

# **Two Texts on Dance**

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## **I**

### **The physiognomy of solitude**

The subject of representation in the arts is as old as art itself. Is the acknowledgement of what an artistic object is supposed to represent – if anything – an intrinsic part of aesthetic experience? The suitability of either a negative or a positive answer to this tricky question differs widely across the arts and makes it very difficult to achieve a satisfactory all-inclusive reply. A way to deal with the problem has been to adapt the very notion of “representation” in order to make it adjustable to all arts in a kind of “variable geometry” of the concept. Philosophers have thus come to agree on the persistence of four kinds of aesthetic representation, i.e., four ways by which an artistic  $x$  stands for an object  $y$ : unconditional, lexical, conditional specific and conditional generic representation. Unconditional representation obtains by triggering the spectator’s innate recognitional capacities and is best represented by the natural generativity associated to the most common systems of depiction: in order to understand that a horse is being depicted we only have to use our visual capacity for recognizing a real horse. Lexical representation involves the mediation of a conventionalized code. In Romantic Ballet, for instance, if a character draws a circle around her head that means “I’m pretty”. Conditional specific representation means that sometimes the spectator is only able to recognize what is being represented – or indeed, that something is being

represented *at all* – if she knows what is being represented. Conditional generic representation implies that in order to recognize an artistic signal as representational the spectator has to be aware that something is being represented (e.g. Pictionary). Some arts seem to rely almost exclusively on one of these representational strategies (e.g. literature is far more dependent on lexicographic representation than, say, theatre or music). But most arts – and particularly, performative arts – tend to involve more than just one kind of representation. One may then distinguish the arts according to the representational strategy each one tends to prefer. Dance, for instance, relies far more heavily on conditional representation than theatre or film. However, it employs unconditional representation far more frequently than music does.

Consequently, any art form that disengages itself from the strict or classic distinction between artistic genres – new media art forms or hybrid arts – may still be characterized according to their specific balanced use of representational strategies.

Pina Bausch's notion of dance-theatre - a suitable heir to the German expressionist tradition - sets her shows quite apart when it comes to this sort of characterization. Half-sister both to theatre and to dance, Pina's choreography would probably confuse both Mr Noverre's project of a *ballet d'action* and André Levinson's desire for a choreographic "pure function". As is the general case with dance, conditional representation is pervasive throughout her pieces. But this is not to say that other modes of representation, particularly those more common to theatre, and namely unconditional representation, are not extensively used. *Café Müller* is clearly a piece where conditional specific representation constitutes the dominant type of representation. The piece is the staging of Pina's memories from the days when, as a child, she used to observe the behaviour of lonely men and women wandering through the labyrinth of chairs of a German café. There is even a jumping elegant lady who

seems to remind us of all those moments when we came to a café looking for someone we know (the question here is: what would happen if we'd never cease looking?). We are aware, then, that loneliness is the theme of this work. The scenario of empty chairs and an empty revolving door is quite effective in the way it reminds us how cafés constitute the most accurate environment for a representation of solitude as the absence of someone. Both chairs and door are clear spatial *slots* that are now devoid of their occupants, public places open to non-existent clients.

The first entrance of a moving character – Pina Bausch herself – repeats the scenario's *availability*: her arms are open and willing. She adds to this, though, a sense of unbalance and lack of support. This is to be understood in a straightforward *gravitational* sense: Pina's *spectre* – a distinct character that never interacts with anyone – is evidently lacking physical support. She denotes it by the way her arms are kept open outwards and leaning forward forcing her body to advance in small steps as if performing a village dance, a clumsy convulsion that stops when she gets to the stage's wall. This movement is to become the recurrent *leitmotiv* that unifies the entire piece. It is entirely representational if we bear in mind the conditional representation strategy followed by the artist: it is the very physiognomy of solitude: unbalance, incompleteness, an anxious openness, the search for a physical support that is momentarily provided by the sidewall. She also initiates a pattern of gestures that is going to be followed and developed by the other dancers throughout the remaining performance. There is a permanent use of angles, particularly in the moving and ostensive presentation of the elbows, interrupted movements of the arms that intertwine or converge in a spiral turning of the body, and gestures that are usually interrupted, closing the arms over the head or the body. Sudden changes of rhythm are also common as if the dancer's solos follow a private and evidently non-interactive program.

Interestingly, the only moments when the spectre seems to “open up” her secluded behaviour is when, again, she resumes her unstable dance towards the sidewall.

(However, if the viewer tries to perform this very gesture something of a generative nature occurs. Imagine you’re standing in this position; imagine you’re facing the same unbalance and compulsion forward, the same kinaesthetic need for physical support. The kinaesthetic identification with the character, this sort of muscular mimesis, is comparable to the generative triggering of our innate recognitional visual capabilities<sup>1</sup>. There is no mediation there, just an automatic empathy. Most aesthetic experience of dance – and indeed, much of dance’s representational power – relies on this kind of unconditional representation of bodily behaviour. The comparison between *this* unbalanced feeling and the concept of “loneliness” is, to a great extent, built on it. Thus, it is obviously a matter of conditional representation. But I am proposing here that the very feeling of loneliness is triggered by this kind of behaviour in a sort of generative representation: if we recognize loneliness - either by experiencing *it* or by witnessing the experience of *it* – then we’ll naturally recognize Pina’s spectre as the representation of the physiognomy of solitude. We don’t act like this because we’re lonely; we are lonely because we act like this. Specific conditions for the identification of representation are irrelevant here.)

The spectral demonstration of loneliness is then multiplied and, in a way, developed by the succession of characters and/or gestures that follows. The female character is frequently used conveying perhaps how the cafés’ loneliness is fundamentally a feminine mode. Her appearance shows us one of the most exciting

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<sup>1</sup> Our understanding of systems of depiction is normally generative, i.e., with classical depictions we recognize that a picture is the picture of a boat if we can recognize a boat. (Cf. G. Currie, *Image and Mind*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 88).

characteristics of Pina Bausch's work: the way music is used not as a complement or supplement of the dancer's movements but as something of which the dancer is clearly aware. Pina's dancers don't just move to the music. They listen to it. Even more interestingly, they demonstrate how they literally react to it. Music is never just a rhythmic or melodic support; it is an *occasion* within the piece. This is why, in most Pina Bausch's shows, dancers tend to *oppose* themselves against the music. Bob Wilson tried for years to show to opera's audiences how choirs should move in opposition to the music. Pina's dancers have learned this lesson and perform this in the most non-redundant and effective way. Both the female and male characters are significant tokens of this effort: at a given moment, she almost starts to dance to Purcell's music but the gesture is quickly interrupted and refused; at another moment, a series of convulsions, extremely rapid and mechanized chains of gestures that take the dancer to an overpowering exhaustion and even the ostensive presentation of this exhaustion (the dancer's heavy breathing, for instance, becomes a salient element of what is being described) are developed counter-current to the soothing pace of *Dido and Aeneas*' aria. Even the anxious way with which the waiter tries to move the chairs away from the affected female or male dancing bodies impresses the viewer with its increasing opposition to the music's mood. In *Café Müller*, this feature becomes particularly meaningful and, indeed, *representational* for the separation of the moving body from the musical framework also represents another sign of loneliness. When a body moves abruptly while a slow tune is being played or when the same body engages in extremely slow movements while listening to a fast-paced march, there is always some degree of discomfort – or fascination – that affects the viewer. The disarticulation or non-compatibility between series of events that *should* or *could* be kept in harmony is always disturbing and it is this kind of disturbance or incompatibility that – I think –

Pina Bausch tries to represent: the presence of a lonely person within a public – often crowded - space.

(This, again, is a matter of conditional representation since we know that the play deals with the feeling of loneliness. But a less learned viewer may also have full access to the most impressive aesthetic qualities of the piece without having been told what the play is about. She may, for instance, recognize the representation of some kind of feeling of disarticulation and of tension between overlapped and conflicting rhythms, bodily postures, gestures and music. Is it that important that this mismatch should be given the label of “loneliness”? “Solitude” becomes important on a conceptual level of appreciation. This is the realm of critics, casual viewers or connoisseurs. But to those that engage on the gestures’ repetition or insist on the kinaesthetic empathy with the characters, the bodily gesture is meaningful *per se*. It represents unconditionally.)

There are other signs of the characters’ scenic isolation. Synchronized movements are sometimes held between two dancers – e.g., between the “spectre” and the woman – but they are never pursued. The brief *pas de deux* between the female and the male characters is utterly dismantled when they reach the side wall, which constitutes one of the most striking examples of the way Pina Bausch tends to disarticulate any sign of tenderness or even empathy between her dancers. The characters’ inter-relationship soon becomes the representation of an irredeemable falling apart and we end up recognizing simply two bodies with different *moving strategies*. Particularly significant in this respect is the “embrace scene” where the spontaneous embrace of both characters – notice that it is, first of all, a gesture of mutual physical support – is substituted by the *ritualization* of the apparently more significant gesture of carrying one’s lover. In pure physical terms, one is trying to substitute the gravity/weight of the female dancer by the “staging” of its portability or lightness. But,

unlike classic ballet, this won't do here. Since the unsupported body keeps falling down, the ritualization becomes a *mechanization* – the paradoxical mechanization of tenderness - and the increased pace of the movements achieves, again, that characteristic of Pina Bausch's pieces in which repetition is often used to transform an intended gesture into its opposite. (Notice also how the male dancer's arms, whenever the woman falls to ground, assume the same position as the spectre's arms, with the palms facing forward, unbalanced, in expectation, "lonesome".)

The kind of contrast that we perceive between music and movement is also noticeable in the way Pina eliminates any trace of lyricism. The woman's and the man's solos with sudden bursts of open gestures and virtuosic demonstrations of corporal articulation and harmony are always accompanied by the waiter's anxious zeal in trying to keep the chairs out of the dancer's range of action. This tension is an essential feature of the work and, indeed, after a while, the viewer does not know whether to admire the dancer's expression or the waiter's physical effort. Their equivalence in terms of choreographic importance amplifies the effect of each one.

The waiter's tenacity leads us to the unconditional and more "theatrical" component of Pina Bausch's piece. In this respect the piece appeals even more clearly to unconditional representation. The waiter is the waiter, chairs are chairs, a revolving door is a revolving door and, above all, men are men and women are women. The difficult order of inter-sexual relationship – "*Geschlechterkampf*" – is one of Pina Bausch's main themes. The embraced couple is, at first, just that: an embraced couple. The tiptoeing woman, eagerly looking for something or someone and sometimes observing what is going on with the other actors is just that: the minimal portrait of a lonely and fragile coquette. That her lonely quest is itself the work's theme is clearly

revealed in the end when she dresses the unbalanced spectre with her own wig and raincoat.

This intertwining of the two modes of representation is also an essential part of Pina Bausch's work. The embrace between the male and female characters is at first a perfect example of unconditional representation. The second man's intervention and the subsequent *accelerando* of precise gestures transform this scene into a case of conditional specific representation. Because we know that loneliness is the work's *motto* we understand how the transformation of the couple's self-support (again, physically) into an image of tenderness forced from the outside in tends to become a sign of unrest and unbalance that leaves the actors exhausted and out of breath. Then, the final and tired embrace is again an unconditional representation: the fatigued bodies of a man and a woman.

## II

### Dancing emotions

Many choreographers and dance theorists agree that dance is the spontaneous expression of emotion or feeling. Its spontaneous character means that conceptualisation is somehow absent from it. John Martin, for instance, proposes that each emotional state tends to express itself in a spontaneously created movement and that the spectator feels *sympathetically* this very state in her own musculature (Martin, 1946: 22). In this manner, intuitive perceptions and elusive truths, that "inexpressible residue of emotion" (Gilbert Murray) are directly transmitted from the dancer's moving *soma* to the viewer's still *soma*. In Martha Graham's paradigmatic definition, dance, as art in general, "is not to be understood, but to be experienced" (Graham, 1941: 45). And Fokine longed for a



completely new kind of dance, detached from the mimetism of the exhausted rules of classic ballet and capable of expressing “everything that is in the human soul” (Fokine: 1916: 23). But it is Selma Cohen who most clearly draws this separation between the realms of conceptual language and of dance as reproduction of pure percepts.

In this text, I’ll try to question this idea of a pure, i.e., *a-conceptual*, expression of emotion and feeling. Two issues are to be pursued: a) the relationship between verbal language and movement which again some authors seem to regard as a much more powerful, flexible and ductile communication medium than language itself; and b) the extremely hard problem regarding the connection between the art’s *code*, its pre-established *grammar*, so to speak, and the spontaneity that expression theories of dance commonly attribute to dance *qua* expression of emotion.

## 1. Gravitations

"I would only believe in a god who knows how to dance."  
Nietzsche

“In the beginning was the act”. Goethe’s famous dictum was warmly acknowledged by some of the most prominent philosophers of the twentieth century. Wittgenstein, for instance, took Goethe’s sentence as a kind of *motto* for his investigation on the conditions of possibility of our language games<sup>2</sup>. We learn our concepts, and namely the concepts that reflect our emotions, just like we are initiated in all other sorts of activities: just like we learn how to play games, for instance. We learn the game - any game, that is - by playing it. Prior to our mastering of words and expressions, there is a “drill”, i.e., a complex series of exercises framed and oriented through the aid of examples, rewards and punishments. None of our concepts has, thus, a single root but a complex history that involves gestures, voice tones and rhythm.

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. L. Wittgenstein, *On Certainty / Über Gewissheit*, §402.

Wittgenstein exemplified this conceptual *archaeology* by noticing how the genesis of such an abstract mathematical concept as “infinity” could be traced back to a double pedagogical strategy. In the *Brown Book*'s tribe (Wittgenstein, 1958: 93ss.), children learned how to master the mathematical function “ $x=x+1$ ” a) by learning how to count from 1 to 20, b) through the successively amplification of that series using “in a first stage” “a gesture that means “go on!”, and c) abandoning then this gesture which allows them to count up to extremely high numerals. The *internalisation* of that previous gesture would ultimately mean that no number, however high, could ever play the role of the last number:

"In other words, our use of the word "infinite" is just as straightforward as that of "open", and our idea that its meaning is "transcendent" rests on a misunderstanding." (Wittgenstein 1958: 95)

Following this conceptual *demystification*, other authors have shown us how many of our most prominent words are based upon and derived from gesture or movement. Lakoff and Johnson<sup>3</sup>, for instance, investigated the way in which essential concepts derive from metaphorical spatial orientation. In some cultures the future is “in front of us”, in others it is “in the back”. Our physical, bodily experience attributes to some of our most fundamental concepts an up-down *spatialization* that is significantly connected to our own posture: happiness is up, sadness is down; consciousness is upright, unconsciousness is down; health, life and similar concepts are usually connected with the movement of “uplifting” whereas sickness and death take us “down”; power is up, servitude is down; and the good, virtue and rationality are “up” keeping their counterparts down: evil, depravity and the emotional. This is why we say things like “You’re in high spirits”, “I’m depressed”, “I wake up”, “He sank into a coma”, “He’s at the peak of his health”, “She’s doing a high-quality work”, “He is an upstanding man” or “That would be beneath you”.

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<sup>3</sup> Lakoff / Johnson, 1980: chapter 4.

We find a similar connection between body and concepts in the writings of Ernst Cassirer and Susanne Langer. The body is our first and most prominent symbol and our “natural geometry” soon becomes an important interface between it and human conceptual articulation. Langer points out that “most of our descriptive language is based on the symbolism of head and foot, leg and arm, mouth, neck, back, etc”. Man is constantly engaged in the translation or passage from *symptoms* to *symbols*, from “feelings shown” to “feelings represented”. It could be argued that this is precisely what goes on in Lakoff’s examples of “orientational metaphors”.

We wouldn’t have the perception of *up* and *down* without gravity. That a force like gravity is powerful enough to ignite an enormous range of connotations apart from its own literal significance, and that these connotations assume such a tremendous importance in our language should help to explain why Langer speaks of impulse-like “powers”. A physical “power” like the force of gravity has sufficient *stamina* as to inspire – and somehow determine – the articulation of concepts that shape, for instance, our moral existence: good and bad, virtue and depravity, heaven and hell. What does this mean? That the basic force that determines our physical life in this planet has also been *imported* into our own language and modulated in a plethora of other “powers”. The forces with which our body relates, reacts and opposes gravity are properly reflected in the way the *subject* manipulates the conceptual paraphernalia. This is where, I think, the *magical* character of these “powers” lies:

“(…) human minds thinking with words have built up their whole world out of ‘powers’, which are modeled on subjective feelings of potency. Religion, history, politics, and even the traditional abstractions of philosophy reflect this fundamental *Weltanschauung* which is incorporated in language.” (Langer, 1953: 189)

Associated to the fundamental concepts of “up” and “down”, which are directly linked to the way our body is affected by gravity, we should also find other meaningful binomials such as light (from above) and darkness (from beneath). And we all know

how important this latter duality becomes as yet another kind of *metaphorical support* for many of our epistemological and moral notions. In science as in ethics as in politics, we tend to look for enlightenment, for truth, for the good and virtuous, for what is somehow conceptually perceived to be *above* our current position, whatever that may be. In the same way, we try to get away from the obscure, from evil and from corruption. In a word, we strive to *ascend*. As Susanne Langer puts it in relation to dance, most of our conceptual investigations are also engaged in a sort of “illusion of a conquest of gravity” (Langer 1953: 194). Just like the dancer’s “main tendency is to surmount the bonds of massive weight and lightness of movement is (...) the cardinal demand one has to make on a dancer”, so too the up-down polarity that lies in the core of some of our essential concepts allows us to imagine the theorist fighting against gravity in a purely conceptual way. If accepted, this common quest for *ascension* authorizes us to perceive dance and conceptual activity as two parallel *investigations* regarding two distinct kinds of powers: a) “the actual forces that are normally known and felt to control the dancer’s body”(Langer 1953: 194) or the theorist’s arguments and b) the *counter-forces* summoned and developed by both of them. In a way, then, like Nietzsche’s god, the dancer is the originary thinker and the thinker is the ultimate dancer. Immediately or mediately conditioned by gravity, they both know how to move, how to jump, and how to sustain, but they don’t know how to fly.

Eventually, this could be used against Selma Cohen’s defence that

“the area of dance is not that of concepts, which are grasped by the mind by way of words, but of percepts, which are grasped by the eye by way of movement” (Cohen 1962: 20)

In fact, it is possible to derive from Wittgenstein, Lakoff and, to some extent – as I interpret her -, Langer, that the frontier between concepts and percepts is a very elusive one. Notice, for instance, how Cohen describes dance as “a movement framed to be seen for its own sake and interest even above its interest of meaning” (Cohen, 1962:

19). Look how the sentence is already saturated with situational metaphors: the *framing* of movement, its interest being *above* that of meaning. Cohen is thinking through polarities and dualities that have at least part of their origin in the perception of our conditions of existence as bodies shaped by a gravitational space. It seems fair to conclude, in a symmetrical way, that when we dance, i.e., when we return to a closer encounter with our own physical condition, we are unable to completely obliterate the conceptual *burden* associated to each gesture, i.e., to each reaction *against* gravity. If *space* - and more than just mere space, *vectorized space* - is such a pervasive part of our language, and if dance is the most persistent exploration of our relationship with space, then, in an indirect way, its “area” is also that of concepts. Cohen quotes Martha Graham’s definition of the aim of dance as “making visible the interior landscape”. The use of the landscape metaphor is, again, significant. We can re-interpret this aim as, literally, a making visible of the way emotions and concepts that constitute our “inner world” are *topographically* distributed.

In a way, physical and conceptual spaces are isomorphic and overlapped. It is difficult, then, to understand how dance could be described as a movement completely devoid of meaning, if by meaning we understand a conceptually oriented activity. When a dancer moves her arms up and above her head instead of leaving them down, how could we not notice the *difference*? In the moment we notice it we are already summoning concepts. And to notice the difference is what makes dance expressive, what distinguishes a gesture from another and detaches it from the rest. This is only possible because *dancers dance with concepts*. When they move up instead of leaning down, when they leap instead of walking, their movements are saturated with concepts that constitute their conditions of possibility for communication. This is how I interpret

Langer's notion that in dance we have "actual movement", but *only* "virtual self-expression":

"It is *imagined feeling* that governs dance, not real emotional conditions...." (Langer 1953: 177)

"The conception of a feeling disposes the dancer's body to symbolize it." (Langer 1953: 181)

Dancers inevitably carry around with them the polarities that reflect in language the bodily reaction to space. And even if they manage to produce a completely new body-feeling "as something kinesthetically new, peculiar to the dance" (Langer 1953: 204) this has to be translated in "visual and audible elements" transmittable to the passive spectator who is bound to recreate these elements in a conceptual framework. If he couldn't do at least this, he wouldn't be able to grasp the simple fact that he was observing an artwork.

All throughout history, language's metaphorical genesis was replaced by literal statement and mythical syncretism between *world* and *language*, or *body* and *concept*, was replaced by science. But there are ways to revisit it. When understood as a vehicle for the dancer's or the choreographer's emotions - and if indeed we accept that our own body plays an essential role in the assembling of our language -, dance could be analysed as a way to, so to speak, *revert* the usual vector that connects language and movement. If dance is the expression of our emotions and if many of these emotions were already somewhat *determined* by bodily and orientational metaphors, by portraying them the dancer is, in a way, *going back* in the path that has taken us – both individually and as a social-cultural community – to the assemblage of our concepts. If the dancer wants to portray a feeling of a sudden happiness, her feeling uplifted will eventually originate upward and open gestures that will "boost" the viewers' spirits. But if she decides to express that same happiness in a totally different way, she'll need the

intervention of another, maybe more sophisticated, *code*. (If her aim is, in fact, the expression and communication of an emotion or inner feeling. It may not be that at all.)

## 2. Code, emotion, effect

It is true, however, that Susanne Langer acknowledges the basic difference between *language* and *gesture*. Language has become “primarily symbolic and incidentally symptomatic” (Langer, 1953: 180) with relatively rare outbursts of exclamation. Gesture, on the other hand, is “far more important as an avenue of self-expression than as ‘word’ “. But gestures in dance are said to “create a semblance of self-expression” and the illusion that they spring from feeling, “as indeed they do not”. The assumption of a *spontaneous* expression of feelings and emotions through danced movements, or Cohen’s notion that the instrument of dance is “a person who not only moves but feels” (Cohen, 1962: 25) seem to be challenged. Dance presents a kind of reflection on feelings and emotions and the search for “the final articulation of *imagined* feeling” and an “appropriate physical form”. In the place of “spontaneity” we find instead a succession of mediations:

- a) from feeling to “imagined feeling”, which involves the possibility of the feeling’s re-creation, or, in Langer’s paradoxical formula, a spontaneity “capable of repetition upon request” (Langer 1953: 178);
- b) the ability to express and communicate this imagined feeling under a physical form, which involves the intervention of a “code” or what Cohen mentions as “stylization”.

Now, it seems that an imagined and coded *feeling* is no longer a *feeling*; it is rather its re-presentation. We could proceed by following two distinct paths. Either

accepting the existence of that hidden *feeling* ultimately responsible for our artistic content as a sort of “thing-in-itself”, or dismissing it altogether and realizing that feelings are not expressed but *produced* through dance and that the *mentioning* of feelings is only part of the rationalization process common both to the creation and the reception of works of art. We could find here another possible connection between dance and language: just like concepts such as “good” or “bad” could be regarded as “rationalizations” of man’s condition as a physical being submitted to the up-down polarity (“up” is where we would like to be, in part because it is unattainable, and “down” is where we could be, a permanent possibility) so too many of the so-called emotions or feelings that we tend to attribute as *a priori* sources of gesture could be seen as *by-products* or indeed “rationalizations” of the dancer’s actual endeavours.

This question opens up to the extremely hard problem of the connection between the art’s *code*, the pre-established *grammar* that permits the reproduction, repetition, or re-enactment of an artwork, and the spontaneity that expression theories of dance commonly attribute to dance *qua* expression of emotion. This constitutes what Langer calls “the peculiar contradiction [that] haunts the theory of balletic art” (Langer 1953: 178). Is the “code” the ultimate enemy of feeling-expression, and is pure expression *uncodifiable*? If to *ex-press* is, literally, to press something out, how can the code become one of its conditions of possibility without, at the same time, depriving what is being expressed of its *spontaneity* and *uniqueness*? How can we ex-press without *squeezing*?

There are numerous examples that reflect the way dancers and choreographers acknowledge this problem. It was, after all, the decay of the old classic ballet and its inability to serve as a vehicle of “inner emotion” that led Fokine to search for a more transparent notion of dance. Mary Wigman stressed the tension that she felt between the



emotional and “the self-imposed law of composition” (Wigman, 1970:304) and Diaghileff tried endlessly to bring together technique and expression. John Martin sums everything up when he writes that

"to a certain extent we have limited the integrity of the emotion to conform to an arbitrary code, and at the same time we have deviated from the arbitrary code in order to conform to emotional integrity."  
(Martin, 1933: 25)

It is in part this *riddle* that explains for a significant part of the evolution not only of modern dance but also of modern art. Given the alternative between more or less arbitrary rules of form (the “code”) and the need to express authentic emotional experience, modern dance seems to have chosen the latter. Expression theories in dance were developed, then, under the assumption that emotions and feelings “can express [themselves] through movement *directly*” (*Idem*: 26). Terms like “authenticity” and “utmost simplicity” emerged as well as the idea that “the technique of composition (...) is of no use until it is learned and forgotten” (*Idem*: 28).

But in fact other artists chose the other alternative and saw in the preeminence of the code a way to “remove themselves in important ways from the compositional process” (Carroll 1999: 73)<sup>4</sup> and to annul or at least mitigate the role of the subject in art making. This subject, however, is to be pursued elsewhere.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf., for instance, the example of the composer Ernst Krenek analysed by Stanley Cavell in “Music Discomposed”, in *Must we mean what we say*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

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