenomenology world-wide. Foundations – Expanding dynamics – Life – Engagements. A guide for research and study*, edited by A. T. Tymieniecka. Dordrecht: Springer, 2002, 491-493.
- Schmitz, H. "Leibliche Bewegung auf dem Grund der Zeit." (Physical Movement on the Basis of Time.) In *Philosophie des Tanzes. Denkfestival. Eine interdisziplinäre Reflexion des Tanzes*, edited by M. Fischer, and M. Alarcón. Freiburg, 2006, 15-26.
- Schmitz, H. *Der Leib*. (The body.) Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011.
- Schmitz, H. *Der Leib, der Raum und die Gefühle*. (The Body, Space and Emotions.) Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2015.
- Schmitz, H. *Der unerschöpfliche Gegenstand. Grundzüge der Philosophie* (1990). (The Inexhaustible Object: Principles of Philosophy (1990).) Bonn: Bouvier, 2018.

- Schmitz, H. *New phenomenology. An introduction*. Milano and Udine: Mimesis International, 2019.
- Straus, E. "Le forme della spazialità. Il loro significato per la motricità e per la percezione." (The Forms of Spatiality. Their Meaning for Motricity and Perception.) in E. Straus, and H. Maldiney, *L'estetico e l'estetica. Un dialogo nello spazio della fenomenologia* (1930), edited and translated by A. Pinotti, E. Straus, and H. Maldiney, Milano: Mimesis, 2005.
- Turner, V. *Antropologia della performance* (1988). (Anthropology of Performance (1988).) Translated by S. Mosetti. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1993.
- Valéry, P. "Filosofia della danza (1936)." (Philosophy of Dance (1936).) In *Opere scelte*, edited and translated by M. T. Giavieri. Milano: Mondadori, 2014.
- Winnicott, D. *Gioco e realtà* (1971). (Game and Reality (1971).) Translated by L. Tabanelli. Roma: Armando, 2019.

## Links

- [http://liberation.fr/culture/scenes/chloe-moglia-haut-perchee-20210721\\_NLBU7QCKTREQJPXV42ZDAKFUZE](http://liberation.fr/culture/scenes/chloe-moglia-haut-perchee-20210721_NLBU7QCKTREQJPXV42ZDAKFUZE) (Accessed 31 August, 2024).
- <http://www.radiofrance.fr/franceculture/podcasts/l-invite-e-de-la-dispute/la-circassienne-chloe-moglia-9727639> (Accessed: 31 August, 2024).
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=avHCiOwuCBM> (Accessed: 31 August 2024).
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bz4S\\_ftXkF8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bz4S_ftXkF8) (Accessed: 31 August 2024).
- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGa-x5ot6vc&t=5s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGa-x5ot6vc&t=5s) (Accessed: 31 August 2024).
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOtGCoWM\\_B8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOtGCoWM_B8) (Accessed: 31 August 2024).
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWm2quyFd0o&t=1102s> (Accessed: 31 August 2024).