Embodying Choreosophy in Contemporary Society: Dance Ethics and Social Practice

Lin Wang

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School of Performance and Cultural Industries

University of Leeds

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I confirm that the work submitted is my own and that appropriate credit

has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Ethical Review

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Abstract

This doctoral research project centres on "Choreosophy," exploring the ethical and epistemological dimensions of dance as a moral practice. The concept can be traced to the times of Pythagoras and of Plato and revived by Rudolf Laban in 1920 as a theory of ethics and aesthetics for new dance and dance education. The primary aim of the research has been to revisit and redefine choreosophy within the context of contemporary social practices and subsequently, to disseminate the educational value of dance and movement practices through systematic movement theories and practice-based methods. It seeks to help individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds connect through artistic creation while examining how personal artistic participation shapes their identity and experiences. Additionally, the research reflects on the ethical and aesthetic values conveyed by choreosophyin movement education, reflecting on and highlighting the significance of its practice.

The study reviews the movement research system devised by Rudolf Laban, with a focus on the social value of dance in the 20th century. Particular attention is given to Laban's contributions in promoting amateur and community dance in Germany, Switzerland, and the UK, as well as his explorations of public living spaces at Monte Verità. It also highlights Laban's ambition in establishing an independent dance language and culture and subsequently his implementation of modern educational dance in the UK. The thesis is structured around five key themes, these include:

1. the relationship between community dance and identity,
2. residents' autonomy over public spaces,
3. perception-guided dance language and research methods,
4. holistic and psychophysical education for young dancers,
5. future directions for movement psychology research.

Thorough a series of case studies undertaken in Beijing, Shenzhen, and Hong Kong, the research involves nearly 80 participants. The participants are from different backgrounds each with varied movement-based experiences and ambitions. The goal in this research is to delineate the educational, personal, and social values that emerge from both collective and individual engagement with movement, through the recognition of ourselves as embodied, sensing beings in motion.

Keywords: Choreosophy，ethics in dance，community dance，movement research

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Introduction

Choreosophy, as the philosophical foundation of this doctoral research project, is a form of dance ethics or knowledge that involves moral practice through dance. It guides our approach to beauty, the body, education, interpersonal relationships, and power. This concept originated in the time of Pythagoras and Plato, interpreted as the wisdom of dance or the wisdom of the circle. It was revived in 1920 by Rudolf Laban, who regarded it as the ethics and aesthetics theory of new dance and dance education (Maletic, 2025,p.24). My doctoral research project aims to reshape Choreosophy in the context of contemporary social practice in the 21st century. The original intention of the concept was to advocate for and disseminate the educational significance of dance and movement experiences for the public. Through systematic movement theories and practice-based methods people were enabled to benefit from dance and artistry both as forms of communication and of artistry. To explore concepts and methods appropriate for contemporary contexts and shifts in social values, the research investigates the ways individuals from different cultural backgrounds can forge discrete connections within communities through shared artistic endeavours and come to recognise how individual artistic participation shapes identity and experience. As part of this process, the study reflects on and summarizes the ethical aesthetic values conveyed by Choreosophy in movement education, emphasizing its educational significance in practice.

Over the past four years, the selection of research subjects has corresponded to five topics and directions for reshaping choreosophy in contemporary contexts. Customized case studies have been established in Beijing and Shenzhen, involving nearly 80 participants from diverse professions, regions, and ages. Throughout the interactions and collaborations with different groups, the research has consistently viewed ethics as a practice, continuously reflecting on the sustainability of ethics in interpersonal relationships and education, and exploring how contemporary philosophical/ethical aesthetics can guide dance in realizing its own social value.

In the process of revisiting and reshaping dance ethics, the research embraces and reviews the entire movement research system that emerged through Laban's ideas. This is

particularly in relation to the history related to the social value of popular dance from the early to mid-20th century, and practices within the context of contemporary society. This includes:

1. **Laban's efforts to promote amateur and community dance in Germany, Switzerland, and the UK.** Laban was recognized by the Imperial League of Community Dance in Germany as a pioneer of modern community dance forms (Maletic, 40). In the 1910s to 1920s, he organized numerous performances with local community performers in Munich and Vienna, many of whom were blacksmiths, tailors, and bakers, with Laban choreographing movements based on their occupational characteristics. In *A Life for Dance (1975)*, he pointed out that this process of connecting with thousands of strangers, using the body to sense the experiences of different professions and breaking down class barriers, sparked his ongoing interest in providing participants with activities that were both meaningful and alleviated tension (Laban, 1975, p.180).

2. **Laban's experiences at Monte Verità in Switzerland, exploring public living spaces and lifestyles with contemporary philosophers and psychologists.** Monte Verità was a sanatorium in the early 20th century where a group of thinkers, artists, and philosophers explored new ways of living. Laban and his friends living at Monte Verità hoped to find a third way that was neither capitalism nor socialism through the exploration of new lifestyles (Green, 1986). This stemmed from their reflections on industrialization and urban life, focusing on simple, healthy diets and living; opposing the pollution of industrialization and urban overcrowding; and longing for new forms of personal freedom and collectivism. Monte Verità served not only as a living experiment but also provided an ideal model for ecological movements, vegetarianism, and the autonomy of social public spaces.

3. **In establishing an independent dance language and culture, Laban made significant efforts in researching movement language systems (terminology and symbols).** In 1920, he pointed out that "the world of dance lacks its own

language,(Laban,1920, p.8)" highlighting the lack of knowledge about movement experiences at that time. Over the next forty years, he and his collaborators developed a system of notation and gradually created a concise and precise vocabulary primarily based on English after moving to the UK. These symbols and terms can be viewed as a refinement of movement principles and an abstraction of experiences. They are still widely used in the fields of dance and movement today.

4. **During his time in the UK, he implemented modern educational dance concepts and practices for children and adolescents against a specific social and historical backdrop.** In the 1930s, due to the Nazi government's opposition to his advocacy of free expression in dance, Laban was forced to flee Germany and moved to the UK in 1938. This was a period marked by significant turmoil and transformation in British society on the eve of World War II. As industrialization and urbanization progressed, there was a growing need to cultivate individuals with creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration skills, rather than relying solely on mechanical knowledge transmission in education. Laban recognized that promoting modern educational dance could help develop students' creativity, bodily awareness, and sense of social responsibility. His goal was to integrate dance into schools, enabling students to explore the relationship between self and society through bodily movements.

5. **Laban and William Carpenter engaged in an incomplete and late-stage psychological study grounded in dance and movement**-where Laban sought to achieve a unity of body and mind through movement as a source of knowledge. Laban and Carpenter thoroughly integrated the theory of movement expression with Jungian psychology, particularly the classification of the four psychological functions. Their research in movement psychology employed a unique composite approach, initially fostering an open attitude towards public interpretation. However, it is worth reflecting on how, in later developments, particularly with the emergence of various derivative systems, knowledge came to be regarded as a certain "regulation" that gradually

became "fixed" for ease of dissemination and consensus. It should be noted that this somewhat limits the potential for the continuous expansion and deepening of movement psychology and other areas of Laban's research, leading instead to a simplification of knowledge and a solidification of cognition.

In correspondence with these five historical studies of Laban, the doctoral project explores and reshapes the values of 20th-century issues and practices through a series of social practices in contemporary cultural contexts:

1. **<u>Community Arts and Life</u>**: many of Laban's community practices could be seen as celebrations and revelries of collectivism (Laban, 1975, pp. 140-154). Dance, as a symbol of collective action, often represented a force of unity, serving the construction of social communities. Today's community dance or inclusive dance emphasizes individual expression and diversity. It encourages participants to explore their identities and express personal emotions and experiences. This reflects society's focus on multiculturalism, identity, and social justice, aiming to include different groups and making dance a platform for expressing individual differences, social issues, and diversity. The primary drive of this doctoral project draws focus from experiences of China's migrant workers and female domestic workers whilst exploring contemporary inclusive, dance art, studying the processes involved in the creation of performative works by the domestic workers' physical theatre in Beijing and the organization of their/artistic community. Through the use of particular case studies, the research examines the ways people today participate in dance art and how experiences found through dancing can both embody and reveal aesthetic diversity.

2. **<u>Community and Public Spaces</u>**: The exploration of Monte Verità by Laban and others is a brief and precious blueprint of idealism. Their experiments pursued not only individual freedom but also emphasized the coordination and cooperation of collective living. This leads to a reconsideration of the use of public spaces in today's society, especially regarding

how to respect individual bodily autonomy within collective actions (such as square dancing and community activities). On the other hand, they stressed decentralized social structures, inspiring us to rethink whether public spaces should be controlled by centralized power or managed in a more equitable and shared manner. This research covers a period of COVID-19 pandemic when Beijing implemented mobility controls in parks, prohibiting residents from dancing there and leading them to gather and celebrate in the streets. This control has also resulted in lingering effects in the "post-pandemic era," exemplified by universities implementing entrance restrictions—prohibiting unregistered visitors. This change highlights the blurred boundaries between public and quasi-public spaces. Through the case of street square dancing in Beijing, this research explores how restrictions on the use of public spaces impact citizens' autonomy and reflects on how to exercise artistic citizenship in the post-pandemic era.

3. **<u>Perception-Guided Dance Language and Research Methods</u>**: Laban named his notation system "choreosophy," which shares its name with the notation of François Delsarte. However, the two are fundamentally different: Delsarte's notation is a two-dimensional static ground pattern based on the direction of the king, leading to an independence and separation between people and the concepts of space and time. In contrast, Laban took the human body as a reference, acknowledging the body's creation of space and the three-dimensional dynamic processes of movement. This recognition of bodily autonomy is rooted in the perspective of movement research, and his symbol system combines both concrete and abstract thinking into a cohesive meaning group, encapsulating knowledge of body, space, time, and dynamics. On the other hand, from Laban's early research in Germany, it is evident that he had not formed the concise terminology found in his 1966 publications, nor did he treat scientific knowledge as a consensus and premise in his writings, instead containing numerous movement examples and complex descriptions. The symbols and terminology system developed by Laban in the UK can be seen as his rational cultural creation of dance. In this special period where movement is strictly limited, our

contact with the outside world is confined to a two-dimensional realm, with Zoom becoming a common space for remote work, dance creation, teaching, and performance. The long-standing orders and habits of choreography, performance, and teaching in dance have faced significant challenges. Thus, an interesting occurrence is that the absence of tactile sensations in virtual space choreography prompts us to revisit the history and complexity of individual perception and its significance for life. Therefore, on one hand, this research introduces notation teaching into the classrooms of young professional dancers, continuously developing the significance of notation in contemporary dance education. On the other hand, the project relies on an online intercultural dance collaboration case from 2022 to reflect on how dance, after establishing its own language (terminology and symbol system) and forming an independent aesthetic and culture, perceives the simplification of knowledge and the weakening of perception within its own field—thus exploring the language platforms and methodologies that today's dance researchers employ in movement studies.

4. **Holistic Education and Psychophysical Education for Young Professional Dancers**: In the mid-20th century, with the popularization of the education system and improvements in social welfare, child labor essentially disappeared in the UK. This was partly due to the industrial process moving past its initial radical development phase, and partly due to shifts in social culture and ideas—British society gradually recognized the need for a more comprehensive, healthy, and free educational approach to help the next generation recover physically and mentally (Simon, 1991 & Lowe, 1997). Moreover, the mechanical and repetitive nature of industrial labor suppressed the body's natural movements, prompting people to reflect on the impact of this lifestyle on their physical and mental health (Mumford, 1934). Laban's dance education practices during this period became a cultural phenomenon opposing industrialization, attempting to help students release their physical potential through free and creative movement and to reconnect individuals with nature. This history leads me to reflect on and summarize my past professional experiences in my

doctoral research project. In my youth, I was a professional ballroom dancer, and due to the competitive nature of that field, the dance form was relatively fixed. Upon returning to this context, I became more concerned about young dancers as future members of society, particularly the career transitions and real-life challenges they inevitably face after ending their competitive careers. Equally important is that as China's higher education system incorporates ballroom dance as part of higher dance education, the social responsibilities of this dance form far exceed entertainment and competition. This necessitates a rethinking of the cultivation goals and processes within the dance genre to meet societal needs and to shape individuals' holistic personalities to realize the educational pursuit of "cultivating people." Therefore, in this case, the research project focuses on a group of young professional dancers, reflecting on and establishing methods for holistic education, self-education, and psychophysical education for young dancers that have long been overlooked, guided by the philosophy of choreosophy and its underlying movement system.

5. **<u>Future Research in Movement Psychology</u>**: Laban and William Carpenter's movement psychology research primarily drew from Jungian psychology. However, examining Jungian psychology from a contemporary perspective reveals its limitations in typology. Nevertheless, Laban's approach to studying the continuity of internal and external movement through visual methods, such as his research on the Möbius strip, remains viable today. Through graphical representations, psychological structures can be visualized, and the interactions, multi-layered complexities, and dynamic changes of psychological phenomena are expressed through symbols and images. Both Lacan and Jung utilized images as important tools for understanding the unconscious, but their approaches and purposes in using images differ significantly. Lacan embedded images within the frameworks of semiotics and linguistics, providing them with clearer theoretical structures and revealing the close relationship between images, language, and subject formation, rather than viewing them merely as abstract psychological symbols. By investigating the participation of individuals born in the 1950s and 1960s who have experienced significant

societal changes in China in square dancing, this research analyzes the social psychological characteristics of that unique historical period and the accompanying movement psychology traits. In this process, the distinctiveness of Lacanian psychoanalysis emerges, characterized by its strong critical perspective, particularly in revealing the relationship between the self and social power structures. Through this fifth case, the research project contemplates what the unfinished mission and direction of advocating for the use of movement in psychological research could be under the philosophical foundation of choreosophy, how it can interweave with contemporary contexts, and how it may influence contemporary perspectives on psychophysical education.

Research Context

In 1920, Rudolf Laban in his first book, Die Welt Des Tanzers (The World of Dancers), revived a term that had been widely circulated in ancient Greece in the time of Pythagoras-Plato, "Choreosophy/Choreosophie". It consists of two Greek words: "χορός" (choros, circle/dance) and "σοφία" (dance), meaning the wisdom (Laban 1920:78). Forty-six years later, in his last and mature work, Choreutics (1966), Laban revisited "Choreosophy" and the "Wisdom of the Circle" as the philosophical/ideological fountainhead of his entire theory of movement. Therefore, guided by this philosophical concept, he developed the important branches of his entire system (Laban 1966: viii). Since Laban mentions the term only briefly in these two publications and a handful of manuscripts and relegates it to a key programmatic position in the last work of his life, this has given rise to a race for conceptual interpretation by later authors. For example, Alessandro Pontremoli (2004), Dick MacCaw (2011), and Gabriele Brandstetter (2015) studied Choreosophy from the aesthetic, ethical, educational, and social (community) significance. It is noteworthy that Brandstetter interprets this notion proposed by Laban as a "worldview of dance" and a "monism", arguing that Choreosophy sees movement as an essential element in the great cycle of life, elán vital (2015: 306). This understanding points to Choreosophy's articulation of the connection between the idea of dance and the wider world of life.

Among the different interpretations, these can be categorised into two consensual aspects. Firstly, from the broad and ancient philosophical values and timeless experience of movement, they consider this concept as a "dance worldview"; secondly, from the educational and ethical significance, they emphasise that this philosophy, worldview, is concerned with the realisation of the social values of dance. This core idea leads us, from the one hand, to cherish and approach the contributions of our predecessors with an attitude of inheritance and improvement; from the other hand, the realisation of the social value of dance requires an ethical conception towards the aesthetics of dance and its participants.

In the first consideration, a question worth pondering is how we, who are standing on the shoulders of previous generations, should regard and use the choreographic legacy left by them. In Laban's planning and commissioning of several important segments of his system, in his correspondence with collaborators, and in his writings, it is evident that he opened the right to interpret and develop his work for all. At the end of his life, Laban summed up his lifelong endeavours by summarising his entire system and inventions as "tools and methods that can be used as a starting point" (Maletic 2019:232). During his lifetime Laban created a complex and profound theoretical system, as well as several germs of thought. Many of their offshoots, such as most of the spatial theoretical knowledge in Choreutics, the systematic application of movement expressions, and the further refinement of movement psychology, need to take root in practice. Each of these areas was targeted for application in the community work of this research project with both professional and non-professional dance groups.

The second consideration relates to the social value of dance. This requires a concern for the contemporary, for the specificities of our time. If we look back from today to the time when Choreosophy was revived by Laban 100 years ago, or even earlier, to the time of Pythagoras and Plato, we find that the contemporary view of the body has changed considerably, unlike the previous history when the body was subjected to both philosophical and religious tribulations. The moral systems of traditional societies, such as Confucianism, Christianity, Puritanism, etc., are slipping away, to be replaced by the prevalence of hedonism and consumerism. Unlike the Platonic-Augustinian tradition of repressing the body, people are now more concerned with the body, with its beauty, with denying the aging body, with rejecting death, with the important role of exercise, and with keeping the body healthy. After millennia

of traditional shackles, the body has made its debut in screen advertisements, fashion shows and other popular culture. The aura of nutrition and medical science has been constantly added to the body, and people's infinite pursuit of youth and beauty has generated many myths of pleasure. The body has become, as Jean Baudrillard put it, "the most beautiful consumer product" in this world of consumption. Today's body, liberated from its confinement, is inexorably entering the trap of consumerism, to be appreciated, gazed, and played. Just as Foucault, who, while accepting Nietzsche's use of the body as deterministic, reveals the will to power, the way in which every aspect of social practice orchestrates the body and pushes it towards new disciplines and punishments.

On the other hand, the study found that the mobility has become a feature of life in the contemporary society. The study found that mobility has become a defining feature of life in contemporary society. In the United Kingdom, long-term net migration for the year ending June 2024 was estimated at 728,000—a decrease from 906,000 in the year ending June 2023 (Office for National Statistics, 2024). This decline reflects a broader shift, with net migration from non-EU countries recorded at 845,000, while net migration from EU countries and UK citizens was negative, at -95,000 and -21,000 respectively (ONS, 2024). In Australia, the 2023–2024 financial year saw net overseas migration reach 446,000, marking a decline from 536,000 in the previous year and representing the first decrease since the country's post-pandemic border reopening (News.com.au, 2024). These figures highlight ongoing global mobility trends, shaped by shifting policies and global events. China's National Bureau of Statistics has announced that the total number of migrant workers in the country reached 299.73 million in 2024, an increase of 2.2 million from the previous year, reflecting a growth of 0.7% (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2024). This global wave of migration also highlights the fact that mobility has become the first choice most people make to change their living situation. However, dwelling is more than just occupying a spatial location; it transcends specific geographic space and is more about people's spirituality and how to settle down physically and mentally in the midst of moving.

Therefore, what we need to face today is the crisis of values brought about by the diminishing of traditional values, as well as the crisis of identity brought about by mobility. This is a key issue for the study in terms of reshaping and disseminating the contemporary

worldview of dance, "choreosophy". In order to create a targeted contribution, the study focuses partly on migrant populations in various locations and on the ways in which dance and movement practices forge a sense of belonging and identity for different groups of people.Interestingly there are ongoing debates within dance research concerning feasible ways in/through dance-based experiences where we can gain opportunities to forge shifting threads of our identity's connections. Whilst systematically outlining the positive impacts of dance in terms of identity, belonging and self-worth, Chappell et al. (2021) focus on the future direction of dance in identity construction and creativity, suggesting that dance should expand its geographic/life-course research in the future to allow for a more comprehensive epistemological critique. Bannon (2023) discusses the use of varied modes of choreographic practices to broaden and deepen our self-awareness through associations with society. My research combines fieldwork and a critical assessment of archival literature related to choreosophy to examine how specific populations engage in dance and the use of alternative movement practices in community art. During this time, I realised that communities could build a sense of belonging in unique ways when people make positive connections through a shared interest in emerging community artmaking. At the same time, movement education through this approach can be an effective way to stimulate creative thinking across age groups. In the following section, I will present my research process and selected case study through the research methodology.

Research Questions

Considering Choreosophy as a "danced worldview" or an ethics in dance with social value and its relevance to everyone's lived experience, in what ways can new explorations of the theory contribute to future applied applications in a contemporary context?

1. In what ways can movers recognize their own unique experiences and beliefs through this movement method in order to identify and engage the community they belong to?

2. What might be beneficial in the experiences gained with respect to well-being, self-discipline, identifying self and other?

Methodology

The research adopts qualitative methodologies, primarily including archival research, constant comparison, and case study methods, to explore Rudolf Laban's Choreosophy and its contemporary value in dance theory and practice. Qualitative methods, with their flexibility and capacity for in-depth analysis of complex issues, are particularly suited for this study, which delves into the development and application of choreosophy in historical and social contexts.

First, archival research serves as a cornerstone of this study, involving a systematic analysis of Laban's original manuscripts, notes, diagrams, and unpublished correspondence to reconstruct the evolution of his ideas, particularly the concept of Choreosophy. Laban's theoretical framework is vast and interdisciplinary, yet many key ideas are not fully explored in published works but remain embedded in archival documents. By examining archival collections at the University of Surrey and the University of Leeds, an aim of this research is to contextualise and interpret the relationship between Laban's Choreosophy and his theories of space harmony and movement notation.

Second, constant comparison enables the dynamic comparing of different theoretical frameworks and experiential observations, helping to distill relationships and differences among key concepts. The four-step process of constant comparison, as proposed by Glaser and Strauss, provides a robust tool for constructing theory. By juxtaposing Laban's Choreosophy with contemporary body philosophy, it reveals opportunities to consider both the contrasts and overlaps in their conceptual attributes, iteratively refining a theoretical model applicable to modern dance education and social practice.

Finally, the case study method offers an in-depth examination of specific practical contexts. In this study, dance workshops or classes serve as case studies, providing opportunities to observe the application of Laban's theories in real-life educational and community art scenarios. Through participant observation and semi-structured interviews, the research aims to validate the positive impacts of Choreosophy on group identity, and the stimulation of creative thinking. Case studies not only ground theory in practice but also enrich the research with real-world contexts, fostering a dynamic dialogue between theory and practice.

By integrating these three qualitative methodologies, the drive of this study is to investigate contemporary significances and application of Choreosophy, particularly in movement education and community dance practice.

- *Archival Research*

The methodology for this study is qualitative, utilizing a combination of archival research, content analysis, and historiography. The primary focus is on the exploration of Laban's original manuscripts, notes, diagrams, and published works housed in various archives. These documents will be analyzed to understand the development of his theoretical framework, particularly his choreosophical ideas, contemporary value of notation and space harmony. Specifically, this project examines how choreosophy relates to Laban's entire theory of movement and how it leads this theoretical system of movement. In the publications we can see a little of the educational vision that this idea conveys, and the relationship between choreosophy and spatial theory can be deduced from the discourse in Choreutics(1966). The concept of choreosophy itself, however, is less covered in current publications (either by Laban himself or by other authors) and is more often found in unpublished archives. The research journey has benefited from access to the Laban Special Collections at the University of Surrey and University of Leeds libraries. Both archives contain critical materials such as unpublished manuscripts, personal letters, and annotated diagrams that reflect Laban's thought processes across a range of projects. Archival research involves:

Cataloguing: Identifying and categorizing relevant documents.

Contextual Analysis: Placing these materials within the historical and cultural context in which they were created.

Document Analysis: A thorough review of Laban's written and visual materials, focusing on recurring themes, terminologies, and methodological innovations.

Through adopting an historiographic approach that traces the evolution of Laban's concepts and practice this study recognises the influences brought to bear on subsequent generations of dance practitioners and educators. Through examinations of the chronological development of

Laban's work the current research seeks to recognise and establish connections between his early experiments and the later theoretical contributions to movement theory.

To complement archival research, the study will incorporate interviews with contemporary Laban scholars and practitioners who use Laban's methods in their work. These interviews will provide practical insights into how Laban's theories are applied in modern dance pedagogy and choreography. Additionally, participant observation will be used in dance workshops or classes that apply Laban Movement Analysis, allowing for a firsthand understanding of its practical implications.

- *Case Study*

Through the use of case studies underpinned by choreosophic interpretation and awareness of artistic/aesthetic challenges the aim to seek ways to evaluate unique experiences for those involved has been recognised. Further, what needs to be considered through each case study is the feasible ways to engage each individual in an embodied activity of their consciousness. At the same time, it acknowledges a body with a history of becoming mature, that is, each person's kinesthetic experience is grounded in her/his own unique historical context. As this body carrying a unique historical experience communicates, collaborates and establishes relationships with other bodies of experience in its environment, how these bodies of experience discover their own experiences, attitudes and beliefs through choreographic means, and how dance allows them to embody and express their own experiences, attitudes and beliefs in the present moment.

The research project therefore searched for suitable cases in Beijing, Canberra, Shenzhen and Hong Kong in the second year. Cases from Beijing, Shenzhen were finally identified as the main subjects for analysis. After identifying the research subjects, I made film recordings of the two cases from Beijing and Shenzhen as a complementary method used in the cases-recording the process of movement education. The selected cases are:

Beijing:

1. The process of creating and performing in the female domestic worker's physical theatre.

2. Psychological history/characteristics of movement in the elderly group of square dancers.

Shenzhen:

3.Professional Ballroom Dance Community

It is designed for the vocational education for young people in the dance profession, focusing on their experience of growing up with excessive competitive events as well as movement norms. It attempts to create a movement education environment for the healthy development of mind and body through self-motivated movement, whilst fostering and preserving the creative thinking.

During this process, as a researcher, I also needed to draw out ways of conducting the case study that were in line with the ideological underpinnings of the project, which included how to observe, how to interview, and how to perceive and deal with ethical issues in movement organisation/choreography. Phenomenology and phenomenological descriptions are a constant source of knowledge and methodology that I have drawn on in my interviews and observations. It was originally adopted and advocated by the somatics methodologists. In the process I concluded that it would be beneficial if the data gathering process included an interview/questioning approach aimed at tapping into the immediate intuitive experience of movement and then applied it selectively to the interviews with the research participants. This interview method will be discussed in detail as a case study in Chapter IV of this thesis (Please Please refer to page 95).

As the research progresses, it enters into the specific field of ballroom dance in Shenzhen that implements the embodied knowledge of choreosophy, the practice of ethics, into the training approach as a recognisable feature of the methodology developed by the research project. The inclusion of the case of ballroom dance in the application is an attempt to break through the excessive competitive and stereotypical movement norms that exist in the field itself, and the conflict between such features and higher education, the physical and mental development of young people. Furthermore, the study focuses on the needs of Chinese society for professional education and social contribution of this dance genre as it enters the higher education of professional dance in China. The case study attempts to reflect on the training and education methods of ballroom dance from the perspective of movement, i.e., from the perspective of movement concepts, training methods, and dance aesthetics from Laban research.

The research project also focused on Laban's late movement psychology research in the application aspect of movement monism and applied it to the psychological analysis of movement in the Beijing square dance elderly population. The research critically reviews how Laban and Carpenter, in the 1950s, combined Laban's theories of movement expression and dynamics with Jungian psychology, new kinesiology, and traditional Chinese philosophy and ethics. At the same time, the project integrates these theories with Lacanian psychology to address the oversimplification of the complex psychology of movement and the dualistic tendencies introduced by classifications. Finally, the elderly square dancers, who have experienced the great social changes of the Cultural Revolution and the Reform and Opening Up, are taken as the research object, and their social, historical, cultural, and psychological causes and characteristics of social public space and self-identity making are investigated. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 will explore this unfinished research on movement psychology.

- *Participant Observation and Semi-structured Interview*

As a visitor to the communities, I was invited to observe movement training, rehearsals and later conducted interviews. The interviews amounted to a total of 42 hours. Participant observation in qualitative research is the main method used in the research which is based on the principle of finding an identity or role in the research object/group rather than just being an observer (Douglas 1976). For example, I was involved as a member of the creative team of domestic workers' dance theatre, mainly filming their collaborative process but also exchanging creative ideas with them. I sometimes practiced contact improvisation with the migrant workers group and participated as an observer/facilitator in discussions about their personal experiences. It was important to retain an observer role, sustaining my role as facilitator whilst recording their conversations and filming their movement collaborations. In terms of interviews, the research model benefited from the use of one-on-one, hour-long, semi-structured conversations. The method provided valuable space for continuous questioning whilst creating a flexible interaction between the researcher and the interviewee (Adams 2015). Ultimately, this emergent method provided a richer and more in-depth qualitative process for data collection during the study.

- *Ethical Considerations*

Due to my different status from that of the research participants, e.g., in the case of Beijing domestic workers, I am not an immigrant or a worker, etc., my research needs to find a way to engage with and articulate their work and lived experiences, forging routes to 'real' and valid documentation of responses. In order to forge ways to become familiar with the community I took the opportunity to spend weekends with the group, spending time with them including eating, going to the usual places, doing their usual things, and meeting their usual people. Thus, a considerable amount of information was gained through open conversations during shared meals and on road trips. In this way, the study not only benefited from 'real' conversations, but also a fuller picture of their spare-time, lived experiences as well as providing an emergent portrait of the group through the research. Therefore, the research continued to engage in open-ended dialogue throughout the process. Such a dialogue ensured that each participate had the ability to change any ideas/materials they shared, allowing them to remain the owner of their experience. By maintaining an attentive manner to each of the personal experiences, the research hoped to ensure that their experiences were shared as a true response to their contributions.

Confronting and dealing with the extreme emotions that emerged during the interviews was an ethical challenge. For example, migrant workers felt sad and tearful when talking about some of their personal experiences. I learned to appreciate when an area of conversation should be terminated a skill and ethical awareness I now recognise as vital in my own development. On the one hand, continuing to ask questions in such a situation would allow the interviewee to continue to dwell on sad memories, on the other hand, avoiding the worsening of emotions can have a positive effect on the questions that follow and on the rational thinking of the interviewees.

Chapter Introduction

After two years of fieldwork, I identified several case themes. The chapters are written to describe, reflect on, distil and summarise the choreosophy, the ethical idea of dance, embodied in the practical cases. Chapter One- *Contemporary Danced Worldviews: Retrospect and*

Development of Laban's Choreosophy, shares a historical overview of the macro-idea of the project, choreosophy, and discuss the belief that movement studies based on mind-body monism promotes the creation of holistic empathy in contemporary society and the value that can be sustainably generated by movement studies/laban studies. In subsequent chapters, I progressively remind the reader of the philosophical/ethical aspects of movement studies that might easily be overlooked. These themes also constitute the research project's holistic reflection on the possibilities of dance ethics and movement philosophy to make an embodied contribution to the well-being of contemporary society.

In the following text, I describe the reasons for selecting these cases at first sight. They are reviewed and presented in a first-perspective way, in terms of what kind of opportunity and reflection they were chosen for, and what new thinking and inspiration they bring to the study.

Chapter I Contemporary "Danced Worldviews": Retrospect and Development of Laban's Choreosophy

In the early stages of my PhD research, in an overview of the concept of choreosophy, It was about the idea of the harmony of circles. Many interpreters understood it as monism. I was puzzled as to how to reshape the concept on the basis of monism. For this reason, I began to focus on phenomenology, particularly Merleau-Ponty's perception-based conception of phenomenology. After initiating the case study, I travelled to a number of arts communities where I saw a constant forging of identity as I continued to meet and spend time with different people. This brought about a further understanding of the dichotomy for me. Our eyes, brain and mind perceive only what interests us, reducing the perceived chaos of the world to a specific object, and ourselves as the subject who observes it. We build an awareness of difference and a categorisation of classes under this kind of thinking. It is a dualistic thinking in which the centre is the main focus and the edges are peeled off in layers. This mindset leads us to treat the people, things, and events around us differently, making us become narrow-minded.

This reflection led me to write the first chapter of this study, "Contemporary Worldviews of Dance": Retrospect and Development of Laban's Philosophy of Movement. The chapter critically reviews the view of the body and movement from the Ancient Greek period to the

present day. In this "history of the body", the historical task of Laban's time, when they endeavoured to recognise dance as an independent art in the strictest sense of the word, was to make dance an independent art. What, then, is our historical task today? In this article, I reflect on the historical task of dance in the new era by looking back at the significance of the worldview of dance Choreosophy (movement philosophy) proposed by Laban 100 years ago, and discussing the continuing relevance of Laban's research and his movement philosophy to contemporary society. In order to follow this path I take into account the characteristics of the current global mobility and consumerist society. The study explores the continuing significance of Laban's research and his philosophy of movement for contemporary society.

Chapter II Transitional Identities and Flowing Habitats

In 2022, I felt acutely that the right-to-move and the space in which I could do so was severely restricted. Many residents were blocked from their homes for months, shops on the streets were forced to shut down, green health codes were required to enter all public areas in the country, and trains, high-speed trains, and buses between cities were cancelled extensively and frequently. My visit-fieldwork programme in China was severely disrupted and out of reach. By chance, I met a female domestic worker who had come from Shanxi to work in Beijing. Our small talk started with mind-body exercises, which surprised me at the time. This conversation also made me aware of the migrant workers in China and what they were experiencing at a time when their mobility is severely restricted.

Chinese migrant workers are an important and specific group in China's urbanisation process, providing the cities with important factors of production and at the same time becoming "marginalized" by the values set by the social and cultural systems. Their marginalisation has been exacerbated by the state of emergency in China over the past three years. For migrants who need to work regularly to earn a reasonable wage, restrictions on mobility make it impossible for them to sustain their well-being. However, the domestic worker told me that there are still different migrant art communities in Beijing that continue to operate. I followed all of their activities and researched the production and construction of migrant identities by these art communities. This chapter is a distillation of numerous follow-up interviews with community organisers, domestic workers, worker poets and choreographers.

In reviewing this case, the thesis narrative of forging community and identity through movement and art underscores how we might build cultural identity, well-being, and empathy for the migrant population.

Chapter III Decentred Approach to Choreography and Movement

It was also in working with the community and the workers that I continued to reflect on the way in which I had previously viewed and engaged with dance. I began to realise that in my previous experiences I had had few opportunities to dance with non-dancers and had become accustomed to distinguishing between two types of dance and dancers centred on occupation: dancers and non-dancers; professionals and non-professionals. In the past two years, I have been dancing and improvising with strangers and unfamiliar bodies in Beijing's domestic worker community and contact improvisation community. It is also in working physically with a diverse group of strangers that the narrowness of centrism and dichotomy has been brought to light. It was replaced by a mindset that physically builds relationships of opportunity in diversity. This mode of thinking now influences the way I see dance. In such dance collaborations, I have become more attentive to the wealth of information that comes from bodily perception, from touch, from listening under the skin to the force of each person I encounter, the truth and uniqueness of that one force.

At the same time I think about the ways in which people are dancing or participating in the arts today, 100 years later, and what their bodily aesthetics look like and how they are presented in dance. The construction of Choreosophy was initially directed towards an ethical conception of aesthetics. When I consider dance through this ambition, I find dance transcends the significance of an alien aesthetic of form or a vehicle of body language. It carries a description of material historical memory and bodily sensations; the body in this sense being the body that reveals its subjective identity. In this sense, the participants and the artist work together in a way that 'contributes to the experience' and 'collects the experience'; the artist in the organisational structure of the artistic creation withdraws from the 'centre of power' and the way of working changes from directive to 'guiding'. In such a collaborative model, all participants weave a network of accountability and share their responsibility equally within it.

Chapter IV Settling Down or Nomadism? Observations on Post-Pandemic Community Art in Hong Kong

When Hong Kong and mainland China had just lifted their lockdown measures, I made a brief visit to Hong Kong. This was an alternative plan. In the first year of my PhD, my original plan was to visit the Taipei National University of the Arts in Taiwan, after receiving a letter of invitation. Unfortunately, despite the pandemic being over, there were still travel restrictions between the two sides of the strait, which have prevented me from traveling to Taiwan. As a result, in 2022, I shift my plan to Hong Kong, where I conducted research on the ecology of dance career development in other parts of the Asia-Pacific region. This shift in location also gave me the opportunity to explore public's participations in dance arts, especially the dance services or resources provided by the community.

During this time, I witnessed a diverse Hong Kong community culture with immense potential and social value. During such a turbulent time, community workers and organizations provided significant spiritual support to Hong Kong society, helping participants reconnect with their roots and deepening their historical identity and sense of belonging. This chapter is based on my observations and reflections during my participation in community arts in Hong Kong with the aim to present the humanistic side of Hong Kong through a storytelling approach.

Chapter V From Square Dancing to Modern Public Spaces and Public Life in Beijing

When people discuss community art or community life, public space becomes a central topic, as the interaction between community life and art largely relies on the physical and social functions of public space. During the strictest lockdowns in China, especially in Beijing, public spaces such as parks, cafes, schools, restaurants, and shopping malls were almost entirely shut down, and there were very few people in the streets. In China, parks have always had a special function, serving as gathering places for square dance enthusiasts. However, during the pandemic, they were not allowed to enter parks to dance. Interestingly, during this time, I observed a group of people gathering on the streets beside a park during dinner hours. People spontaneously brought speakers, water, and food from their homes. Some didn't participate in dancing but instead "picnicked" on the sidelines with friends.

This phenomenon prompted me to reflect on the use of public space and basic civil rights in a state of emergency. At the same time, even after the pandemic ended, some social habits formed during the lockdown persisted. Many universities, for example, have even permanently closed to the public. This raises questions about the traditional definition of public space within universities, leading to reflections on how the subtle shifts in its social function are impacting broader society.

Chapter VI The Spiral of Phenomenological Enquiry：A Return to Perception and Kinaesthesia in Cyberspace

During the first year of my doctoral research, I reviewed body-centred ideas of phenomenology, a discipline that can perhaps be understood as intermediate between philosophy and science, and which has already inspired and underpinned much of the study of dance and movement with its recognition of bodily perception. Later, in October 2023, while participating in a contact improvisation dance jam, I read again the preface to the English version of the I Ching by the psychologist Carl Jung. In this preface, Jung points out the epistemological differences between East and West. He argues that the co-temporality of the I Ching, embodied in the moment, encompasses many visible and invisible elements, which go far beyond the 'statistical truth or fact' of causation. Co-temporality in the moment, in other words, every moment of chance is a reorganisation of factors and relations, an instantaneous occurrence, rather than the result of a replication or duplication of a homogeneous relational mechanism. This is precisely the point I noticed when reviewing the concept of harmony in Chinese philosophy: harmony is not a religious view of reincarnation, or a mechanical repetition of cycles. Because there is no fixed spatio-temporal starting point or end point and treating that end point as the ultimate volition of the ideal world. That is to say, like the spectrum of colours, the line of harmony possesses an infinite number of different dots, each of which is of equal importance.

> I continue to wonder how we can embody this harmonious thinking
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> that honours microcosm and flux in our movement life?
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> How do we listen to the complex dynamics of the microcosm?
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> How do we, as dancers, examine and recognise the complexity of our
>
> tiny perceptions through a methodology?

As researchers, How do we use "observing" and "listening"?

I therefore bring the idea of phenomenological description to my interview experiments with groups of dancers and non-dancers. This interview was conducted with the aim of uncovering their own unique movement experiences. In the interviews, the movers described their immediate intuitive experience of the process of physical co-operation. The challenge here is that the simplifying effect of naming and the inertia/habit of movement make it difficult to perceive and reflect on immediate experience. However, during the course of the study it was found that by continuously pausing and questioning the describer's description as an observer, the describer had the potential to enter a pre-reflective state. Pre-reflection is the first step in examining changes in corporeal states and breaking through stereotypes, and it enables the dancer to inspire and reframe creative thinking.

Chapter VII The Significance of Dance Notation in Dance Education

During my teaching of Laban's concepts to teenagers, I was pleasantly surprised by their significant interest in the movement notation. This was something I hadn't anticipated at the beginning. Reading and writing a set of complex symbols does require patience. However, they seemed to find joy and a sense of accomplishment in this learning process. This prompted me to reflect on my teaching methods and their learning experiences, as well as to further consider the enduring value of movement notation in today's dance education.

The symbols, provide us with a linguistic platform in education, where we can share a common understanding and knowledge among members. Communication based on this foundation is effective and enjoyable. Therefore, I will continue from the previous chapter to delve deeper into the understanding of movement language and summarize the insights I gained from the Shenzhen case regarding movement education.

Chapter VIII Structure of the Youth Ballroom Dance Movement Education Curriculum

In 2023, I explored the use bodily awareness in workshops with ballroom dance students at the Shenzhen Art School (secondary school). The participants were eight teenagers aged 15. They are undergoing a rigorous 6-year professional education in Ballroom Dance and are participating in competitive competitions at home and abroad in their spare time. The month-

long workshop with them was an experimental journey, prior to which they had no knowledge of mind-body studies or Laban analysis. Their training method has always followed the technical learning of ballroom dancing, supplemented by ballet fundamentals. Their teacher has been concerned to broaden the minds of their students so that they might further enhance their learning and awareness of movement processes.

In this research I am interested in making and testing the methods used as a dancer and researcher. In the phenomenological description case, I summarise how the researcher listens and observes. Similarly, I apply the monism/movement practices supported and reviewed by the research to the areas with which I am familiar. Bringing them into the ballroom dance and ballroom dance youth professional community is an experiment in which I am both a participant and an observer. On the one hand, I realise that ballroom dance has undergone a major shift in its identity since its entry into China, that is, it has moved from its initial recreational and competitive functions to the realm of professional higher education. Moreover, as the scale of ballroom dance professional higher education has gradually expanded in China, there are now 101 universities in China that offer undergraduate degrees in ballroom dance. As a result, it has inevitably taken on the dual responsibility of education and social contribution. However, from its own organisational, training, historical and cultural aspects, it carries excessive competitive and entertainment attributes, making dance and education often in conflict with each other. I think it is wise and feasible to look for solutions from within this dance.

How can dance solve its own problems in order to face the physical and mental education of young people that it undertakes, as well as to cultivate the future young generation with comprehensive culture?

I place hope in a systematic approach to movement education and training that respects the wholeness of mind and body. Therefore, combining my research on Laban—which I have been focusing on during my MFA in Dance Pedagogy, specifically exploring how Laban Movement Analysis can be applied to the study and interpretation of Ballroom dance techniques—and the various movement forms and concepts related to appreciating spontaneous bodily expression that I have been engaging with from 2022 to 2024, I hope to

infuse an introspective, perceptive concept of self-education into the early stages of professional education for Ballroom dance.

Chapter IX Research on Movement Psychology by Laban and Carpenter

Mental health is an important concern for the well-being of society. I became aware of this in my frequent interactions with migrant, elderly, and teenage dancers. At the same time, the Beijing Domestic Workers, a group of older square dancers who have experienced the social upheavals of both the Cultural Revolution and the Reform and Opening Up, have shown me the potential natural ability of dance and movement to promote mental health. Therefore, I reviewed movement psychology research in an attempt to find its connection to contemporary society.

Laban conducted a movement psychology study with William Carpenter a few years before his death. In this chapter, I mainly go back to the historical sources to try to approach its original appearance and initial research intention. This was a very late study by Laban, and it points to Laban's profound exploration of motivation and expression theory. Carpenter helped Laban develop many movement patterns based on Jungian psychology and Laban's theory of expression that were categorised into different kinds of effort expected to be used in psychological clinical treatment. However, Carpenter's unexpected death and Laban's inability to work on his own brought this research to a standstill. Carpenter and Laban had, in fact, already conducted extensive clinical experiments in collaboration with Jungian psychologists. Later, Yat Malmgren inherited the research and shifted its purpose, applying it successfully to actor training for the theatre.

Chapter X Lacan and Laban's Visual Approach: The Beginning of One Type of Movement Psychology Research

As I reflect on this study, I can sense that it relies on the application of Jungian psychological classification models, simplifying movement into a synthesis of several elements and categorizing them into countable types of behavior. This classification also carries a strong functional orientation, making it easy to distinguish between good and bad types and to repeat certain factors to achieve personality success. To some extent, it obscures the complexity and

subtleties of psychological activity, and as a result, psychology and personality are labeled or colored in a particular way.

However, contemporary psychological research increasingly emphasizes the impact of diverse factors such as culture, gender, race, and socioeconomic background on psychological phenomena. Researchers strive to avoid cultural biases and aim to understand and interpret psychological phenomena on a global scale. Lacan's theory highlights the complexity of human psychology, exploring deep psychological phenomena such as the unconscious, language, and desire. This emphasis on the complexity of human psychology aligns with the contemporary psychological values that favor a multidimensional understanding. Lacan places great importance on the influence of language and culture on individual psychology, stressing the role of social structures and cultural symbols in the formation of the self. This perspective aligns with contemporary psychology's emphasis on diversity and cultural context.

The combination of Lacan and Laban's theories is not only theoretically sound but also provides deeper insights and applications in psychology, movement analysis, dance education, and movement therapy. Laban's system of movement classification and analysis offers tools for observing and analyzing behavior, while Lacan's psychoanalysis provides a way to explore the cultural, symbolic, and unconscious dynamics behind behaviors. In a contemporary context that emphasizes diversity and complexity, this integration can offer researchers and practitioners a more comprehensive perspective, helping them better understand and apply the interaction between movement and psychology.

Thus, combining Lacan's psychological theory with Laban's movement psychology theory is based on the respective strengths and limitations of these two fields in addressing the complexity of human psychology and behavior. Firstly, Laban's movement psychology provides a concrete, observable, and analyzable framework that helps us understand an individual's psychological state by starting from their external movement expression. Lacan's theory complements this framework by offering an explanation of how the unconscious and language profoundly influence an individual's choice and expression of movement. For instance, in movement analysis, if researchers rely solely on Laban's classification system, they might struggle to explain why people from different cultural backgrounds or social structures exhibit radically different movement preferences. Lacan's theory, however, can elucidate how

underlying cultural and symbolic systems influence individual psychology, accounting for these differences.

Chapter XI The Movement Psychology of the Reform and Opening-up Generation: Social Psychological Characteristics of Modern China from Square Dancing

My investigation of the arts community during the epidemic also led me to be drawn to a group of square dancing seniors who were dancing in the street. They were not allowed to dance in the parks, so they spontaneously took to the streets where they met every day after dinner to dance. Through further investigation, I was able to discover that the young people who were passionate about ballroom and disco dancing in the 1980s were in the same age group as the seniors who square dance in the parks and streets today. The dance frenzy in the public space of the community also prompted me to reflect on what contributes to this phenomenon of collective revelry, to analyse the deeper social and psychomotor dimensions of the connections behind the widespread popularity of this form of entertainment among this generation, and how to understand the issue of self-artistic education of Chinese citizens in the context of this phenomenon. Through researching square dancing, I review Laban and Carpenter's unfinished research on movement psychology, compare Laban with Lacanian psychoanalysis, and see their visual approach as one of the starting points for a new way of studying movement psychology.

In order to provide the reader with more adequate background information relevant to this research project:

Appendix 1 reviews the history and contemporary context of the concept of choreosophy.

Appendix 2 offers an overview of the philosophy of the body/ethical history from Plato-Descartes to Nietzsche, from Spinoza-Deleuze to Agamben-Foucault, serving as a comprehensive overview of the perspectives on the body from ancient Greece to the present day.

Appendix 3 extends the case of the body theatre of Beijing domestic workers, examining the theatre of Chinese migrant workers with a focus on thematic concerns in workers' theatre/dance theatre.

Literature Review

- **Ethical Challenges in Contemporary Community Performance Art**

Contemporary community performance art holds significant potential for driving social change, but it also presents ethical challenges regarding how to balance artistic freedom with social responsibility. Bishop (2012) argues that many community art projects aim for social justice, using art to raise public awareness and promote social change. However, these socially engaged and/or community arts-based projects often face the challenge of balancing artistic expression with social responsibility. Garoian (1999) emphasizes that artists must maintain a high degree of ethical sensitivity when addressing these issues to ensure that their work does not negatively impact or mislead the audience or participants.

In community performance art, the rights and respect of participants are critical ethical concerns. Community-based art often involves non-professional performers, who may come from vulnerable or marginalized communities. Their participation raises ethical questions about consent, representation, and potential exploitation. Kuppers (2007) argues that artists and facilitators must be particularly mindful of power dynamics when engaging with community members. Additionally, participant privacy is a significant ethical consideration. In performance art, especially when dealing with personal stories or experiences, protecting participants' privacy and avoiding secondary harm becomes a major ethical challenge (Bishop, 2012). Artists and organizers need to carefully assess participants' rights during the creative process and implement measures to ensure their dignity and privacy are fully protected. Bresler (2006) notes that personal stories often involve intense emotions and privacy, and choreographers must respect this privacy in their designs and performances to avoid further psychological harm to participants. This can be achieved by anonymizing, adapting story elements, or using metaphorical expressions, which ensures that participants' privacy is not excessively exposed, thus mitigating the risk of secondary harm from trauma re-enactment.

Moreover, the risk of secondary harm extends beyond privacy breaches to the emotional and psychological impacts on participants during the performance process. Beausoleil (2015) suggests that when performances involve deep personal trauma, participants might re-experience traumatic memories during the performance, increasing their psychological burden.

To reduce this risk, choreographers and researchers need to create supportive environments and provide necessary psychological counseling and support. Additionally, the principle of voluntary participation is crucial, and participants should have the right to decide when to withdraw or adjust their level of involvement (Heddon & Milling, 2006).

In the ethical framework of artistic creation and research, informed consent is a fundamental principle for safeguarding participants' rights. Bayer & Beausoleil (2016) emphasize that participants must fully understand the content, purpose, and potential psychological impacts of the performance before deciding to participate. Researchers and artists need to engage in detailed communication with participants prior to the performance to ensure they can make an informed choice. Continuous informed consent and communication are crucial, as participants' emotional states and psychological needs may change during the performance. Ensuring that participants can make requests for adjustments or withdrawal at any time is an effective way to avoid secondary harm (Jeyasingham, 2021).

Additionally, the presentation of the performance has significant implications for participants' psychological well-being. Heddon & Howells (2011) point out that when personal stories are presented through dance performances in public spaces, managing audience feedback and reactions is a complex ethical issue. Misunderstandings or negative feedback from the audience could exacerbate participants' psychological stress and negatively affect their self-identity. Therefore, choreographers should carefully consider the audience composition and context of the performance and provide support and strategies for participants to cope with potential negative emotions.

The ethical responsibilities of the audience are also noteworthy. Benedict (2019) suggests that as audience members, individuals should not only respect the privacy and emotions of performers but also be aware of the potential impact of their feedback and reactions on participants. Thus, audience members should possess cultural sensitivity and ethical awareness to minimize potential harm to participants. This ethical responsibility can be fostered through audience education and guidance from cultural institutions, contributing to a safer and more respectful artistic interaction environment.

- **Power Dynamics in Choreography**

Power dynamics are a crucial topic in the ethics of choreography. Lepecki (2006) explores the power dynamics between choreographers and dancers, suggesting that dancers often find themselves in a passive role while choreographers hold absolute control. This imbalance of power can restrict dancers' creative freedom and may even lead to the exploitation of their bodies.

The manifestation of power in choreography is closely related to the role of the choreographer. Choreographers are generally seen as the dominant figures in the creative process, wielding decision-making authority over the dancers' movements and the final presentation of the work (Hewitt, 2005). This power often manifests in the control choreographers have over the dancers' bodies and their interpretation of the work. For instance, Butler (2010) notes that choreographers shape the image of dancers on stage through movement design and performance arrangement, reflecting the choreographer's artistic intentions while potentially overlooking the dancers' individual expressive needs.

However, power is not solely exercised in a one-way control from the choreographer to the dancer. Power can also be expressed through the interactive relationships within the collaborative process (Risner, 2002). The power dynamics between choreographers and dancers can be dynamic, with dancers influencing the direction of choreography through their own movement expression and feedback. The balance of this interactive relationship directly affects the ethical nature of dance creation.

Power dynamics in choreography are mainly reflected in three areas: the distribution of power in the creative process, control and freedom of the body, and the ownership of artistic interpretation.

Distribution of Power in the Creative Process Choreographers are typically viewed as central figures in the creative process. However, power distribution can vary in different choreographic styles and creative models. For example, in collective creation processes, the power relationship between choreographers and dancers is often more egalitarian (Morris, 2003). Nevertheless, even within such egalitarian frameworks, choreographers still retain some level of authority, particularly in making final decisions about the presentation of the work.

Control and Freedom of the Body Dancers' bodies often become tools for artistic expression in choreography, with choreographers controlling dancers' movements to realize their artistic vision. This control can sometimes lead to an unequal distribution of power, especially when dancers are required to perform movements that do not align with their physical condition or desires (Foster, 1997). Simultaneously, dancers also express their subjectivity and artistic intentions through their bodily control, which affects their freedom within the creative process. The power dynamics in choreography also involve managing the dual role of the body as both a tool for creative expression and a carrier of the dancer's personal identity and bodily experience. Some research indicates that choreographers may impose excessive demands on dancers' bodies in pursuit of specific aesthetic effects, potentially causing physical harm (Lepecki, 2006). This control of the body not only involves physiological aspects but also norms related to body image and expression, which may negatively impact dancers' self-identity.

To address these issues, some choreographers have adopted "body-centred" choreographic methods, emphasizing respect for dancers' bodily experiences and avoiding unreasonable control (Foster, 2011). This approach advocates for the dancer's bodily experience as a core resource in the creative process, with choreographers exploring movement possibilities collaboratively rather than imposing specific bodily forms or expressions. This dancer-centred approach helps reduce power imbalances and fosters a healthier creative environment (Daly, 2002).

Ownership of Artistic Interpretation Choreographers are typically considered the primary creators of a work, holding the interpretive authority. However, dancers, as the actual performers, also significantly influence the final presentation of the work. With increasing attention to choreographic ethics, more choreographers and scholars are exploring how to reconstruct power dynamics in the creative process. Some practices have experimented with decentralized creative models, encouraging dancers to play a more active role in choreography (Foster, 2011). For example, in improvisational and collective choreography, choreographers are no longer the sole decision-makers, and dancers' movement proposals and improvisational contributions become central to the creation process. This creative model disrupts traditional power structures, making the choreographic process more open and democratic (Butterworth,

2004). Additionally, choreographic education is focusing on how to cultivate sensitivity to power dynamics among dancers and choreographers. By analyzing power dynamics in choreography, dance educators can help students understand their roles and responsibilities in the creative process, thereby fostering healthier and more equitable creative environments in their future careers (Risner, 2009).

- **Physical and Mental Health of Adolescent Professional Dancers**

Adolescent professionals, such as dancers and athletes, face dual challenges of physical and psychological stress due to their unique career choices. Compared to their peers, these adolescents must balance physical skill development with psychological adaptation while managing the dual pressures of academics and professional training. This paper reviews existing literature to explore the physical and mental health issues faced by adolescent professionals, with a focus on physical development, psychological well-being, educational support, and long-term career sustainability.

The physical health of adolescent professional dancers and athletes is foundational to their career development. However, due to intense training, their physical growth may be impacted. Research indicates that adolescent professionals are more susceptible to overtraining syndrome and sports injuries (Emery, 2003). Williams (2011) further notes that high-intensity training can lead to chronic injuries to bones, joints, and muscles, as adolescents' bodies are still developing. Nutritional deficiencies are also a significant concern, especially in professions requiring strict weight control, such as ballet dancers and gymnasts. Heffernan (2014) shows that these groups often experience eating disorders, with excessive weight control leading to nutritional deficiencies, endocrine imbalances, and osteoporosis.

Balancing academics and professional training remains a persistent challenge for adolescent professionals. Many adolescent dancers and athletes often sacrifice academic development while pursuing their career goals (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004). However, academic and educational backgrounds are crucial for career transition, particularly when moving to other fields after their professional careers end. Studies show that support from schools and training institutions is vital for adolescent professionals. Gledhill & Harwood (2015) found that those with comprehensive educational support are more likely to balance academics and career and adapt better to societal transitions later in life. Therefore, educational

systems need to offer more flexible curricula to support the multiple needs of adolescent professionals.

Recent research has increasingly focused on the physical and mental health of adolescent dancers. This group, in a critical period of physical development and skill training, often faces combined psychological and physiological pressures due to intense training (Krasnow & Chatfield, 2009). To alleviate these pressures and improve overall health, more studies are exploring the potential benefits of "alternative movement practices" (Fortin & Long, 2002). These practices include yoga, Tai Chi, the Feldenkrais Method, and the Alexander Technique, which focus on body awareness, breath control, and relaxation techniques to promote holistic health rather than solely technical training.

Physical Health High-intensity dance training often carries the risk of physical injuries. Research indicates that alternative movement practices can effectively reduce this risk. For example, Schmidt et al. (2014) found that adolescents who regularly practiced yoga not only improved their flexibility but also reduced muscle tension, thereby decreasing injury risk. Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) improves movement efficiency by analyzing dancers' movement patterns, helping to reduce excessive force or unnecessary body tension, thus lowering injury rates (Fitt, 1996). Similarly, the Feldenkrais Method has been shown to positively impact movement efficiency and posture control, helping to reduce excessive force during dance (Batson, 2010).

Mental Health Adolescent dancers often face psychological stress from high self-performance expectations and external competitive pressures. Alternative movement practices, focusing on inner sensations and self-regulation, can significantly alleviate this mental stress. For instance, dancers practicing the Alexander Technique report that body relaxation helps reduce pre-performance anxiety and enhance confidence (Koch, 2015). Additionally, slow-moving practices like Tai Chi can help dancers develop patience and improve attention, thereby reducing anxiety (Chan et al., 2004).

Overall Mind-Body Coordination Alternative movement practices emphasize overall mind-body coordination, which is crucial for the long-term career development of adolescent dancers. These practices help dancers develop a more comprehensive bodily awareness, enhancing their control and perception of their bodies (Eddy, 2009). This not only improves

performance levels but also helps them better handle physical and psychological challenges throughout their careers.

Chapter I

Contemporary "Danced Worldviews": Retrospect and Development of Laban's Choreosophy

This chapter critically reviews the conceptions of the body and movement from Ancient Greece to the present day. It argues that within this long "history of the body," Laban's system of notation and terminology, his vision of modern educational dance, as well as his spatial theories and movement practices, mark a significant turning point. The establishment of these foundational theoretical frameworks contributed to the recognition of dance as an independent art form in the strictest sense. By revisiting the historical significance of Laban's proposed worldview of dance—Choreosophy (the philosophy of movement)—a century ago, the chapter reflects on the contemporary historical mission of dance in light of global mobility and consumerist society. It further explores how Laban studies and his movement philosophy might be inherited and developed within present-day socio-political and cultural frameworks.

"Choreosophy" A Century Ago

In 1920 Rudolf Laban, in his first book in, Die Welt Des Tanzers (1920), reintroduced the term "Choreosophy/Choreosophie", which had been widely circulated in ancient Greece during the time of Pythagoras and Plato. It consists of two Greek words: "χορός" (choros, circle/dance) and "σοφία" (sophia, wisdom/knowledge), which means the wisdom of circles, or the wisdom of the dance (1920,p.78). Forty-six years later, in his last work, and the culmination of his work, *Choreutics* (1966), Laban revisited "Choreosophy" and the "Wisdom of Circles" as the philosophical/ideological genesis of his entire theory of movement, which generated all of the important strands of his entire system: Choreology，the study of movement grammar or syntax can be seen as a scientific approach to the study of movement; Choreography focuses on the design and writing of movement (choreography); Choreutics is also known as space harmony,

which Laban explains "…can be understood as the practical study of (more or less) various forms of harmonious movement"(1966, viii).

Laban explains the term as "the movement of circles in nature and in life. (1966, vii)" And the book refers to philosophical views in different cultures, exemplifying the attitudes Choreosophy shares with them: the cosmic evolution of Pythagoras in Plato's *Timaeus*; the beliefs of the followers of Sufism; Nietzsche's view of the dancer as a flawless being in Zarathustra; and Confucius's preference for dance as the means of ritual education (1920, pp.13-14).

These few examples convey Laban's two basic attitudes towards the term. First, that Choreosophy is an exploration into the universal laws of motion; second, this law of motion seeks harmony, perfection, and the adoption of the dance or the body as the means of arriving at its purpose. The main idea of *Timaeus* is the geometrical rationale as the vehicle of the source of all things, and through the rationale the structure of all 'things' is explained as the essence of the workings of the world (Plato, 17a-92c). The Sufi followers of "spinning" is a dynamic meditation of the body, through which one meditates and achieves a state of "transcendence", thus escaping from the barrier of reality that separates one from God. In Zarathustra (1885), Nietzsche uses the philosophy of the Übermensch and the will to power to break down and expose the "manipulated" order of God, to express his love for the human being, and to recreate and revive an earthly power to affirm the value of life. Dance thus became, contrary to its traditional philosophical image, the perfect embodiment of the gods of sun and wine, and the representative force that Nietzsche appealed to (Nietzsche, 1883). Confucius' ritual education focuses on the interdependence of "benevolence and ritual", in which human beings must have the ability and willingness to practise ethics, but the practice of ethics is to be concretely shaped in the context of cultural traditions and social contexts. This led to the Confucian view of the body, which was later represented by Mencius' theory of "Jian Xing"and Xunzi's Mei Shen(Yang, 2019: 16-23). Both of them are discussing the "cultivation of the body", which is to embellish the body with virtues, and the long-term cultivation of the body will naturally embody the subject's moral consciousness. It is evident that the philosophical outlook of these

different cultures generates an ethical view of aesthetics through the focus on bodily practices, especially in Nietzsche and Confucianism where the holistic conception of the body conveys a sense of "love" and "goodness".

However, in parts of the Platonic, *Timaeus*, and Sufi traditions, the body is actually seen as an object of "being disciplined". Starting from Plato's dualism to Augustine's theological thought, Descartes' body mechanism, the body is basically in the position of being suppressed by the reason-consciousness-soul and suffers from both philosophical and religious ordeals. Dance has also been blamed or ignored for its affinity with the body. When Hegel categorised the various artistic disciplines according to rank in his Aesthetics, dance had no place among them(Hegel 1975: pp. 888-893). What we can see is that it was not until 1982 that philosopher Francis Sparshott, in a review of the history of philosophical research, famously questioned "Why do philosophers ignore the aesthetics of dance?" to explore the continuing influence of traditional notions of the body in contemporary times. He finds that common views of aesthetics are seldom exemplified by dance, and that philosophers who study aesthetics often deplore the tendency to neglect it in their work, but give no reason for its absence(Sparshott 1982: 5). Sparsholt ultimately gives two reasons for this, which are summarised here as follows: firstly, ideas that can be applied to other arts cannot be applied to dance, and therefore philosophers are unable to situate dance within a general theory of the arts; and secondly, philosophy has never regarded dance as a culturally-centred art (1982: 5-30).

An example of the inability to generalise dance by placing it within a general theory of art is Susanne K. Langer's account of dance. In *Feeling and Form*(1953), Langer's main interest is in deriving a general theory that applies to all the arts. She argues that all the arts are essentially one, that the symbolic function of each artistic expression is the same, and that their logic is "non deductive"(1953: 103). However, Susan Kozel, in her doctoral thesis *As Vision Becomes Gesture*(1994), challenges this, arguing that Langer's research does not support such a unified, nondeductive theory of art, and that "it is dance that is the largest effect of homogenisation in her theory of symbolic expression resistance(1994:79)". According to Kozel, this is the result of Langer's overemphasis on the conceptualisation process of art, thus neglecting the artist's own experience and perspective. At the same time, this viewpoint makes Langer's theory suspected of dualism. Langer suggests that there is no physical polarity in

dance and considers it to be a 'virtual force':"The bodily movement, of course, is real enough; but what makes it emotive gesture ... is illusory" (Langer, 1953, p.178). Kozel, on the contrary, argues that "she separates brute physical movement from thought as well as feeling, and once again the presence of dualistic reasoning in her thought is evident" (Kozel, 1994, pp. 80-81).

Focusing on the second original reason given by Sparshott, that philosophy has never seen dance as a culture-centred art, we find that both in the Ancient Greek period, as well as in the Medieval and pre-Nietzschean period, the body and dance belonged to the incarnation of desire in both philosophical and theological contexts. Although Plato considered the practice of song and dance (chorus) to be a sign of whether or not a person had received a good education (Plato, 654-b), Dance, expressed through the use of the body and associated with the ecstasy of the god of wine, tends to cause a loss of self-control and judgement, and therefore needs to be augmented with moral education to empower one to discern good and good-oriented art(65b-67d). Plato emphasised the need to avoid immersion in the senses of the body and the separation of the soul from the body in order to approach pure knowledge. In the Medieval period, Plato's 'God' was only a 'rational model' that created all things in the universe, but the 'elements' of the things were inherent in nature.

However, during the Augustan period, Plato's 'rational world' was transformed into the 'city of God', and the 'doctrine of creation' was developed, proclaiming that God created everything. Asceticism and asceticism prevailed, and dancing was a condemned behaviour during this long history. In Hegel's time, dancing with its contemporaries was a spectacle of magnificent virtuosity represented by Salvatore Vigano, but, as Sparshott says, it was only a spectacle, and in Hegel spectacle is not art (Sparshott 1982: 7).

It is worth noting that still in 1920, in Laban's first book, The World of Dancers, he was already concerned with the neglect of dance and attempted to establish "dance as art", or "the culture of dance", starting with symbols and language. He made two important reminders: first, the world of dancers lacks its own language; second, dance should be liberated from its subordinate status to music and restored to its beauty as an independent art (1920: 7). Arguably, these two reminders complement each other, with the former being a necessary condition for the realisation of the latter. The lack of language behind represents the lack of exploration of the laws of dance or the results of the exploration of the laws, and thus the lack of their own

basic theories, without the solid support of the basic theories, a high-rise building belonging to the dance can not rise out of thin air. The development of the basic theories of Western music began with Pythagoras' mathematical study of the laws of harmony, and has been gradually refined over a long period of time into what it is today. Dance is confronted with the complexity of the "universe" of the body, so it is no easy task to build its own language system.

Surprisingly, eight years later, Laban's system of movement symbols, named after Kinetography, was launched (cf. Maletic, p. 28). Behind the symbols is Laban's borrowing of paradigms and concepts from history and different cultures, and by means of the symbols, he visualised a whole system of his theories. With the emergence of the 27 spatial symbols and the five spatial "rational models" behind them, the body and its movements moved to new heights by linking the basic laws of human movement to the broader laws of the universe. After 1938, when Laban's life and work were centred in England, his predominantly English teaching and writing made it necessary for him to refine and invent complex ideas and language into short English terms, which in turn gave rise to his world-impacting vocabulary of terms. Choreutics, published in 1966 (completed in manuscript in 1939) can be seen as a summary of most terms under Laban's study. Many of the terms we use today in the various movement systems and training methods of modern dance, somatic studies, and theatre performance derive from his terminology system, as seen in Valerie Preston-Dunlop's Dance *Words* (1995), and Paul Love's Dictionary of Modern Dance *Terminology* (1953).

All of Laban's research along the way suggests that he was developing from the past, and it is illustrative that the so-called 'reformer' emphasised the importance of summing up his theory of static form in the five fixed positions of the ballet tradition, and then laying the foundations of a theory of dynamic form for the 'new dance', in order to master the movement and the process of the dance(Maletic 2019: 81-88). His tendency to develop from inheritance is also reflected in the "wisdom of circles", as pointed out by Laban earlier. The circle is a round movement. Nietzsche, for example, talked about the eternal cycle, which Nietzsche considered to have its own laws of space and time, with no goal or destination, no origin or end, and in which every moment of rolling in a circle has equal importance. Thus Nietzsche also rejected the ancient view of reincarnation, the pursuit of an "ideal world" in the ancient Greek tradition - an ideal existence above all things as the end and beginning of space and time (Nietzsche2001:194-195).

This raises the ponderable question of why Nietzsche appears alongside such a reincarnation in Laban's discourse, despite its completely different position from the eternal

reincarnation of Plato or the *Timaeus*. And, through the narrative of Laban's 1966 work criticising the dualistic tradition of 'separation of space and time' inherited from the Platonic-Descartes period(1966: 67), we can understand that this juxtaposition is not unintentional. Because Laban's critique of the dualistic tradition of "separation of space and time" inherited from the Platonic-Descartes period in his 1966 book shows that he stands for contemporary values. Laban's attempt to sort out and list the 'wisdom of the circle' that emerged in history up to his time is, in a way, another indication of his break with the traditions of his predecessors in the context of the time. Inheriting the spirit and wisdom of the ancients in exploring the laws of harmony, he insisted on the development of a worldview of dance, while breaking the paradox of the traditional body-soul dichotomy. The following section will focus on Laban's inheritance of the Platonic polyhedron and the development and influence of his theory of space.

Philosophical Foundations of Laban's Theory of Space

In reviewing the Western tradition of the history of the body, one question arises: why did Laban choose Plato. As mentioned earlier, the basic idea of Plato's *Timaeus* is to explain the origin and structure of all things in terms of geometrized rational types. And the five symmetrical polyhedra (tetrahedron, octahedron, hexahedron, dodecahedron, icosahedron), or Platonic polyhedra, created by Plato, became the ideal form for the study of the laws of harmony in all things. It is on this basis that Laban critically chose Plato and inherited the five polyhedra from him. With the perfect symmetry of the forms that these polyhedra possessed, he put mathematical and geometrical methods to work in exploring the harmonious laws of human movement, developing spatial direction symbols, spatial movement sequences (scales). And the spatial models became the scaffolding for the practice of harmonious spatial movement forms.
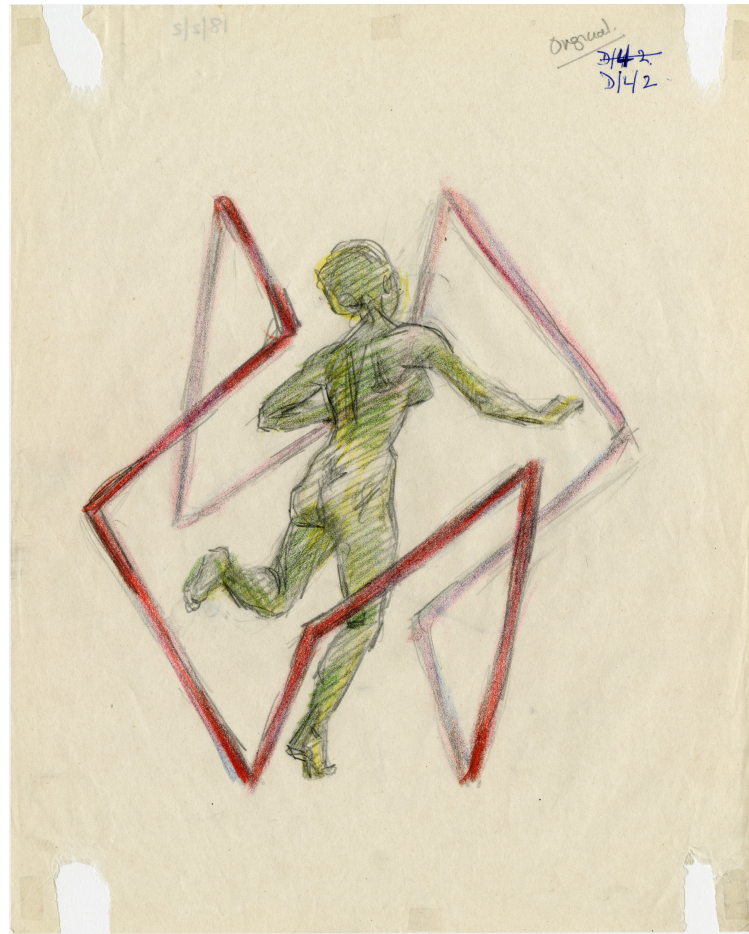
Figure 1 Laban's hand-drawn spatial trajectory(L/C/5/78-86)

In Laban's research, space accounts for the largest portion of his study of body movement, and he created a variety of spatial directional sequences and movement steps for use in his practice. These spatial movement sequences are a set of specific directions linked in a certain harmonic or logical order. Moreover, they are designed according to the ' opposite movement " or " principle of opposite movement ', i.e. using the symmetrical structure of the body, when initiating a movement in one part, the opposite body part moves in the opposite direction to maintain balance. On the other hand, the sequence of movements follows a cycle starting from the centre of the body to the edge of the personal sphere and from the edge back to the centre.

'Spatial movement sequences' and 'movement scales' are the complexity and perceptual awareness of spatial knowledge that is built up for the subject of the movement through directional exercises. Thus Laban's spatial orientation is not only a visual illustration of the direction of the environment, but also emphasises the form-building power of spatial

orientation itself, which is similar to the construction of crystalline forms, both of which are dynamic shapes of movement. He views spatial crystals as a medium for establishing the structure of human tension. This kind of thinking is consistent with Plato's use of rational types to explain the structure and origin of all things as a method of visualisation.

Laban also applied this visual approach to the study of the 'inner form' and 'outer form' of movement, which became another focus of Laban's spatial theory, i.e., he viewed movement as a union of two poles, a continuous unity in space between the 'inner' and 'outer'. 'outer' in space. His focus on topological three-dimensional objects, the Möbius strip, is one example. This figure has only one surface, but it is folded. Therefore, it looks like it's made up of two different strips of paper. However, it is just a folded strip that goes from inside to outside and back again, so we are seeing different surfaces of the same ring. So even though it goes from inside to outside, it is the same surface. This is its topological nature, i.e., sameness and continuity, both of which are topological properties. Analysing it on a philosophical or psychological level means that inside is outside and outside is inside, that we are never completely outside and never completely inside, that we 'exist' on this continuum. Thus, in the last analysis, the Möbius strip is a model for understanding the continuity of polarisation in life. Life is polarised, tense and pulled apart.

However, a number of processes (mental and kinetic) allow us to collapse these tensions, thus creating a continuum. Thus, in Laban's thought, the emotional, psychological and outer form of movement is the same thing in the continuum of movement. This idea was fully demonstrated by Choreutics (1966) in his study of the 'dynamosphere'(1966: 27-45). In it, Laban uses different spatial models to introduce a shadow-form that accompanies the movement process at all times, and juxtaposes it with the trace-form of movement, using visualisation to illustrate that human movement is accompanied by action-moods in space at all times.
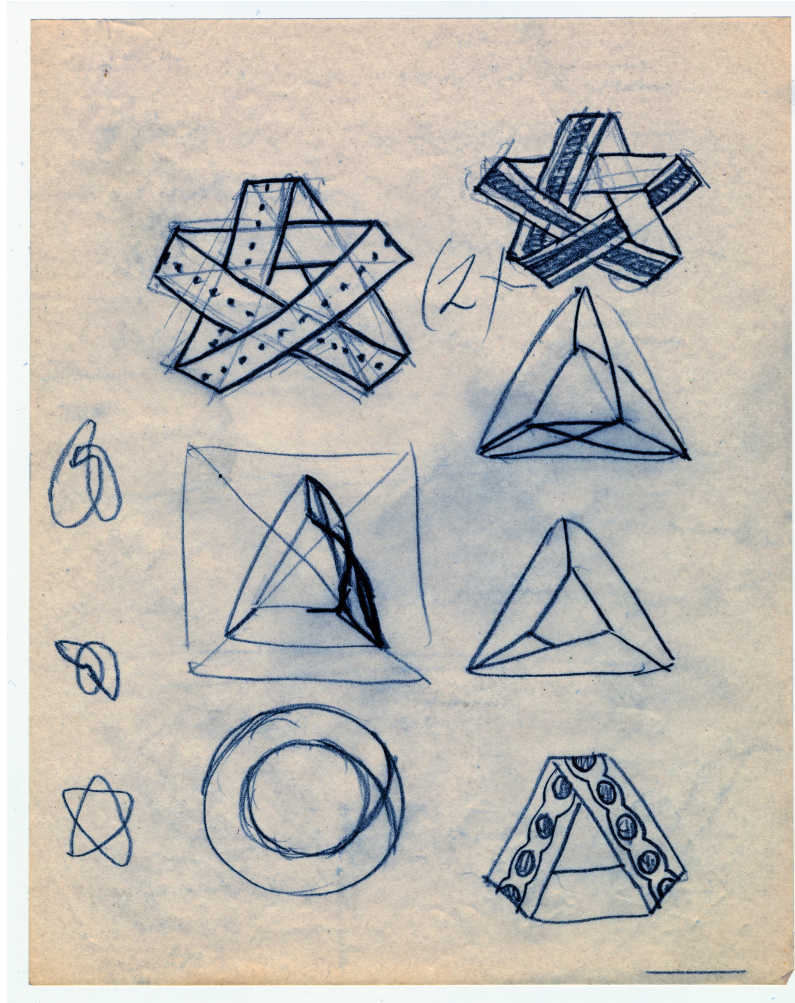
Figure 2 Laban's hand-drawn Mobius strip and torus(L/E/28/73)

Differences between the standpoints of the old and the new 'Choreography'(Notation)

Laban has suggested that the history of the development of the art of human movement is also a history of the endeavour to record movement. In expressing this view, he studied the different alphabets and other symbolic features of hundreds of pictorial forms around the world, including musical and dance scores, as well as Chinese hieroglyphics. Later, he developed his own system of symbols, also in the manner of 'hieroglyphs'. Laban paid homage to his predecessor by calling his symbolic system 'choreography', the same name as Feuille-Beauchamp's dance scores. However, his choreography is fundamentally different from Feuille 's in many ways.

When we expand our gaze to the 17th to 18th centuries in which Feuille was living, we find that as in any kingdom or period under a king, hierarchy and difference were natural and humane. Jennifer Homans, reflecting on this history, suggests that this hierarchical difference is reflected in stage performances where people do not treat bodies equally (Homans 2010: 26).The 'superior' body was better suited to perform in the 'noble' style. As a result, the people of the period distinguished actors by hierarchical types: the serious, or noble, demi-character, and, lastly, the comic[1]. In such a field, Feuille concentrated on recording what he considered to be the most important and noble dances, the so-called 'la belle danse' (the dance of grace). This was a social dance with a high degree of skill that was performed on major occasions. It was usually performed by a male dancer alone or by two male dancers. It should be noted that most of the dances recorded by Feuille were solo or pas de deux.

In Feuille's score, dance and liturgy are inseparable. The notation is a two-dimensional floor pattern viewed from the air: a variety of elaborate curved arcs and circles form even and balanced figures. These symbols represent where the feet are in each beat, and their direction of travel is on the axis of where the king is, and the two men either together, or in a mirror image of each other, step out on the floor to create these shapes. When picking up one of these dance scores and reading it, we are able to appreciate the experience of the mover in this form: he forms an orderly relationship with himself, the dancers with each other, and with the king. The steps are crucial towards the king, which forms a metaphor. Through the motif we see the king's physical body associated with the polity of the state and the order of the universe, or associating the head of the state with the limbs, which must be coordinated to conform to perceived natural hierarchies and laws (Homans 2010: 21-22).

The above contrasts sharply with Laban's choreography. A typical example of this difference in audience is Laban's organisation of movement choruses for thousands of people. Albrecht Knust and Laban have always attempted to record and disseminate movement chorales using 'simple symbols'. Since the 1920s he has been interested in 'amateur dance' and 'social dance'. Like the harmonic practice of music, Laban and his colleagues developed the gymnastic dance

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[1] Interestingly, Laban also distinguished between different types of movers, namely high movers, medium movers, and low movers. The significant difference between these classifications lies in the fact that the categorization during the Foyer period was hierarchical, establishing a body class from top to bottom among performers, which created a hierarchy within the performance. In contrast, Laban differentiates the qualities or dynamics of movement based on the action styles inherent to the movers themselves.

as a 'harmonic form', which they called 'movement chorus'（1975:184）. The chorus of his movements in Munich and Ascona at that time consisted entirely of amateurs or 'commoners', blacksmiths, tailors, furriers, bakers and children(Laban 1975: 180).The Reichbund Fur Femeinschaftstanz (Imperial Union of Community Dance) in Germany at the time, in an article titled Wir Tanzen (We Dance Together), credited Laban with creating the modern form of community dance（Maletic 2019: 39）. This value of egalitarian symbiosis is also reflected in Laban's assessment of historical figures. In his assessment of Jean-Georges Noverre, a reformer almost contemporary with Beauchamp and Feuille, Laban highlights his contribution to encouraging his students to observe and learn from the actions of people in the street and at work, rather than copying the behaviour of princes and ministers (Laban 1975:4).

Feuille's choreography takes the position and direction of the king as its axis; Laban's choreography takes the human body itself as its reference. Prior to Laban, Feuille's choreography was a ground pattern left by the dancer's body in space; in this sense, then, the body and space existed in opposition to each other in the form of subject and object. This contrast also brought about the groundbreaking contribution of Laban's notation. It is the first time in the history of dance that the creation of space-time by the human being/body is recognised and made explicit, and the three-dimensional dynamic movement of the human body leaps out onto two-dimensional paper in the form of symbols and vertical spectra. The values lurking behind the symbols bring out the sense of human subjectivity and the body emerges from the shackles of dualistic thought.

Popularisation of Movement Education

Laban, like many of his contemporaries, challenged the perceived 'inferiority of the body' in Western society. However, after he moved to the UK in 1938 and shifted the focus of his work to movement education, a consensus emerged that the study of movement was the way to build awareness. To this day, although we see very little of Laban's work in schools in the UK and Europe, we can still see elements of Laban's work, or of the movement systems that grew out of and were influenced by it, in some of the teaching and philosophies.

Laban based his work on modern educational dance on the idea of popularising movement studies and enhancing 'self-consciousness'. In Modern Educational Dance (1948), a work first

published in 1948, Laban recalls Noverre's emphasis on learning 'contemporary' movement rather than imitating royalty, and recognises the release of 'self-consciousness' in Isadora Duncan's dance. and recognises Isadora Duncan's dance as a release of 'self-consciousness'. In his critique of Frederick Winslow Taylor's study of industrial movement, Laban argues that although Taylor's aim was to increase the efficiency of workers when manoeuvring machines, completely disregarding the aesthetic value that might be attached to their movements, Taylor reminds of the educational value of movement, drawing today's (Laban's era) attention to the educational value of industrial movement today.

But Laban observes that children who spend their days at school never have the opportunity to learn to appreciate movement, and they hardly have the chance to know that their future happiness will depend on the foundations of a life rich in movement. Thus education today (in his time) endeavours to provide a balance to the work-life imbalance by focusing on the arts in general, including the art of movement, as dance has come to be regarded as the basic art form of mankind. Laban believed that movement was the only way to achieve physical and mental education for both adults and children. And he does not confine himself to a particular movement or type of dance, suggesting that modern educational dance takes into account all the achievements that have been discovered by the pioneers, including the seemingly mundane and tedious study of efficiency-enhancing movement. Laban states, 'With the exception of the theatre choreography of ballet, every social form of the art of dance, such as state, folk, and social, has its own forms of movement and technique.' Thus, 'there are no limits to the performance of dance on the stage. (1975:8)'

As Laban worked tirelessly to popularise 'educational dance' in society using a variety of movement and dance forms, he gradually drew attention to the importance of the body and movement in society. Laban's collaborator, Lisa Ullmann, and students Dunlop, Marion North and Joan Russel have applied his ideas to a variety of educational frameworks in schools and community programmes in the UK. Such a trend has not only allowed later generations to gradually explore a range of movement methods applied in different fields, It also promotes a decentred, egalitarian approach to education in the smallest details of human relationships through body movements. He continues to provide children, workers, teachers, and stage performers in communities and schools with diverse forms of movement art practice and

modern educational dance teaching methods that connect people's bodies with movement. His free dance, 16 basic movement themes, Methods of observing movements provide a concrete and clear model for teachers to teach modern educational dance.

Contemporary Dance Worldview

Mary Wigman, commenting on Laban, credits him with freeing dance from its subordinate status to music and making it an independent art. Her thesis also provides support for demonstrating that Laban ultimately realised the aspirations he set out in 1920. Symbolic systems, terminological systems, spatial theories and practices, and the popularisation of modern educational dance concepts in society make Laban studies a watershed in the strictest sense of the word. Since Laban, the dance world seems to have embarked on a new journey. The journey was filled with a sense of bodily subjectivity. In today's terms, although Norville was the first to claim the 'social value of dance', his idea could only be realised in the practice of later generations, which shows that his perception was far beyond his time, and also proves that the current of history is turning in a different direction. Thus, Laban's success also belongs to the general awakening of the time, when people began to move towards the body.

People come from history, and they are bound to history. It is difficult to evaluate any contribution on the basis of the 'present' alone, apart from the time in which it was made. Because, when the dimension of time is infinitely extended, every 'present' is the future past, and every 'present' person's judgement of the past is in the dynamic alternation of eternity.

There have been mixed reviews of Laban. Many have questioned him in terms of his gender concepts, dualistic tendencies, and especially in terms of his collaborative research with Lawrence on industrial action analysis (industrial effort) to enhance factory productivity. Some of his ideas, such as classifying and interpreting the qualitative nature of the A/B movement order in terms of male masculinity and female femininity, were considered to be gender stereotypical and biased; and in terms of industrial movement research, it was argued that in the name of focusing on physical and mental development, he was trying to improve the efficiency of workers' movements and maximise factory efficiency, which by its very nature contradicted the desire for the oneness of the mind and body. However, it is indisputable that

Laban aroused in society the awareness of shaping cognition by movement and implementing physical and mental education by movement, and gradually worked this awareness into a general consensus. As we can see, Laban studies are widely pervasive in dance higher education, vocational education, and mind-body education in the UK and Europe, and some of them may not bear their names, but are heavily influenced by their development.

As mentioned earlier, a number of Laban scholars have competed to examine and interpret 'Choreosophy', and in their more or less divergent interpretations, these interpretations can be categorised into two areas of consensus. In other words, the concept is seen as a 'world view of dance' in the sense of a broad and ancient philosophical value and a timeless experience of movement; From an educational and ethical sense, it is emphasised that this philosophical and worldview is concerned with the realisation of the social values of dance. This core idea leads us, on the one hand, to value and treat the contributions of our predecessors with an attitude of inheritance and development; on the other hand, the realisation of the social value of dance requires an ethical conception to aesthetise dance as well as to treat its participants.

Among the first considerations, a question worth pondering is how we, who are stepping on the shoulders of those who have gone before us, should view and use the choreographic legacy left by our predecessors. During his lifetime, Laban's plans and instructions for several important segments of his system, his correspondence with collaborators, and his writings reflect his openness to all those who came after him to interpret and develop his work. At the end of his life, Laban summed up his lifelong endeavours by reducing his entire system and invention to 'tools and methods that can serve as a point of departure.(Maletic 2019: 232)" Arguably, Laban opened up a vast and formidable theoretical system, along with several germs of thought, during his lifetime. Many of their offshoots, such as most of the theoretical knowledge of space in spatial harmony, the systematic application of the science of movement expression, and the exploration of the value and application of symbol systems today, need to be developed and take root in practice.

The second consideration relates to the social value of dance. This requires an attention to the contemporary, the specificities of our time. If we look back from today to the moment when 'Choreosophy' was revived by Laban 100 years ago, is the emphasis on the sense of bodily subjectivity another kind of narrow-minded centrism, or is it still reincarnating in an endless

dichotomy and philosophical vortex? In our present time, the moral systems of traditional societies, such as Confucianism, Christianity, Puritanism, and so on, are gradually slipping away, to be replaced by the prevalence of hedonism and consumerism. Unlike the Platonic-Augustinian tradition of repressing the body, people now pay more attention to the body, to its beauty, to denying the aging body, to rejecting death, to the important role of exercise, and to keeping fit. The body, after millennia of traditional shackles, has leapt to the forefront of popular culture in screen adverts and fashion shows. The aura of nutrition and medical science is constantly being placed on the body, and the endless quest for youth and beauty has given rise to a plethora of pleasure myths. As Jean Baudrillard puts it, the body has become 'the most beautiful consumer product' in this consumer society (Baudrillard 2014). Today's body is liberated from its confinement and inexorably enters the trap of consumerism to be appreciated, scrutinised and played with. As Foucault, who, while accepting Nietzsche's use of the body as determinism, reveals how the will to power, every aspect of social practice, orchestrates the body and pushes it towards new disciplines and punishments.

On the other hand, mobility characterises life in the contemporary world. According to the data released by the National Bureau of Statistics of China, as of the end of 2023, the urbanization rate of the resident population reached 66.16%, an increase of 0.94 percentage points from the previous year. The urbanization rate for 2024 has not yet been published, so the latest official data is from the end of 2023(NBS, 2023). With the gradual reduction of villages in the process of urbanisation, a large number of rural labourers have been forced to migrate to cities for employment. This global wave of migration also highlights the fact that 'mobility' has become the first choice most people make to change their living situation. However, living is not only about occupying a space, but also about people's spirituality and how to settle down physically and mentally in the midst of the wave of mobility, which goes beyond specific geographic space.

Therefore, today we need to face the crisis of values and or identity caused by the decline of traditional values and global mobility. Indeed, the realisation of the social value of dance, i.e. the reshaping of the empathy of society as a whole through the intimacy of dance and the body, is something that contemporary society should pay attention to. The viability of this pathway lies in the fact that we come to know ourselves through movement, while dance

collaborations allow our bodies to constantly overlay bodily experiences from others in mutual listening. As if in a dance jam of contact improvisation, there is a constant focus on all the information of the world around us as perceived by the body's perception, listening to the force of each person with whom one chances to meet in a collaboration, and feeling the authenticity and uniqueness of this one force. As a result, we come to appreciate dance as a way of building relationships of opportunity from the body, and to value all the opportunities to listen to one's strengths.

On the other hand, conveying concern for 'minorities' and appreciation of non-consensus in all corners of the world is an effective way for dance to realise its social value. Here, we will focus on Gilles Deleuze's reference to 'becoming', i.e. becoming a woman, becoming a child, becoming an animal, a plant or a mineral, becoming a molecule, becoming a particle. To become a woman is to dismantle the mainstream and the majority that men represent and to defend the periphery and the minority that women represent; to become a child is to reflect on the rationality and the planning that adults represent and to appreciate the sensibility and the intuition that children represent; to become an animal, a plant, or a mineral is to escape from the debilitation and alienation that civilisation has led to and to return to the vitality and the selfhood that nature has preserved; to become a molecule or a particle is to escape from the totality and the rigidity of the macrocosm that is the counterpart of the grandiose (Deleuze 2019).

On the way to building a holistic empathy, the world of dance should be more capable of avoiding the dichotomy of 'centre' and 'periphery' because of the body we share, despite our independence from each other. Acknowledging and appreciating the spontaneity of movement art opens up a keen sense of the body and allows individuals to gain empathy in the interweaving of experiences, thus building a sense of trust in the environment and in others. Cultivating a true sense of autonomy through art that inspires identification with the environment and history and culture can be the beginning of a culture of endogenous autonomy where the individual is the main focus. It allows for a decentred narrative that allows different individuals to tell their own stories in art, showing the true state of existence of each individual. Therefore, defending the marginal and the minority, embracing sensibility and perception, returning to vitality and naturalness, aspiring to the individuality and fluidity represented by

the microcosmic - today we need to and are able to forge identities and values with art from such a standpoint, reconstructing and spreading the worldview from dance.

Research Theme One: Community Art and Community Life

In the 1920s and 1930s, Laban was passionate about organizing mass dances involving thousands of people, which he called "movement choirs," demonstrating a powerful sense of community unity. In June 1926, Laban created the work Vienna and the Trade Fair (1926), where 10,000 performers paraded and performed movement choirs on movable platforms. He brought together thousands of strangers from different professions, weaving their characteristic professional movements into a dance to allow everyone to physically experience the barriers between professions, thereby generating a sense of connection. In the same year, he created the large-scale movement choir Daily Life and Joy (1928) with 500 participants. The dancers not only represented individuals but also various professions in society. Laban skillfully incorporated their professional movements into the performance, endowing them with artistic significance that they may not have been aware of in their daily work. His goal was to create a collective bodily experience that allowed both performers and audiences to feel connected, thus achieving social cohesion and resonance. This idea of breaking boundaries and using art to achieve social solidarity also provides important insights for modern community dance practices.

My case study takes domestic work as a research subject, observing their participation in the artistic creation process, and clarifying the portrait of this group's existence by understanding the characteristics of their profession. Through this study, I hope to reveal the multiple identities and complex emotions that domestic workers exhibit in artistic creation, and how they express themselves and form resonance through art. This is not merely a representation of their profession but a deep exploration of their personal experiences and emotions. In observing these domestic workers participate in artistic creation, we can see that they are not just creating works, but are also expressing their understanding and reflection on their profession through the form of art. In this process, domestic workers often transform the trivial details of daily life into an artistic language, and this transformation allows their work to go beyond the realm of household service, giving it deeper social and cultural meaning.

At the same time, this study also reveals the unique perspectives and voices of domestic workers in their participation in artistic creation. Through their creations, the audience can

more directly perceive the life conditions, challenges, and hopes of these invisible laborers. This process of self-expression is not only a confirmation of personal identity but also a challenge and reflection on society's inherent perceptions. The artistic practices of domestic workers provide us with a new dimension of understanding regarding power, identity, and community, prompting us to think more deeply about how art can become a tool for marginalized groups to express themselves and unite in modern society. Such research is not just focused on individual artistic creation but also aims to advocate for a better understanding and respect for the profession of domestic work through their stories, thereby promoting the social recognition and revaluation of the entire domestic worker group.

In Chapter II and III, we can see the life of an art-centred community formed by the domestic workers. Their artistic approach is all-encompassing, talking, cooking, singing, dancing, painting and so on in the theatre. They contribute their ideas as the dominant players in their own work. We can see by way of example how they embody the idea of ethical dance aesthetics/philosophy and choreosophy - the beliefs of the participants in community art, the strategies and the organisation of movement in choreography. They focus on how a de-hierarchical approach to choreography and movement works within the Beijing Domestic Workers dance community. How this concept and approach in turn provides a constant source of material and choreographic inspiration for the artists and their works. In writing these two chapters, the research hopes to convey the possibilities of artistic community life: when a group of people with common interests gather in a public space that can be large or small for the reason of creation, contributing their experiences and acquiring identities and appreciations with different distributions of roles and responsibilities, they have touched on the purpose of an ideal community life.

Chapter II

Transitional Identity and Flowing Habitat: The Group Image of Beijing's Migrant Population in Art-Dance Community

In 2022, residents of China experienced unprecedented mobility restrictions due to policies implemented to guard against Covid-19. People were restricted from entering public places and quarantined in their homes for months. Female domestic workers from Hongyan Workers' Service Centre in Beijing persevered through extreme restrictions to rehearse the dance theatre performance work, *Separated Bodies* (2023). I interviewed the participants and filmed the rehearsals, thereby gaining insight into the domestic workers' professional specificities, personal stories, and immediate sensations during movement practices. I realized that art making is just the reason they can meet, and art in turn becomes the way to forge connectivity in the community. In order to delve into the survival status and artistic participation of migrant workers, I investigated the workers' literary group located in the urban village, Picun, in Beijing. 'Separation' and 'dwelling' are recurring themes in interviews and rehearsals with migrants. In the article, I present information and perspectives on both themes. It aims to critically reflect on the impact of national policy changes, cultural norms and social values on the issue of migrant identity in China. As the article develops, the discussion deepens into the contribution and influence of identity-making through the arts by NGOs.

China's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) announced that there are nearly 300 million migrant population in China (NBS 2023). Since 1978, China's urbanization rate has continued to grow at an average rate of 13% per decade (NBS 2018), and according to the latest national census in 2021, the urbanization rate of the resident population was 64.72% (NBS 2022). With the gradual reduction of villages in the process of urbanization, an enormous number of rural

labourers have had to flock to the cities for employment. However, China's household registration system, combined with the orienting effect of social values, gives them a transitional identity suspended between peasant and citizen, which can cause obstacles in employment, housing, education, health care. Migrant workers, as important factors of production for cities in China's urbanization process, have also become marginalized.

My research combines investigative fieldwork and critical evaluations of literatures examining how specific populations participate in dance and the use of alternative movement practices in community arts. The project started during the early stages of the global pandemic covid-19, during which time I realized the distinctive ways in which communities can build a sense of belonging when people can forge positive connections through shared interests and when creating art together. The investigation developed a particular approach, one that gives focus to a migrant workers' community in Beijing, Hongyan Workers' Service Centre. Accordingly, I observed the rehearsals of the migrant women's dance theatre at the Hongyan and the regular literature courses of Picun Literary Group for migrant workers in Picun. Gaining access to the lived experience of both groups allowed me to observe and film the emergent creative process of the domestic workers' dance-theatre 'Separated Bodies' (2023) at the Hongyan. The literary and artistic activities of the Beijing Picun Workers' Literature Group as part of the survey extended the research into the real lives of Beijing's migrant population.

With the intention to capture the immediate reactions, experiences, and thoughts of the participants I aligned the interviews with the workers during their rehearsals and other associated art activities. The schedule of questions revolved around the stories they aimed to explore and to share in their performances as well as their changing perceptions of shared movement practice/s. During my visit I benefited from engagements with the group during their spare time and came to appreciate the details of their lives and living environment more fully. The forging of close associations allowed me to become more aware of their experiences and backgrounds, as I reflected on the purpose of their participation in the life of the arts community, and on their perspectives on identity and values.

The peculiarities of each domestic work context mean it is not easy for them to develop a sense of belonging in their work and life. Firstly, they are dispersed among families after their

influx from the countryside to the city, which results in the absence of a network of colleagues and difficulty in getting to know and empathize with each other. Secondly, by its private, sensitive nature, each host family offers an area where it is hard to clearly define the scope of their work; it is a zone that the law finds challenging to access. Moreover, household work has been stigmatized by the dominant culture leading to increased levels of stress amongst the community when facing the society and their families. Notably, during the interviews almost every domestic worker mentioned the lack of an independent living space in their daily life. This has led them to aspire for a place of their own.

In addition to 'residency' and 'separation', the personal stories surrounding it were frequently mentioned in the interviews. Both the concepts of dwelling and separation are evident in the working process and thematic undercurrents of dance theatre productions and community events. In the frequent movement between urban and rural areas, they must get used to parting with their family. In moving between families in the city, they must become accustomed to being apart from their employers and the employer's children. Dwelling is the making and construction of identity meaning by the floating population, the workers' physical and mental settlement, an embracing of self-identity amidst the frequent separations and farewells.

The article addresses two main areas of discussion. Firstly, by interpreting the life story of the domestic worker in *Separated Bodies*, the article prefaces a discussion of the current situation and challenges experienced by the migrant population in Beijing. By gaining insight into these life stories, the article focuses on the generation of movement responses to lived experiences. Secondly, it proceeds to examine identifying features of an expanding Art Community where through *Identity Making* the efforts that art as a means of connectivity and the NGO community can make to build the self/environmental identities of the migrant population.

Methodology

During this study, research data was gathered through a range of observations agreed with the domestic workers during their rehearsals, their artistic life in the Picun community, and with

their agreement to take part in, one-to-one interviews. The data collection sites for this study were located at the Hongyan Workers' Service Centre in Beijing's Chaoyang District and the Workers' Literature Group at the Picun Tongxin School in Beijing.

As a visitor to the community, I was invited to observe six rehearsals and later conducted interviews four domestic worker performers, the choreographer, the stage designer, the producer, and the community organizer. The interviews amounted to a total of 20 hours. During the investigation in Picun, the author was involved in observing two literature group sessions; an art festival and book reading organized by the Tongxin School and the literature group for migrant children; interviewed five Picun workers and one volunteer who works for migrant children in the community, amounting to a total of six hours.

To protect the rights and privacy of the participants, all data was collected following the standards set out by the Ethics Committee of the University of Leeds. Observations and Interviews were approved in advance by the committee and with the consent of all participants.

The observations were centred on a research design divided into three main aspects. The first was the choreographer's approach to social choreography, including the training methods utilized the choreographic approach, style of engagement and ethical awareness throughout the process. Secondly, observations of the contributions made by the domestic workers, choreographers, stage designers, producers, and community organizers to the creative and performance process, were evaluated. Thirdly, the observations made by the literature group focused on the range of topics of interest to migrant workers and the peculiarities of their writing.

To design a bespoke range of themes for discussion, the interview questions were developed after a period of observation of the working process.

- For the domestic worker-performers, the author designed the schedule of questions around personal experiences drawing on enhanced understanding through engagement with the individual stories told by the different domestic workers in the rehearsal. With a view to analyzing these personal histories in terms of historical changes in national policies, cultural norms, and the guiding role of societal values, the interview questions emphasized the time and location (province, city, village) of the events while guiding the domestic worker to present their stories in full.

- For the choreographer, the interviews centred on the changes in the choreographer's creative approach during the process and the reasons behind them; the influence of social issues on the creation of the work and the choreographer's changing perspectives as they made further explorations; the choreographer's approach and attitudes to working and the ways cooperation with the internal members of the team was fostered.

- For the stage designer, questions centred on the design of props and sets and the way materials were solicited and underscored the design thinking behind this. For the producer and organizer, the interview questions focused on the characteristics of the domestic worker community, the features of social work and the operational approach of the organization.

- The interviews with Picun workers and volunteers specialized in survival experiences and family situations in Beijing, as well as experiences and impressions of participating in community art activities.

Occupation, Household Status, Family of Chinese Migrant Population

The term 'floating population' is widely used by mainstream media and academics in China to identify people who have travelled away from their bespoke households in order to seek paid work, usually referred to as rural workers or other migrant workers (NBS,2023). The word 'floating' implies a sense of instability and uncertainty, which reflects the reality that they are not fully accepted by the urban mainstream. In the 1980s, the mobility of this group of people was characterized by working in the cities during the farm slack season and returning to their hometowns during the farm busy season, and most of them worked in construction sites in the cities.

Unlike the early years of Reform and Opening in the 1980s, current migrant workers in China are mainly engaged in the secondary and tertiary sectors (NBS 2023). Most of the people work in the fields of domestic work, take-away, logistics, hotel services, and processing and manufacturing. A considerable number of the workers are second-generation migrants who were born and grew up in the city; many have established families and parented their children in the city. They are now more familiar with the city than their earlier life in their rural districts.

However, the household registration of the new generation of migrant population is still in the countryside, and their household registration identity is as farmers in the countryside. Therefore, they are still referred to by the public as rural workers. Scholars have argued that the identity label 'rural worker' implies a 'transitional identity' that is neither a worker nor a farmer (De Fina, Schiffrin, and Bamberg 2006; Dong 2020). This transitional status has led to discriminatory treatments in housing, jobs, and educational opportunities for them and their children.

In 2023, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) jointly released *What the 2020 Census Can Tell Us About Children in China Facts and Figures* (2023). The report shows that in 2020, 138 million children in China have been affected by population mobility (NUICEF 2023, 2), nearly half of children are directly affected by migration compared to the total of 298 million children in China (2023, 9). The number of 'left-behind' children who cannot live with their parents is 66.93 million, and the number of migrant children moving with their parents to places other than their household registration is 71.09 million (2023, 9).

China's household registration system can be regarded as an identity system, which creates a difference between rural and non-rural households. It plays the role of controlling population movement and coordinating the distribution of resources in society. There are inequalities in the systems of welfare, employment, education, and housing derived from it. This is evident in the difference in educational opportunities between migrant children and city resident children by the research of migrant children conducted in China (Goodburn 2020; Wu 2011; Ling 2017).

Compared to children with local household registration, the educational resources of migrant children are limited by the policy thresholds of points-based enrolment, school choice fees and differentiated admission scores, and by their background of origin in terms of family income and living space. A significant proportion of migrant children in China are unable to access state schools because they do not have an urban household registration and turn to non-state working children's schools. Chen and Feng (2013) examine the consequences of this not-entirely-voluntary school choice, using data from field surveys and standardized test scores

conducted in Shanghai. The research indicates that access to public schools is a central determinant of the quality of education received by migrant children (2013).

The first to bear the brunt of changes in society is usually the migrant population. In 2021, out of a desire to achieve equity in education, the government issued the *Regulations on the Implementation of the Law on the Promotion of Private Education* (GOV.CN 2021) to restrict the development of mid-to-high-end private schools and educational institutions. Schools for migrant children were implicated because of their non-government-run nature.

Figure.3 This photo was taken at the Tongxin Learning Centre in Picun, Beijing. Formerly known as Tongxin Experimental School, a full-time school for working children aged 3-12 years, the school closed in September 2020 and was transformed into an activity centre providing hobby training for migrant children[2].

Regularised Separation in Picun and Domestic Worker's Dance Theatre

As China's urbanization process accelerates, rural migrants have become a major component of the migrant population. In the frequent mobility between rural and urban areas, separation

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[2] All images in this chapter are screenshots from the documentary filmed by the author.

has become a normalised mobility behaviour. This instability often creates a sense of floating and a sense of alienation from their surroundings for migrant workers and their children.

He Ran, a volunteer who works with migrant children in Picun, Beijing, recalls that when a class of children was once graduating in Picun, she and her colleagues designed a farewell session. The children were encouraged to record the moments they experienced with their classmates at school in photos, after which they would receive a complimentary photo album as gift for graduation that would be a unique memory. They were expecting the children would be enthusiastic, but few of the students were interested, she said, 'there was not at all the atmosphere of parting that we had imagined would be hard to part with (He Ran, pers. Comm., April 1, 2023). As He Ran and her fellow volunteers became familiar with the children's experiences, they pushed back and realised that separation was a common occurrence for them. He Ran explains that many of the students changed school several times during their primary school years, and some of them had the experience of being left behind and then transferred from their hometowns to study here, thus they have long been used to the separation. This sense of rootlessness born of the frequent movement of these children makes them feel somewhat indifferent to their surroundings. Shen Jiliang, who studies child psychology, argues that for children who are constantly on the move, the separation behaviours they face during frequent moving give them a potential for psychological problems (2015).

On 8 April 2023, domestic workers from different parts of China used their life stories to perform the dance theatre performance *Separated Bodies* (2023) at Beijing Tianqiao Theatre - Art Space. According to the statistics collected by Hongyan, 200 audiences watched the performance (2023). From the first event on 20 November 2021 to 2 April 2023, domestic workers used 36 non-consecutive days off to participate in physical exercises and rehearsals. Ninety-two domestic workers were brought in, while creators and volunteers also participated in different ways. A group production was based on the physical expression of migrant women workers.

Figure.3 At the end of the performance on 8 April 2023, the domestic worker and the audience were taking a photo together.

The group of migrant women workers called themselves migratory birds in the city, which also became the origin of the name of Hongyan Workers' Service Centre. Hongyan means 'wild goose' in Chinese. The specificity of the domestic profession is the basis for their choreography and art design (Jie Xiaofeng, pers.comm., April 21, 2023). Firstly, they rely on physical labour to earn a living. Secondly, the nature of their work makes it necessary for them to move physically, from rural to urban areas and from one home to the next. Thirdly, they need to learn to deal with levels of distress due to frequent moves as they seek work and live away from home for extended periods of time. The name *Separated Bodies* symbolizes the multiple identities that domestic workers play in work and life, underscored from the perspectives of their perceived helplessness and complexity of their lived experience through multiple identities. The material in their work often draws on the separate experiences of domestic workers with their families, employers, friends.

Figure.4-5 Tan Qirong and Luo Xuefang were rehearsing their farewell pair dance. The two domestic workers keep bumping into each other, embracing, and saying 'I'm leaving' in this dance and then separating again.

When observing their practice, I recognized that frequently during the rehearsal of the farewell pair dance, domestic workers fell into tears as they watched. Li Wenli, a domestic

worker, empathizes with the conflicting emotions of parting. She describes a hurried reunion with her son in Beijing in the inner journal, *New Workers' Literature*, organised by the Picun Literature Group. She and her son took a break from work to travel across the north and south of Beijing to eventually be reunited for 20 minutes. (Li 2023, 84-87).

Figure.6-7 The final scene of the piece is a farewell with folded flowers.

At the end of the performance, the domestic workers fold the red clothes donated by the public into the shape of flowers and hold them in front of their faces, making a pair to farewell each other. Choreographer Liao Shuyi explains the design of the scene of folding flowers for farewell. The folding action comes from the action of domestic work, and putting the action into the farewell is also a way for domestic workers to tidy up and preserve their past life experiences (Liao Shuyi, pers.comm., July 23, 2023).

Temporary and Fragile Residence

Beijing, which occupies 16,410 square kilometres, is divided into six ring districts. Going outwards from the third ring represents a gradual decrease in the level of prosperity and orderedness. This is not only a geographical division between the centre and the periphery, but it also means concentrating economic, cultural, and political vitality towards the centre. Therefore, it is the lifelong goal of many workers from 'non-central areas' to gradually move from the periphery to central cities and central zones. The gradual convergence from the periphery to the centre er has also become one of the characteristics of China's population movement, which is an effort by people to migrate from rural to urban areas, and from third- and fourth-tier cities to first- and second-tier cities.
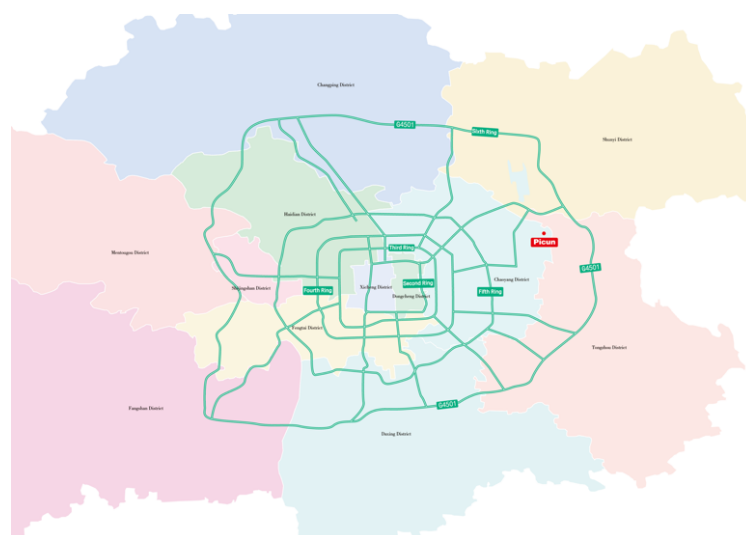
Figure.8 Beijing Ring Zone Marking.[3]

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[3] Made by the author.

The graph below, made by the author based on data published by China's National Bureau of Statistics, shows the change in the average sales price of houses in Beijing from 1999 to 2021 (NBS, n.d.). The two notable points of increase are 2006-2010 and 2015-2017. This is partly due to a series of resettlement and demolition policies during these periods (Beijing.GOV 2015; Mohurd. GOV 2017), and an acceleration of Beijing's urban construction as a result of the city's hosting of the Olympic Games in 2008.
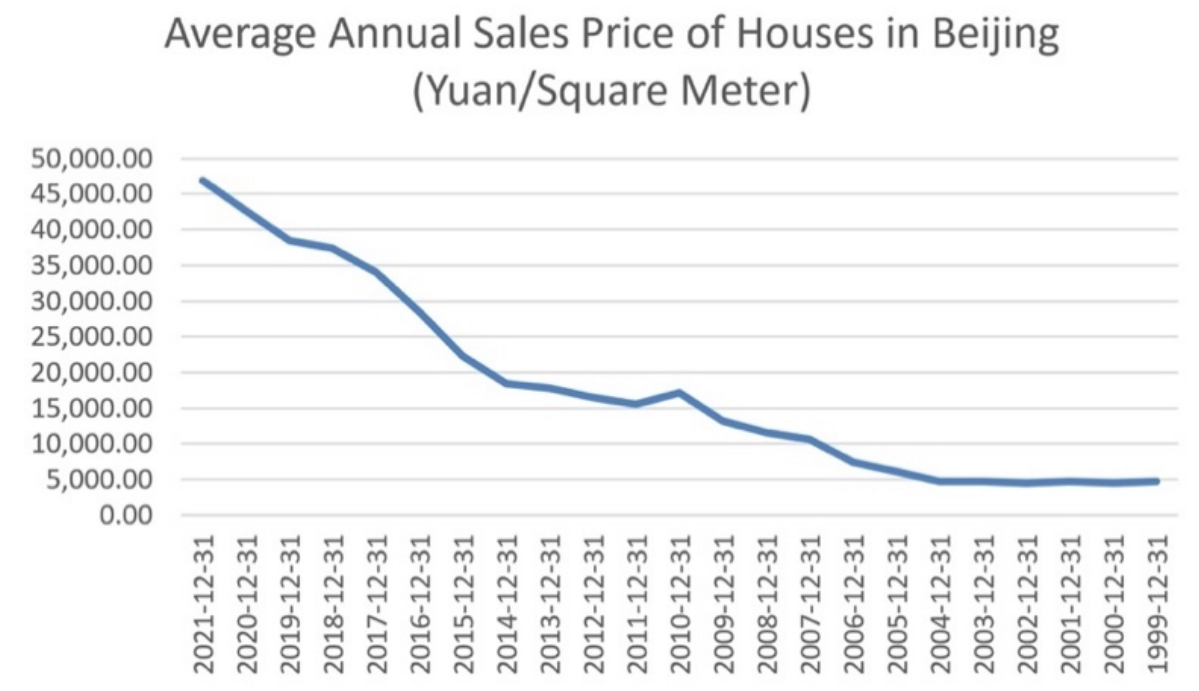
Figure.9 Average Annual Sales Price of Houses in Beijing[4].

A Picun worker's moving experience in Beijing corresponds to the times when property policies were adjusted and the demand for urban construction expanded. He recounts his experience of living in Beijing from Shanxi province. When he first came to Beijing in 2005, he lived in the Third Ring and then in 2007 he moved to the Fourth Ring when the rent in the Third Ring became expensive. Later, with the cost of living in the Fourth Ring became higher, he moved to the Fifth Ring, and finally to the Sixth Ring in 2015. He said, 'the city is getting more and more prosperous, yet we keep moving to the fringes' (pers.comm., April 1, 2023).

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[4] Made by the author.

I learned from Hongyan's staff that most of the domestic workers who come to Beijing from other cities sleep on the floor in domestic service companies. Live-in workers are more mobile in terms of where they live due to the change of employers (Weixu Yan, pers.comm., March 21,2023). Hence, when exploring material in the lead-up to rehearsals, their stories are often about finding a relatively independent but vulnerable personal space in the midst of mobility. Their line in the theatre, 'she lived on the balcony for a whole winter', comes from the real experience of a domestic worker. The worker came to Beijing from her hometown in Hubei province, and it was a winter when she built her temporary home on the balcony of her employer's house, which was enclosed by old cloths. The domestic workers later used the old cloth to build the shelter again in the performance.

Figure.9 During the rehearsal, the domestic workers used red cloths donated by the society to try to build mobile and different forms of shelters.

After setting up their 'mobile' shelter, the red cloth is transformed into a picnic carpet, where they sit down on each other and talk about their rest time.

"I'll make something nice to eat in my rented room, call my friends together with singing and dancing", Niu Huiling said. "Find a quiet corner in a shopping mall and make a phone call to my elderly mother", Wu Ying said. "On my down time I go to McDonald's and stay all day and write", Li Wenli said.

They are all talking about a space, a space that they hold for a short while, in which they can separate themselves to do as they wish. Finding a personal, self-identifying space/place is of vital importance to them. Arguably, residence/home is not only physical, but it also transcends specific geographic space and is about people's spirituality, and how to settle down physically and mentally in the midst of the waves of movement.

Identity Crisis Suspending Between City and Countryside

One of the workers in the Picun Literary Group sings in the lyrics he wrote, 'I've travelled all over the world but haven't found myself' (Xiao Hai 2019). This lyric expresses the confusion of identity among migrant workers. When talking about the origin of the name Separated Bodies, choreographer Liao Shuyi believes that the name imprints the multiple roles of domestic workers (Liao Shuyi, pers.comm., April 1,2023). They are workers in their employer's house, childminders of their employer's children, mothers of their own children, children of their elderly parents, and carer of their employer's parents. The scenes of their labour in the work, tying aprons, beating eggs, sweeping the floor, and reading stories to children also suggest that they are divided in their busy working day.

Li Wenli resonates strongly with the name Separated Bodies. She is the sole income earner of her family. Her husband was disabled in an accident, and she has a son and daughter who are studying at university. Thus, she often needs to work several jobs in one day for survival. She came to Beijing seven years ago to work as a live-in domestic helper and has been through five families in the meantime.

When Li Wenli was asked if she now felt settled and found a sense of home, she recalled: in her employer's home, she can know exactly when her child's teeth will change, her employer's dietary preferences, and she can be aware of not being able to participate in her

employer's family conversations, and her own living space and range of activities in the family. When she returned to her hometown, there were no restrictions on her living space and range of activities, but she did not know where the firewood, rice, oil, and salt were kept, she could not name the children of her relatives, nor did she have much in common with her neighbours. She said, 'I don't know where my home is' (Li Wenli, pers.comm., March 26, 2023).

In one scene in the performance, Li stands in the centre of the venue, surrounded by domestic workers who throw dozens of clothes over her shoulders one after another. 'She doesn't have a home anymore, where can she go?' is repeated. The story is based on a female worker who escapes from her home after experiencing physical violence from her husband. Li has her own interpretation of this scene in her performance. She regards it as the longing and calling of the migrant worker for a home (Li Wenli, pers.comm., March 26, 2023).

Figure.10 The domestic workers put clothes on Wen Li's shoulder.

Li Wenli's ambivalence about identity is a norm for migrant people. Existing research has pointed out that China's migrant population generally faces an identity crisis (Gui, Berry, and Zheng 2012; Lin, Ren, and Yang 2019). Although migrant workers have moved from rural to urban areas and have worked and lived in cities for a long time, most of them do not consider themselves to be urbanites nor ruralites. According to Xiong, this identity crisis also carries

over to their children, and the children have similar difficulties integrating into urban society (2010).

Xiong Yihan's fieldwork for his doctoral study, *Urbanised Children: Identity Generation and Political Socialisation of Migrant Children* (2010), took place in Shanghai. He found that many migrant children believe that they should not play with urban children, and they actively defend the social boundaries between the two. Xiong argues that this is out of self-protection on the part of the children 'to avoid being emphasised as outsiders in cross-group interactions, they prefer to actively segregate themselves from the local kids and not play with them, thus asserting the difference in their identities' (2010, 21).

In the survey in Picun, it is found that some parents in Picun send their children to public schools, however, these children do not socialise with their local peers. Because most schools have separate classes for migrant children, and some even stagger their work schedules with those of local students, so that these children have little contact with their city peers. More importantly, this separate classroom behaviour makes migrant children psychologically classify themselves as different from their urban peers.

Art Community and Identity Making

NGO Community and Art as a Way of Connecting

The combination of art and community is often a way and space to connect people with shared interests. In the study of two NGO communities, it was found that people use art to connect with others who share the same circumstances and interests as themselves, allowing them to meet and empathies with each other, and to build a spiritual habitat and a sense of belonging.

In 2022, the third year of the Covid-19 outbreak in China, the mobility of mainland Chinese residents was challenged beyond ever before. Residents were barricaded in their homes for months, shops on the streets were forced to shut down, green health codes were required to enter all public areas within the territory, and planes, trains, high-speed trains, and buses to and from various areas of the country were cancelled on a large and frequent basis. *Separated Bodies* was a work created during this period, when domestic workers insisted on engaging in rehearsals every Saturday, even at the risk of quarantine. When asked why she

insisted on coming to the rehearsals, Tan Qirong said, 'I primarily wanted to meet them' (pers.comm., March 4, 2023).

Liao Shuyi talked about the Beijing Contact Improvisation community they launched, where weekly dance activities were almost uninterrupted during the epidemic. This was rare at the time. Jie Xiaofeng, stage designer, is also a member of the community. She is very active in being involved in group dances, saying, 'I find that I go there more because there are people who I find interesting, and I want to stay with them' (Jie Xiaofeng, pers.comm., March 22, 2023).

Picun is an urban village located in Beijing's 6th ring district, where many migrant workers live. Members of the Honyan domestic worker community often visit Picun for volunteering dance performances. Picun Workers' Literature Group was initiated in 2014 by a professor in the field of literature, where people in the group share two identities at the same time, i.e., migrant workers and literature enthusiasts. Domestic worker performer, Li Wenli, joined the group in 2018. According to Li, every Saturday, writers and university teachers specialising in literature come to the group to provide them with free writing lessons (Li Wenli, pers.comm., April 1, 2023). The group has an internal journal called *New Workers' Literature*, which they publish every two months, and have published 25 issues consecutively to date.

When we first entered Picun, the immediate impression it left on us was not of a desolate place, but of a bustling world of life. Its exterior is surrounded by fields, dirt paths, and several close-knit factory buildings. Deeper down the path there is a narrow unassuming junction which is the entrance to Picun. As it goes further in, a thriving, all-encompassing little town comes into view. The road is bustling with people; there are many grocery shops, restaurants with Chinese specialities, pharmacies, clinics, fruit and vegetable stalls, schools and so on. But there are no hotels around, only cheap rented rooms for 500 to 1,000 RMB a month.

Figure.11 A street scene in Picun

The literature group was in the Picun Tongxin Working Children's School. The~~is~~ school once included both nursery and primary education, and the parents of the students were migrant workers. They live in Picun and work in Beijing in the masonry, domestic service, and takeaway industries. It has now been halted by the government and transformed into a training centre for children's hobbies and interests. The main entrance of the school faces the road, and there is only one small road in the campus, which is about 600ft away from the front and back of the school, and the whole campus is within reach. The school building consists of a few bungalows on both sides of the road.

A bungalow at the end of the lane was the home of the literature group. The centre of the room held a long table assembled from children's desks. It was very quiet, surrounded by bookcases, categorised books, slogans about the care of books, and seemed to be cut off from all outside sounds.

Figure.12 A regular event of the Picun Literary Group in April 2023. Domestic worker-writer Fan Yusu was teaching a literature class to Picun workers. She worked as a childcare worker in Beijing and became a popular author when she wrote about her working experience in Beijing in her novel, *I am Fan Yusu* (2017).

Ma Dayong, editor-in-chief of *New Workers Literature*, believes that 'in addition to the lower cost of living, the culture of the community makes workers feel that we are welcome, that there are people like us who still have a passion, a desire, and a thirst for life' (Ma Dayong, pers.comm., June 29, 2023).

Picun also has a Labourers' Home Union. In 2002, Sun Heng, Xu Duo, Wang Dezhi, Jiang Guoliang, and other young workers with a passion for music set up a music performance team in Beijing, with the initial aim of singing for the labourers working in the city. In the same year, they released their first album, *The World's Workers are One Family* (2002), and used the revenue from the copyright to set up a public service organisation, Beijing Labourers' Home Union (Zhang 2023). The union has set up a community activity centre within the Tongxin School with a female workers' group, the literature group and a children's dance class. These activities give workers a place to gather.

In April 2023, organisations from various social sectors, including the Labourers' Home Union, organised a World Book Day Bazaar for migrant children in the Tongxin School. The domestic workers of Hongyan also participated in the charity performance. They interacted with the children of the Picun dance class who were watching from the stage. The children spontaneously and rhythmically applauded for the domestic workers on stage, becoming the most devoted audience for them. This scene witnesses dance becoming their shared language, allowing them to have empathy with each other across ages and bodies.

Building Empathy and Confidence in Experiential and Perceptual Interactions
The occupational characteristics of domestic workers make it difficult for them to have a network of colleagues. After moving from the countryside to the city, they are assigned to isolated households and, as a result, they have few opportunities for gaining empathy at work. Choreographer Liao Shuyi used Contact Improvisation to train the domestic workers in the beginning. She guided them to explore the energy of their bodies through specific movements. Participants who had never been on stage before explored their physicality through the exercise. On the other hand, she used the domestic workers' unintentional life actions in rehearsals, whisking eggs, sweeping the floor, and flipping pans, as performances on stage. This way of practising and rehearsing confused the domestic workers at first, thinking that it was very different from what they imagined dancing to be, Luo Xuefang said,

> I didn't know what we were doing in the beginning, two people with their backs to each other, crawling and rolling on the ground. There was no feeling initially, only very simple contact, and then when it came to a group of two people it started to feel an emotion, a story incorporated into it. (pers.comm., 8 April 2023)

The choreographer pointed out in the post-performance talkback session that different domestic workers joined the creation at different points in time, and that they were in different states of consciousness. She hopes the work to be constructed as a container that can carry multiple facets, which can allow the spectrum of different colours to develop equally (Liao Shuyi,

pers.comm., 8 April 2023). Their work does not reveal preconceived notions of their experiences as domestic workers, but rather narratives of their bespoke, lived experiences.

Figure.13 Daily movements in the performance, stirring eggs.

During the rehearsals of *Separated Bodies*, the domestic workers rarely initiated interaction with other people at the beginning, but gradually came to enjoy hugging and chatting with each other. For the farewell pair dance, domestic worker Tan Qirong said she suddenly felt the emotional impact of the repetitive movements during one of the training sessions. She and her dancing partner first hugged each other tightly, bodies fitting together as she then slowly pulled back. When the two bodies were only connected by their fingertips, her companion rushed forward to catch up with her, and the two of them hugged each other tightly again, repeatedly. This makes her recall the time when she left her relatives and hometown to take the train to Beijing for work.

Figure. 14 Tan Qirong and Luo Xuefang's Embrace.

After the farewell pair dance, there was a group hug. There are no so-called fixed partners here, and each rehearsal may be with a different partner, but each time one can feel the clash of their strong, sincere bodies, not performing anything, but using the embrace to dissipate an emotion and give encouragement to themselves and others. When this behaviour takes place in the performance space, as audiences there is a moment in which we seem to bridge the gap between stage and reality, closing the distance between viewing-performing and realising that it seems as if we have not had the impulse to embrace as much in a very long time. Domestic worker Ye Fengmei, who is a performer in the work, was touched by the embrace and shared how she felt after the embrace with her dance partner,

> Her heart was beating, and her arms were around me. That moment made me feel
> like letting go, and after that the two bodies kept twining and weaving together, as
> if I had found someone to talk to. And to be sure that she desired to confide in me
> as well. (pers.comm., 11 March 2023)

Figure.15-16 Ye Fengmei talking about her feelings on the farewell pair dance of Tan Qirong and Luo Xuefang. The order of the figures in the picture (from left to right): Luo Xuefang, Tan Qirong, Zhang Dongmei, Ye Fengmei.

Making Identity Acceptance and Exporting One's Voice through Art Creation

The Picun Literary Group and the periodical it organised became a channel for the voice of the migrant workers. In the follow-up of this study on the Picun community, it was found that in May 2023 the Museum of Working People's Culture and Art in Picun, Beijing, was demolished. It was the only museum in China founded by migrant workers themselves, launched on 1 May 2008. It displays the typical characters and incidents of injustice suffered by the working class over the years. According to Ma Dayong, it was 'because a car park is to be built in Picun' (pers.comm., June 29, 2023). The Literature Group then decided the theme of the latest issue of its journal to be The Demolition of the Museum of Working People.

In Wan Changwu's article, the worker says, 'since there is such a history in the course of time, why should we leave it blank, and since history is written by the people, why should we be ignored' (Wan 2023, 32). Working literature can be a tool to respond to lives and how they see them, according to Xiao Hai in the Picun Literature Group (pers.comm., April 1, 2023). Sun Heng said, 'I am becoming more and more aware of the importance of working culture, and after doing these things (writing, Workers' Art Group activities), the negativity is slowly disappearing, and I am aware of the group I belong to and the support behind it' (pers.comm., April 1, 2023).

The music performance team founded by Sun Heng and others was later renamed the New Workers' Art Group, and the periodical issued by the literary group was also called New Workers' Literature. Sun Heng explained that in the past, society used to call us wage earners, which meant that we were a group of hired labourers. The term 'new workers' represents a social status of ownership, and secondly, new workers are a conscious pursuit of our own, which also includes an urge to create a new working class and a new social culture (Sun Heng, pers.comm., April 8, 2023).

Behind China's fast-growing urbanisation rate, there are hints of the awkward situation of those who have lost their hometowns and are in 'transitional identities'. Their silent, muddy, unobtrusive backs are buried in a larger context of unity, bustle, and celebration. Harriet Evans commented in a conversation about her book *Beijing from Below* (2020) that the success of wealth creation and urban regeneration is dependent on the creation of a certain disadvantage, namely, it relies on the exclusion of the underclass, or precarious precariat, from formal

channels of access to welfare (2021). What cannot be ignored in the social development of collectivity, therefore, is the emergence of large numbers of migrant populations and how their identities and benefits as individuals are protected and embodied.

The emergencies related to covid-19 that have occurred in Chinese society over the past three years have deepened our concern for the sense of subjectivity and the right to well-being of the underprivileged migrants. The underclass is often the outermost and first to be hit by social upheavals. In the context of protection against viruses, mobility and migrant populations almost represent the spread of viruses. People are prevented from traveling between urban and rural areas for work and family reunions by various regulations restricting mobility. There were frequent instances of local landlords interrupting tenancies because of discrimination against migrants. People walked thousands of miles from their cities back to their homes because they were unable to use public transportation. The suspension of law and morality in such emergencies deprives already fragile lives of basic protection and dignity in society. This leads us to reflect on the fundamental question of how life can freely liberate its subjectivity and develop its rights and well-being in society of emergencies.

In investigating the art activities of two NGOs brought me to realizing a sensible way of living with art. Art and community forge a connectivity, where the people who gather here carry a commonality and a desire for a certain pursuit. The rehearsals at the domestic workers' theatre are a vivid example where art-making serves as a meeting subject and the risk of quarantine has not deterred the desire to meet. I noticed that as they negotiated their time off with their employers, many emphasized the need to reserve the day of Saturday so that she could come to rehearsals or meetings. They seemed to find a spiritual dwelling here, a dwelling that became a spiritually separate space while also being an intimate shared space.

As I found in the tracking of arts activities in Hongyan and Picun, the community work of NGOs around arts activities/artistic creation developed a unique cultural experience and practical effect. Cultivating the subjectivity of the migrant population by means of art stimulates the identification with the environment and its culture, which becomes the beginning of an endogenous and autonomous culture in which the individual is the main focus. Secondly, it allows for a de-politicised lyricism, a de-centred storytelling, where diverse individuals tell their own stories, which in turn connects to its globalised picture to show the true state of

existence of each individual. Moreover, the art of recognising and appreciating spontaneity leads to the initiating of acute corporeal perception, allowing individuals to harvest empathy in the entwining of experiences, thus building a sense of trust in the environment and others. In such community creation, each member within the organisation builds a more intimate and meaningful connection.

Chapter III

De-hierarchical Choreography and Movement Methods

This chapter explores the hierarchical relationships in traditional choreography and the shift towards a de-hierarchized choreography model, particularly in its application to marginalized communities. Under the traditional choreography model, the choreographer holds absolute creative authority, while dancers, as executors of movements, lack creative autonomy. In contrast, de-hierarchized choreography, through collective creation and improvisation, breaks down this power structure, emphasizing equal interaction between the choreographer and dancers, granting dancers more opportunities for creative expression. The article further analyzes the practice of de-hierarchized choreography within marginalized communities, especially among Beijing's migrant population and domestic workers. Through decentralized creative methods, these groups can express their experiences and identities in dance, gaining empowerment and social recognition.

In traditional choreography systems, the hierarchical relationship between the choreographer and the dancer is often clear and explicit, reflecting a top-down structure of control and execution. As the dominant figure in the creative process, the choreographer holds the primary responsibility for designing movements, constructing the dance's structure, and conveying artistic intent. In contrast, the role of the dancer is primarily to perform these pre-designed movements. This hierarchical relationship can be traced back to Western dance traditions, particularly in classical ballet, where the choreographer's artistic status and authority are highly emphasized. While a dancer's technical skill is crucial within this system, their role in the creative process is more that of an executor than a creator. The advantage of this model lies in the coherence and completeness of the work, ensuring the choreographer's intent is precisely conveyed. However, its limitations are also apparent, as the dancer's personal creativity and artistic expression are suppressed, and the creative process lacks equal dialogue and interaction.

In the late 20th century, the development of modern and postmodern dance gradually challenged this traditional hierarchical relationship. As new dance concepts emerged, choreography was no longer solely the task of a single choreographer but became a collective creation. In this new choreography model, dancers transitioned from mere executors to co-creators, contributing not only in performing movements but also in generating creative ideas. This shift is closely tied to the development of multiculturalism in society, the awakening of individual consciousness, and the increased emphasis on personal expression in artistic creation. From this, the concept of de-hierarchical choreography emerged, emphasizing equality between dancers and choreographers, valuing collective wisdom and creativity, and promoting openness and diversity in the creative process.

One significant feature of de-hierarchical choreography is the widespread use of improvisation. Improvisation, as a way of breaking away from fixed movements and opening up bodily expression, grants dancers a great deal of freedom. In de-hierarchical choreography, the choreographer no longer dictates all movements and emotional expressions but instead collaborates with the dancers through dialogue and interaction to co-create the dance piece. The choreographer's role shifts from that of an absolute authority to more of a guide or facilitator, no longer making all artistic decisions alone, but exploring a balance of creativity and expression alongside the dancers. This open creative model stimulates the dancers' individual creativity, allowing each participant to find their own voice within the work.

This shift in choreographic philosophy holds particular significance in the artistic practice of marginalized communities and migrant populations. For these groups, de-hierarchical choreography is not only an innovation in artistic expression but also a reflection and reconfiguration of social power structures. In many traditional choreography systems, the voices of marginalized groups are often overlooked, and their personal experiences and identities are not respected in the creative process. However, de-hierarchical choreography, through its decentralized creative methods, provides these groups with opportunities to express themselves and tell their stories. For instance, in the physical theatre of Beijing's migrant population, choreographers adopt de-hierarchical methods, using improvisation and collective discussion to enable participants to express their life experiences, identities, and cultural belonging through their bodies. In this process, the choreographer is not an external controller

but collaborates with the participants through dialogue and feedback to help them complete the work together. This equal creative process breaks traditional artistic hierarchies, granting participants more agency and opportunities for self-expression.

The artistic practice within the domestic worker community is a typical example of de-hierarchical choreography. In this community, most members are female migrant workers from rural areas, engaged in domestic work in the city, often isolated in both their living and working environments. Through de-hierarchical choreography, the domestic worker community can express their daily experiences and emotions in the form of physical theatre. This creative model not only dismantles hierarchical structures in artistic creation but also provides these women with a public platform to share their stories through bodily expression, enhancing their self-identity and sense of community belonging.

Hierarchical Relationships in Traditional Choreography

In the traditional choreography system, choreographers are the primary creators and decision-makers. They are responsible for designing the overall structure of the dance, arranging the movements, coordinating the music, and setting the stage. They bear ultimate responsibility for the final presentation of the work. Dancers, on the other hand, primarily follow the choreographer's guidance to perform. They are usually in a subordinate position within the traditional choreography system, with their creativity and participation largely limited to interpreting and executing the choreographer's instructions. This centralized decision-making approach ensures the unity of the work and the realization of the choreographer's artistic intent, but it also restricts the dancers' initiative and creativity in the creative process (Santos and Massarani, 2019).

Since choreographers hold all creative power, the dance works within traditional choreography systems often reflect the choreographer's personal style and perspective. According to Klien (2007), the traditional choreography structure is typically a top-down model, with dancers' individuality and creativity minimally integrated into the final work. This concentration of authority can also stifle innovation and diversity in dance works because the space for dancers' self-expression is limited. Franko (2011) further discusses that due to the

excessive concentration of authority, the forms and content of dance often remain conservative and struggle to adapt to new artistic concepts and social changes.

This mode of traditional choreography is particularly evident in 19th and early 20th-century European classical ballet. Choreographers such as Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky and Marius Petipa characterized classical ballet with rigorous choreography and standardized movements, emphasizing the dancers' subordination and obedience to the choreographer (Daly, 2002). This highly hierarchical choreography system reinforced the dancers' role as executors within the work. Jones (2018) emphasizes that while this hierarchical relationship has advantages in terms of technical and artistic standardization, it has limitations in terms of artistic diversity and innovation.

With the development of modern dance, especially with the rise of postmodern dance in the mid-20th century, the traditional hierarchical relationships in choreography began to be challenged. Daly (2002) notes that modern dance advocates aimed to break this top-down power structure, proposing more democratic methods of creation, allowing dancers to participate more in the choreography process. Particularly in de-hierarchical choreography practices, choreography is no longer the responsibility of a single leader but becomes a collaborative endeavor where dancers are co-creators, reflecting the trend of social structure moving towards diversity and democratization (Klien, 2007).

The Rise of De-hierarchical Choreography

At the beginning of the 20th century, dance education and choreography were undergoing profound transformations. The decentralized choreography methods and teaching practices implemented by German dancer Rudolf Laban at Monte Verità in Switzerland represented the core of this transformation. During this period, Laban explored the freedom of dance, de-classified teaching methods, and a comprehensive liberation of the body. He believed that dance should break away from traditional centralization and hierarchical systems. Traditional dance education and performance models often emphasize technical precision and hierarchical divisions, whereas Laban advocated for exploring the body's possibilities through a freer approach (Sparling, 2009). Laban encouraged collaboration and communication among

dancers, believing that collective creation could lead to richer artistic expression (Cohen, 2012). His choreographic methods focused on group interaction and collaboration rather than individual heroism (Gordon, 2014). He encouraged dancers to participate in the choreography process and to create dance works through collective creation (Sparling, 2009). At Monte Verità, Laban emphasized the integration of art into daily life (Cohen, 2012). He believed that dance should not be confined to the stage but should become a part of everyday life (Gordon, 2014). Therefore, he encouraged dancers to incorporate dance into daily activities and explore the relationship between the body and the environment (Hanna, 1999). Laban's practice highlighted the relationship between art and society, promoting the socialization and popularization of art (Gordon, 2014). His decentralized philosophy provided a new perspective on the social functions of art and influenced the social practice of art (Sparling, 2009).

The true rise of de-hierarchical choreography occurred in the mid-20th century, evolving with the advent of postmodern dance. Postmodern dance challenged the authority of traditional modern dance, advocating that dance should no longer be solely controlled by choreographers but should encourage greater autonomy for dancers in the creative process. Sally Banes explored how postmodern dancers like Yvonne Rainer and Trisha Brown removed hierarchical structures in traditional choreography through improvisation, collective creation, and anti-formalism in *Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance* (1987). This decentralized approach to creation reflected the cultural pursuit of individual freedom and diverse expression of the time. The de-hierarchical choreography concept can also be traced back to the countercultural movements of the 1960s. During this period, Western society underwent profound social changes, with personal freedom, equality, and anti-authoritarianism becoming mainstream ideas. Jill Johnston described how the dance community was influenced by the countercultural movement in *Marmalade Me* (1971), emphasizing collective creation, democratic participation, and anti-authoritarian choreographic methods. This cultural background encouraged dancers to explore more egalitarian creative relationships, leading to the gradual development of de-hierarchical choreography as a new creative model.

The rise of de-hierarchical choreography was also closely related to interdisciplinary experimentation in 20th-century performance arts. Susan Foster discussed how artists in the 20th century explored new relationships between the body and performance by breaking down

traditional art form boundaries in *Choreographing Empathy: Kinesthesia in Performance* (2010). Particularly in experimental theatre and body performance fields, the relationship between choreographers and performers was redefined, with choreography no longer being designed by a single creator but becoming a result of collective collaboration. This interdisciplinary artistic practice advanced the application of de-hierarchical concepts in dance creation. The feminist movement in the 20th century also played a significant role in the rise of de-hierarchical choreography. Ann Cooper Albright discussed in *Choreographing Difference: The Body and Identity in Contemporary Dance* (1997) how feminists expressed the autonomy and liberation of the body through dance. She noted that feminists opposed traditional authority structures and advocated that dance creation should reflect values of equality and inclusivity. This ideology promoted the development of de-hierarchical choreography, encouraging creators to respect and integrate each dancer's uniqueness in the choreography process.

Therefore, the rise of de-hierarchical choreography is closely related to a series of social, cultural, and artistic movements in the 20th century. It is not only a rebellion against traditional authority structures but also a pursuit of individual freedom, collective collaboration, and diverse expression. The formation of this choreography concept intertwines with modernism, postmodernism, feminism, countercultural movements, and interdisciplinary artistic experiments, forming the historical context and theoretical foundation of de-hierarchical choreography.

Application of De-hierarchical Choreography in Domestic Workers' Communities

The de-hierarchical choreography model enhances the engagement and involvement of all participants by encouraging their creative contributions. In this model, artistic creation is not the privilege of a few but a collective outcome of the entire community. This participatory approach increases community members' identification with and responsibility for art projects, fostering their active involvement and sustained engagement. The following discusses the importance of de-hierarchical choreography in community art, with a focus on its application

in domestic workers' physical theatre. De-hierarchical choreography, through collective creation, improvisation, and participatory dialogue, encourages equal participation from all members, enhancing the diversity and inclusiveness of artistic works. This text provides real-life examples from domestic workers' physical theatre to illustrate how de-hierarchical choreography strengthens personal and community connections and reflects the social and cultural background of migrant populations.

1. Collective Creation

Work Method: In the domestic workers' case, their work method involves collective creation under the de-hierarchical choreography model. The creation process is typically carried out collaboratively by all participants rather than being led by a choreographer. This collective approach allows each member to contribute their ideas and creativity, resulting in more diverse and inclusive works.

Example: In the physical theatre of domestic workers, all creative outputs are the result of collective brainstorming. This is also reflected in the promotional poster for the performance, which features a drawing by a domestic worker. She drew a three-headed, six-armed woman and a flower representing female genitalia. This imagery reflects her experiences growing up in the countryside, where menstrual and genital issues were often described negatively, leading to a sense of "menstrual shame." By depicting the female body with flowers, she illustrates beauty and acceptance of the body. The art design was highlighted in interviews as a unique contribution, demonstrating the feasibility of collective creation.

2. Improvisation

Work Method: De-hierarchical choreography encourages improvisation, allowing dancers to express themselves freely based on the situation and their feelings during the performance. This approach reduces pre-set movements and steps, enabling participants to respond instantly to their bodily sensations and emotions, creating unique artistic expressions that enhance dancers' freedom and creative flexibility.

Example: For migrant workers, Contact Improvisation or any form of de-hierarchical and self-initiated movement offers them a comfortable space free from social or professional labels. Their choreography incorporates various approaches based on the choreographer's training in contact improvisation, the Feldenkrais Method, the Jacques Lecoq Method, and Tai Chi.

Domestic workers practice contact improvisation most frequently in rehearsals. Through 'chance encounters' and corporeal collaborations with diverse people, they build intricate relationships based on these spontaneous interactions. Such dance collaborations focus on bodily sensations, touch, and the force of each participant, respecting and appreciating each other's unique contributions.

3. Participation and Communication

Work Method: The de-hierarchical choreography model emphasizes equal communication and collaboration among dancers, allowing each participant to offer opinions and suggestions during the creation process. This approach fosters interaction and communication among participants, enhancing community cohesion.

Example: Community dance workshops and participatory art projects often use group discussions to share opinions and understand each other. Such dialogues ensure that every participant's voice is heard, strengthening the overall sense of participation and belonging in the community. At the beginning of a performance, domestic workers gather and walk while discussing personal experiences shared by one of them during an earlier group chat. For example, a domestic worker, newly arrived in Beijing, mistook the sound of a TV for speech in her employer's room due to her previous environment where such standard Mandarin was only heard on television. This unique story, interspersed with dialects and Mandarin, and accompanied by disordered walking, resonates with other domestic workers and helps the audience understand the confusion and disorientation of migrant populations in new environments.

How Movement Methods Support De-hierarchical Community Art

Contact Improvisation (CI) is a dance form based on bodily contact and spontaneous creation, initiated by Steve Paxton in the 1970s. It emphasizes interaction through bodily contact and immediate response during the dance, rather than relying on pre-choreographed movements or fixed dance techniques. This approach disrupts the structural and formalistic constraints of traditional dance, providing dancers with greater freedom and creative space (Paxton, 1979).

The core of Contact Improvisation lies in its de-centralized nature. During improvisation, dancers co-create the dance without a single leader or defined centre. Each dancer's body and reactions become integral parts of the creation process, and all participants are equal in the dance (Hanna, 1987). This de-hierarchical feature aligns with the principles of de-centralized choreography, offering significant inspiration and practical experience.

Michel Foucault's theory of power provides a philosophical foundation for understanding how Contact Improvisation informs de-hierarchical choreography. Foucault argued that power is not concentrated at a single point or entity but is dispersed across various aspects of society, forming a networked power relationship (Foucault, 1977). Foucault's concept of power as a networked force present in every corner of society (Foucault, 1977) parallels the way Contact Improvisation breaks the traditional power centres in dance, allowing all dancers to contribute actively to the creation process.

Contact improvisation and Feldenkrais are two of the main training methods used by the choreographer in rehearsals for domestic workers. I noticed a scene that often resonated with the domestic workers in rehearsals. It was the 'Separation' duet between Tan Qirong and Luo Xuefeng. They look at each other, run towards each other, embrace, and then separate. Notably, the 'running towards each other' and 'embracing' are not designed movements but are developed during improvisation. They 'alertly' watch and sense their partners, and at a certain point, like two magnets that have found their positive and negative polarity, they are suddenly attached to each other. What is trusted in such a way of moving is one's base survival intuition, through which one decides whether I am going to take on a partner or apply weight to a partner. As Steve Paxton says, "it is a happening form". This happening allows movement to be movement, and leaves the self-open and productive in a state of mind-body oneness, and enables human relationships to be one of rapport, change, equality, listening to one another, and conformity.

The choreography and the free-form movement training in the community focus on the body's intuition and rely on the body's base sense of survival. Somatic ways of being aware of the body pave the way for the domestic workers to pay attention to the body's perceptions and to be alert to look inward first before working with others. This is the first step in building empathy. Contact improvisation develops for them a concept of interpersonal relationships

based on chance. Each moment in improvisation is unpredictable and full of change in the participants' relationships with each other, a reorganisation of forces, dynamics and other factors in that one moment. Each contact throughout the process of improvised movement change is an assemblage of various contingencies. In this relationship, each participant is a constructor of the relationship, but not a determiner. Listening and responding to each other drives a continuous transformation of the relationship that reflects a certain situation or relational possibility of human existence as a community.

Therefore, future choreographies with mobile workers should establish decentred choreographic and community organisational approaches in which free-form movement training is appreciated. In this sense, we start from a focus on the corporeal experience, so that people feel happy about gaining knowledge and making connections from their bodies. Furthermore, the organisers, participants and artists work together in a way that 'contributes to the experience' and 'collects the experience', the artist withdraws from the 'centre of power' and the way of working changes from leading to 'guiding'. In such a collaborative model, all participants weave a network of accountability and share the responsibility equally.

Research Theme Two: Community and Public Space

In the early 20th century, Laban encouraged his students to work in a variety of less physically restrictive environments. He wanted his students to experience a new way of life - a way of dancing outdoors that would liberate the boundaries of solid materials. Thus, from 1911 to 1914, his workshops, schools, and performances took place at a health farm in Munich in the winter and at Mount Veritas in Ascona (on Lake Maggiore, Switzerland) in the summer (maletic).

Mount Veritas was founded in 1900 by Henry Oedenkoven from Antwerp, the pianist Ida Hofmann from Montenegro, the artist Gusto and the ex-officer Karl Gräser from Transylvania. The group began to advocate, in 1900, a new way of life. These reformers sought a third way between capitalism and communism at Mount Veritas. The alternative life explored here was a utopia woven together by people who shared a common belief. In a document on the educational ideology and historical review of the Mount Veritas Art School, it is mentioned that Mount Veritas was more like a sanatorium dominated by the belief in saving the strength of the body and mind (p4, title Mount Veritas Art School). In surviving historical images from that period, they are shown draped in loose flowing garments with long hair, working in gardens and fields, building simple wooden huts, relaxing in dances and nude baths, exposing their bodies to light, air, sun and water.

In *Mountain of Truth: The Counterculture Begins, Ascona, 1900-1920* (1986), one of the most comprehensive English books on the history of the Mountain of Truth, Martin Green describes in detail the founding of the Mountain of Truth, its way of life, and its impact on European culture. These inhabitants of Mount Veritas preached the purity of nature and had a diet based exclusively on plants, vegetables, and fruits, with no animal ingredients whatsoever. Their social organisation was based on the co-operative system, through which they strove for women's liberation, self-criticism, new ways of cultivating the mind and spirit, and body-mind oneness. Harald Szeemann (ed.) in Monte Verità: Berg der Wahrheit, ein Sanatorium der Sehnsucht nach dem richtigen Leben (1978) combines artistic, historical, and cultural studies to explore the various experiments in life on Mount Veritas and their impact on modern art and culture. Philosophers, writers, artists, and psychologists who explored alternative lifestyles

each sought inspiration at Mount Veritas. Intellectuals such as James Joyce, Martin Buber, Paul Cassier, Carl Gustav Jung, Hans Arp, Hugo Bauer, and Oskar Schlemmer considered Mount Veritas their meeting place. Oedenkoven also established an art school as an 'individualist co-operative'. After Laban's arrival in 1913, the school began to use his new educational principles as a guiding basis (see the school's 1913 charter).

Ingeborg Oehme in the book Jüngling, Bernhard Giger, and Hanspeter Manz - Monte Verità: Sanatorium der Sehnsucht (2017) explores the role of the Mount Veritas as a social and cultural proving ground, especially for the artists of the time, thinkers and reformers of the time. Truth Mountain was an 'individualist' or 'anarchist' living space constructed by people of common faith, who formed a co-operative pattern that drove each member of the inner circle to share responsibility. Laban as one of the leading figures in the community has boldly applied his ideas of harmony to a mix of artistic practice and teaching at Mount Veritas in Switzerland. He was passionate about dancing in outdoor environments and celebrated the harmonious symbiosis between the human body and the natural environment. What can be found in the practice of the art schools directed by Laban during this period is a mixed practice of nude dance, speaking, theatre and music, which drew on each other for sustenance and inspiration in a collaborative effort.

The hybrid artistic practices of the likes of Laban and Mary Wegman at Mount Veritas in the early 20th century influenced modernist and postmodernist dance. We can see a de-layered choreographic philosophy later developing in the mid-20th century with the rise of postmodern dance. Representatives of postmodern dance such as Yvonne Rainer and Trisha Brown challenged the authority of traditional modern dance, arguing that dance should no longer be solely under the unilateral control of the choreographer, but rather that dancers should be encouraged to exercise greater autonomy in the creative process. The formation of this de-centred approach to creativity is closely linked to the interdisciplinary experimentation of performance. How artists have explored new relationships between the body and performance by breaking down the boundaries of traditional art forms: the relationship between choreographer and performer has been redefined, and choreography is no longer devised by a single creator, but becomes the result of collective collaboration. This interdisciplinary artistic

practice promotes the application of the concept of de- hierarchy in the creation of choreography.

However, by the mid-1920s, the original community at Mount Veritas began to decline.Locatelli, M. (2012), Klein, J. P. (2002) in their writings reveal the reasons that led to the decline of this experiment . These include changes in leadership, internal divisions, and waning outside interest in this alternative lifestyle. As the political and social situation in Europe changed, the influence of Mount Veritas began to decline.In 1926, Mount Veritas was purchased by Eduard von der Heydt, a German banker, who transformed it into an upscale hotel and sanatorium. While still retaining some elements of health and spiritual pursuits, this transformation marked the end of Mount Veritas as a radical social experiment.

Mount Veritas represented a radical rethinking of modern lifestyles and social values, attempting to find a purer and more authentic mode of living by returning to nature and individual freedom. Although the Mount Veritas lifestyle was considered radical and even fringe at the time, it had a profound impact on subsequent cultural and intellectual trends. Many of the people who lived and created there later became important figures in their fields, and Mount Veritas's experimental lifestyle also provided inspiration for later anti-mainstream cultural movements.

Laban and his dance collaborators' experiments at the Mountain of Truth not only advanced the transformation of dance education concepts but also prompted artists to rethink the relationship between art and life. This return to nature, emphasizing individual liberation, represents not just the expression of bodily freedom but also a redefinition of social space, community organization, and public ways of living. This dance experiment illustrates that bodily movement in public space is not only a form of self-expression but also a means of interaction and connection with the environment and others. Public space becomes a site for individuals to engage with society, while dance, as a performative form, serves as a medium to establish connections with others and the space around them. Therefore, Laban's dance practice signifies not only the liberation of the body but also the practical transformation and utilization of public spaces.

Furthermore, Laban's artistic community at the Mountain of Truth reflects this redefinition of public space. Here, public space is not merely a venue for gatherings or

performances but a place where everyone can participate, contribute, and share. It blurs the boundaries between private and public spaces, emphasizing the roles and responsibilities of individuals within public spaces. The connection between public space and community art thus becomes increasingly evident. It not only provides artists with a creative environment but also serves as a platform to stimulate community vitality and promote interaction among community members. In such spaces, artistic creation becomes a collective process rather than an individual act, developed and participated in alongside the community. Through his dance experiments, Laban revealed the harmonious coexistence of body and space, laying the groundwork for the development of community art. Public life spaces are no longer merely geographical locations; they become mediums for deeper interactions between individuals and society.

My research spans the entire COVID-19 pandemic, a time when global mobility has been more or less restricted and obstructed. However, due to intertwined factors of health, hygiene, and social unrest, this period also marks a time of global movement. Although the number of travelers has decreased, migrants and refugees are still moving across the globe. Therefore, my investigation also focuses on the stories emerging from these movements. These narratives involve different people searching for a place to settle in the world, raising a question in my mind: if ideal places abound, why do bodies remain displaced? Where can we gather amid this mobility? Can this gathering place become a home, embracing our naked lives in an uncertain and complex era?

In this section, we discuss a space that is neither private nor entirely physical; it serves as a social public space that bears social exchanges, collective memories, freedom of expression, and cohesion. It not only carries the network of interactions between individuals and society but also serves as a field for constructing group identity and cultural meaning. Therefore, Chapter 4 reviews the records and reflections from my visits and investigations in Hong Kong, particularly observations in the realm of community art and community life. The following Chapter 5 focuses on the community artistic life of residents in Beijing during the strict COVID-19 lockdown, where spontaneous gatherings of square dance emerged on the streets. It examines the tension between the autonomy of community life spaces and public policy, reflecting on the challenges and crises that public spaces face in the post-pandemic era.

Chapter IV

Settling Down or Nomadism? Observations on Post-Pandemic Community Art in Hong Kong

This chapter explores the shifting notions of habitation and belonging in the post-pandemic context, with a focus on community art practices in Hong Kong. The narrative begins with personal reflections on arriving in Hong Kong on the day its borders reopened in February 2023, revealing a quieter city shaped by emigration and pandemic disruptions. Through interviews with both emigrants and those who remained, the chapter examines how individuals navigate emotional, psychological, and spatial transitions in uncertain times. A central case study centres on the Centre for Community Cultural Development (CCCD), whose inclusive community art initiatives—such as Saori weaving and participatory music performances—serve as powerful tools for resilience, expression, and community connection. The stories shared by CCCD participants illuminate how art fosters memory, solidarity, and a renewed sense of place. Drawing on theoretical frameworks including Deleuze's concept of nomadism (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) and Agamben's "state of emergency, (Agamben, 2005)" the chapter also reflects on the author's personal experience as a "reverse traveler" during the pandemic. Ultimately, it challenges the binary of settling down versus nomadism, proposing instead a fluid and embodied understanding of habitation—one rooted in perception, presence, and the continual redefinition of identity.

On February 6, 2023, Hong Kong and mainland China fully reopened their borders, lifting the previous daily travel quotas and eliminating the requirement for a negative PCR test. All border checkpoints resumed operations, marking a return to pre-pandemic levels of movement between the regions. I arrived in Hong Kong on this day to begin a short-term visit, starting at the School of Dance at HKAPA. My focus was to explore the professional dance ecology and

community arts scene in Hong Kong, particularly the connections fostered by the APA within the local dance community.

Ten years ago, I frequently came here for competitions and classes, and the layout of the streets and urban spaces was almost identical to what it is now. However, this trip to Hong Kong left a distinct impression on me. Hong Kong seemed notably quieter, as if the usual bustle was gone. Although businesses had resumed operations, some storefronts had closed permanently due to the pandemic's impact.

In recent years, Hong Kong has experienced a significant wave of emigration. According to data from the Hong Kong Government and various research institutions (Census and Statistics Department of Hong Kong, 2022), approximately 120,000 to 140,000 residents chose to emigrate between 2020 and 2022. The *South China Morning Post* reported that in 2021 alone, the net emigration reached around 89,000 people, which was a notable increase compared to previous migration trends.

The numbers may reflect people's concerns about the future and a desire for inclusivity, raising two key questions for me: How are those who left and those who stayed faring? After returning to the UK, I contacted and interviewed a former Hong Kong-based pianist who had emigrated to the UK during the pandemic. He, his wife, and their child now live in a small, narrow house near London's Chinatown. The piano, his livelihood, is the most important piece of furniture in their home, as he teaches piano lessons both online and in person. Although he appreciates the greater freedom, he mentioned that their standard of living has declined, and the emotional and psychological strain of leaving his homeland persists. When I asked if he regretted his decision, he replied, "If I were to make the choice again under those circumstances, the outcome would likely be the same."

Some residents who stayed in Hong Kong seem to have discovered new ways to explore the city during the pandemic. *Urban Walking Studies: Starting from Hong Kong*, written by Sampson Wong during the pandemic, explores how walking became a new way to find joy in the city amidst movement restrictions. The book goes beyond highlighting distinctive architecture and hidden paths, focusing instead on observing everyday urban elements like signs, phone booths, advertisements, and graffiti. These ordinary details reveal the city's unique character and history.The book mentions interesting stories, such as residents engaging in

socially distanced interactions from their balconies or organizing small gatherings within their neighborhoods to increase community interaction. Others began to explore less-traveled streets, discovering new cafes and hidden gardens. These stories emphasize people's ability to find connection and support during challenging times. This mode of walking has also prompted greater attention to neighborhood relationships and the micro-ecology of urban spaces.During the pandemic, public spaces transitioned from being mere backdrops to bustling city life to becoming vital places where people sought comfort and psychological relief. This shift not only highlighted the flexibility and importance of urban spaces but also demonstrated how the dynamic relationship between people and their environment could be redefined during extraordinary times.

The CCCD (Centre for Community Cultural Development) is a non-profit organization based in Hong Kong that aims to foster community development and promote social inclusion through arts and cultural projects. The centre runs various community art projects encompassing performing arts, visual arts, crafts, music, and more, with a focus on encouraging cultural expression and community building among marginalized groups. Mr.Mok Chiu Yu, CCCD's director, was my first interviewee during my stay in Hong Kong. Upon our initial meeting, he handed me a stack of booklets showcasing the diverse and impactful community art projects that CCCD has conducted over the years. This clearly reflects a rich and varied community with significant achievements. One of their projects involves the weaving art form known as Saori, which Mok introduced to Hong Kong in the 1990s. Saori is a form of free weaving art from Japan, created in 1969 by Misao Jo. Unlike traditional weaving, Saori places less emphasis on precise symmetry and mechanical repetition. Instead, it encourages improvisation based on one's feelings. Weavers can use different colors, materials, and even add spontaneous embellishments. Saori embodies the concept of "no mistakes in weaving," celebrating each piece's "imperfections" or "irregularities" as expressions of personal creativity.

In my view, these inclusive principles permeate CCCD's other art projects and are reflected in the everyday interactions among community members. During my first meeting with Mok, he took me into their Saori workshop. There, a visually impaired individual was weaving Saori. I remember Mok introducing me to this person with the following description:

"Her name is Lynn; she's a girl with long hair, a bright smile, wearing a knitted cardigan, and carrying a nylon backpack." I still recall this introduction vividly because it made me aware of the thoughtful attention paid to another tactile world.

Figure 17 CCCD community members immersed in the art of Saori weaving[5]

Later, I attended a rehearsal for one of their community music projects. They were preparing for a performance titled "Voices Hidden in the Community," which featured four elderly women. One of the elders, Jenny, shared during an interview that when the composer He Liqian asked her what her most memorable childhood moment was, she recalled her journey home from school. At that time, she lived on a boat docked at the pier with her parents, and every day after school, she had to leap over the gaps between the boats to get home. Each jump was a thrilling moment for little her. However, if she encountered neighbors, they would lift her up and pass her along the deck. Their community music weaves these stories together through

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[5] The image was taken by the author at CCCD in Hong Kong in 2023.

song and dialogue. In May 2023, they took this piece to Leeds, UK, where they performed alongside many elders from different regions. After the performance, I had a conversation with Jenny and asked her if she planned to leave Hong Kong. She replied, "I don't want to leave Hong Kong; it holds all my memories."

During that time, I also interviewed an audience member who had watched a physical theatre performance featuring domestic workers in Beijing. Born in Beijing, she had lived in France for ten years since she was twenty. She mentioned that it wasn't until her seventh year in France that she gained a deeper understanding of her living environment. This coincided with the first year of the COVID-19 outbreak in France, when fear of the unknown triggered a series of immoral actions. Asians faced random verbal abuse and even physical assaults on the streets. Surprised by the rapid shattering of civilization's mask, she said, "It was then that I truly realized this idealized world of life also harbored an irreconcilable and unbearable contradiction." Consequently, in 2023, she returned to her hometown, Beijing.

Her response, along with those of Jenny and the previously mentioned pianist, sparked my reflections on habitation. Where is the best place in the world? How do we define the best place in the world? My answer is "here," not "there." "Here" represents the present and embodies a sense of ownership. It also implies that we have established or are in the process of building intimate relationships with our surroundings. "Here" emphasizes forging close connections between people and the world, rather than viewing the world merely as a resource to be exploited. Thus, no single place can be deemed the best place; conversely, any place can be the best place. This depends on each individual's history, identity, and diverse aspirations.

Deleuze explored the construction of social space through the lens of nomadic thought. In contrast to fixed urban spaces and national borders, nomadic space is open and fluid, emphasizing freedom of movement and the blurriness of boundaries. In such spaces, actions and thoughts are unrestricted, allowing individuals to wander freely among various possibilities, forming new social relationships and experiences. His notion of "nomadism" indeed carries a strong idealistic tone; however, if we do not simply regard it as an abstract philosophical concept but implement it in concrete social practices, there may be cognitive gains.

During the period from 2020 to 2022, Chinese students studying abroad were referred to as "reverse travelers." Perhaps out of fear of the pandemic or fear of the unknown, many

Chinese people abroad were desperately trying to return home, while these students chose to venture out to study. I "unfortunately" became part of this reverse group, with some friends kindly asking, "Are you sure you want to go abroad?" Looking back now, it feels like a century has passed. However, this journey was significant because this tumultuous era presented an excellent opportunity for us reverse travelers to witness the true state of the world at that moment. We experienced everything that happens in society during what Agamben describes as a "state of emergency" and witnessed the resilience and tension exhibited by people on the move amid chaotic times. Throughout this process, we continuously migrated, transformed, and redefined ourselves.

Settling down or being nomadic? Perhaps it no longer matters. We can embrace nomadism as a way of habitation—residing in our bodies, inhabiting possibilities to perceive this world, to connect with the people in it, to hear their voices, to converse with them, to savor diverse cuisines, and to feel the warmth of sunlight permeating the air. Through this, we gradually learn to coexist with ourselves, see ourselves, hear ourselves, and continually discover who we are.

Chapter V

From Square Dancing to Modern Public Spaces and Public Life in Beijing

In China, many middle-aged and elderly individuals are obsessed with dancing square dance in parks. Their dances are simple, accompanied by deafening music, and occur day and night, often involving large groups ranging from a few dozen to over a hundred participants. Consequently, the younger generation of Chinese internet users frequently complains that they "morally occupy a significant portion of public space." Between 2020 and 2022, due to the invasion of the novel coronavirus and the implementation of strict pandemic control measures, all crowd-gathering activities in major public places were prohibited, leading some elderly individuals to isolate themselves at home to reduce infection risk. However, this did not stop them from dancing. During this period, square dance activities transitioned from offline to online. In 2023, shortly after China emerged from the shadow of the pandemic, the restrictions on social and public space usage that were imposed during the lockdown left lingering effects: people began to actively avoid gatherings, even in "low-risk areas" under policy control, out of fear of a resurgence of the virus. When a group of square dancers was not allowed to dance in parks, they organized on the streets, as the streets had not yet been explicitly designated under any jurisdiction. For a time, an interesting phenomenon emerged, with more and more people dancing and gathering on the streets.

Meanwhile, research has noted that many universities remained closed or restricted access to the outside world even after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. These phenomena have prompted multifaceted reflections on the ethics of public space usage. By analyzing this situation, the roles of parks, streets, and universities as public spaces, the rationality of closed management, and their social and ethical implications can be better understood. Do universities still bear a social responsibility to remain open? Does the continued restriction of public access after the impact of the pandemic wane indicate a shift of universities from public institutions

to quasi-public spaces? These questions directly challenge the traditional role of universities as places for knowledge sharing and cultural intersection in democratic societies, while also provoking broader discussions on the changing role of universities in society. Additionally, the phenomenon of parks still prohibiting square dance activities after the end of COVID-19 lockdowns due to concerns about infection risk also exposes the tension between public space management and individual freedom.

The openness and freedom of public spaces provide a platform for citizens to express their individual identities and creativity. Thus, these spaces serve not only as venues for leisure and entertainment but also as vital components of the social democratic process. As Oldenburg pointed out, true public spaces grant individuals the opportunity to express their uniqueness and pursue self-actualization. In such spaces, people can freely become who they want to be, and this freedom of interaction helps break the constraints of social class and identity. The phenomenon of square dancing not only concerns the usage of public spaces but also involves the concept of "artistic citizenship." Artistic citizenship refers to the rights of individuals and groups to freely participate in artistic and cultural activities in the public domain. It emphasizes that everyone has the right to express themselves through art and to engage in collective cultural practices within public spaces. As a form of collective dance, square dancing is not merely an entertainment activity; it has become an essential means for middle-aged and elderly groups to maintain social connections, promote physical health, and express their identities.

After the pandemic, the usage of public spaces has been subjected to stricter management. For example, many universities still limit external access, gradually transforming them from open public spaces to quasi-public spaces. This shift challenges the traditional role of universities as places for knowledge sharing and cultural intersection, reflecting societal anxieties regarding the safety and openness of public spaces in the post-pandemic context. Parks are similarly affected; although many square dance activities have gradually resumed after the end of the pandemic, some parks remain vigilant against gatherings due to concerns about infection risks in 2023. These management measures reflect the necessity of public health while also revealing the tension in the post-pandemic era regarding how to balance public safety with individual freedom, as well as public spaces with private needs.

The public spaces of modern society are gradually losing their democratic and open character. The conflicts and restrictions surrounding square dancing, the closure of universities to the public, and the management of park and street usage all exemplify a crisis in public spaces. As urbanization accelerates, an increasing number of public spaces are functionally designated for commercial districts, residential areas, or limited use by specific groups. This change restricts people's rights to freely participate in public life and suppresses individual artistic expression and cultural creativity. To address this crisis, we need to rethink the management models of public spaces, particularly how to encourage different social groups to participate in and share these spaces while safeguarding public interests. The square dancing phenomenon is not only a sociocultural occurrence but also offers an opportunity for us to reflect on the significance of public spaces and their contribution to social democracy. At the core of artistic citizenship is the empowerment of each individual to freely express and participate in public spaces, and this right must be balanced with the management of public spaces, social equity, and individual freedom.

Review of the History and Democratic Power of the Third Place

The concept of the "Third Place" was introduced by American sociologist Ray Oldenburg in his book *The Great Good Place* (1989). The "Third Place" refers to public spaces where people gather for social activities outside of the home (the first place) and the workplace (the second place), such as cafes, pubs, parks, and libraries. These venues provide a free and open environment for social interaction, allowing for equal exchanges regardless of social class or background.

According to Oldenburg's theory, the "Third Place" has several important characteristics:

Neutrality: Third places are neutral spaces where there are no obligatory duties, allowing participants to enter and exit freely.

Equality: These spaces promote social equality, unbound by profession, wealth, or social status.

Conversation Centrality: Communication and dialogue are the core activities in these spaces, fostering community connections and interpersonal relationships.

Accessibility and Convenience: They are typically located in community centres, making it easy for everyone to participate.

"Home Away From Home" Feeling: They provide a sense of relaxation and belonging, akin to that of home.

The significance of third places lies in their role as generators of social capital, promoting community cohesion and social integration. In these spaces, individuals can transcend social and economic divides, engaging in free interaction and sharing. They offer a venue for people to alleviate daily stress, build social connections, and develop a broader community consciousness. The importance of third places to social and cultural life is also evident as they often serve as hubs for the exchange of ideas, cultural creation, and political discussion. For example, throughout history, cafes and pubs have played crucial roles in advancing Enlightenment thought and social change through dialogue.

During World War I, artist Rudolf Laban remained in Switzerland until the war ended. While in Zurich, he participated in the first Dada movement. Dadaism was an avant-garde art movement that emerged in the early 20th century against the backdrop of societal collapse and moral decay brought on by World War I. Artists expressed their anger at the war and disappointment in traditional values through satire and questioning of societal norms. This movement was characterized by opposition to conventional artistic ideas, rationalism, and social institutions, exhibiting strong anti-war sentiments and challenging modern social order. Dada artists refused to adhere to established art forms and rules, questioning definitions of art and beauty. Their works often presented absurdity, disorder, and illogic, challenging traditional aesthetics and artistic values.

During this time, Laban developed a game called Space-Puzzle, where players could collect cards with directional symbols based on Laban's rules of spatial harmony or randomly draw unpredictable sequences (Maletic, 2025, pp.181-183). This game could be played solo or with three to four participants. By employing chance, he liberated individual imagination from clichés. The puzzle game also awakened forms of movement from the flow of natural actions. When many people participated in or attempted to understand the puzzle game, they not only discovered multiple individual characteristics but also identified numerous common trends within the game. This gameplay concept resonated with the spirit of the Zurich Dada movement.

Notably, Dada gatherings primarily took place in cafes and pubs, especially at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich. This venue was one of the key origins of the Dada movement, co-founded in 1916 by German poets Hugo Ball and Emmy Hennings. These gatherings attracted numerous avant-garde artists, including Tristan Tzara, Marcel Janco, and Jean Arp. The Cabaret Voltaire became a hub for Dada artists to present their works, perform, and discuss art. The gatherings were often filled with impromptu performances, absurd poetry readings, musical displays, and dance showcases, allowing artists to express their dissent against societal conditions and subvert traditional art forms.

Looking back at history, we can observe that third places like pubs or cafes have frequently become spaces where movements, special periods, or even emergencies allow people to freely exchange ideas, engage in experiments, and innovate. This public space imparts a unique anarchistic character to activities. It can be argued that third places are crucial to the democratic political process. However, they often face resistance due to their inherent opposition to the political control methods of authoritarian societies.

In *Human Rights in Hungary* (1967), Laszlo Varga describes how before 1954, the Hungarian government encouraged traditional rural communities to reorganize reading groups, allowing farmers to discuss their issues. Initially, people were anxious and reluctant to attend such gatherings, but gradually, they agreed to participate. Discussions soon turned critical of the regime, prompting government newspapers to declare these groups centres of grassroots resistance, leading to their dissolution. Varga reflects that, in hindsight, the revival of discussion groups was a deliberate tactic to entice farmers into organizing elections, which the government later decreed had no legitimate purpose.

In the 18th century, Sweden imposed strict bans on coffee for various reasons. This began with King Gustav III, who issued a prohibition in 1746, believing that coffee was harmful to health and a luxury that could damage the national economy. Moreover, coffee was seen as an imported luxury good, subject to high taxation and consumption restrictions. To control this trend, the king even demanded the surrender of coffee cups and related items. However, the key underlying reason was the discontent of Sweden's elite class with coffee culture, viewing it as a catalyst for gatherings where political issues were discussed, thus threatening traditional

social order. Consequently, many involved in healthcare were coerced into providing "scientific" medical testimony to prove coffee's harmful effects (Wallace, 1982, 24).

Nevertheless, as Richard Oldenburg noted, third places "exist as spontaneous, reliable group relations that interact freely and are seen as necessary conditions for a healthy order (Oldenburg, 2023, p.86)". Cafes and pubs are often criticized and subjected to bans precisely because they are not only social spaces but also incubators for intellectual exchange and political discussion. However, within these spaces, spontaneous interactions and free exchanges among individuals enable diverse social groups to share information and exchange views. This social model is vital for a healthy social order. In fact, these third places provide the soil for social and political renewal and change.

Cafes, in particular, have played a significant role as gathering places for intellectuals, merchants, and political activists during the Enlightenment. Cafes in England and France became venues for discussing political, economic, and cultural topics, where many Enlightenment thinkers shared their ideas about freedom, equality, and science. In these spaces, people could speak freely, forming a new public sphere that challenged authoritarian governments and traditional authorities, laying the groundwork for modern democratic processes. Furthermore, while cafes primarily attracted the middle class and intellectual elites, they also gathered the working class and ordinary citizens. Thus, despite being officially criticized as venues for disseminating reactionary thoughts and encouraging excess, it is precisely their inclusivity and openness that allowed for the expression and discussion of diverse voices and perspectives, ultimately contributing to societal pluralism and inclusivity. The Swedish coffee ban did not halt the prosperity of cafe culture in Europe; rather, it further underscored the role of these "third places" in promoting social and political change.

The Third Place as a Fusion of Self-Interest and Altruism

The third place places great importance on "amateur identity," which contributes to the enjoyment of social interactions within such environments. In our everyday lives, the various social roles we play often do not fulfill our deeper needs for self-expression. For instance, we typically wouldn't perform a tango with colleagues in an office break room, nor would the

domestic workers I followed and interviewed dance improvisationally at their employers' homes. However, as passionate dancers, we found each other in the basement of a social work activity centre, where we engage in this shared interest weekly.

In fact, due to public health safety concerns, those forced to dance on street corners are often perceived as disturbances to public peace. Yet, in the absence of such restrictions, their activities could symbolize harmony and friendliness. In everyday life, these individuals are not singers, dancers, speakers, or actors, but in the third place, they can embody these roles. Moreover, this setting provides an excellent stage where everyone can be an audience member, significantly increasing the likelihood of receiving applause. This exchange of emotional value—providing and receiving acknowledgment—serves as nourishment for the spirit.

Oldenburg distinguishes between "places" and "non-places" in his writings. He notes that in a true place, human beings are recognized as unique individuals, each possessing their own distinct personalities. In non-places, individuality disappears; one becomes merely a customer, shopper, client, patient, or a body in need of seating, an address requiring billing, or a car needing parking. In non-places, it is impossible to be an individual, as one's personality becomes irrelevant and can even act as an obstacle (255).

In the third place, individuals can break free from the constraints of their daily social roles and explore their multifaceted identities. This liberation of "amateur identity" enhances people's sense of participation and creativity. In this free, informal environment, individuals can engage in activities that are challenging to pursue in more formal settings. These spaces not only provide opportunities for self-expression and exploration of interests but also foster a sense of belonging within the community through mutual support and observation. The unique significance of the third place lies in its ability to serve as a platform for transitioning from "doing" to "being."

In everyday life, social roles are often functional, focusing on what people "do," such as their work identities and the societal expectations tied to those identities. In the third place, however, individuals concentrate more on "who they are" through artistic expression or other forms of participation. This shift not only unleashes creative potential but also enables individuals to find fulfillment in a non-instrumental environment. Additionally, when people

gather around shared interests in these spaces, it often breaks down traditional social hierarchies and barriers.

In offices or other everyday environments, power structures and social status can dominate the modes of interaction. In the third place, these boundaries are often blurred or dismantled. This de-hierarchized interaction helps to establish more equitable and inclusive communities, promoting healthier social relationships. Therefore, the third place is not merely a space for leisure and entertainment; it also plays a crucial role on emotional, social, and psychological levels.

The Modern Crisis of Public Space and Public Life

Before the pandemic, square dancing frequently faced complaints and resistance from other community residents due to loud music and noise associated with these activities. This phenomenon is widespread, not just in individual cities but across most urban areas in China. According to a survey by the China Environmental Protection Federation, complaints related to square dance noise have been on the rise in major Chinese cities in recent years. For example, in 2018 alone, the Beijing Environmental Protection Bureau received hundreds of complaints regarding square dance noise, with similar cases occurring frequently in cities like Shanghai and Guangzhou(Wang Fang, 2020). The conflicts arising from noise not only highlight differing cultural perceptions but also reveal generational tensions. The primary participants in square dancing are middle-aged and elderly individuals who, after retirement, have more leisure time and prefer to socialize and exercise through group dancing. However, younger generations and middle-class residents may not resonate with this communal activity, favoring quieter, personal spaces instead (Zhang Jing, 2021; Hu Peng, 2022). Research indicates that square dance enthusiasts view this activity as a vital means of maintaining social connections, especially in the increasingly isolating context of urban life(Lin Dan, 2018). In contrast, other community groups, particularly busy young professionals, may perceive square dancing as an intrusion into their private space. Such differences in perception exacerbate generational and cultural conflicts(Liu Wei, 2020).

Nevertheless, during this study of square dancing activities on the streets near Zizhuyuan Park in Beijing, it was discovered that a small number of young people also joined square dancing during the pandemic. One participant, Ge Wenzjie, a programmer working in Zhongguancun, stated that his busy work schedule often prevented him from participating in square dancing, but whenever he had free time, he would join in. He appreciated the simplicity of square dancing, which does not require specialized training—one can simply follow along—allowing him to temporarily immerse himself in an active atmosphere. This provided him an opportunity to escape pressure and engage in entertainment and exercise. Another respondent noted that during the pandemic, his entertainment options were severely restricted, leading open public spaces like squares and streets to become new gathering spots for him and his friends. Those who continued dancing in the streets were primarily seeking ways to connect with others amidst contact restrictions.

In modern cities like Beijing, families seem to have lost the function of connecting younger members with a broad network of friends, relatives, and neighbors. Prior to the 21st century, most Beijingers lived in communal settings, with courtyard houses (siheyuan) built around a central courtyard, forming enclosed spaces. These compact communities, often comprising multiple courtyard houses arranged along a hutong, fostered close ties among residents who frequently visited one another, shared meals, and cultivated a strong sense of community.

Contemporary living arrangements often leave young people in a state of isolation. Courtyards in siheyuan naturally provided social spaces for family gatherings, neighborly activities, and even small festive events. They served as ideal places for children to play and for elders to chat, fostering spontaneous community culture. In contrast, the design of modern apartment buildings frequently lacks such natural social spaces. While some residential complexes may include gardens, fitness equipment, or public activity areas, these spaces tend to be highly functional and do not facilitate spontaneous neighborly interactions like siheyuan do. Many residents, even those living on the same floor for an extended period, may not know one another. Modern buildings often incorporate security measures like access control systems and surveillance cameras to enhance safety, but they lack the sense of trust and mutual support characteristic of close-knit neighborhoods.

Oldenburg argues that "the revolutionary aspect of the new environment is not its maze of highways or the rectangular skyscrapers made of deep gray glass, but the unprecedented resistance to user-driven change (2023, p.347)". He raises this point primarily out of critique of modern urban planning and architectural environments, expressing concern over the dwindling presence of public spaces. He suggests that while the emerging urban environments and architectural forms may be physically impressive, they often overlook the needs and behaviors of humans as space users. Modern urban development is often driven by technological and economic forces, with urban planning and design largely prioritizing efficiency, functional zoning, and rationalization. This trend leads to cities being divided into distinct functional areas—residential, commercial, industrial, etc.—lacking diversity and mixed functions, rendering urban spaces monotonous and cold. The needs of users become passive; they can only utilize spaces according to the functions designated by planners, without the freedom to adapt or redefine these spaces based on their lifestyles or needs. The "resistance" that Oldenburg describes reflects the suppression of users' flexibility to use spaces in modern urban design. Such designs rarely leave room for residents to make spontaneous alterations, temporary changes, or flexible uses, resulting in individuals feeling a lack of control over urban spaces in their daily lives. While the maze of highways and dense skyscraper districts may appear modern, they are designed primarily for vehicle traffic or commercial demands, not aligning with the everyday needs of ordinary residents and thus limiting their participation and agency in these spaces.

Public spaces that genuinely foster social interaction and community cohesion—such as cafés, squares, bars, and parks—are gradually disappearing. Modern urban design often places excessive emphasis on private and workspaces while neglecting the importance of public life. In cities, residential areas have become isolated environments for family life, leading people to seek community and social interaction elsewhere when they find no reason to venture out from home. Square dancing, originally a leisure activity dominated by middle-aged and elderly individuals, has gradually attracted more young participants in recent years. This trend reflects young people's desire for a sense of community and social interaction and highlights the unmet need for authentic, face-to-face communication in the context of high urbanization. Especially after the pandemic nearly halted any gatherings in public spaces, those who engaged in

communal activities completely lost their opportunities to connect with others and the world. This disruption not only affects a social cultural phenomenon but also limits people's freedoms and rights to socialize in their daily lives.

Thus, the restrictions on square dancing during the pandemic have sparked widespread attention and discussion. Zhang Xiaohong (2021) notes that during the lockdowns, many public venues were closed or faced strict limits on gatherings, forcing square dancing activities to cease significantly. News reports have also highlighted the impact of the pandemic on square dancing activities. For instance, an article from Xinhua Net (2020) described how cities with strict lockdown measures, such as Wuhan, restricted activities like square dancing, forcing citizens to exercise at home and interrupting social activities. This limitation led to widespread dissatisfaction among square dance enthusiasts, as they lost daily opportunities for socializing and staying physically active. Research by Guo Yuqing (2021) on the psychological impacts of lockdown measures indicates that the ban on square dancing negatively affected participants' mental well-being, particularly among the elderly. They lost regular opportunities for physical exercise and social support, leading to increased feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and depression. Studies show that square dancing serves not only as a form of entertainment for many elderly individuals but also as an essential means of maintaining health and social engagement, with lockdowns severely limiting these necessary interactions.

Despite the significant reduction in live square dancing activities during the pandemic, many square dance enthusiasts and organizers found new ways to adapt. For instance, Li Ming (2021) explored how square dance activities continued through online platforms during the pandemic. Many participants turned to social media, live streaming platforms, and video conferencing software to maintain their square dance practice, creating new opportunities for social connections through this digital transformation. This phenomenon reflects the strong sense of collective identity among square dance participants and their resilience in facing crises.

Public Space Usage in the Post-Pandemic Era

In December 2022, the Chinese government began to ease strict pandemic control measures. Prior to this, China had implemented a long-standing "dynamic zero-COVID" policy, which

included large-scale nucleic acid testing, strict isolation measures, and lockdown policies. However, with the increased transmissibility of virus variants and the relaxation of control measures in most countries worldwide, there was growing demand for a more flexible approach to pandemic management. On December 7, 2022, China announced the "Class B Management" plan for COVID-19, adjusting its control strategy and abolishing mass lockdowns and routine nucleic acid testing. On January 8, 2023, China officially reclassified COVID-19 as a "Class B infectious disease," meaning it would be managed as a less severe infectious disease, no longer treated as a major public health event requiring comprehensive control. Following this adjustment, international travel no longer required mandatory quarantine, and residents' daily lives gradually returned to normal, with domestic travel, commuting, and social activities quickly resuming.

Despite China's announcement of the end of the pandemic and the restoration of normal social and economic order in early 2023, some policies, behavioural habits, and social impacts related to the pandemic continue to persist. A representative example is that during the pandemic, schools, as crowded public spaces, were considered high-risk areas. To prevent the spread of the virus on campuses, many universities implemented closed management measures. These campus lockdown policies restricted access for outsiders, ensuring the safety of students and faculty. Although the pandemic has ended, many schools have chosen to maintain these policies, believing that closed management effectively controls the movement of people on and off campus and reduces security risks. This shift has transformed temporary pandemic measures into long-term management strategies. Furthermore, with the proliferation of digital management tools during the pandemic, many universities have enhanced internal personnel management through electronic passes and surveillance systems. The widespread adoption of digital tools has led school administrators to favor the continuation of closed management models for precise control over the movement of individuals, reducing management costs and complexities.

However, this has sparked a new round of reflection and debate about public spaces. Traditionally, many universities have been viewed as open public spaces, particularly in China and Europe, where universities serve not only as educational institutions but also as venues for cultural exchange, community activities, and urban leisure. Li Wei (2021) notes that prior to

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the pandemic, many universities welcomed community members, allowing free access to participate in various academic and cultural activities or utilize public resources such as libraries and sports facilities. These measures were not just temporary pandemic responses; many universities have opted to normalize them. This transition has transformed universities from relatively open spaces into "closed communities," which may help reduce the risk of virus transmission in the short term but poses challenges to their public functions in the long term.

The closure of public spaces has led to a series of social Issues. According to Chen Xiao (2021) in *Public Administration and Policy Research*, the closure of universities has restricted citizens' rights to use public resources, particularly affecting community residents who rely on university spaces for exercise, recreation, and cultural activities. Chen points out that this not only impacts the social spatial layout of cities but also raises discussions about citizens' rights. Citizens generally believe that universities, as publicly funded educational institutions, should continue to fulfill their open social functions and that pandemic lockdown policies should not serve as justification for long-term closure.

Additionally, Liu Minghui (2021) in *Urban Development and Public Space Management* indicates that closed universities adversely impact the economic activities of surrounding communities. The closure of universities means a significant disruption to related businesses, such as restaurants, cafés, and bookstores near campuses, complicating economic recovery.

Beyond social impacts, the closure of universities has profound effects on academic activities and students' daily lives. Sun Li (2022) notes that although access control measures protect campus safety, they also limit academic exchanges across institutions and public access to university resources. Scholars have grown accustomed to conducting academic discussions and meetings online during the pandemic, but the reduction in face-to-face activities has weakened in-person academic exchange, thereby affecting the breadth and depth of academic collaboration.

At the same time, Wang Lei (2022) found that the closure of campuses negatively impacted students' mental health. Many students reported feeling isolated due to the closed environment, with limited external contact, resulting in monotonous campus life. Furthermore, opportunities for off-campus social activities and career development have also diminished, increasing students' feelings of anxiety and stress.

While the pandemic has prompted universities to adopt closed management measures, there is a growing call for these institutions to reassess their public space usage policies as the pandemic subsides. Li Jing (2023) argues that universities should gradually restore their openness as public spaces based on actual pandemic control situations while ensuring safety. This approach would not only help repair the relationship between universities and their communities but also restore universities' public functions in cultural dissemination, social services, and knowledge sharing.

The Dissolution and Politicization of Public Space

Agamben points out that, in modern states, public space is not only a physical place where people live but also a site for political actions to manifest and occur. When public space is closed off, the opportunities for public participation in social and political life are restricted, diminishing the political function of that space. In his work *State of Exception*(2005), Agamben explores how modern states implement control over citizens' rights through temporary emergency states (such as war or pandemics), thereby normalizing a certain state of exception. He argues that the state power can legally interrupt or suspend normal legal order to achieve comprehensive social control. Agamben believes that individuals must liberate themselves from a state of "bare life" by reclaiming political rights and participating in public life. In the post-pandemic era, the reopening of universities signifies not only the unblocking of physical spaces but also the revival of thought and social roles. It is only when universities again become crucial sites for public discourse, social participation, and political action that a true transcendence of the closed management model during the pandemic is achieved.

The Public Power of Art

Agamben's understanding of publicness can help analyze the role of square dancing in public spaces. He posits that public space should be an "exposed place," accessible to all individuals for equal participation in public life (Agamben, 2005). Square dancing, as a collective and popular dance activity, embodies interaction and participation among individuals within public

spaces. It represents the "publicness" of public space, meaning it is not solely the domain of privileged classes or specific groups, but rather a shared resource that all members of society should enjoy. John Dewey argues that art is not an elite activity but an integral part of everyone's daily life. In his work *Art as Experience*, he emphasizes that art is a process of experience where individuals create meaning through interactions with their environment, and this interaction occurs in the social and public domain (Dewey, 1934, pp. 87-120). Therefore, square dancing, as a form of collective dance, allows individuals to express emotions and values through movement, music, and physicality while connecting with others and their surroundings. Dancing in public spaces enables people to articulate their feelings and establish connections with others through artistic physical expression. Thus, the lockdown policies during the pandemic not only weakened public art forms like collective dance but also highlighted the importance of public space as a site for artistic experience.

Research Theme Three: Movement Language

Rudolf Laban mentioned that "movement is one of the languages of humanity and must therefore be consciously mastered." In reality, our verbal or written language has evolved from our movement experiences; it is not separate from movement but an extension of it. In 1920, he remarked that "the world of dance lacks its own language," which highlighted the scarcity of knowledge about movement experiences. Over the next forty years, he and his collaborators developed a system of symbols and, after moving to England, gradually created a concise and precise vocabulary primarily in English. These symbols and terms can be seen as a distillation of the principles of movement and an abstraction of experience. They continue to be widely used in the fields of dance and movement.

However, new problems and challenges have emerged. As dance theory and technical skills have advanced, many established principles and terms, as well as remarkable techniques, have been developed. The simplification effects of this knowledge and the inertia of movement thinking might make it difficult for dancers to perceive and reflect on their experiences that have become "routine" to them, which simultaneously contributes to the generation of "mechanical" movements and techniques in dance. Phenomenology opposes the simplification of names and terms primarily because such simplification might obscure the complexity and depth of the phenomena themselves. As a philosophical method, phenomenology emphasizes the intuitive grasp of the "essence" of things, returning to the experience of the phenomenon "itself." For phenomenologists, language is not only a tool for communication but also a medium for thought. The names and terms within language must maintain sufficient richness and subtlety in describing and understanding phenomena to avoid losing a deep understanding of the essence of the phenomena.

The rational summary and simplification of terms can have multiple Impacts on movement research:

- Simplified names and terms often come with preset conceptual frameworks, which can lead people's thinking towards rigid patterns rather than an open confrontation with the phenomenon itself.

- Language is not only a tool for expression but also related to the depth of people's experiences. Simplified language may fail to express the rich inner experiences, leading to a superficial perception and understanding of phenomena, ignoring the hidden details and internal relationships within the phenomenon.

- Simplified terms may distort or obscure the essence of the phenomena.

Therefore, the early research and review have found that the phenomenological concepts of bracketing, intuition, and description provide an appropriate method for "returning" to the essence of the phenomena. This method itself acknowledges the multi-layered and multi-dimensional nature of phenomena and emphasizes the perceptual experience of intuition, thus expanding the richness and diversity of movement, avoiding fixed conceptual frameworks, and valuing the connection between language and experience. It is important to note that this does not mean that we do not need terms and symbols or a specialized language for dance. Rather, this descriptive approach reminds us to continue returning to, respecting, and benefiting from the richness of experience after distilling and summarizing knowledge.

This phenomenological description is based on the online participation in the Arts Cross 2022 project during the pandemic. This project originated in 2009 and was jointly initiated by the Beijing Dance Academy and the Centre for Performance Arts Research at Middlesex University in the UK. Its aim is to promote cross-cultural exchange through dance, fostering understanding and connection with others through diverse interactions. In June 2022, the inaugural SWEAT Hong Kong International Dance Festival, initiated by the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, incorporated this cross-cultural exchange project under the theme "City Breathing." It invited 15 choreographers, dancers, and scholars from Beijing, London, Hong Kong, and Taipei to experiment with online creation, performance, and discussions based on observing online choreography practices.

The process of online choreography conducted through the Zoom platform sparked in-depth discussions among participants regarding perceptual issues. In a traditional offline choreography environment, dancers perceive each other's movements, space, breath, and energy flow through direct bodily interaction. However, when choreography shifted from a physical space to a virtual platform, the dancers' perceptual experiences underwent significant changes. The screen, as a medium, partially obstructed direct perception between bodies,

forcing dancers to rely on visual and auditory cues to collaborate and communicate in the choreography. This change in perception prompted participants to reflect on how to maintain sensitivity and responsiveness to each other's movements in the absence of physical contact and direct spatial awareness.

During discussions, participants not only explored how Zoom choreography altered their perceptions of time and space but also analyzed how the screen interface affected bodily expression and movement transmission. In online choreography, dancers' bodies are confined within a two-dimensional screen frame, fundamentally impacting how space is occupied and presented. For example, large-scale movements may appear constrained due to the screen's boundaries, while subtle details may become more pronounced on screen. Such choreography practices not only challenge dancers' movement habits but also lead them to engage in new reflections on the relationship between perception and movement.

This discussion also touches on phenomenological concepts regarding the relationship between the body and the environment. Phenomenology posits that the body is not merely an independent entity but is always interacting within its environment. The online choreography environment is not a traditional physical space but a virtual space constructed through screens and digital technology. In this space, dancers need to readapt their perceptual modalities for movement and explore how to engage in dynamic bodily communication through visual and auditory means. The delays, perspective limitations, and indirectness of perception introduced by the Zoom platform provide dancers with new experiences and understandings of the "real-time" and "presence" of movement during collaboration.

Based on these discussions, the Arts Cross 2022 project is not merely an online choreography practice; it has also become an experimental space for dancers and scholars to explore the complex relationships between perception, space, and the body. In this new form of choreography, participants realize that although dancers' bodies are mediated and filtered by digital technology, they can still refocus on the essence of bodily experience through a phenomenological lens. By deeply exploring perceptual experiences in virtual choreography, dancers not only overcome the limitations posed by technology but also further enrich their understanding and reflections on dance practice.

Chapter VI is the result of the author's gradual accumulation and summarization of interview methods during the case study process in Artscross 2022. It is based on the phenomenological descriptive methods reviewed and designed in the early stages of research and applies this method to interviews with different dancers to uncover personal first-hand experiences centred on movement and perceptual experiences. In the writing, the author selects the interview experiences of five professional dancers to challenge the simplification effects of established principles/terms and the inertia of thinking within the professional dance domain. From this chapter onwards, the research transitions into targeted case practices, where previously reviewed knowledge of body monism, phenomenology, Laban studies, and somatics is selectively applied to dance research/teaching collaborations with case subjects.

In Chapter VII, I continue to discuss the enduring significance of dance notation as a language in dance education. I use the case of youth professional dancers in Shenzhen as an example. During my teaching sessions with them, I found that the scientific logic and extensive disciplinary knowledge inherent in dance notation provide an indispensable tool and linguistic platform for analyzing movement. The students incorporate their awareness into the analysis by writing and depicting symbols, allowing them to gain a deeper understanding of their perspectives on specific movements through dance notation. As a result, dance notation becomes an essential tool for their self-education and self-assessment. A more detailed background on the Shenzhen case can be found in the introduction of the next case study.

Chapter VI

The Spiral of Phenomenological Enquiry： A Return to Perception and Kinaesthesia in Cyberspace

2022 Artscross choreographed in the Zoom online platform. This provokes scholars to reflect on corporeal collaborations in cyberspace: how do we mobilise the full participation of bodily perception (especially touch) in such a virtualised space where the visual seems to be at the centre. This paper uses the example of the Zoom dance collaboration in Artscross to observe and analyse the ways in which the dancers' bodies interact in cyberspace and to explore a methodology based on phenomenological description and thus a return to perceptual and kinesthetic experience. The author conducts one-on-one interviews with five dancers from four cities, in which the dancers step-by-step describe-approach their intuitive experience in the process of bodily collaboration, through the use of suspenseful questioning. The challenge here is that the simplifying effect of established principles/nomenclature and the inertia of movement makes it difficult for the dancers to perceive and reflect on experiences that have become 'everyday' for them, and this is also the reason for the 'mechanisation' of movement and technique in dance. However, by continuously suspending and inquiring into the describer's description as a spectator, it is possible for the describer to enter a pre-reflective state. This is the first step in examining the immediate flow of the corporeal state and breaking out of preconceptions, and it provides a viable way for the dancer to continue to develop and reconfigure creative thinking.

Relevance and Preliminary Findings

Perception is the conscious sensation we gain from objects and/or the external world through sensory organs such as vision, hearing, touch, smell, and taste, as well as from our sense of balance and movement, known as kinesthesia. The sensation of suffocation prompts us to

breathe, while the sensation of falling encourages us to walk. For each individual, perception and kinesthesia represent a heightened awareness of the body, symbolizing vitality and survival drive. Perception reflects the connection and interaction between the "self" and the external material world, with dance embodying this connection and interaction through dance or non-routine actions. For practitioners, maintaining sensitivity to complex perceptions rather than mechanically executing movements remains a challenge throughout their performing and choreographic careers. On the other hand, as dance researchers, conventional social science methods, particularly interviews, often struggle to address the deep-seated issues related to movement and perception inherent in dance. This limitation results in research staying at a superficial level.

This study uses an online choreography activity that occurred during the pandemic as a case, employing a phenomenological approach through interviews to gradually activate the dancers' bodily historical experiences and to explore how to "expand perception/kinesthetic awareness in virtual space." During the Covid period, dance, due to its reliance on physical collaboration and immediacy, may have been one of the most impacted and restricted art forms. Online choreography offered a unique opportunity for this research, making traditional interviews and observations more challenging and allowing for reflection on "touch" in the "untouchable," engaging all memories to comprehensively review one's perception, and revisiting the history of personal kinesthetic experiences in a space that cannot be physically touched.

Two preliminary findings emerged during the early stages of investigating Zoom rehearsals. First, dancers reported that they were more prone to losing focus when dancing on Zoom compared to in-person studio settings. Second, choreography collaboration in online spaces relies on imaginative actions, such as the "constructed body" from different body parts by dancers. This led the study to compare the impact of posture and dynamic content on kinesthetic awareness and highlight the importance of returning to perceptual imagery, emphasizing that perception is the ultimate destination of imagination and the fundamental source of creative activities dependent on imagination.

Research Methodology

This study initially involved observing the rehearsals of four choreographers, followed by one-on-one interviews with five dancers from four different cities. The methods used in analyzing the interview data were approved by the participants. Phenomenological interviews are a common qualitative research method employed to explore and gather experiential material. In this approach, the specific aim of the interviews is to explore and collect narrative material about experiences. It is important to note that this study focuses more on the participant's pre-reflective state, describing their personal movement experiences rather than interpretations of phenomena from cultural narratives or social psychological perspectives. At the same time, the study seeks to find a method that allows participants to provide personalized, tailored responses without pre-setting their answers.

A challenge of the phenomenologica" des'riptive method is the need to constantly remind oneself that the goal is to understand the essence of existence, not just the named concepts. In "The Mystery of Health" (1996), Gadamer attempts to describe health rather than illness, illustrating the difficulty of describing the body in its natural, taken-for-granted, or silent modes. In such a mode, it is challenging to maintain focus and reflection on the state of the body's existence. This requires us to describe the primordial moments and dimensions of existence. In dance, this also involves enabling the subject to recognize the uniqueness of their experience after forming knowledge and habitual movement patterns.

However, Merleau-Ponty, from the perspective of others' bodily dissonance, points out that although we may, in a sense, forget our own bodies, another person may quietly observe our bodies and study how we perform tasks (Merleau-Ponty, 2012). This discussion reminds us that experiencing and exploring the subject's experience from the observer's perspective is a viable method to help the subject reflect on the state of their bodily existence.

In implementing this method, the author's experience was as follows: first, to suspend the questioner's pre-judgments about the meaning behind the movements, suspend the summaries provided by the dancers, capture specific verbs, and ask questions from the perspective of perception, focusing on scientific/rational terminology/summaries. The aim of this method is to use a spiral questioning process to provide dancers with the opportunity to return to the

phenomena themselves, specifically the perceptual and kinesthetic experiences during online dance collaboration. It serves as a resource and method guided by phenomenology to explore essence, thereby expanding the dancers' awareness of perception in movement, ultimately helping us recognize the lived body and experience, and deepening our understanding of its uniqueness.

Example Analysis

This section provides a detailed account of two interviews with interdisciplinary dancers. After each case, the author will discuss the considerations behind the questions asked to offer readers insights into the methodological aspects of the study. The first dialogue is with Liao Jian-yao from Taipei, focusing on his experiences with losing attention while dancing online and his typical responses to regain focus. The second case presents descriptive material from Song Li-jie from Hong Kong, who described how the image of the "Whomping Willow" from the movie "Harry Potter" frequently appears in her mind while dancing.

- **Liao Jian-yao's Description of Regaining Attention**

Liao: I will focus on a body part, such as my arm, watch it, and then move it. I often find my lost focus this way.

1. Author: Why this body part rather than another?

Liao: (demonstrates arm movement) I can see my arm now because I am sitting here, and I can pay attention to it. Dance is similar—find the part closest to me, or the most active, or the most engaging.

2. Author: What is the "me" that is closest to "me"? What is the "me" that captures the "me" most? Or, what is the specific basis for judging proximity?

Liao: (demonstrates arm movement) My eyes. My eyes are looking.

3. Author: So what are you seeing while doing this movement?

Liao: (demonstrates arm movement) I see the arm, and sometimes the movement of the arm reminds me of something else, so I act it out. It looks like a fish.

4. Author: What makes you judge it as a fish?

Liao: Its movement is smooth, like swimming.

5. Author: What did you feel that made you think it is swimming, or choose the word "swimming"?

Liao: (demonstrates movement) The movement of the head is not large, but the tail can wiggle flexibly. The tail is light and fast, and it pushes out with a lot of force.

First Question: Intentionality

The first interview question delves into the concept of intentionality. Intentionality refers to the way an object is presented to "me" as a result of intentional choice. In this context, intentionality is about the intention of consciousness. From this perspective, Liao Jian-yao's consciousness initially projects the intention to "there," which causes the arm to appear in his awareness. This reflects a form of consciousness-driven thought in the pre-reflective sense. Consciousness-intentionality, due to its lack of acknowledgment of "being," does not focus on the body as "being" and as "embodied" perception. Here, Merleau-Ponty's concept of motor intentionality might be more useful. Merleau-Ponty does not distinguish between the body as a mechanism and consciousness as existence. Motor intentionality emphasizes that consciousness of an object arises from the primary impulse of movement. The importance of motor dynamics lies in treating movement, perception, and the body as pre-reflective materials. By emphasizing the role of movement in pre-reflective awareness, we can connect the subject with the object, and the body with the world.

Second Question: Beliefs about the "Self"

The second question suspends the dancer's belief about the "self." The "self" in the answer is an object set by the dancer, through which he judges other existences. This "self" is an entity pre-assumed to be supreme over "all things," and it exists only in consciousness. The distance of the arm is judged by consciousness, so the belief behind it is somewhat close to consciousness-intentionality. The purpose of suspension is not to doubt or deny the existence of consciousness but to shift focus toward the body as an existence.

Third and Fourth Questions: Movement and Imagination

When the dancer begins to focus on the movement of the eyes, the third question guides the dancer to describe using "seeing," and the fourth question captures his imaginative activity. The fifth and sixth questions continue to suspend the noun "fish" and the verb "swim." After

Liao Jian-yao's final answer, it is possible to further trace the judgment of the head and tail, such as what sensations led to the choice of terms like "head" and "tail" for description.

This analysis demonstrates how phenomenological methods can provide deeper insights into the dancer's embodied experiences and perceptions, emphasizing the importance of pre-reflective awareness and the interplay between movement, perception, and consciousness.

- **Example Analysis: Song Li-jie's Description of Imaginary Images**

Song Li-jie's Description of the Imaginary Tree

Song: My movements are very expansive, with my power originating from the centre. My opening and closing are both large and fast.

Author: Where is the centre, and how do you perceive its location? How do you determine that your power comes from the centre? How is the opening and swinging reflected in your movements?

Song: When I dance, I imagine the image of a tree. The trunk is thick, and the branches are dense, spiraling upwards in a swaying motion. This tree is referred to as the "Whomping Willow" in the movie "Harry Potter," and this image often appears in my mind while dancing.

Here is Song Li-jie's description of the willow tree, with the author inviting her to describe it through sensory experiences:

The willow tree's upper limbs and trunk are very large. The branches continuously grow, but the tree itself does not get larger (it's a localized cycle). The stump doesn't move, but the middle part can sway and twist upwards; it has no smell; its sound is like the wind, with a "growth" sound and faint sound of flowing water; it feels a bit damp, and although the texture is rough, it doesn't feel hard due to the dampness.

The sound of growth Is closer to the sound we hear when we pull hair. The difference Is that the sound of growth is continuous.

Analysis of the First Question

The first question focuses on the simplification and impact of terminology. The phrase "power from the centre" is commonly used in training. However, the simplification of terminology and the habitual acceptance of conventional practices might obscure the complexity of movement, preventing us from perceiving the fluidity of power in its subtle forms. Breaking conventional patterns through questioning is a way to challenge established orders. The obsolescence of

knowledge can allow dancers to break free from inertia, suspend acquired knowledge, and return to a pre-reflective state of awareness. This means that by using this approach, we might realize that when we are not told where the so-called centre of gravity is, we "feel" it through perception. When this pre-reflective state is reengaged, those subtle body parts that are not easily perceived have a chance to be sensed, and the kinesthetic experiences obscured by later knowledge can be revealed. In this sense, suspension and description are not the end goals but are rather ways and spaces for dancers to re-experience perception.

Interestingly, during the process of recalling experiences, dancers engage in conscious imaginative acts, which frequently occur in online choreography activities. However, imagination does not capture the object itself but rather the image of the object within the subject. Therefore, guiding the dancer to describe images from their imagination injects a pre-reflective space, allowing the object image to return to the subject's perception.

From Imagination to Perception

Husserl (2010) introduced the concepts of the presentness of perception and the presentification of imagination. The term presentness indicates the nature of perception as direct experience. Presentness signifies that the source of imagination is rooted in direct perception, but imagination itself differs because it lacks directness. It is important to note that Husserl states, "Every act of presentness corresponds to an imagination as presentification; every experience has a corresponding imagination" (2010, p. 589). Husserl further suggests the fundamental role of perception, meaning that every perception grasps the object itself. However, imagination does not grasp the object itself or any part of it; it only provides an image of the object. As long as this image remains an image, it is not the truth itself (Husserl, 2001). Husserl further clarifies that the phenomenological nature of imaginative acts depends on whether they ultimately return to perception (Husserl, 2012).

Figure 18: Immediate collaboration between two bodies on Zoom, image provided by Xie Jiehua.

In Xie Jiehua's group, the dance collaboration between the upper and lower limbs of two bodies on one screen is a conscious imaginative activity. The body parts not displayed on the screen need to be represented through imagination by the collaborators. This relies on the imagination of past kinesthetic experiences, reflecting the presentness of the past. Similarly, in interviews, dancers' choreographic processes based on imagination and their methods of finding focus in flow follow this pattern. These phenomena can be understood from the perspective of conscious actions, where they represent the subject's perception as changes in object awareness. The process of image returning to perception gradually brings this conscious activity closer to the essence of the phenomenon.

In most of my interviews, describing is not a pre-defined task but rather something that emerges as the conversation progresses, requiring the interviewees to describe what they discover they want to focus on. In the phenomenological interview phase, the first question I ask each dancer is, "What do you think is unique about your dance and movements?" This question guides dancers to open up their subjective awareness and explore the uniqueness of their own practice/body in space. Typically, dancers provide a conclusion or comment on others' assessments. However, by continually suspending the interviewees' judgments, dancers are able to uncover that as they describe the experience, they are layering and suspending their existing understanding. During the interview, many poetic adjectives and rational terms become ineffective in the spiral questioning, avoiding conclusive summaries. They are forced to revisit the collaborative experiences that left a deep impression on them, either the first or the last. This is why dancers often revisit experiences through bodily actions during interviews.

Comparing Song Lijie's dialogue with her subsequent description reveals a clear correspondence between the description and the dance. This aligns with Husserl's assertion that "every experience corresponds to a corresponding imagination" (2010, 589). While this represents a way of re-presenting perception in imagination, her description of the willow tree emerges from the perception of the movement at that time. Meanwhile, her visual impression of the willow tree, her past perception of a real willow tree (touch), and her capture of the movement forms of both virtual and real willow trees are freely imagined based on these experiences. These imaginations are transformed into perception, creating countless "variables/changes" within the body.

Cultivating Non-Positional Awareness

Jean-Paul Sartre, in "Being and Nothingness" (1956), introduced the contrasting concepts of positional awareness and non-positional awareness. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, in "The Phenomenology of Dance," suggests that positional awareness stems from an ontological perception—a sense of the body's location and a positional thought from "here" to "there" (2015, 44). Sheets-Johnstone emphasizes that this point-to-point awareness overlooks the dynamic movement process from "here" to "there" (2003, 62), and that the terminology we use to discuss movement is often static and positional (2015, 44).

It Is Important to recognize that developing non-positional awareness is challenging due to the inertia of everyday life. Typically, people become aware of their bodies only when their health is compromised. This is because sudden illness disrupts the stability of daily life, leading to a heightened awareness of one's body. Jean-Luc Nancy (2008) describes illness as an intruder to highlight how a decrease in sensitivity to the body's perception is related to our engagement in daily activities as if they were normal, natural, and taken for granted.

When a dancer (Liao Jianyao) refers to finding a body part that is closest to the "self," it reflects his assumption of a binary relationship between the self and the body—a "self" that is distinct from the body. This "self" occupies the centre, determines the "position" of the arm, and manipulates the judgment of the body's position. In interviews with dancers, they noted that dancing in virtual space is more likely to result in losing focus compared to dancing in real

environments. Specifically, when targets disappear or get stuck due to network issues, they find themselves losing focus. Reflecting on the rehearsal process, dancers often focus on the floating position of virtual objects (such as balls or fish) and the speed at which their bodies track these objects, or react quickly to the current movement of the objects. In focusing on the objects and their positions, dancers tend to forget about themselves/the body and the process of movement. Thus, to expand the perception of the body and movement, it is necessary to develop non-positional awareness, which requires creating reflective capabilities in movement or employing choreographic methods with reflective space.

Figure 19 Dancing with a virtual ball, photo from Zoom rehearsal footage.

In the conversation with Liao Jianyao, when he questions and reflects on the existence of the "self," he enters a thinking dimension that starts from the body, focusing on the perception of the eyes. Once the "self" is "put in brackets" and not discussed, judgments based on the "self" also become untenable. At this point, judgments about where the arms and legs are, as well as similar positional judgments, no longer matter. It should be acknowledged that behind every question is indeed a preconception, which aims to gradually transform judgments into descriptions in order to get as close as possible to perception. Only when the subject continuously suspends their preconceptions can they enter a spiral reflective state, infinitely approaching the essence that makes the phenomenon its representation. In this regard, description, due to its own suspensive nature, is a viable method.

We need to recognize that technical skills and the desire for narrative exacerbate the dancer's neglect of the body and movement. Technical skills pull the dancer into a positional awareness focused on objectives and destinations. When a dancer's desire is to tell a story and convey beliefs behind the story without using verbal language, the body becomes a tool or container for the narrative and beliefs, and movement replaces language as the medium and material for filling the story. In this sense, the quality of the body will be judged based on its efficiency in completing the expressive task. This is a major issue brought about by Descartes' mind-body dualism in dance. The dancer's body becomes a vessel controlled by the "helmsman" of rationality/consciousness.

Sartre argues that "the body is the thing that is ignored in silence" (Sartre, 1956: 330). But in reality, dance, as a non-ordinary activity, has the ability to break the philosophical/phenomenological paradigm that views the body as something to be ignored. The prerequisite for this exception is maintaining a high alertness to the perceptual experience of the body. Here, we can view movement as a continuous pre-reflective activity that provides us with a way to vividly experience the body, in a purposeless, non-positional awareness of movement.

Chapter VII

The Significance of Dance Notation in Dance Education

This chapyer explores the significance of Labanotation and its application in dance education, particularly in the context of youth ballroom dance learning in Shenzhen. Labanotation is not merely a recording tool; it establishes a unique symbolic language for dance that helps dancers understand the relationship between body movements and space. This article analyzes in detail the contributions of dance notation to body symmetry, centre of gravity movement, joint activity, and spatial orientation, while also emphasizing its role in cultivating self-observation, stimulating creativity, and fostering individual expression. Through an open teaching space and encouraging debate, dance notation becomes a dynamic dialogue platform, promoting students' deeper understanding and reflection on dance.

In exploring the commonalities of human movement and enhancing the status of dance within the arts, Laban undertook numerous experiments, particularly in the development of movement and dance notation. He believed that any time-based art form could not fully develop without a notation system capable of capturing, preserving, and verifying its transient creations. Therefore, Laban advocated that the symbols of dance notation should originate from the forms and spatial rhythms of dance itself, rather than borrowing from unrelated symbolic systems. Drawing on analogies from poetry and music, he pointed out that relying solely on oral traditions to transmit these arts is unimaginable. Laban emphasized the crucial importance of writing dance symbols; only through comparison, verification, repetition, and recreation can a profound judgment of the artistic achievements of dance be established. He further stated that the development of dance and movement arts cannot be separated from the exploration of notation systems, which not only provides practical tools for dancers but also concerns the long-term development of dance as an art form. Laban believed that had such notation systems been established centuries ago, we would have a deeper understanding of early dance forms

and efforts today. He also noted that dance could only stand alongside music, poetry, and other art forms when it became a language for choreographers to express their intentions and found its unique way of being recorded, bringing the same pleasure, power, and cultural significance.

Returning to this original intention reveals that dance notation is not merely what the current Labanotation system presents and guides us to see it as a recording tool that attempts to rival video recordings. It is evident that Laban's purpose in inventing this notation system far exceeds the aim of mere recording; he was creating a language for dance, a language that requires a logic formed by spatial knowledge and dance experience. He hoped this language would ultimately influence dance education, criticism, and creation, enabling dance to truly become an independent art form. In fact, the foundation he established for this symbolic system possesses the rationale to support this goal. In the following text, we will analyze this rationale from several aspects to further explore the value and significance of notation/dance notation today. At the same time, I will use the case of youth ballroom dance learners in Shenzhen studying dance notation as an example to further support my assertions.

Body Symmetry and Joint Activity

When encountering a score or beginning to record a movement, several fundamental questions naturally arise: Who is performing the action (which part of the body bears or does not bear the centre of gravity)? For how long (the length of the symbols and bar lines indicate speed)? Where to (directional symbols indicate orientation in space)? I have observed that youth ballroom dance learners in Shenzhen often engage in debates when reading, recording, or analyzing a movement that bears or does not bear the body's centre of gravity. A common initial situation is their inability to distinguish between the movement of posture and the movement of the centre of gravity. For instance, when reading a score, such as a movement that moves forward on the beat, they sometimes only perform a leg posture movement rather than the overall shift of the centre of gravity forward. Improvement occurs only after they genuinely differentiate the distinctions between posture and centre of gravity movement through the symmetrical structure of dance notation, at which point awareness of the centre of gravity is established.
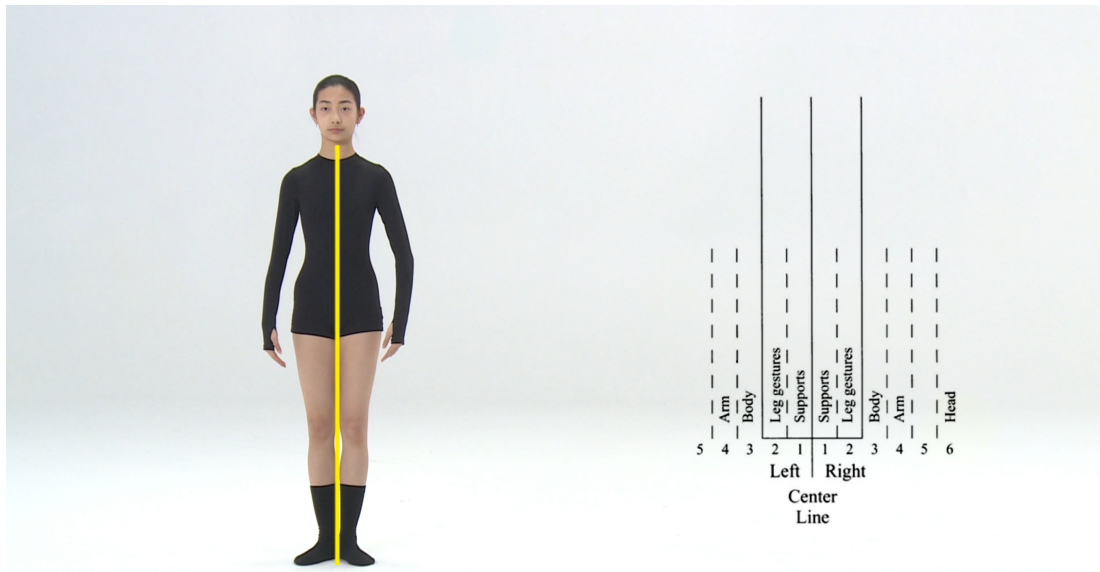
Figure 20 The notation staff and the symmetrical structure of body[6]

The anatomical structure of the human body is fundamentally symmetrical on both sides. In kinematic studies, the symmetry of the body is considered a crucial factor in optimizing movement performance. For example, S. R. D. A. Smith (2014) noted in his research that body symmetry significantly impacts the efficiency and execution of movements. A symmetrical body structure enables athletes to better balance, coordinate, and control their actions. The design of Labanotation is based on the symmetrical structure of the body. This idea was contributed by Kurt Jooss, who proposed adapting the method used by F. J. G. Meyer to divide movements into left and right sequences, which has become a prominent feature of Labanotation. In fact, Laban borrowed several principles from the Bournonville-Meyer notation system, including using a central line on the score to distinguish the left and right sides of the body, utilizing bar lines to partition rhythm over time, applying directional and shape symbols, and indicating qualitative movements through special symbols.

The three-line score places symbols on either side of the centre of gravity line, reflecting the body's symmetry. This innovation creates an essential distinction between the centre line and the lines on either side; actions that bear the body's centre of gravity are recorded close to the centre line, while the lines extending outward record posture movements that do not bear

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[6] The image is a screenshot from the author's teaching material *The Handbook of Dance Movement Analysis: Ballroom Dance*, published by Shanghai Conservatory of Music Press in 2025.

the body's centre of gravity. Thus, the centre line is also referred to as the centre of gravity line. This distinction clearly categorizes the essence of movement, placing centre of gravity awareness in a highly significant position. In other words, when a dancer reads and writes symbols, they first recognize that the essence of bodily displacement is the movement of the centre of gravity. In my Shenzhen case study, students made an interesting discovery regarding this knowledge. They found that in Latin dance, the sequence of performing a movement often aligns with the order of body parts represented in the three-line score, beginning at the centre of gravity and extending sequentially to the legs, upper body, arms, and head. As a result, this later arrangement of body parts in the score fostered a habitual analytical approach to movements, considering them from the centre to the outer edges of the body.

Furthermore, this notation system summarizes all joint movements resulting from human anatomical structure, namely contraction, extension, and rotation. In practice, we found that these three joint functions play an essential role in modifying movements, and their importance is evident in the analysis of various embellishing actions. From a symbolic perspective, these three symbols emphasize dynamism and process more than spatial symbols do. From a movement perspective, the combination of these three actions with spatial directions often generates different styles. For example, in the forward steps of the rumba, the movement of the centre of gravity is forward; however, during this forward shift, the alternating contraction and extension of the back to the ends of the pelvis create the style conveyed in rumba dance.

Vertical State and Spatial Orientation

Students' understanding of spatial orientation begins to develop as they clarify the distinction between personal space and general space, recognizing the presence of a spherical space that accompanies their bodies. However, a common issue during this process is the ambiguity surrounding one-dimensional, two-dimensional, and three-dimensional movements, such as when a two-dimensional movement directed to the left front is executed in a way where both the upper and lower body face the same direction (diagonally forward in general space). Through mutual observation during the movements, they gradually become aware of the

differences in direction, texture, and style among one-dimensional, two-dimensional, and three-dimensional movements. This leads to a clearer delineation of the spherical space created by their bodies. The foundation of all this is the vertical structure of the dance score and the knowledge of spatial orientation based on it.

Labanotation is read and written in a vertical manner from bottom to top, which relates to its assumption of a person's vertical structure. Its description of spatial direction is determined by the vertical state (the normal condition under the influence of gravity) or a Cartesian coordinate system that is perpendicular to two horizontal dimensions. Laban places the demarcation points of the three dimensions at the centre of gravity of the body, which significantly aids movers or dancers in orienting themselves directionally. Various systems used for spatial orientation are established geometric knowledge, such as dimensions, diagonals, and diameters; Laban relates these to body structure and movement potential. However, it is essential to note that the vertical coordinates are positioned at an individual's centre of gravity, so even when a person is lying down, their body centre still occupies a coordinate that is used to locate their personal space. An individual's spatial awareness is often established after they clearly understand this concept.

When a person lies down, their personal spatial orientation changes. For example, the height in an upright position becomes a forward-and-backward orientation in this moment. This change is defined by the coordinates established by their body centre. While this may seem fundamental, in practice, dancers often experience various conceptual confusions. The roots of these confusions ultimately stem from an inability to distinguish clearly between general space and spherical space. General space refers to orientation in the external world/physical environment, while spherical space delineates directions based on the human body as a coordinate. Interestingly, in dance notation, there is also a scenario where this coordinate can be placed at different body locations to indicate directional movement towards specific body parts. This situation undoubtedly relies on a foundational understanding of spherical space to be proficiently applied.

Proprioceptive Awareness in the Context of Personal Space

There is a tradition regarding "original position" in ballroom dance. Often, after finishing a dance and bowing on stage, the host will ask the dancers to return to their original position (so that the judges can clearly see the back number of the male dancer in a quieter setting). This original position refers to the original spot. However, this concept is different in dance notation. In dance notation, the original position refers to the location of the centre of gravity. It can be said that this approach helps establish a logical connection between movements.

When we stand in a double-foot original position, the body is in a vertical state. When one foot (for example, the right foot) steps in any direction, the centre of gravity is initially released from this right foot. After the right foot steps out and contacts the ground, the left foot begins to release the centre of gravity until the left foot fully pushes the body's centre of gravity onto the right foot, thus entering a new vertical state—i.e., a new original point (original position)—when this step's centre of gravity movement is completed. In other words, no matter how fast or fluid the dance steps are, each step undergoes this process. In other words, each movement is a continuous cycle from beginning to end, where the current end becomes the next beginning. Therefore, when we possess an awareness of the original position, we naturally become aware of the "logical connection" between movements, indicating that everything that happens in one moment is always related to the next.

It can be observed that the concept of the original position is also developed within spherical space. The original position in a ballroom dance competition refers to a specific location in general space. In dance notation, whether this position is considered original depends on whether a person's centre of gravity movement is completed, thereby forming a new starting point for the action. This analytical approach is centered around the body and subject, where the dancer naturally focuses first on the space created by their body rather than seeking a "space" within the external world.

Non-Positional Awareness and Motion Description

Sartre proposed the concepts of positional and non-positional awareness. Positional awareness means that when we clearly recognize something, it is through the specific position or angle

we occupy at that moment. Maxine, in dance phenomenology, argues that positional awareness originates from a bodily perception—specifically, a perception of where my limbs are—which is a position-oriented thinking from point A to point B. However, this point-to-point positional awareness overlooks what happens in between, which is the dynamic process of movement.

We often fall into the trap of positional awareness. A typical example of positional awareness in dance theory comes from Rudolf Laban's discussions in *choreutics*. Laban's spatial symbols can be seen as one of the earliest challenges to Cartesian dualistic thinking in the theory of dance practice, representing a significant breakthrough from the two-dimensional ground drawings characteristic of the Bausch-Fayé notation. His notation's hallmark contribution lies in its first acknowledgment of the body's dynamic participation in three-dimensional space and its attempt to activate the three-dimensional body-space and dynamic content on a two-dimensional page. However, when examining the various branches of his theory independently, one finds that despite his emphasis on dynamic quality, dynamic processes, and nuances in the *dynamosphere* theory, the trace-forms introduced in *choreutics*, which describe the dynamic process of movement as the opening of a fan's ribs through directional markings in three-dimensional space, also inevitably exhibit the suspicion of positional awareness. Maxine's discussion in her book on dance phenomenology illustrates the problems of analyzing motion in space without connecting it to dynamic content, highlighting that "Positions and postures may play a role in those qualitative dynamics, but they are not the foundational space-time-force realities of the task—or the dance."

In distinguishing non-positional awareness, Sartre emphasizes its significance, noting that non-positional awareness is an awareness of the body that is pre-reflective and recognized as the foundation of everyday experiential awareness; without this awareness, consciousness cannot be aware of things in the world and itself. Thus, "The pre-reflective cogito is a 'non-positional self-consciousness'" (Sartre, 1956). However, non-positional awareness is challenging because, under normal circumstances, it is difficult for reflective actions to occur. Sartre observed that in most daily life, or on a non-reflective level, I may hardly ever be aware of my body. Nancy holds a similar view, arguing that we only become aware of our bodies under special circumstances, such as when our health is disrupted or when we are ill.

It is crucial to recognize that the lack of motion language/vocabulary in dance significantly fosters the spread of positional awareness in dance. Maxine notes that the terms commonly used to discuss movement are often static and positional. Furthermore, the explanations in dance seem to focus more on the description of positions rather than the description of movements. Laban similarly mentioned in *The World of the Dancer*, published in 1920, that the dance world lacks an independent language. Here, examining Laban's notation in relation to its core practice of describing motion rather than spatial directions can be helpful, as its "motion description" serves that purpose. The symbols of Laban's notation can roughly be divided into two categories: one primarily serving directional symbols for spatial positioning, and the other comprising motion symbols, such as contraction, extension, motion lines, and stillness.

Motion description can be seen as a way of describing with the purpose of conveying dynamic content; it relies not on directional symbols used for naming and positioning in space but rather on these motion symbols. In dance teaching, we often hear instructions like "head left, back, right, and then return," which exemplifies "positional description." When placed within the context of notation, the static and fragmented nature brought by positional thinking becomes apparent. For example, in an action where the head rotates around the horizontal plane, if marked by position, there could be countless directional symbols, whereas a motion description would only require symbols for bending and rotating. From its dynamic structure, this action consists of contraction, extension, and rotation. Bending, extending, and rotating emphasize the dynamic content rather than the destination. This goes beyond a discussion of the correct method of notation; what is more intriguing is the understanding and thought patterns about actions implied behind the recording methods. It reveals whether we view actions in a motion-oriented, process-focused way.

If we attempt to categorize the symbol system of Laban's notation, we find that symbols such as contraction, extension, and twisting, formed by anatomical structures, possess dynamic attributes; similarly, motion lines and stillness symbols, aimed at describing the trajectory of centre-of-gravity movement rather than "the positional relationship between base and endpoint," also belong to motion symbols. It is worth noting that in Laban's notation, directional symbols are not necessarily descriptions of positions or spatial placements; using

directional symbols to describe the "direction the centre of gravity is about to go" rather than the positional relationship between base and endpoint is also a form of motion description.

One can observe that the concepts introduced by Laban, namely "positional description" and "motion description," resonate with Sartre's notions of "positional awareness" and "non-positional awareness." Understanding Sartre's concepts at the level of movement reveals a comparison between location and process, posture and dynamics. In fact, motion description is a reflective approach or an attempt to "return to essence." It offers movers a reflective opportunity to "return to the phenomenon itself": to contemplate what lies behind the phenomenon and what exactly occurs in between, shaping its presentation.

The Agency Inspired by Dance Notation

At the second German Dance Congress held in Essen in 1928, Laban critically reviewed the development of movement and dance notation, showcasing his research methodology. He described three basic methods of notation, although he did not name each one separately. The first method relies on symbols to describe actions, such as words, letters, or numbers. This approach requires the user to possess a certain vocabulary of movements. Laban mentioned that he himself had used this method, marking the hierarchy of movements in space with numbers. The second method is pictorial notation, inspired by his discoveries while researching ancient musical scores at the St. Gallen Library in Switzerland. These scores illustrated the rise and fall of melodies through wavy color patterns, akin to the movements of a conductor. Pictorial notation describes the movements of body parts and the overall design of actions through simple drawings, but its limitation lies in the user's need to deeply understand the author's thought processes to connect the actions with external events. Laban's most esteemed third method breaks movements down into basic elements, representing these elements through symbols and graphically demonstrating their combinations. He considered this method the most meaningful, as it allows everyone to add symbols according to their needs and intentions, accommodating individual creative demands.

The prominent advantage of what Laban referred to as the "third method of notation," first introduced in his 1928 presentation at the Conference on Dance Notation in Magdeburg, lies

in its flexibility and precision in describing complex movements (Maletic, 2025, pp. 145-146). Unlike the first method, which relies on verbal descriptions, or the second, which uses pictorial representations of positions, Laban's third method employs abstract graphic symbols to deconstruct movement into fundamental elements such as direction, level, timing, and dynamic quality. This symbolic notation system, later developed into what is now known as Labanotation, enables users to analyze and reconstruct movement without relying on conventional dance vocabulary or cultural references. Because it is based on a universal symbolic system, this method enhances cross-cultural applicability and movement literacy. It visually captures the performer's dynamic changes in time and space, offering tools not only for documentation but also for choreographic creation and reflective practice. Laban believed this method would support both pedagogy and performance, helping students understand movement as a structured process. Today, Labanotation continues to be taught and applied internationally, especially in the fields of dance analysis, choreography, somatic practice, and archival documentation.

The flexibility of the third method allows for personalized symbol expansion. When Laban first introduced this notation system in 1928, he envisioned it as an open-ended framework, encouraging individuals to invent new symbols or combine existing ones based on their creative intentions and practical needs (Maletic, 2025, pp. 145–146). This openness made the system highly adaptable and accessible for a wide range of users and purposes. As the system evolved—particularly following the establishment of the Dance Notation Bureau in the United States and the formalization of the International Council of Kinetography Laban (ICKL), which meets biennially—the development and use of notation gradually became standardized. While this institutionalization ensured greater consistency and precision in documentation, it also introduced certain limitations in creative and improvised applications.

Ann Hutchinson Guest and her colleagues later developed an alternative notation system known as *Motif Notation*. Unlike the full Labanotation system or *Structure Notation*, Motif emphasizes capturing the essential ideas or intentions behind movement, rather than detailed technical execution(Guest, 2007). It is widely used in creative exploration, improvisation, and

somatic education, offering a more intuitive and flexible way to support spontaneous thought and expressive movement in both pedagogical and therapeutic settings. This makes notation not merely a recording tool but an organic component of artistic creation. Through this approach, movements can not only be effectively conveyed but can also evolve with the creator's intentions, generating infinite artistic expression. The rationality of this method lies in its simplification of complex movement sequences and its provision of a holistic analysis of the entire movement process. Dancers can directly observe the changes and developmental trajectories of movements in time and space through symbols and graphics, enabling them to understand the fluidity and spatial relationships of movements more intuitively.

Debate as the Norm in Analysis and Notation

In my teaching experiments in Shenzhen, I used dance notation as a practical platform for movement analysis, grounded in various movement concepts established in Laban's research. We tested these concepts through this notation, in other words, it provided us with a fundamental dialogue platform. Applying theory to practical issues or specific cases often incites debate, as the complexity of practice frequently challenges the completeness of theory. Simultaneously, I create a debate atmosphere in classroom discussions by presenting controversial movements as analysis material and selecting opposing viewpoints presented in students' notations. At first, students may be hesitant to openly display their differing opinions on the issues. However, encouraging different individuals to debate a topic from their own positions gradually inspires deeper discussions and ongoing reflections. An interesting finding is that with the notation as an analytical tool, we seem to have constructed a perfect dialogue platform where we share some rational knowledge with consensus, equipped with a clearly defined terminology system and concepts among members. However, due to individual differences in understanding movements and experiences, many disagreements naturally arise. An environment without debate often tends to stagnate or become complacent. In contrast, debate and disagreement keep students and myself active, continuously pushing for new questions, challenges, and discussions, thus avoiding stagnation in research. Throughout our experimental process, this vitality has allowed us to maintain our exploration of the unknown and the uncertain.

Advocating for Autonomy in Symbol Selection

The establishment of this platform stems from the rationality and openness expressed in dance notation. As Laban stated, everyone can add necessary symbols according to their intentions. This flexibility not only makes notation a tool for describing dance movements but also broadly reflects the freedom of thought expression and creativity. The rationality of notation lies in its systematic organization of dancers' physical movements, accurately recording complex bodily motions through symbolic expression. Its openness allows individuals to interpret and extend the notation based on different creative ideas, cultural backgrounds, artistic styles, or physical conditions. This combination of rationality and openness ensures that notation serves not only specific art forms but also provides space for diverse expressions. Within this framework, individual intentions intertwine with group norms, creativity with rules, forming a dynamic structure. On this platform, performers and choreographers can collaborate freely in multidimensional ways, co-creating works that adhere to artistic logic while reflecting individualized styles.

As Laban envisioned, this freedom stimulates greater creative expression. In his system, the addition or deletion of different symbols is not merely a technical modification but enriches and expands the language of dance. With artists and scholars from various fields continuously introducing new symbols and expressions, dance notation has transcended its role as a mere dance recording tool, becoming a cross-disciplinary platform for intellectual exchange. This inclusiveness of dance notation reflects its ability to adapt to different performance forms and traditions within a global cultural context. For instance, since the mid-20th century, China has recorded many notations of Chinese folk dances, summarizing the characteristics of Chinese dance movement patterns while enriching the theoretical dimensions of Laban's notation.

Therefore, the establishment and development of this platform are based on a profound understanding of the relationship between rules and innovation. It provides researchers in dance, performing arts, and other related fields with a shared space, allowing them to explore new territories through symbols and structures and promote new intersections and collisions of ideas. This platform is not only a product of art but also an important manifestation of rational thinking and human creativity in coexistence and interaction.

Emphasizing Self-Observation Rather Than Testing Right or Wrong

In the process of teaching dance notation, emphasizing self-observation rather than simply testing right or wrong can guide students to a deeper understanding of the diversity of dance and the logic behind it. This teaching approach goes beyond traditional standardized technical assessments, focusing more on cultivating students' subjectivity and critical thinking. By observing their own movement records, students can discover their unique modes of bodily expression and thought processes, thereby establishing a deeper body awareness and artistic understanding. The core of this method lies in guiding students to no longer rely solely on external evaluations but to learn to assess the quality and significance of movements through internal self-observation. Dance notation, as a recording and analysis tool, can help students externalize their internal perceptions into a visualized symbolic system. Through analyzing these symbols, students can uncover their movement preferences, habits, and even potential blind spots—details that are often difficult to capture in traditional teaching.

Moreover, this process of self-reflection can stimulate students' creativity and individual expression. An open learning environment allows students to experiment with various movement expressions and recording methods, encouraging them to discover their own dance language through exploration. This inclusive teaching environment not only enhances students' sense of participation and enthusiasm but also allows each individual to grow in a unique way, avoiding confinement within a single technical framework. In this process, the teacher's role is not merely as a judge but as a guide and inspirer. By posing open-ended questions such as "What does this movement mean to you?" or "Do you think this symbol accurately expresses your intention?" the teacher can encourage students to actively think and reflect on their choices. This dialogical teaching model enhances students' autonomy and sense of responsibility for their learning, while also providing them with a safe experimental space.

Research Theme Four: Physical and Mental Education for Adolescents

In this section, I focus on introducing the cases of body monism, phenomenology, and Laban's research applied to dance education that were reviewed and supported in the preliminary investigation of the research project. I will primarily introduce how my course is specifically designed, focusing on how the aforementioned theories interact within ballroom dance teaching and form a practical approach. Before introducing this main section, I will first reflect on why I implemented such a course, my initial intentions, and the experiences that led me to this point.

In 2023, I attempted to teach standard ballroom dance students at Shenzhen Art School (secondary vocational) using a body awareness approach. The first workshop took place at a dance studio not far from Shenzhen Art School. The participants were eight teenagers, around 15 years old, who were undergoing a rigorous six-year professional education in ballroom dance and participating in domestic and international competitions during their spare time.

The development of standardized dance movements can be traced back to the early 20th century. With the establishment of the international dance competition system, dance experts from different countries gradually unified the standards for ballroom dance through cooperation and discussion, forming organizations such as the World DanceSport Federation (WDSF). These organizations established a series of standards and norms internationally, ensuring consistency in the level of ballroom dance across different competitions and promoting the rapid global development of this dance form.

However, standards and norms are set by a "power organization," and through countless competitions, these established "standards" are given aesthetic practice, deepening their recognition. The integration, categorization, and arrangement of folk dances and social dances from various regions under a "universal international" standard create a homogenized aesthetic level within the group, which in turn limits diverse possibilities. From the perspective of the power centre, dance is controlled under an aesthetic quantification symbol system, and individuals are also drawn into the powerful vortex of temptation, namely the endless pursuit of championship.

The historical body of ballroom dance and the micro-awareness movement approach seem incongruent. Since engaging in this type of practice, especially in the past two years, this seemingly contradictory experience has given me a spectator's identity to re-examine my body's history. I reflect on when I first began to observe these micro-awareness practices and under what circumstances they occurred. I felt that the hypocrisy of the partner relationship in competitive settings and the deliberate ostentation of performances made it impossible for me to find pleasure in such practices. Therefore, I began to seek an alternative practice. When reviewing these theories and practical knowledge, I often compare them with ballroom dancing, paying attention to every detail from arms, legs, pelvis, and feet, and reflecting on why and how they are related. In practice, I also attempt to gradually let go of artificial traces, similar to releasing tense small muscles that I have been reluctant to let go. I hope to slowly return to the most original and relaxed state, realizing that relaxation is a skill that requires patient cultivation. Thus, my pleasurable experiences from the body have gradually increased, seemingly rekindling my initial passion.

This is not to say that removing artificial traces from the body is something to be done deliberately. On the contrary, it emphasizes real experience and first responses. In dance collaboration, either I or the person opposite me continuously engages with each other's force in corresponding ways, with forces interweaving and iterating to form a continuous bodily dialogue. Contact and response create a consensus, leading to an ongoing dialogue of random duration. Sometimes, two familiar bodies can spontaneously perform many unexpected movements together, even one body hovering over the other effortlessly. When observing and participating in contact improvisation, I wonder if the partner relationships in ballroom dance should be like this. In contrast, the ballroom dance that emphasizes partner relationships is often numb to genuine interaction. True partner relationships are based on continuous bodily dialogue, consensus, trust, and the enjoyment of the game.

I revisited the idea expressed by Judson Dance Theatre's Rainer in the 1960s that "thinking is a muscle" (2009), viewing thought from the body's perspective. Even today, this remains a striking notion. Our bodies move alertly and autonomously, not blindly or passively. This means that all our bodily movements are not governed by mechanical program operations but are spontaneous movements triggered by our senses like sight, hearing, smell, and taste. Since

the 20th century, with philosophers shifting their focus from ideas to the body, and the efforts of several generations of European phenomenologists, a living (lived), material body philosophy has gradually become a more resonant value. Thus, does the highly standardized dance form of ballroom dance naturally fall outside the range recognized by such resonant values?

On one hand, the field is crucial. An autonomous, creative, organic, and equally cooperative stage can provide the soil for nurturing autonomy, creativity, and identity in the future. Theatre can host such soil and also allow for the emergence of diverse and unique thinking. Such a field allows for the occurrence of "unconventional" movements, including deconstructing highly codified movements using systematic methods and then reconstructing and presenting them according to the choreographer's personal narrative intentions. Furthermore, theatre allows for all personal and identity presentations.

On the other hand, it concerns how we view standardization and normalization. Standards and rules can manipulate and limit the order of competition operations, but what constitutes "good" dance is hard to define with a standard answer. Creating stunning technical peaks for the audience within 1 minute and 30 seconds to gain countless applause and screams seems to be the pursuit of many competitive dancers on the dance floor. But while striving for every second of peak performance to attract viewers' attention, does the dancer themselves ever truly open to the acute bodily perception of sensing, conveying, and appreciating the immediate interaction between partners? Ballroom dance is a game of pleasure in partner perception and interaction. Its charm lies in the genuine interaction between two bodies. Looking back at the ballroom dance competition scenes from the 1970s to today, especially in recent years, one might observe that as body techniques have continually iterated and sought perfection over decades, patience and concern for immediate inner body perception have gradually diminished. More and more dancers' bodies resemble products from an assembly line, with fewer differences in appearance and technique across different age groups and populations. While technical progress is evident, the bodily cultural diversity, creativity, and creative thinking that should be present in each age group and identity are gradually being lost. In the context of globalization, personal and cultural identity is often clearly recognized through unique distinctions from others.

Therefore, how to cultivate and reshape diverse bodily cultures and creative thinking in dance, and how to embody and protect identity diversity, are ongoing topics. This is also the focus of the case studies and workshops. The Western modern philosopher Descartes compared the body to a ship and reason/soul/consciousness to the helmsman (1985, 141). Modern dancer Martha Graham viewed the body as an instrument (Graham, quoted in Fraleigh 1987, 9). Both of these notions, emerging in philosophy and dance respectively, are contentious in contemporary times. Merleau-Ponty argued that the autonomous body is body-mind unity, which does not require the helmsman of a ship (1967, 188); Fraleigh suggested that the dancer's body is therefore not a container of technique or a tool for playing music, but rather a body with autonomous consciousness, recognizing the spontaneity of movement (1987, 9-11). It is this autonomous and spontaneous body and movement that brings uniqueness: each person's embodied "experience" is naturally carried by the "self"; this "self" inherently carries personal, cultural, historical, political, and identity experiences.

For most people, it is difficult to fully perceive all parts of the body in daily life, especially the movement of small parts like each vertebra in the back. For those who perform highly standardized movements over long periods, awareness of the entire body becomes even weaker. Mechanical assembly line movements or standardized dance routines often only mobilize or train part of the body's coordination and expression abilities. Moreover, ballroom dancers' movements and training methods always follow a relatively single, fixed, and standard pattern, and competitors practice a fixed routine for an extended period in hopes of demonstrating "mastery through practice" in competitions. In such daily practice, they consciously involve only part of the body in the movement while naturally excluding other parts, leading to the body often being confined to a single movement pattern. Additionally, the competitive environment and strong dance style interventions cause some dancers' attention to remain focused on ways to attract external attention, extreme refinement of limbs, and constant external presentation, while less attention is given to internal observation of the body's perception of the environment and immediate experience flow. Therefore, as an art form, dance's artistic creator's plasticity, creative thinking, and creativity are often restricted by these reasons.

In the following section, I will introduce the experimental process of teaching collaboration with youth professional groups, during which I explore space, time, and dynamics starting from cultivating bodily awareness.

Chapter VIII

Structure of the Youth Ballroom Dance Movement Education Curriculum

This chapter draws primarily from my teaching manual *Dance Movement Analysis: A Guide for Ballroom Dance*, offering a concise introduction to its four core components: Body, Time, Space, and Dynamics. These fundamental dimensions form the analytical framework used throughout the manual to support both theoretical understanding and practical application in ballroom dance education. The illustrations featured in this chapter are still frames taken from my instructional video materials, which were developed to complement the textbook and provide students with visual references for movement analysis and practice. Each component—Body, Time, Space, and Dynamics—is explored in relation to both movement theory and pedagogical methods. The chapter introduces foundational concepts such as weight transfer, line of tension, movement phrasing, and dynamic contrasts, while integrating analytical tools adapted from Laban Movement Analysis and applied specifically to the context of ballroom dance. Special attention is given to how movement qualities are shaped by intention, rhythm, and interpersonal responsiveness, all of which are central to partner dance practice. Through this integrated approach, students are encouraged to cultivate somatic awareness, technical precision, and expressive range, fostering a holistic understanding of movement as both a communicative and psychological process.

When teaching these young dancers, I designed a curriculum structure that begins with the body and gradually progresses to space, time, and ultimately dynamics. Unlike approaches based on specific dance genres or stylistic classifications, this method focuses on movement

itself, guiding students to reflect on why we move, how we move, and how else we could move. This approach aims to inspire and nurture all possible creative ideas during adolescence.

Our world has long been exploring ways to cultivate spontaneous bodily movements. Pioneers in philosophy, phenomenology, movement, and dance have accumulated centuries of research for us. While focusing on fostering autonomous bodies and spontaneous bodily movements, we must critically absorb the legacy and experiences of our predecessors, taking into account contemporary contexts and the specific characteristics of each field. In designing the training framework for adolescent ballroom dancers, I categorize the training elements based on the essential characteristics of bodily movement rather than following the traditional classification by dance genre. That is, I categorize them into four units—body, space, time, and dynamics—elements that are inherent in any human movement. This replaces the mindset of classification by dance genre. It is important to note that, whether in our understanding of the body, movement, or in actual training, these four elements are interdependent.

Rudolf Laban once mentioned, "There is no movement which does not develop in space and time, and the weight of the body will naturally enter into the flow" (1947, 58). This statement is summarizing: it points to the essential elements of human movement and acknowledges an organic, living body and its creation of space and time. As he said, "There is no such thing as lifeless space" (Laban, 1966, 94). Phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty shared a similar view, stating that "If I did not have a body, I would not have space" (2012, 102); the space of one's body is continuously created and recreated through its movement in time, rooted in existence (2012, 240). It becomes evident that in movement, the blending of spatial elements is built upon the unfolding of time, while the body governs time, creating both past and future for the present. Similarly, it is the various combinations of space, time, and body weight that generate diverse dynamics and rhythms.

I classified their curriculum into four units:

In the Body unit exercises, I consciously emphasize a phenomenological understanding of the body. I draw upon several concepts and methods from the field of somatics in order to help ballroom dancers develop proprioceptive awareness in movement.

In the Space unit, I incorporate Laban's foundational knowledge of spatial harmony, focusing on a rational understanding of how the moving body creates different harmonious spatial forms.

In the Time unit, I distinguish between perceived time and learned time: the first aims to cultivate dancers' ability to perceive the alternation and variation of different time rhythms, while the second focuses on training them, as professional dancers, to classify and measure time units using basic knowledge of music and dance notation.

In the Dynamics unit, the curriculum builds on the body, space, and time awareness previously established, and integrates Laban's theory of dynamics/effort to further develop dancers' creative thinking in movement and choreography.

Laban's various methods, concepts, and tools are also applied to classify and analyze the centre of gravity, spatial structure, time-rhythm, and dynamics characteristics of standard ballroom dance as a singular genre with its typical movement style. In the body unit, we utilize the concept of the centre of gravity projection point and the three-line stave to conduct a detailed analysis of the characteristics of centre of gravity movement in both modern and Latin dances. This includes analyzing the relationship between the centre of gravity and footwork, the centre of gravity and foot techniques, the centre of gravity and pelvic movement, and distinguishing between centre-guided rise and fall versus knee-guided movement.In the space unit, we focus on analyzing the spatial structure factors of modern dance frame and basic body posture, guiding dancers to conduct self-checks and practice using spatial scaffolding. In the time unit, I introduce the allocation of music from dance notation into the distribution and handling of time and rhythm in ballroom dance, guiding dancers to create free time expressions within their movement flow. In the dynamics unit, we help dancers analyze and categorize the dynamic qualities of each ballroom dance genre based on the fundamental elements of space, time, and force.

This design aims to assist four types of people:

- Ballroom dancers/competitors who are seeking personal style and trying to break through performance or mental bottlenecks. By continually engaging in self-reflection,

they can gradually discover and express their unique characteristics. It also provides a method and tools for self-examination and movement analysis, enabling dancers to engage in systematic self-education.

- Dancers who have experienced sports injuries in dance or those focused on scientific movement can use this knowledge, especially the exercises in the body unit, for supplementary training and rehabilitation.

- Teachers who master the logic behind the four units, the training logic, analysis methods, tools, and terminology can create an effective platform for dialogue with students, cultivating and inspiring diverse thinking. This approach helps teachers systematize, personalize, and enrich their past teaching experiences.

- For choreographers exploring the possibilities of ballroom dance in the theatre, studying the four fundamental elements of human movement—body, space, time, and dynamics—helps to break through the barriers imposed by dance genres and set routines. This provides a method for rationally deconstructing "patterns," which can then be reinterpreted and presented on stage through the choreographer's personal intent/creativity.

Body

The exercises in the body unit aim to help ballroom dancers cultivate comprehensive and acute bodily awareness and kinesthetic consciousness through self-reflection. In the body unit exercises, I begin with body scanning techniques, then progressively move into the development of spinal awareness and centre of gravity awareness.

Body Scan

There is a clear difference between relaxing for the sake of relaxing and consciously relaxing. The former induces inertia, while the latter is the foundation of focus and awareness—a bodily ability that needs to be cultivated. A systematic method for relaxation, the body scan, helps address this issue. The key point of this practice is the "scanning," where attention moves gradually across the body, inch by inch, part by part, keenly observing the current state of each area. The purpose of the body scan is to bring clarity to the "blurred spots" in the body's

composition and develop the ability to focus on the subtle sensations arising from the body. It also becomes an effective method for stress relief and pain reduction. We often use our bodies, especially as dancers, but aside from caring about its form and the execution of movements, we rarely spend time observing, focusing on, and empathizing with the body's true sensations. In this practice, learners start by lying completely relaxed on the floor, following guided instructions to actively engage their complex sensory awareness, and consciously perceive the subtle flow of different body parts.

When the body is in a relaxed state, the freer it is, the more sensitive it becomes to perceiving information. However, past experiences have shown that relaxing is not always easy. Even when lying flat on the ground—a position that requires no movement—you may still find that your body continues to carry a certain degree of muscle tension. Are you unconsciously tensing certain parts of your body, not allowing them to fully relax, as if you're unwilling to let them "drop". Therefore, the first step is to use the scan to identify the tense muscles and consciously relax them.

After relaxing, we move on to observation—paying attention to the contact between your body and the floor. Which parts of your body are in contact with the floor, and which are not? Specifically, your feet, calves, knees, thighs, entire legs, pelvis, spine, shoulders, arms, hands, head, and the direction of your nose—how do they touch the floor, and what are the precise points of contact? Are the areas and weight of contact on the left and right sides equal? Also, observe your breathing: which part of your body moves the most when you breathe—is it your abdomen or your ribs? Does the contact between your spine and the floor change when you breathe? It's important to note that when comparing the differences between the left and right sides of your body, there's no need to deliberately adjust them to make both sides equal; simply focus on the current state of each part of your body.

Spinal Awareness

Preliminary research for the curriculum revealed that ballroom dancers generally have relatively weak awareness of their spinal chain, especially among some modern dancers who struggle with chain-like movement abilities in the thoracic spine. Therefore, in the second part of the body unit, I designed seven exercises to explore spinal chain awareness. These exercises

progress from solo to partner work; from sensing the stillness of the floor with the spine to dynamic spinal interactions between two spines; from whole-body transmission of movement along the spine to segmented chain-like movements; from the complete sequential movement of the spinal chain to focused training on specific areas such as the pelvis and thoracic spine. After establishing an awareness of the sequential movement of the spine, the exercises further develop into sequential movement of the entire body—head, shoulders, waist, hips, legs, and feet.

Centre of Gravity Awareness

- *Centre of Gravity Projection Point and Three-Line Staff*

Centre of gravity awareness is fundamental to human movement. Understanding the centre of gravity projection point helps us monitor the position and state of the centre of gravity during motion. The centre of gravity projection point is the spot where the vertical projection line from the body's centre of gravity meets the ground. For example, when standing with feet together, the centre of gravity projection point falls near the seam between the two feet. In second position, the projection point is between the two feet, and in fourth position, it is located between the front and back feet.

The three-line staff from Labanotation can offer a clearer reference for distinguishing between movements that support the body's centre of gravity and those that do not. In the three-line staff diagram below, the vertical line in the centre divides the dancer into left and right halves based on the body's symmetrical structure. This line passing through the body's centre of gravity is called the central line or centre line. Moving outward from the centre, the two columns closest to the centre line help us distinguish or record movements that support the centre of gravity, referred to as support columns. The areas adjacent to the support columns help differentiate leg movements that do not carry the body's centre of gravity, followed by the torso, arm, and head movements.

- *Centre of Gravity Shifts in an Upright Position*

Performing centre of gravity shift exercises while maintaining an upright body helps us perceive the movement and changes of the centre of gravity on the supporting points of the feet,

and trains the body's balance and coordination during movements with polar tensions. The key in this exercise is to imagine the centre of gravity projection point rolling along the edges of the entire foot, reaching all positions along the edge while striving to maintain balance. We can use opposing movements of the upper and lower body to keep balance, such as when the centre of gravity projection point moves forward to the toes, the arms can move backward to create opposing tension and thus maintain balance. From this perspective, the ballet position of arabesque is an excellent example of maintaining balance through opposing movements of the arms and legs.

- *Analysis of Centre of Gravity by Dance Style*
1. Centre of Gravity Analysis - Steps

In the dance style of the Rumba, a posture-based movement of the foot followed by a shift of the centre of gravity characterizes the step pattern. The example on the right illustrates this. The step pattern first appears in the posture column and then moves to the support column. This pattern is similar to the sequence of steps in Rumba. Initially, the foot is moved rather than the centre of gravity, which creates a brief period of leg posture adjustment before shifting the centre of gravity to complete a forward step. At this point, the centre of gravity projection point is located at the ankle of the left foot. During the movement of the centre of gravity, we can use the projection point to assess if the centre of gravity is correctly positioned. For example, if the position is meant to be forward but the pelvis is left behind the body, the projection point may not be at the ankle but instead at the heel or even further back, between the feet. Awareness of the centre of gravity or sensitivity to its movement affects the execution, accuracy, speed of a movement, and the fluidity of transitions between steps and throughout the entire movement sequence.

Step

Figure 21: The representation of the slow forward step in Rumba in Labanotation[7].

2. Centre of Gravity Analysis - Footwork

In Modern Dance footwork, transitions between the heel, the ball of the foot, and the toes essentially involve shifts in the centre of gravity, or more precisely, the movement of the centre of gravity projection point on the foot. Therefore, while focusing on footwork, it is crucial to also pay attention to the fundamental movement of the centre of gravity. The following five centre of gravity projection points illustrate the movement of the centre of gravity during the transition from the heel to the ball of the foot. However, it is important to note that these are merely snapshots of certain projection points; the entire dynamic and continuous movement process, which can project countless points on the ground, should not be overlooked.

3. Centre of Gravity Analysis - Latin Dance Pelvic Movement

The movement of the hips has become a prominent characteristic of Latin dance. However, it is essential to recognize that the movement of the centre of gravity is at the core of hip movement, with the contraction, extension, and rotation of the hips being merely superficial aspects. In the typical and widely used Cuban Motion in Latin dance, the contraction, extension,

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[7] All the images in this chapter are screenshots from the author's teaching material The Handbook of Dance Movement Analysis: Ballroom Dance, published by Shanghai Conservatory of Music Press in 2025.

and rotation of the hips are essentially modifications of the centre of gravity movement or adjustments and alleviations during its polar movements.

We first shift the centre of gravity to the left foot, and as we continue moving left, one side of the body quickly reaches an extreme point. To maintain balance, the hips participate in releasing and alleviating the force at this extremity. Meanwhile, the centre of gravity projection moves along the outer edge of the left foot toward the back, creating a diagonal tension between the right and left sides of the body. On this basis, while the hips remain unchanged, the centre of gravity continues moving diagonally. Upon reaching the extreme point on this side, the hips again release and alleviate the internal force within the body, allowing the centre of gravity to initiate the next movement sequence. Conversely, as the centre of gravity moves backward, it continues to create diagonal movement, and the hips again release this polarity. Our body's movements, whether in actions or dance, embody a dialectical unity between extremes such as movement and stillness, symmetry and asymmetry, imbalance and equilibrium.

Partner Relationships

The final training element in the body unit is partner relationships. The entire training process initially focuses on developing individual body awareness and a clear understanding of one's own centre of gravity, which is fundamental for establishing effective partner coordination. During this process, dancers delve deeply into their own movements, progressively enhancing their sensitivity and control over various bodily elements such as muscles, joints, and balance. This individual training not only helps dancers better master their own movement patterns but also cultivates their sensitivity to internal rhythms and external space. Only when individuals have a thorough awareness and control of their own bodies can they proceed to the more complex exploration of partner relationships. At this stage, dancers are not only able to adjust their movements more fluidly but can also more acutely perceive and respond to their partner's bodily signals, achieving smoother interactions. Thus, placing the partner relationship training at the end is not only a natural extension of the previous individual body awareness training but also a crucial step for collaboration and coordination in partner dancing.

In exploring partner relationships, I categorize the dynamics of pair coordination in standard ballroom dance into three types: contact, non-contact, and delayed feedback.

Contact Relationships refer to interactions where two dancers transmit force and intention through physical touch. This direct physical contact means that the partnership relies heavily on each other's perception abilities, especially immediate responses to subtle changes in force, direction, and rhythm. Through this perception, dancers can build trust and achieve highly synchronized movement coordination in dynamic scenarios.

Non-Contact Relationships are established through visual, spatial, and psychological interaction. Although there is no direct physical contact, dancers coordinate through eye contact, shared spatial awareness, and anticipation of each other's movements. This type of interaction is often seen in Latin dance, where dancers maintain a certain distance but still manage to perform fluidly through mutual rhythmic and dance language understanding.

Delayed Feedback represents a more subtle interaction, occurring not instantaneously but through the delayed response to movements and force transmission. In this type of relationship, interaction happens after a movement is completed, with dancers reflecting on their partner's reactions and their own performance to make subsequent adjustments. Delayed feedback reflects how choreography can accommodate fine-tuning and adaptation without disrupting the fluidity of the movements.

These three types of relationships illustrate the multi-layered interactions in partner dancing, highlighting both real-time responses during contact and communication and adaptation at visual and psychological levels. These interaction mechanisms not only affect the performance of standard ballroom dance but also reveal the rich and diverse ways in which bodily perception and cooperation exist behind highly standardized movements.

Space

Space is the starting point in many branches of Laban's research and is also a typical method within his study. Movement endows space with life. Lifeless space does not exist because there is no space devoid of movement, nor is there movement detached from space (Laban, 1966). Laban explored different historical perspectives on movement, space, and time, noting, "In

traditional notions of space, space is thought to be a phenomenon that can be separated from time, force, and expression. This notion is entirely erroneous" (Laban, 1966, p. 67). Here, he specifically refers to the dualistic thinking represented by the philosopher Descartes, which has been a philosophical constraint in Western modern philosophy for centuries. This dualistic thinking led to the view that bodily movement could only be mechanical. For example, Beauchamp-Feuillet recorded the dancer's steps by mapping the routes or floor patterns created by the dance, reducing three-dimensional continuous body movements to individual points on the ground. Laban's spatial notation can be seen as one of the earliest challenges to this Cartesian body-space dualism in dance practice theory. It breaks away from the two-dimensional floor patterns represented by Beauchamp-Feuillet's dance notation. The significant contribution of this spatial notation system is its recognition of the holistic, dynamic involvement of humans in three-dimensional space, and its ability to translate the dynamics of three-dimensional space onto a two-dimensional plane.

With the assistance of spatial notation, dancers can gain a deeper understanding of the spatial knowledge and movement logic behind their performances. This spatial knowledge includes not only geometric and spatial awareness in modern dance choreography but also touches on deeper structural elements from historical philosophy, such as the harmonious structures of the five Platonic solids proposed during Plato's time. Plato associated these solids with natural elements, reflecting the concept of cosmic order and harmony. In dance, these spatial principles can help dancers comprehend the relationships between different movements, how to create harmonious spatial forms through choreography, and how to clearly perceive their own position and orientation in space. Moreover, dancers can explore the flow and stability of movements through movement symbols, achieving a higher level of harmony and unity in choreography and collaboration.

When discussing harmonious movement, it is essential to consider the concept and system of Choreutics, also known as Space Harmony. The term *Choros* means "circle," and *eu* represents "good." In his eponymous work, Laban explores the spatial factors of body movement in a manner similar to how musical theory examines the construction of harmonious melodies. He investigates the logic behind the various developmental processes of the body in

space, based on established anatomical movement structures, geometric definitions, and the laws of movement, and summarizes these into spatial scales, akin to musical scales.

Thus, spatial scales can be seen as abstract principles and patterns of harmonious space-movement forms, which can be practiced in daily activities to cultivate spatial awareness in dance performance, choreography, and teaching. In my teaching, I refer to the directional sequences proposed by Laban in his 1966 original work and design fundamental exercises based on dimensions, diameters, and diagonal spatial directions.

In this unit, during the practice of movement sequences and shaping connections, two fundamental principles are consistently followed, which are also two basic spatial movement awarenesses: alternating movements from the body's centre to its edges, and understanding the order and balance established by reverse movements. Essentially, movements coordinated by the entire body begin from the centre and then extend outward. Therefore, the 27 directions generated in the three fundamental spatial orientation systems—dimensions, diameters, and diagonals, which will be introduced later in the textbook—originate from the body's centre and radiate outward. This practice not only adheres to the traditional teaching of Laban's theories but also aligns with the consensus among dancers and movement researchers over time.

The second principle, concerning reverse movement order, involves the simultaneous movement of two parts of the body in opposite directions. This is crucial for maintaining balance during movement. Additionally, balance under tension (balance, poise, equilibrium) is one aspect of harmonious movement.

Spatial Knowledge

- *Platonic Polyhedra - Spatial Exercise Framework*

Laban studied the movement space of the human body based on geometric theorems. The five harmonious and symmetrical polyhedra from Plato—tetrahedron, hexahedron (cube), octahedron, dodecahedron, and icosahedron—serve as topological models for analyzing the composition of movement space. These topological models act as scaffolding for studying harmonious spatial movement sequences within the Laban system, providing practitioners with a visual reference for harmonious movement. In practice, using these scaffolds helps convert abstract knowledge into concrete and visible spatial structures. In this textbook, the spatial unit

introduces three basic orientation systems: dimensions, diameters, and diagonals, utilizing the tetrahedron, hexahedron, and octahedron.

The tetrahedron is a polyhedron composed of four triangular faces. A body posture can illustrate each face of the tetrahedron. The triangle formed by the support points of the hands, knees, and feet on the ground represents one face of the tetrahedron. Looking from other perspectives, connecting the space points where the fingertips and toes are located forms the remaining three triangles.
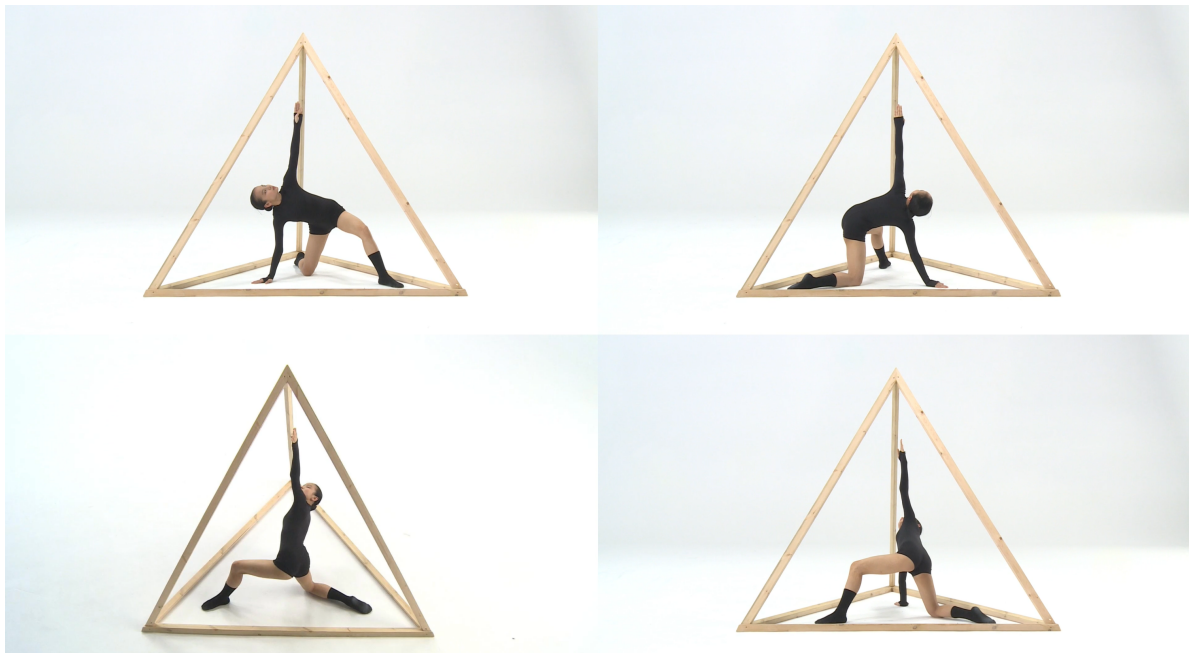
Figure 22 The Four Triangles of the Tetrahedron

The hexahedron is a cube. It is formed by four diagonals. Connecting the extremities of these four diagonals creates the structure of a hexahedron.

Figure 23 Hexahedron

The octahedron is a crystalline form oriented by dimensions. When the body is vertical, the upward extension of the arms represents its height, the distance the limbs extend to the sides represents its width, and the forward and backward movements of the limbs determine its depth.
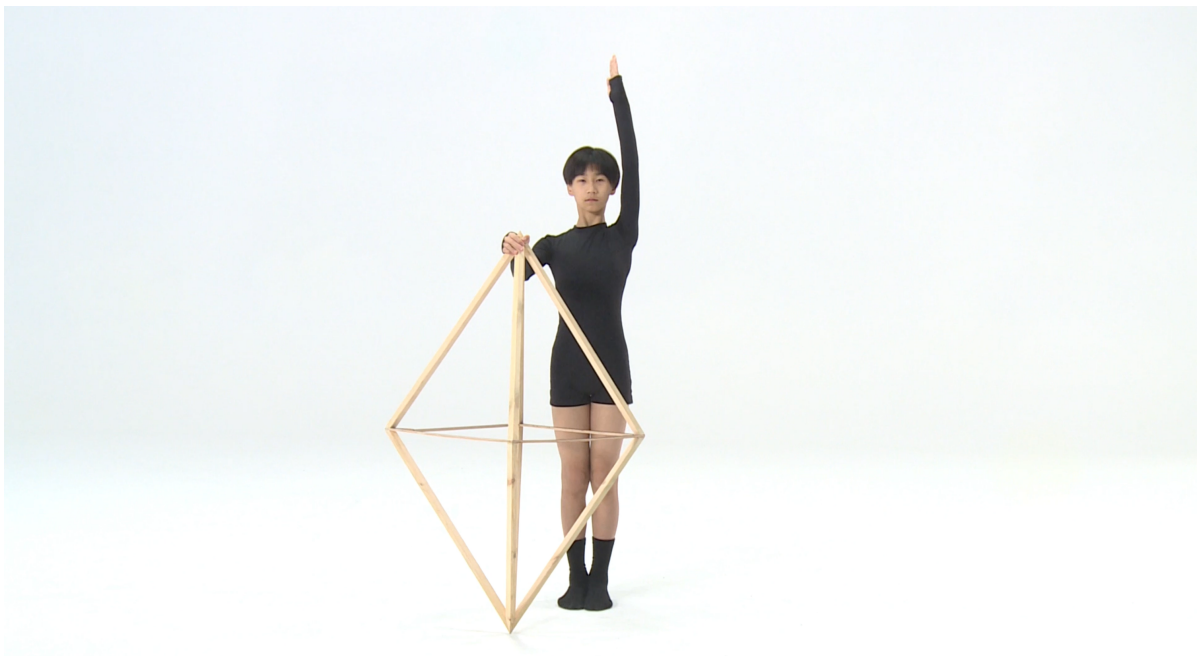
Figure 24 Octahedron

In understanding space, it is essential to first distinguish between general space and personal space (the kinesphere). Laban, in his work "Choreutics" (1966, p. 10), states:

"Whether the body is stationary or in motion, it occupies space and is surrounded by space; we must distinguish between general space and the space that the body can reach. The latter is referred to as personal space or the ' kinesphere'."

'General space' refers to the objective space in a universal sense, such as a room or stage, with fixed directions such as forward, backward, left, and right.

"Kinesphere" is a term coined by Laban, derived from the Greek words "kinesis" (movement) and "sphaira" (sphere or ball). It refers to the space that our hands and feet can reach while standing in place without moving our steps. It is a personal spherical space created by our own body movements, so each person creates a unique kinesphere due to differences in body size.

Figure 25 Kinesphere

The dancer's "personal space," also known as the "kinesphere," is centered around the individual's body and serves as a reference system for movement directions. From the body's centre of gravity, it radiates outward, forming 27 primary directions. These 27 directions arise from three spatial orientation systems: dimensions, diameters, and diagonals.
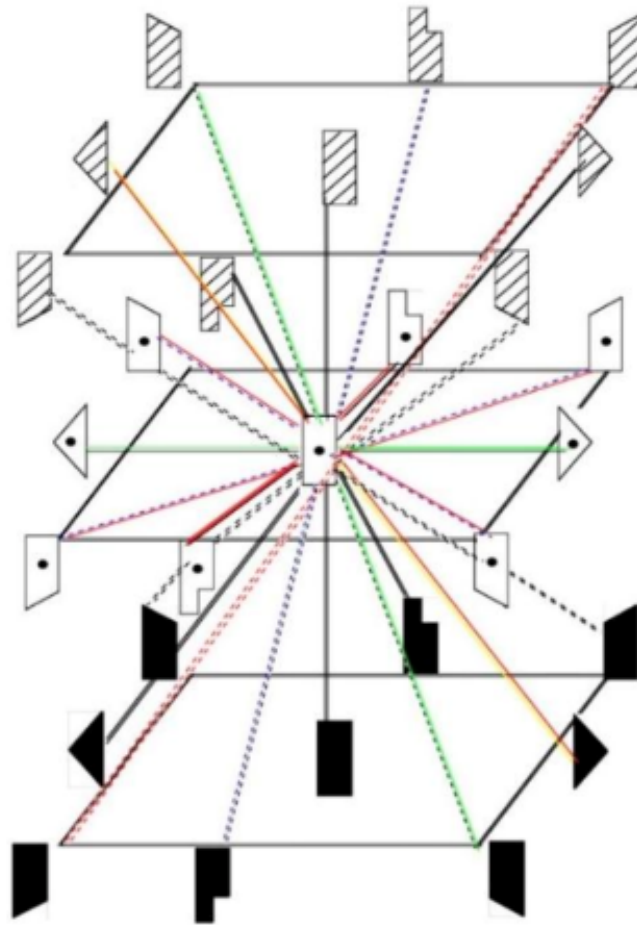
Figure 26 Main Directions in the Kinesphere

Directional Systems: Dimensions, Diameters, and Diagonals

In the dimension system, there are three one-dimensional axes: the vertical axis, the sagittal axis, and the frontal axis. The vertical axis has two polar directions: up and down. The frontal axis introduces left and right directions, while the sagittal axis brings forward and backward directions. This results in a total of six directions (red for the vertical axis, yellow for the frontal axis, and blue for the sagittal axis).
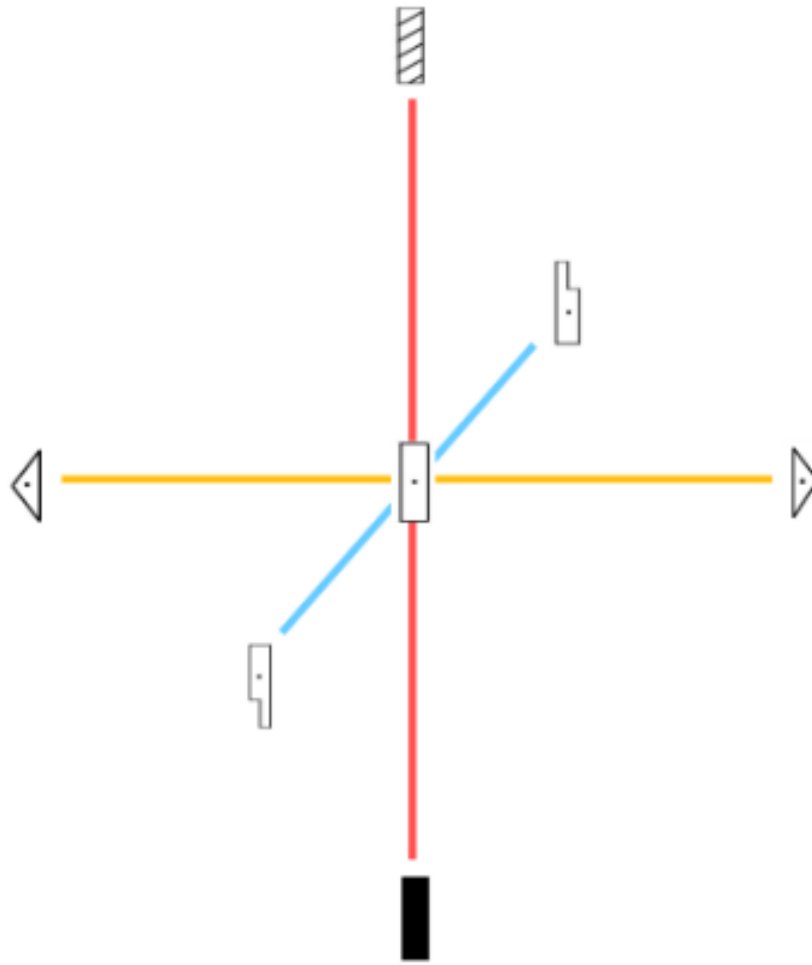
Figure 27 Dimension Space Symbols

Sagittal(F-B)　　　Horizontal(L-R)　　　Vertical(H-L)
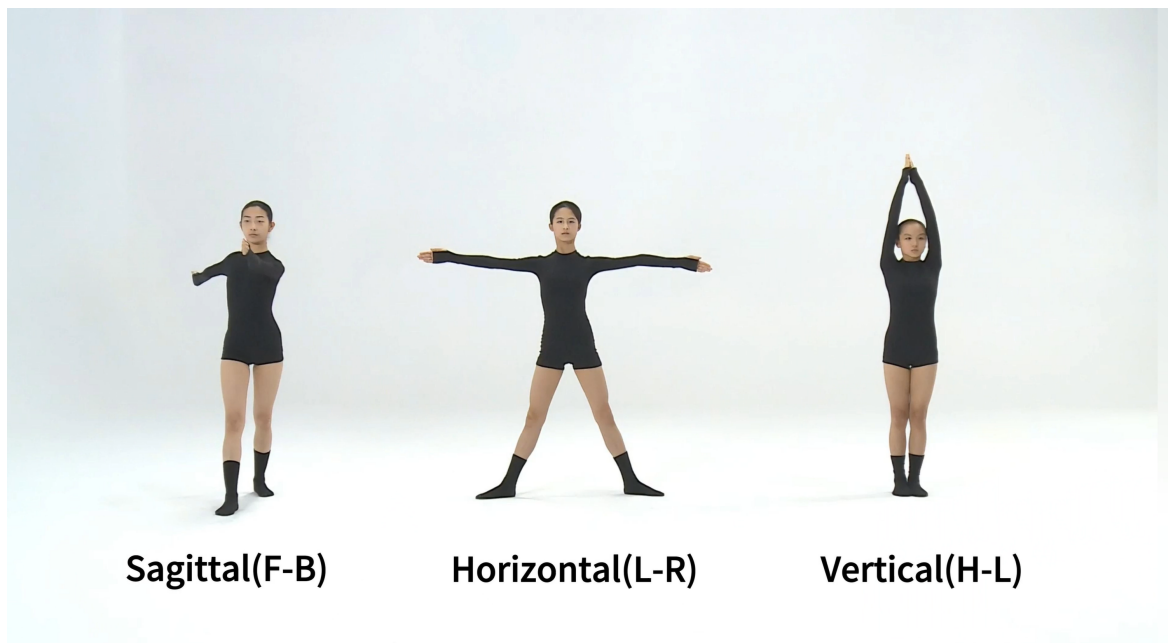
Figure 28 From left to right: sagittal axis, frontal axis, vertical axis.

Diameter System

The diameter system includes 12 spatial directions, which are derived from six diagonal axes across three different planes: the door plane, the table plane, and the wheel plane.

- **Door Plane** directions are left high-right low and right high-left low.
- **Table Plane** directions are left front-right back and right front-left back.
- **Wheel Plane** directions are front high-back low and back high-front low.
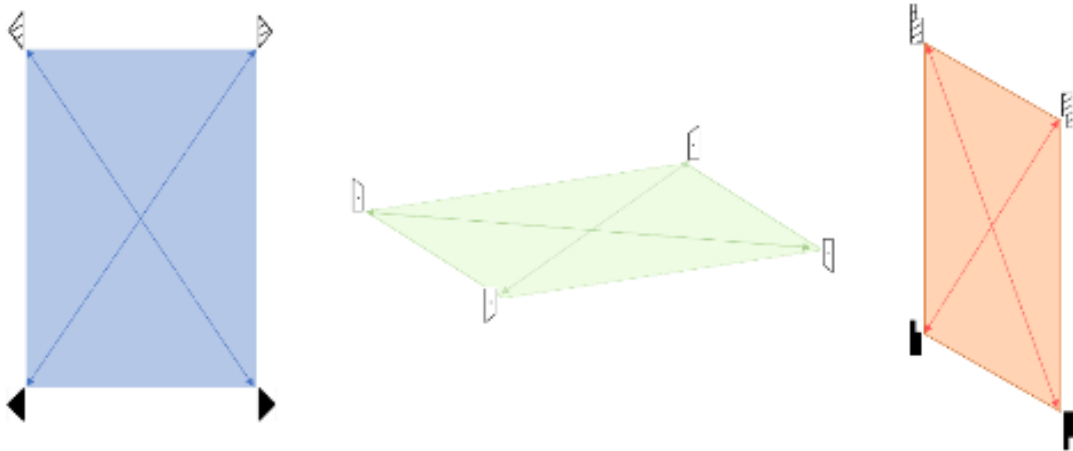
Figure 29 Symbols for Spatial Directions in the Door Plane, Table Plane, and Wheel Plane

Diagonal System

The diagonal system comprises 8 three-dimensional directions, derived from four diagonals passing through the centre. These diagonals are:

- **Left Front High - Right Back Low** (Green Axis)
- **Right Back High - Left Front Low** (Purple Axis)
- **Right Front High - Left Back Low** (Blue Axis)
- **Left Back High - Right Front Low** (Red Axis)
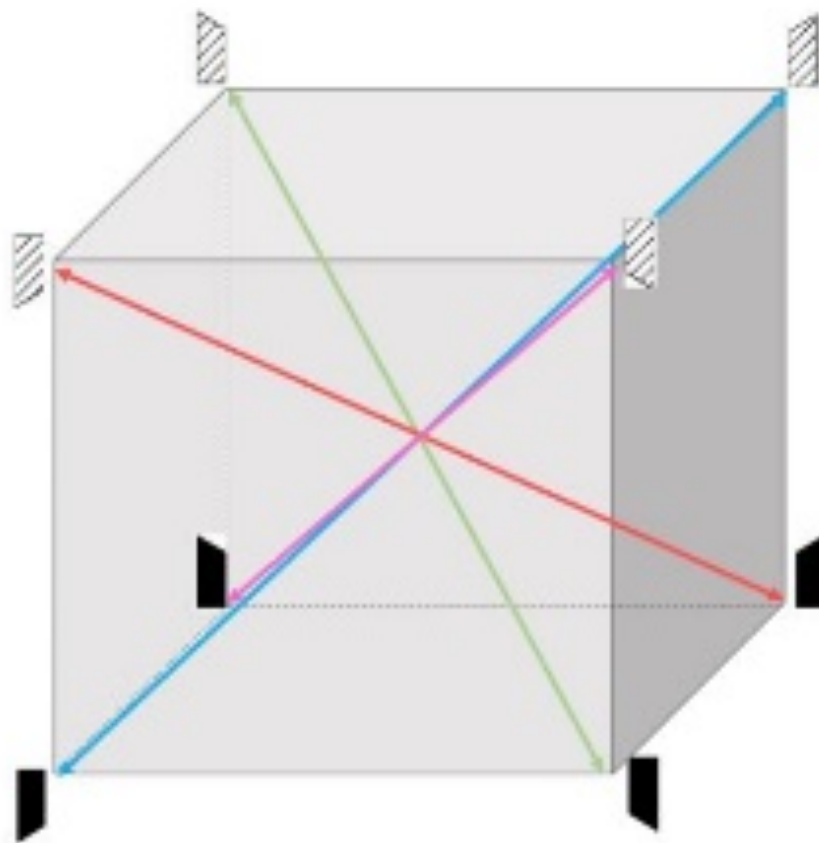
Figure 30 Diagonal Directions and Symbols

Space Sequence Exercise

- *Dimension Sequence*

Direction Order: High - Low - Left - Right - Front - Back - Centre - High - Low - Right - Left - Front - Back

The crystalline form of the dimension sequence is the octahedron. As mentioned earlier, the sequence of movements is designed based on the principle of opposing or reciprocal actions. That is, each movement reaches an extreme point of one dimension before moving to the opposite endpoint. The alternation of directions ensures that any unilateral "tension" is balanced, thus adhering to the principle of equilibrium.

In exercises guided by Laban's assistant, Lisa Ullmann, it is observed that she incorporated both convergent and divergent postures into the dimension sequence, creating a variant based on this sequencing principle. This method helps deepen the practitioner's emotional

understanding of different dimensional directions. It is worth noting that Laban characterized dimension directions as promoting stability and tending towards stillness. Practitioners are likely to have a similar experience when comparing the three sequences.

- *Diameter Sequence*

Direction Order: Right High - Left Low - Centre - Left High - Right Low - Centre - Front High - Back Low - Centre - Back High - Front Low - Centre - Right Front - Left Back - Centre - Left Front - Right Back - Centre

The diameter sequence in the textbook follows the order of the three plane directions. Interestingly, different combinations of diameter directions can produce various spatial appearances of diameter direction sequences. For example, Laban designed Sequence A based on the body's left-right symmetry and Sequence B based on the front-back symmetry, resulting in spatial forms characterized by "flat," "steep," and "flowing" sensations when connecting to different dimensions.

- *Diagonal Sequence*

Direction Order: Left Front High - Right Back Low - Right Front High - Left Back Low - Right Back High - Left Front Low - Left Back High - Right Front Low

The crystalline form of the diagonal sequence is the cube (hexahedron). It includes 4 spatial diagonals and the 8 directions they generate. Compared to the "stable and stationary" feeling produced by the dimension directions, the diagonal directions create a sense of instability and movement.

Spatial Motion Connection

It's important to note that, unlike some modern dance practices where the goal of "shape connection" training is to create choreography, the connection of spatial motions is not intended for composition. Instead, its purpose is to deepen the dancer's understanding of spatial knowledge. As such, it establishes a particular spatial system (such as dimension, diameter, or diagonal) and develops it systematically until the system is complete, rather than serving as a means for spontaneous improvisation or composition that follows or resists inherent tendencies.

Therefore, we do not encourage practitioners to view it as a choreographic tool. Rather, we hope that, after developing a keen bodily awareness and rational spatial understanding through body and spatial units, they will explore their own creative methods independently.

- *Dimension Motion Connection*

The three pre-designed spatial motions should include the vertical axis, sagittal axis, and coronal axis, which represent the dimensions of height, width, and depth respectively. Each spatial motion should encompass one of these dimensional directions—high/low, left/right, and front/back. Transitional movements are then used to connect these three spatial systems together.

- *Diameter Motion Connection*

The three pre-designed motions should include the door plane, table plane, and wheel plane, with directions corresponding to the following:

Door plane: left high - right low - right high - left low

Table plane: left front - right back - right front - left back

Wheel plane: front high - back low - back high - front low

- *Diagonal Motion Connection*

Design several pre-planned motions that incorporate all three dimensional directions simultaneously. This means including directions from the front-back, left-right, and high-low systems.

Figure 31 Example: Diagonal Motion Connection

Spatial Feature Analysis

- *Spatial Composition of Modern Dance Framework*

The basic body shape in modern dance is a typical example of diagonal motion. The opposing movements of the head and feet create a three-dimensional diagonal tension that radiates outward from the centre of the body, resulting in the interlocking of the dancers' upper bodies. For instance, when constructing a framework, a dancer's body starts from the core, with the upper body's tension and awareness directed towards the left-front-high, while the lower body's tension and awareness move towards the right-back-low. The opposing movements of the head and feet are crucial for maintaining balance under tension, as they ensure an even distribution of force throughout the body. Additionally, the vertical tension of the arms/elbow joints, crossing with the body's vertical alignment, forms a stable cross structure. This structure helps establish a symmetrical awareness of up-down and left-right, integrating this symmetry with the dancer's connection in partner work, which is essential for maintaining balance and harmony in cooperation.

Figure 32 Framework and Body-Movement in Ballroom Dancing

Time

Laban began his research on time and rhythm in the 1920s. Although some of his concepts are now a century old, they still appear relevant today. For dancers, "time" and "rhythm" are not only durations divided quantitatively but also the manifestation of various subtle differences in tension within space and dynamics. Laban studied time from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives. In his qualitative approach to time, he mentioned (Laban 1926, quoted in Maletic 2019, 120):

A great deal of our perception of time is relative. A prolonged state of tension that causes discomfort can feel endless, while pleasurable tension seems to pass quickly. Compared to a whole hour of pleasure, half an hour of fear can feel much longer, as if time has been stretched three times its actual length.

In his subsequent manuscripts and works, Laban further explored the concepts of "rhythm" and "phrasing" in dance. He proposed that rhythm is an experience unfolding in space, time, and dynamics. Thus, he introduced the concepts of "space-rhythm," "time-rhythm," and "weight-rhythm." Space-rhythm refers to the different patterns and interweavings created by

the body in space. Time-rhythm pertains to the distribution of the duration of actions, which can be either regular or irregular. Weight-rhythm is related to the rhythm of bodily weight and is reflected in the emphasized or de-emphasized parts of a movement sequence. The development of rhythm leads to phrasing in dance, where each action begins from a state of stillness and ends in another state of stillness, marking the termination of the movement.

In terms of studying time from a quantitative perspective, Laban's dance notation system reflects this approach. Laban considered that every change in the position of body parts in space occupies a certain amount of time and requires a specific amount of muscular effort. Therefore, in the description of his notation system, several key questions are addressed: which part of the body is moving, how long the movement takes, how much effort is required, and in which direction the movement occurs. In terms of time, the speed of execution can be visually identified from the length of the notation symbols.

Thus, in this unit, time can be understood in two ways. First, in a quantitative sense, referring to the measurement and regulation of time. For example, clock time, time differences across various world time zones, and musical time values such as quarter notes, half notes, whole notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes. In dance notation, these time values are distinguished by the lengths of the intervals. Second, in terms of perceived time contrast, such as fast and slow, which is often reflected in the tactile differences experienced when contrasting speed and slowness.
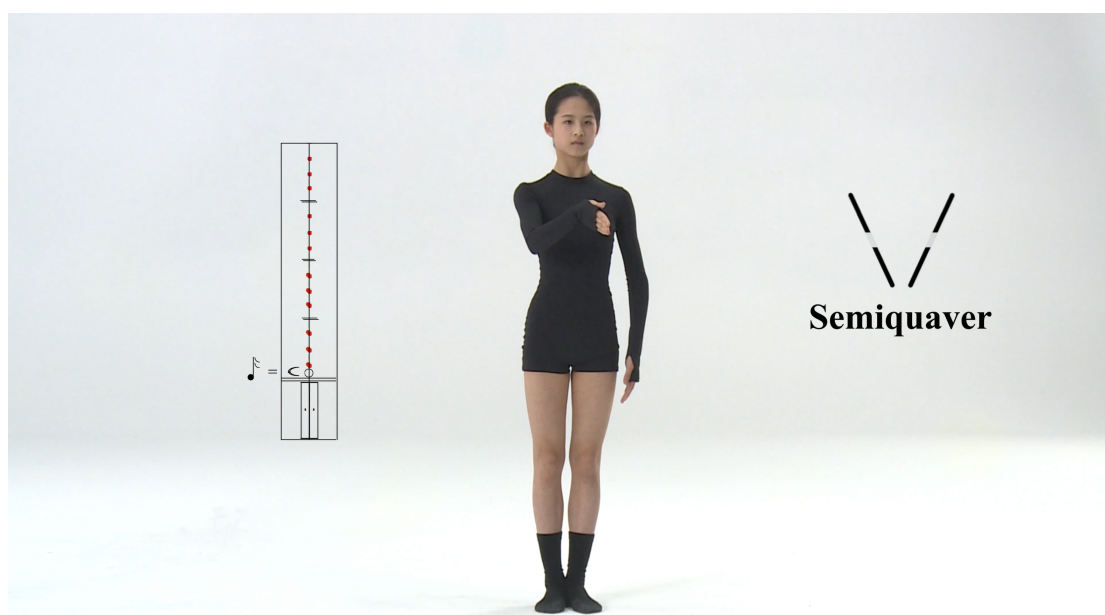
Figure 33 Example: Semiquaver in Dance Notation

Perceived Time / Time-Rhythm

For the perception of time in terms of speed, we can integrate the previously discussed non-contact partner perception exercises with the comparison of fast and slow time. Similarly, in this context, the facilitator can not only design and create contrasts in time speed but also incorporate emphasis and attenuation of body weight. Additionally, using the spatial knowledge we have learned, we can attempt to create alternating rhythms with spatial changes in different dimensions.

Dance Score and Beat Distribution

Dancers should also master the knowledge of studying time from a quantitative perspective. This can be understood through basic music theory and the way beats are allocated in a dance score. The dance score should be read from bottom to top, with the lowest section indicating the starting position, denoting the preparatory pose or movement. As shown in the diagram, the bar with the initial position symbol indicates the starting point of the movement, and the initial position mark is located on the support bar that bears the body's centre of gravity, indicating that the stance is to be maintained. The example is in 4/2 time, where a quarter note represents one beat, and each measure contains two beats. Measures are separated by measure lines, and each beat is divided by short bars. The symbol "Stroke Line" can be understood here as representing the movement of the centre of gravity and steps.

Clapping Canon
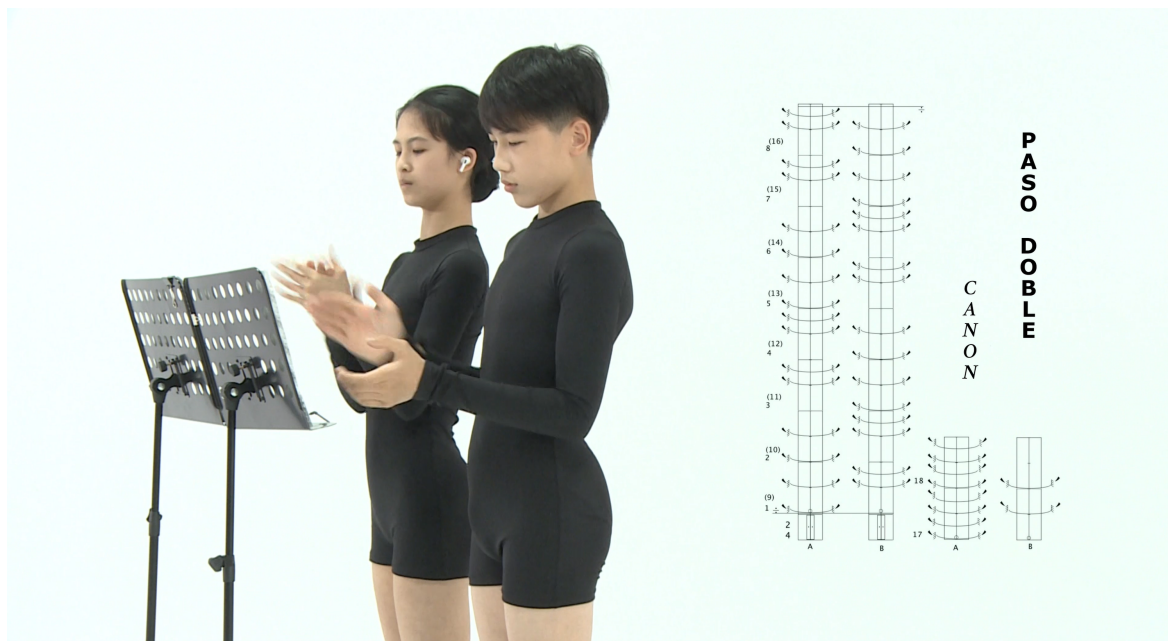
Figure 34 Clapping Canon-Paso Doble in Latin Dance

Practicing clapping canons is an effective way to enhance musical awareness. After becoming proficient in clapping the AB sections, practitioners can experiment with clapping different parts of their body, similar to Flamenco dance techniques. The "Spanish Bullfighting Dance Clapping Canon" was composed by the author in 2019 based on the typical bullfighting piece "Spanish Bullfighter's March." This score is organized in 4/2 time, which contrasts with the traditional "counting eights" method used in dance. This distinction was keenly felt during the composition process. In past experiences, ballroom dancers often relied on listening for the climax of the sections, accustomed to dividing the bullfighting music into two or three segments based on counting eights, or even five, nine, or ten beats. However, teachers frequently struggle to help students clearly understand the time structure of the music, especially the more subtle musical structures within the piece.

Dynamics

Force, space, time, and flow are the four fundamental elements of movement. All human actions are closely related to these four factors, to varying degrees. There is no movement that

does not develop within space and time, and the body's weight is also involved in the flow. Thus, these factors are interdependent, and their combinations create diverse dynamic qualities or textures of movement. The dynamics unit, as the final section of the textbook, integrates and builds upon the knowledge elements from the body, space, and time units. It ultimately explores the force, quality, and emotional aspects of human movement. This unit draws on some of Laban's theories and their branches to help learners develop creative thinking in dance.

Examining Laban's system of Eukinetics, which he developed for studying movement expression (emotional expression), can help in understanding his theories of dynamics. Eukinetics, a term created by Laban from Greek, combines "Eu," meaning "good," and "kinesis," meaning "movement" or "action." In his comprehensive work *Choreutics*, published in 1966, Laban describes Eukinetics as a study that clarifies the structure of movement dynamics (Laban 1966, 30). While some might associate it with Dalcroze's "Eurhythmics," it is important to note that Laban and Dalcroze had completely different starting points and objectives. For Dalcroze, music stimulates movement and dance, whereas Laban believed that music arises from rhythmic and patterned movements. Eukinetics does not transform musical rhythm into bodily movement but explores the dynamics of movement based on the body's own rhythm. Therefore, it is fundamentally based on the body itself and develops according to its own rules, regardless of the presence of music. This viewpoint is supported by Mary Wigman, a student of Laban who had also studied Dalcroze's method. She confirmed that Laban's approach liberated dance from its subordinate status and restored it as an independent art form (Wigman 1929, quoted in Maletic 2019, 205).

Four Elements of Movement

The four elements of movement are space, weight, time, and flow. Laban analyzed these elements by dividing them into polar opposites: space into direct-indirect; weight into light-heavy; time into fast-slow; and flow into free-bound. This polarity is visually represented in the design of the effort charts.

It is important to note that Laban combined these movement elements with psychological factors. The concepts of "thinking," "feeling," "intuition," and "emotion" used by Carl Gustav Jung to classify consciousness (Jung, 1971) align with Laban's framework. Similarly, Laban

associated the movement elements with different aspects of consciousness: space relates to cognitive ability (attention); weight relates to sensation (intention); time relates to intuition (decision-making); and flow relates to emotion (developmental process).

The combination of any two elements results in six possible combinations, each with four variations (from each element's two polarities), creating 24 different "efforts," which Laban termed "incomplete efforts." The combination of three elements in their polarities results in 32 distinct efforts. When all four elements—space, weight, time, and flow—are combined clearly, 16 different variations arise, known as "complete effort actions." Thus, the diverse combinations of element polarities generate 72 different qualities of movement. This textbook will introduce and analyze eight common basic effort patterns, often applied in the analysis of time, space, and force elements in various movements.

Basic Effort Actions
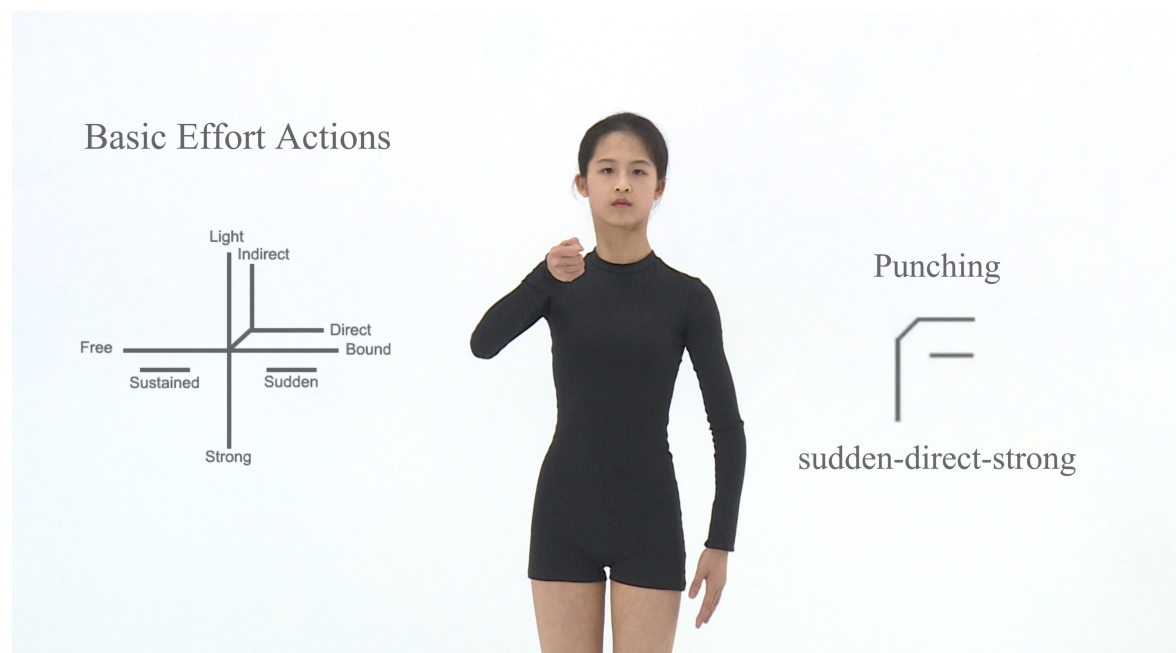
Figure 35 Example: Punching in Basic Effort

By combining these four movement elements in different ways, they form the eight basic *efforts*. Punch,Press,Slash,Wring, Dab, Glide, Flick,Float**.** I don't treat this as fixed knowledge; rather, I use Laban's categorization to help students understand the possible

components of a movement and what kind of effects their combinations might achieve. Eight basic patterns can be used to classify ten dance styles according to time, space, weight, and flow. However, it is important to note that each dance style can exhibit more than one type of movement quality, so there is no single "correct" answer. The key is to understand the underlying principles of time, space, weight, and flow in movement and to develop the ability to analyze these elements.
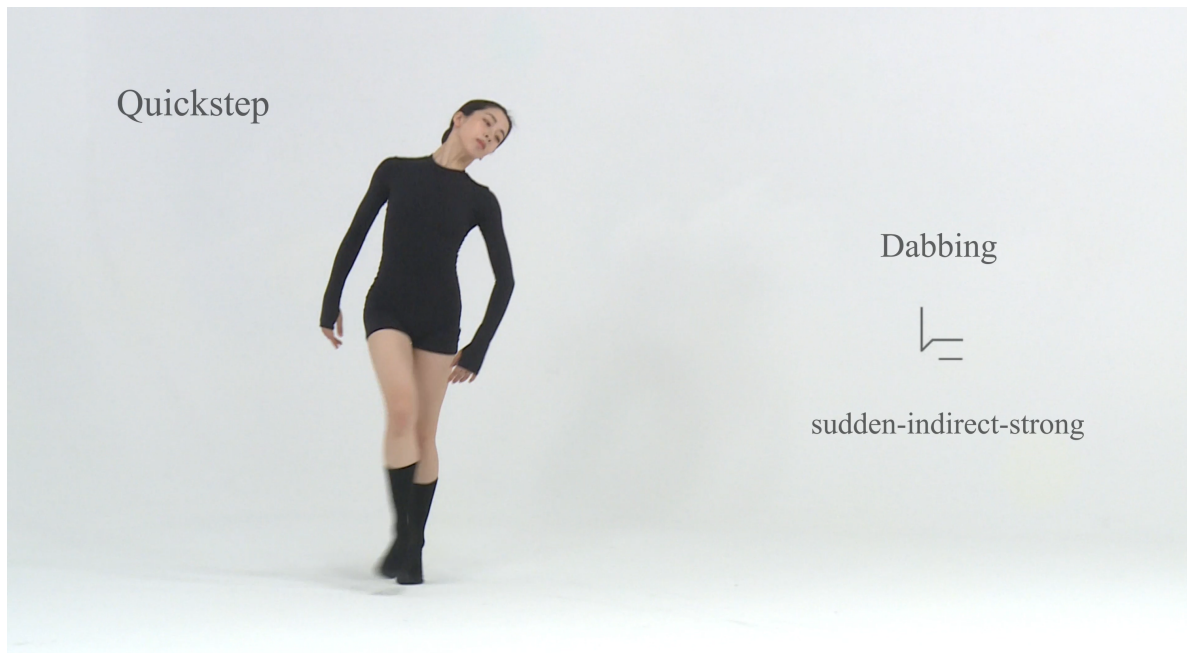
Figure 36 Example: Effort Analysis of Quickstep

Element Emphasis and Combination

A single movement element rarely appears in isolation, but it can become a primary variation within a particular sequence of actions. This primary variation can ultimately suggest a specific preference, giving the sequence its unique stylistic character (Maletic, 2019). Therefore, we encourage learners to design movements by emphasizing a single element and experimenting with combinations of two elements.

- *Element Emphasis*

Emphasis on Space: Space represents thinking and can guide movement to form a quality that is multi-focal and flexible.

Emphasis on Weight: Weight represents sensation, and emphasizing weight as the dominant element brings a sensitivity to the intention behind the movement.

Emphasis on Time: Time represents intuition. Emphasizing time highlights the performer's sharpness and grasp in decision-making.

Emphasis on Flow: Flow is often associated with emotion, giving the dance an overall impression of either restrained caution or enthusiastic expressiveness.

Figure 37 Example: Flow-Feeling

- *Combination of Weight and Time*

The combination of weight and time creates a rhythmic, grounded, and intimate emotional quality or attitude.

Space and Flow: In contrast to the combination of weight and time, the combination of space and flow creates a more abstract and distanced emotional quality or attitude.

Space and Time: The combination of space and time creates an alert or aware attitude.

Weight and Flow: The combination of weight and flow creates a dream-like, unconscious state, which is distinctly different from the alertness and awareness exhibited by the combination of space and time.

Flow and Time:The combination of flow and time elements creates a sense of movement and adaptability.

Space and Weight:Unlike the combination of flow and time, the combination of space and weight tends to create a stable and unshakable attitude.

Figure 38 Example: Space and Weight（Stable）

Research Theme Five: Movement Psychology

Choreosophy's ideas also emerged in Laban's later studies on the psychology of movement. During this period, he and Carpenter linked movement behavior to the individual's psychological space. Laban's classification and combination of movement elements within his concept of "effort" suggest that they regarded space, time, weight, and flow as inseparable and unified components. For them, the movements and behaviors observed in external space were manifestations of inner drives. Based on this thought, they developed movement psychology. At the time, this was a novel and simplistic monistic approach to movement as both a point of departure and a solution.

Integrating Lacan's psychological theory with Laban's movement psychology is based on the strengths and limitations each brings to addressing the complexities of human psychology and behavior. Laban's movement psychology, particularly his method of breaking down movements into quantifiable elements and categorizing them into different behavioural types, provides a clear and highly functional analytical tool. However, such classification and simplification inevitably overlook the deeper complexities of human psychological activity. Through detailed movement analysis, Laban transformed bodily movement into a structured, almost mechanistic model, which is well-suited for educational and training purposes. Yet, this model can seem overly mechanical when exploring the multidimensional, multilayered influences on individual psychology.

On the other hand, Lacan's psychological theory significantly compensates for this shortcoming. Lacan emphasizes the deep structure of human psychology, particularly the unconscious forces driving behavior and self-identity. His theory goes beyond the functional expression of individual behavior, delving into the hidden forces of language, desire, and the unconscious. Lacan stressed the impact of cultural, gender, racial, and socio-economic factors on individual psychology and behavior, which aligns closely with the multidimensional approaches in contemporary psychology. For instance, when analyzing movements, relying solely on Laban's classification system might not explain why individuals from different cultural or social structures exhibit distinct movement preferences. Lacan's theory, however,

can uncover the underlying cultural and symbolic systems influencing an individual's psychology.

Secondly, Lacan's theory offers a critical perspective on Laban's functional framework. Laban's method of classification may tend to privilege certain types of movement over others, potentially idealizing specific behavior patterns. This simplification ignores the complexity and diversity of the psyche. Lacan's theory reminds us that any "ideal behavior" or "successful movement" may unconsciously reflect an individual's conformity to social norms or unspoken identification with certain cultural symbols. Thus, combining Lacan's deep psychological analysis with Laban's movement analysis allows researchers to move beyond functional analysis and explore the interactions between an individual's movement expression, unconscious desires, and social norms.

Finally, merging Lacan and Laban's theories in the context of understanding dance movements can open new avenues in movement education and psychotherapy. In movement education, Laban's method provides a foundational system of functional training, while Lacan's theory enables educators to grasp the psychological dynamics behind the student's movements. For example, Lacan's "mirror stage" theory explains how individuals form self-identity through imitating others when learning dance movements. This understanding can help teachers more sensitively gauge students' psychological states, aiding them in developing stronger self-awareness and mental health through movement learning.

Chapter IX

Research on Movement Psychology by Laban and Carpenter

In the early 1950s, Rudolf Laban and Jungian psychoanalyst William Carpenter initiated a groundbreaking research project on movement psychology, aiming to integrate Laban's theory of movement expression with Jung's psychological typologies. Their collaborative work at the Art of Movement Studio in Surrey explored how physical movement reflects psychological functions, combining observational research, notation systems, and kinesiology. Carpenter's untimely death in 1954 left the project unfinished, yet it laid the foundation for future applications, notably in actor training by Yat Malmgren. Drawing on unpublished manuscripts and letters, this paper traces the intellectual origins and structure of their movement psychology model, revealing its depth beyond the simplified systems known today. The study further examines how Laban and Carpenter aligned movement qualities with Jungian categories, creating a typology of effort drives that reflect internal attitudes. It also explores Carpenter's engagement with Chinese philosophy and spectral biology, including the use of light, color, and solar rhythms as metaphors for movement energy. Ultimately, this paper re-evaluates the theoretical richness and contemporary relevance of Laban and Carpenter's vision, emphasizing movement as a powerful tool for psychological insight, self-awareness, and holistic health.

In the early 1950s, Rudolf Laban and his late-life collaborator William (Bill) Carpenter initiated a research project on movement psychology. Carpenter, a Jungian psychoanalyst, developed a keen interest in analyzing the characteristic movement behaviors of different individuals after attending Laban's first movement observation workshop. He subsequently collaborated with Laban to explore this theme further. Together, they applied movement psychology to clinical psychological experiments across various age groups and professional backgrounds, with plans to publish a book on using movement to analyze and treat

psychological traits. However, in June 1954, Carpenter passed away suddenly. Laban felt unable to complete the project on his own, so he entrusted Carpenter's notes to Albrecht Knust and Yat Malmgren. In the years that followed, through combining Laban and Carpenter's work with Stanislavski's theatrical system, Malmgren developed his career by transforming Carpenter's vision of a general "movement psychology" into a more narrowly focused yet practical training system for actors. This system has since been adopted by world-famous actors, including Tom Hardy.

During the years of collaboration, Carpenter had led the "new research" on movement psychology at The Art of Movement Studio in Addlestone, Surrey. Promotional documents released by the studio in the 1950s officially introduced movement psychology as their latest research project (EL 36/27). These documents specifically highlighted that movement psychology was aimed at promoting mental health. Besides offering "movement practice" courses for children, adolescents, and adults, the studio also offered "introductory courses" for observers, analysts, and teachers to further disseminate and develop this field of study. The studio briefly outlined their research methodology, which was based on (EL 36/27, p.1):

> *Observing and analyzing the behavior and movements of children, adolescents, and adults, including everyday activities, learning processes, school activities, occupational work, and personal/group behaviors in artistic expression and responses;*

> *Filming movement sequences and recording sound;*

> *Using a specialized shorthand dance notation system.*

Looking back at 1955, shortly after Carpenter's death, Laban offered a profound reflection in his eulogy, summarizing the unfinished research and analyzing the future directions implied by Carpenter's work in both collaboration and writing (Laban, EL 36/39, pp.1-7). Laban painted a comprehensive picture of Carpenter's study on movement psychology. He mentioned that the core idea of Carpenter's book focused on the conflict and harmony expressed by men and women in their movement behaviors. At first glance, this theme may today be criticized for its "outdated" views on gender and its narrow, dualistic thinking. However, by reading the full unpublished manuscript and through the lens of Laban, Carpenter's close collaborator, we

can trace the complex intellectual foundations behind movement psychology and its continuing relevance today.

The methods, concepts, and fields used by Carpenter and Laban in their research go far beyond what was summarized in promotional materials. Their movement psychology research employed a unique composite approach and initially embraced an open attitude, allowing the public the right to interpret the findings. However, it is worth reflecting on how, in later developments—especially as various derivative systems were established—knowledge became increasingly viewed as a set of "rules" that gradually solidified. This shift, perhaps intended to facilitate dissemination and consensus, also constrained the further expansive and profound development of movement psychology and other areas of Laban's research. Instead of encouraging the broadening and deepening of knowledge, there was a tendency towards simplification and cognitive rigidity.

The following analysis, drawing primarily on Laban-Carpenter's unpublished manuscripts (including unpublished works, letters, drawings, pamphlets, handwritten shorthand, etc.), will trace and clarify the origins and structure of the movement psychology research paradigm during their collaboration. It seeks to remind us of the vast and profound research foundations and possibilities inherent in their work.

The Expansion of the New Field of Kinesiology

When establishing the foundation of movement psychology research, Carpenter partially directed his attention to kinesiology. Interestingly, in a 1941 letter where Laban explained Eukinetics (the study of movement expression) and Choreutics (harmonic space movement), he also discussed this discipline. Laban believed that, unlike anatomy, kinesiology focuses more on the cooperation of muscle groups and nerves in movement/actions and pursues harmonious and effortless movement processes. In this letter, he specifically referenced and discussed the views of Wilbur Pardon Bowen, author of *Applied Anatomy and Kinesiology* (1919). Bowen stated that "skillful movement often requires muscles not only for the motion and support of the movement but also to guide its spatial direction" (EL 36/17, 2). Laban believed this perspective offered a new direction for kinesiology and the cultivation of

movement awareness because it approached movement holistically, linking the elements of space, time, and force closely together.

When discussing pioneers in the study of kinesiology and harmonious movement, Laban reflected on his experiences learning from and collaborating with his teacher, Professor Siegfried Mollier, a student of Delsarte. In the early 20th century, Laban studied anatomy with Professor Mollier, and as the only student who truly put the concept of harmonious movement into practice, he found that his academic views aligned strongly with Mollier's. Over time, they became collaborators. They both agreed that the "natural laws" of movement were essential for the study of harmonious movement and kinesiology. These laws, they believed, could only be established through a comprehensive investigation of all movements and behaviors. Laban pointed out that earlier kinesiology had neglected the analysis of spatial orientation, but noted that a substantial history of research already existed on the spatial arrangement of the body's horizontal systems and their impact on the skeletal structure. Thus, Laban incorporated Choreutics (the theory of space harmony) and Eukinetics (the theory of movement expression) as two principles in the study of modern kinesiology.

It is evident that Carpenter endorsed Laban's expansion of the scope of modern kinesiology research, and his exploration of movement psychology was based on Laban's theory of movement expression. Carpenter listed four works related to kinesiology in his notes, all published between the 1940s and the early 1950s, concurrent with his research. These works covered foundational and complex knowledge of kinesiology. One notable text, *Human Motion Study: A Textbook of Kinesiology* (1942) by Gladys Scott, emphasized the need to list all the various movements a person performs in a day in a detailed manner and compare them among different individuals. It aimed to highlight the diversity and adaptability of human motion and summarize the principles of effortless and efficient movement. Interestingly, Scott's book examined the features of body parts and joints through different spatial forms. This was published only a year after Laban criticized earlier kinesiology for neglecting spatial analysis. This suggests that during that period, "spatial awareness" was beginning to emerge as a general consensus in the field of body movement.

Viewing space, time, and force (weight) as part of a single continuum is a key feature of Laban's movement philosophy. In this view, harmonious movement represents the continuous

unity between the internal and external aspects of the body. This idea provided a strong theoretical foundation for Laban and Carpenter's promotion of mental health research, while also explaining why Laban's work continues to have applied value across various fields today. As historical materials and movement practices are explored more deeply, it becomes clear that Laban's movement expression theory forms a coherent thread, rooted in Laban's overarching philosophy of movement, Choreosophy. This thread integrates into Choreology (the logic of movement), its main branch, and complements Choreutics (space harmony theory). It subsequently branches out into Dynamosphere (the theory of dynamics), different drives, and factors like Effort and force-effect. Throughout the development of this trajectory, Carpenter played an important role, especially in Laban's later research on drives and the classification of forces. The next section will explain Carpenter's process of integrating Laban's tradition with Jungian psychology in the early 1950s.

Classification: Jungian Psychology and Movement Psychology

Carpenter and Laban's movement psychology was an attempt to integrate Laban's theory of movement expression with Jungian psychology, especially Jung's classification of the four psychological functions—thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition—into Laban's framework. Through Carpenter's persistent efforts, the intersection of these two intellectual traditions began to take shape, particularly in the classification of drives in movement psychology. Today, the methods used by practitioners like Warren Lamb, Botniew, and Malgrem all draw on the research on drives and effort initiated by Laban and Carpenter during the 1950s.

In the early 1950s, after Carpenter joined the Art of Movement Studio in Surrey, he rigorously combined Jungian psychoanalysis, particularly the four psychological functions, with Laban's theory of movement expression. Through comparative analysis of elements like weight, time, space, and flow across different professions, ages, and behaviors, Laban and Carpenter first categorized different drives under conscious and unconscious states. They then linked movement elements with psychological functions, visualizing these combinations in what we now recognize as effort graphs. Further, they applied these classifications to professional types to analyze the psychomotor characteristics of various occupations. This

involved studying how certain professions emphasize or neglect specific movement elements or psychological functions, often leading to personality conflicts.

Today, we observe 72 movement qualities, categorized through different combinations of weight, time, space, and flow (two or three combined at a time). Once the movement elements were matched with psychological functions, the combination of three elements led to four distinct movement characteristics or expressions known as drives: action drive, passion drive, visionary drive, and remote drive.

Psychological Types (Jung, 1971)

In his famous book *Psychological Types*, Jung proposed a classification system for personality types that laid the foundation for modern typology. Jung believed that each individual's psychological development tends toward one of two attitude types:

- Introversion: Focuses on the inner world, emphasizing personal thoughts and feelings.
- Extraversion: Focuses on the external world, emphasizing interaction with the outside environment.

Additionally, Jung categorized psychological functions into four primary cognitive functions:

- Thinking: Relies on logic and reason to process information.
- Sensation: Depends on the senses and direct experiences to gather information.
- Feeling: Makes decisions based on value judgments and emotional responses.
- Intuition: Uses unconscious insight and potential future possibilities for judgment.

Each of these functions can operate in either an introverted or extraverted attitude, resulting in eight personality types:

- Extraverted Thinking Type: Guided by logic and reason, focusing on facts and data from the external world, and making decisions through analysis and objective judgment.
- Introverted Thinking Type: Focuses on internal logic and personal ideals, paying less attention to the external world and valuing internal reasoning and abstract thinking.
- Extraverted Sensation Type: Emphasizes sensory experiences from the external world, focusing on concrete details, and making decisions based on direct perception.

- Introverted Sensation Type: Focuses on internal sensory experiences, immersing in the subjective world of individual perception, with a more personalized understanding of the external environment.

- Extraverted Feeling Type: Makes emotional judgments through external interpersonal relationships and social norms, emphasizing social interaction and others' emotional reactions.

- Introverted Feeling Type: Strongly focuses on inner emotional experiences, with emotional judgments often concealed from others, where personal values are highly significant.

- Extraverted Intuition Type: Focuses on possibilities and future trends in the external world, favoring exploration of new ideas, adaptability, and creativity.

- Introverted Intuition Type: Focuses on unconscious insight, seeking meaning from within, with a unique intuition and foresight about the future.

In addition, Jung proposed the concept of the collective unconscious, which refers to the shared unconscious content of humanity, different from Freud's personal unconscious. The collective unconscious includes archetypes, universal psychological models or images like the "Hero," "Mother," and "Shadow" (Jung, 1981). By analyzing archetypes, Jung further classified human psychology. These archetypes influence individual behavior and personality. Furthermore, Jung believed that the ultimate goal of psychological development is individuation, the process of achieving self-wholeness. In this process, individuals must confront their shadow and integrate opposing forces within, such as the Anima and Animus, to achieve a complete personality (Jung, 1968). Within this framework, Jung categorized different stages, obstacles, and forces involved in psychological development. He posited that the psyche's energy stems from balancing and integrating these opposites, such as introversion and extraversion, rationality and intuition, etc. Through understanding these opposites, individuals can achieve psychological balance (Jung, 1971).

It's clear that the theoretical roots of Jung's classification system can be traced back to various intellectual traditions. Jung was influenced by ancient Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, especially regarding the nature of the soul and the relationship between

consciousness and the unconscious. Plato's theory of forms influenced Jung's understanding of archetypes, which he saw as universal structures within the collective unconscious. Additionally, Jung was interested in concepts of opposition in Hinduism and Taoism, such as Yin and Yang, which helped shape his Principle of Opposites—the idea that different components of the psyche (such as rationality and emotion, consciousness and unconsciousness) oppose yet shape the whole personality.

Laban's Efforts system incorporated Jungian psychology's classification thinking, opposition theory, and symbolic expression. Jung's theory of psychological types, especially the four major psychological functions (thinking, sensation, feeling, intuition), provided an essential framework for classifying Laban's efforts. In Laban's system, movement qualities can be understood as external manifestations of emotional or psychological states. The efforts involve four primary movement dimensions that, to some extent, correspond to Jung's psychological functions:

- Space: Related to the thinking function, as it involves logic, direction, and sensitivity to the external environment.
- Weight: Related to the sensing function, as it reflects the intensity or involvement of emotions.
- Time: Comparable to intuition, representing an individual's experience of the present, with speed corresponding to different perceptions of reality.
- Flow: Similar to feeling, expressing freedom or control in movement, symbolizing openness or control over the unknown future.

By applying these dimensions to human movement, Laban drew from Jung's ideas about externalizing psychological functions into behaviors. Jung's psychology emphasized the integration of opposites like introversion and extraversion or rationality and emotion. Similarly, Laban's effort system describes movement through three pairs of opposites:

- Weight: Heavy vs. Light
- Space: Direct vs. Indirect
- Time: Quick vs. Sustained
- Flow: Bound vs. Free

When Laban and Carpenter classified psychomotor factors, they used combinations of two elements to identify internal attitudes, moods, or states during movement. There are six possible combinations of these elements that align with different psychological functions:

- Weight + Time: (Sensation and Intuition) create rhythmic, earthy, and close attitudes or emotions.
- Space + Flow: (Thinking and Feeling) create abstract, distanced attitudes.
- Space + Time: (Thinking and Intuition) create a vigilant or alert attitude.
- Weight + Flow: (Sensation and Feeling) evoke dreamlike, unconscious attitudes.
- Flow + Time: (Feeling and Intuition) create mobile, adaptive attitudes.
- Space + Weight: (Thinking and Sensation) create stable, firm attitudes.

Since each element contains two polarities, these six combinations yield four possible variations for each, ultimately resulting in 24 distinct qualities through the combinations of two elements. For instance, the combination of weight and time can be light and free, heavy and bound, heavy and free, or light and bound. This classification system laid the foundation for a structured approach to analyzing movement psychology.

Figure 39 Inner Attitudes, desiged by Laban & Capenter（LE/79/21）

In the Laban-Bartenieff Movement Analysis system, the combination of three elements is recognized as bringing about a more distinct movement character, flavor, or preference. This combination is referred to as "drive," and from this emerge **32 different movement qualities**. However, in the early stages of the conceptual development, the thinking around drives was closely linked to the **internal attitudes** generated by the combination of two elements, as discussed earlier.

In **October 1953**, in a final diagram by **Carpenter and Laban**, they referred to this as "**character drive**" (EL/). In this diagram, Carpenter and Laban gathered all the classification results together: the movement qualities produced by the combination of elements, their categorization according to Jung's psychological functions, and eventually the resulting **Effort notation**. Interestingly, they also categorized Effort according to the behavioural characteristics brought by different professions, illustrating the movement psychological factors emphasized by different occupations, as well as what they overlooked.

Figure 40 Characteristic Drives, designed byLaban & Capenter（LE/79/21）

These opposing elements reflect tension and release within bodily movements, a dynamic balance that closely mirrors Jung's concept of opposites in psychological types. Jung believed

that psychological health is achieved through the integration of opposing elements, while Laban considered high-quality movement to be realized through a balance of different Efforts. Jung's process of individuation refers to achieving psychological wholeness by integrating unconscious opposites, such as the Shadow and the Anima/Animus. Similarly, Laban's movement analysis emphasizes individuality, where a person can express their unique psychological state and personality through different combinations of Efforts. Each individual's movement patterns and Effort preferences reflect their psychological structure, just as Jung believed that behavior reflects one's psychological type and functions.

Through detailed movement analysis, Laban and Carpenter linked subtle variations in human movement to psychological traits, which echoes Jung's theory of individuation to some extent. Every person's Effort patterns are external expressions of their personality and psychological development, akin to Jung's psychological process. Moreover, Jung emphasized symbolic expression of the unconscious through dreams, art, and myth to understand its content, while Laban's Efforts system expresses internal psychological and emotional states through bodily movement. Movement is seen as a symbolic language, capable of conveying emotions, motivations, and psychological states from the unconscious. Laban's movement notation system and analytical tools are similar to Jung's study of symbolic systems, both aimed at revealing deeper psychological content hidden beneath conscious awareness

Spectral-Biological Therapy in the Consideration of Movement Psychology

Chromatherapy, or color therapy, originates from ancient traditions of healing through color. These methods can be traced back to civilizations like ancient Egypt, Greece, and India. In ancient Egypt, doctors used colored glass and light to treat patients, believing that colors could influence the body's health (Cohen, 2003). Similarly, ancient Greek philosophers and physicians, such as Hippocrates, discussed how colors affect the human body, suggesting that different colors can impact temperament and health (Kohl, 1994). In the Ayurvedic system of ancient India, colors were also emphasized for their healing properties, believed to balance the body's energy (Peters, 2005).

In modern science, the theory behind Chromatherapy has been further studied and validated. Research has shown that colors can provoke different physiological responses. For example, red is known to increase heart rate and blood pressure, an effect confirmed by several experiments (Boyce et al., 2003). Conversely, the blue spectrum can lower heart rate and blood pressure, promoting relaxation and calm (Figueiro & Rea, 2008). Regarding the emotional impact of colors, modern psychological research supports the idea that warm colors like red and orange are often associated with vitality and excitement, while cool colors like blue and green are linked to calmness and serenity (Wexner, 1954).

The clinical application of Chromatherapy has also gained significant attention. For instance, one study showed that using specific color spectrums can help alleviate symptoms of depression and anxiety (Berman et al., 2008). This form of therapy is increasingly being adopted in modern psychotherapy and rehabilitation to improve patients' mental health.

In 1912, Carpenter published a paper titled "Pulsatory Theory of Light (EL/37/14 p37)," where William Carpenter's research explored how the pulsating characteristics of light influence psychological and physiological states. Carpenter proposed an intriguing direction of research, suggesting that the pulsating nature of light might interact with the body's physiological rhythms, such as the circadian rhythm. He believed that light pulses could have long-term effects on health and behavior.

During the 1950s, Rudolf Laban also focused on the harmonious relationship between the light spectrum, color, and movement in life. Laban employed the perception of the polarity between ultraviolet and infrared rays to realize both chromatherapy and color harmony. Colors are part of the visible light spectrum, which is usually divided into six regions that the human eye can perceive. This visible spectrum represents only a small portion of the entire electromagnetic spectrum. Electromagnetic wave vibrations generate energy, but what humans can see with the naked eye is just a small part of the total electromagnetic energy (EM).

It's important to note that although we cannot see much of this energy, we can feel it, such as through heat—we can feel warmth but cannot see it. Therefore, in the practice of chromatherapy, it is essential to recognize that not only what we can see affects us, but also what we perceive through gravitational sensation (weight) and our inner attitude of sensing can influence us. Likewise, by sensing movement's flow, heat, friction, and the energy consumed,

we can feel the fluctuations of energy that extend beyond the visible spectrum. For instance, if someone spends the whole day sunbathing, they might look beautifully tanned. Yet in the evening, their body still emits infrared rays. All the energy absorbed during the day continues to radiate from the body. We can't see it, but we can sense it.
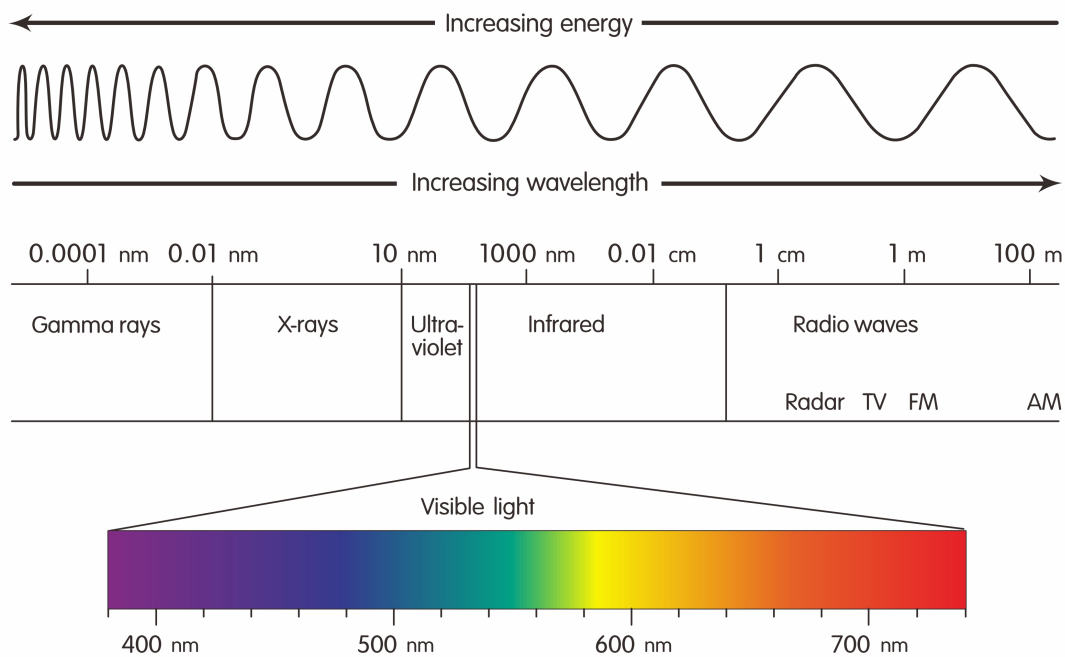
Figure 41 Spectrum[8]

From Spectrum, we can see that light has different frequencies. Electromagnetic waves vibrate in different ways depending on their frequency, which is measured by the number of waves per nanometer, and this is influenced by the wave's speed. When the wave speed increases, the frequency rises. The color of light is determined by different frequencies within the electromagnetic spectrum. Thus, violet has a high frequency, while red has a low frequency. If you go beyond the boundary of 400 nanometers, the light becomes invisible. So, when the frequency of light vibrations exceeds that of violet, it turns into ultraviolet light, meaning it is faster than violet.

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[8] This image was redrawn by the author.

Any light that vibrates faster than violet is invisible to the human eye. Ultraviolet light is the sunlight at noon—bright and intense—when the sun's rays are the strongest. Its high frequency causes its vibrations to exceed the range we can perceive with the naked eye.

Now, let's move to the other side of the spectrum. When the frequency decreases and the wave speed slows, the color turns to red. Then, when the wave frequency becomes slower than that of red, we call it infrared. Similarly, we cannot see it. For example, an object that stores heat (like a rock) stores heat during the day and emits light at night—this is infrared light. Our bodies also emit infrared light both during the day and at night. Therefore, infrared has significant technological applications. For instance, infrared technology allows us to detect living organisms in the dark through infrared vision.

This illustrates the polarity between high-frequency ultraviolet light and very slow, low-frequency infrared light. In some of Laban's manuscripts and drawings, he expresses his understanding of spectral biology in the study of movement. Laban recognized that we can convert color into movement through the transformation of energy, and this conversion is achieved through dynamic factors. In other words, the frequency of electromagnetic waves corresponds with the speed of movement. That is, the faster the movement, the more energy it possesses, which can be associated with the colors on the left side of the electromagnetic spectrum. For example, he connected speed with purple and blue, while associating slow dynamic movements with red. Balanced movements were linked to green and grandmother green. Laban referred to this as spectral biology—a discipline that studies how the electromagnetic spectrum relates to dynamic movement on a biological level. He attempted to demonstrate that spectral biology, defined as a biological phenomenon characterized by energy transmission and transformation, provides an understanding of the energy relationship between the human body (or other life forms on Earth) and the solar body (the sun).

Interestingly, green is positioned in the middle of the spectrum and is often used as a harmonizing color because it serves as the balance point between ultraviolet sunlight and infrared emissions. This appears to bring his research back to an eternal theme: polarity and

harmony. Under this theme, he also delved deeper into the investigation of solar cycles, defined by equinoxes (such as the spring and autumn equinoxes) and solstices (such as the summer and winter solstices). Laban believed that the rhythm of life in spectral biology is determined by the sun and the Earth's movement around the sun's axis. The changes in light during the Earth's rotation and revolution cycles (day and year) accompany rhythmic moments and speeds (such as noon/midnight, solstices/equinoxes, or high and low light intensities). This pattern and its analysis form the core of spectral biology research.

In a chart of spectral biology drawn by Laban, he explores the polarity between infrared and ultraviolet light. Laban conducted this research in Addlestone, Surrey, and he believed that between May and June in England, there exists a specific range of light and colors (EL/37). The names of colors during this calendar period include brown, red, orange, yellow, all the way to purple, violet, and ultraviolet. He explained that on a clear day, we absorb different ranges and amounts of light and color. From infrared to the ultraviolet end of the electromagnetic spectrum, we are continuously exposed to the movement of this energy, which affects us in various ways. Laban posited that the body experiences energy fluctuations throughout the year based on the amount of exposure to ultraviolet light and the release of infrared light. Thus, the solar energy consumed by the body varies throughout the year. His chart titled "solar spectrum" lists the average energy that can be consumed throughout the year, based on measurements of available ultraviolet light on sunny days. He also referred to the spiral, continuous cycles of energy consumption based on the amount of energy consumed, measured in astronomical units (AU), which is the distance between the Earth and the sun.

In summary, our bodily energy intertwines with these cycles in a similar manner. In other words, we need to pay attention to the amount of solar energy we consume at different stages of the year, and by avoiding excessive exposure beyond the measurements proposed by Laban, we can achieve a balanced and harmonious absorption of ultraviolet light and release of infrared light. Laban believed we need to maintain awareness of the sun's position throughout the day and year. After all, our energy levels depend on that burning light sphere in the sky. It radiates energy continuously, and we must be aware of its position and the colors it reflects in the Earth's sky. Depending on the time of year, the sun's color may appear red, purple, violet, or pink, or it may refract green or other colors from other objects. This change in color will

determine the energy of a living being. This forms the basis of Laban and Carpenter's study of color therapy—achieving harmony through the balance of movement and color energy. So, from a more practical perspective, this means aligning daily life with the sun, making behavior and life more sensitive to the sun that provides energy and supports life.

This line of thought is also evident in his later work on effort and recovery. In Laban's concept, effort and recovery represent a rhythm of life. Each day has its rhythm, and so does each year. The rhythm of each individual's life is seen as part of a greater whole. This means that, first and foremost, an individual's awareness is connected to the natural world, which requires sensitivity to changes in the natural environment, such as the positions and movements of the sun and moon. On the other hand, work and rest are not seen as two separate or opposing parts; rather, they are supportive partners. In a broader context, one person's effort can be another person's recovery: for someone who writes often, movement is the best way to recover, rather than continuing static rest. Thus, in this sense, one's state of self is adjusted instantaneously in relation to the environment and is a skill that needs to be cultivated.

The Influence of Chinese Philosophy/Ethics on Carpenter

Carpenter frequently references a famous saying from the *Tao Te Ching*: "He who knows others is wise; he who knows himself is enlightened." He adds that this enlightenment is closely tied to personal movement experiences. In his tribute to Carpenter, Laban also mentions the influence of Daoist culture on him. On the other hand, Carpenter's reference to Jung reflects a deep engagement with Chinese philosophy, evident in Jung's preface to the English version of the *I Ching*. Jung articulates the differences between Chinese philosophy and Western philosophy, asserting that the synchronicity represented in the *I Ching* encompasses many visible and invisible factors, rather than merely causal statistical facts. It is important to note that while the *I Ching* is not a product of Daoist philosophy, its ideas have greatly influenced indigenous Chinese religions and philosophies, including Confucianism and Daoism.

The concept of "Dao" emphasized in the *Tao Te Ching* or Daoist philosophy serves as a "code" representing a "nameless" entity that transcends the study of images and actual things. Logically, the opposition of name and reality in ancient Chinese philosophy resembles the subject-object dichotomy in contemporary philosophy. For example, in the statement "This is

Tai Chi," "this" is the "reality," while Tai Chi is the "name." The image or process of performing this action is real, while Tai Chi serves as the signifier for that image. This perspective continues to develop into a distinction and understanding of essential properties and images, as seen in the philosophical concept of "white horse is not horse." The reason a white horse is not a horse lies in the fact that the essence of a horse does not include color. Thus, the commonality of horses differs from that of white horses. This also allows for a discussion of the distinction between the "inner image" and the "outer image" in Chinese philosophy. What lies within the image is "real." For instance, size, shape, length, and color are all forms of images. Anything that can serve as an experiential object or a potential object of experience possesses an image. For instance, Tai Chi as an experiential object presents its image. However, at the same time, Chinese philosophy also includes an "outer image," which refers to a world that transcends imagery. A person can see a white object but cannot perceive the commonality of "white." While one can observe the movements of Tai Chi, it is challenging to perceive its commonality. As Feng Youlan explains regarding the "outer image," "All commonalities that can be named and pointed to exist in the world beyond images." In my view, Carpenter's study of movement psychology is an exploration of the "outer image" of movement. This is exemplified in his opening quote from British poet Robert Bridges' essay "The Witness of Beauty" (1930):

"The unseen and untouchable force is the foundation of life... But on the whole, he (humanity) knows that his analysis has not yet approached the secret of its vitality. Humanity has never doubted that sensory objects can affect the mental state of a person, or that the mind can, in turn, promote the actions and functions of animal life."

Carpenter aims to remind people to pay attention to perception and the invisible psychological states. He describes poets as dancers of thought because they "witness their external flow expressed so clearly in movement." This statement reflects Carpenter's view of the "self-awareness" discussed in the *Tao Te Ching* as the pursuit of a mover. He notes that "most adults have lost their basic sense of their bodily parts." He provides a compelling example: people often treat their bodies as if they were cars, driving them endlessly until they run out of gas—only then do they pay attention to their sickness and listen to their bodies (LE/37/19, p. 17). In other words, he believes that our movements and our sensations during

movement represent and even influence our mental states. When we can grasp the secrets of movement, or the commonality of movement, and become conscious and sensitive movers, our actions can help us construct a healthy and abundant mental world.

Carpenter's perspective aligns with the practice-oriented view of traditional Chinese philosophy. In my opinion, traditional Chinese philosophy or ethics encompasses a strong concept of bodily practice. Confucianism emphasizes moral concepts in humans, yet these concepts must gradually take shape through social practice; this is represented in the Confucian body view by Mencius's "practicing the form" and Xunzi's "beautifying the body" theories. This perspective embodies a highly ethical aesthetic notion, as it emphasizes that morality is manifested in behavior and developed through practice. Daoism, often seen as the opposite of Confucianism, does not reject practice despite its emphasis on "non-action." Tai Chi serves as an excellent example of this. Tai Chi embodies the thought of Daoist Tai Chi philosophy. One of the core ideas of Daoism is "extremes lead to reversals," thus its concept of non-action is to avoid excessive human intervention and not to treat any matter too much. For instance, both excessive neglect of the body and excessive attention to the body are not advocated by Daoism, which appreciates the natural emergence and development of things.

However, it is essential to note that all commonalities that can be named and pointed to exist in a world beyond images, but not everything in the world beyond images can be named and pointed to. From today's perspective, Carpenter's attempt to name or exhaust the essence of every movement has, to some extent, led to limitations in the study of dynamics. Each movement is distinctly defined by an "essential" property, resulting in a superficial understanding of movement. This simplification resembles Occam's Razor, which eliminates seemingly empty complexities or universals, categorizing the qualities of movements into several countable types through a polarized classification principle. Therefore, when brought into specific movement analysis, it often falls into a self-evident dilemma: for example, why does upward motion necessarily represent "light," while downward motion necessarily represents "heavy," and so on.

Nevertheless, this does not imply that the theory of movement performance/dynamics/effectiveness is useless. It opens the door to moving from unconscious to "conscious" and "thoughtful" movement, permeating a simple monistic view that acknowledges the continuity of ti

me, space, and weight into the mover's thinking. During the research period of the Shenzhen case, I witnessed the function of dynamics as a means to initiate analytical thinking and awareness of movement reflection through collaboration with a group of adolescent professional dancers. Particularly in the process of emphasizing and combining different movement elements, the youths used movement to contemplate their bodies and the underlying psychological functions of movement, applying this function to the formation of self-awareness and artistic creation.

The extensive application of Carpenter and Laban's movement psychology research reflects their profound considerations of psychological health and behavioural studies. Through an in-depth analysis of historical materials, especially unpublished manuscripts and letters, it becomes evident that their research holds significant sustainable potential. This potential far exceeds the simple categorization of efforts we currently observe; it can lead to a broad and profound multidimensional exploration of the relationships between human behavior, psychology, and movement. As Carpenter envisioned, their research aims not only to assist individuals in psychological therapy but also to understand human psychological conflicts and harmony through the analysis of movement behaviors.

Chapter X

Lacan and Laban's Visual Approach: The Beginning of One Type of Movement Psychology Research

This chapter explores a comparative framework between Rudolf Laban's movement analysis and Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory, particularly focusing on their shared use of visual and topological models to approach movement psychology. It examines how both thinkers conceptualize movement—physical and psychological—as dynamic, interrelated processes shaped by desire, structure, and symbolic representation. Key geometric figures such as the torus, Möbius strip, lemniscate, and Borromean knot are used to illustrate the continuity between inner and outer experience, body and psyche. The chapter argues for the complementarity of Laban's kinetic language and Lacan's psychoanalytic discourse as a foundation for an emerging field of movement psychology. It concludes by suggesting the therapeutic and diagnostic potential of these visual-spatial approaches when applied to embodied practices, such as dance, through a case study of senior square dancers in Beijing.

This introduction presents a comparative analysis of Laban's and Lacan's topological-mathematical models for the study of movement psychology/psychoanalysis, and describes a beginning of movement psychology that Laban made late in his research career, but left unfinished. The visual approach to the study of harmonic forms of movement was a consistent concept for Laban. It is noteworthy that in his manuscripts and later works, Laban focuses on different topological models and uses spatial analysis to combine the kinetic and psychological elements of movement. In the various models that he mentions frequently but lightly (the lemniscate, the Möbius strip, the knot), the study of the psychology of movement does not go any further than, as he puts it, providing a tool and a methodology as a point of departure. By reviewing Lacan's psychoanalytic research with the help of topology and various mathematical figures, it can be noticed that both he and Laban attribute the purpose of their research to the

study of 'movement', and regard mental/external movement as a continuum of opposites. From this dimension, the complementarity of Laban's and Lacan's approaches seems to remind a way of studying movement psychology. Movement is intangible, and so is the psyche. So how do we study the psyche and approach movement? Their approach is to understand the world of motion by using visual models. This is like MoCap, which uses technology to see phenomena (movements) in order to understand, capture and data them. This is an analytical tradition, inherited from ancient Greece, which tries to break down movement, by objectifying it, making it into something we can see and model.

The basic idea of Plato's *Timaeus* is to explain the origin and structure of all things in terms of geometrical models. Rudolf Laban's inheritance of Plato's five spatial geometries (tetrahedron, octahedron, hexahedron, dodecahedron, and icosahedron) stems from his conception of movement as crystalline form. Laban sees the language of movement, organised movement, and spatial choreutic movement as crystalline forms that form and organise the world of inner dynamics. He therefore relies on the ideal symmetry of these multifaceted forms to visually explore the harmonic laws of human movement.

Interestingly, with Jacques Lacan, who studied psychoanalysis in a visualised way, he argued that being is related to language, to the process of crystallisation of something within us in linguistic form (Fink, 1996). Thus, the psyche is the crystallisation of the subconscious in language (Lacan). Basically, Lacan and Laban conduct their own research in a way, and both of them focus on 'language', but their languages are different: the former studies language in the linguistic sense, i.e., speech and oral language; the latter studies language in the kinetic sense, i.e., choreography and other languages originating from movement. But whether it is what Lacan called the 'subconscious' or what Laban emphasised as the 'dynamosphere', both are crystalline forms of flow, rhythm and energy that organise and anchor the dynamic aspects of ourselves. Thus, Laban's study of the psychological aspects of movement and the premises of psychoanalysis appear at first glance to be very similar.

From this basis, both Laban and Lacan are interested in understanding life as movement. However, they differ slightly in this respect. Whereas Laban is interested in the dynamic and kinetic movement of life as a whole, in physical and emotional space, Lacan is interested in the movement of the psyche. In Lacanian psychoanalysis, the psyche is a movement, and the role

of the psychoanalyst is to understand that movement. The psyche is a complement to conscious and subconscious thought. And conscious and subconscious thinking, understanding and apprehension are driven by being, the ego, which is linked to language because it understands itself in the conditions set by language. Therefore, the movement of the psychological self is not only found in physical movement, but also in the projection of the self through the 'desire' condensed in language.

In brief, psychoanalysis is the study of the movement of the psychic self, which is realised through conscious and subconscious thought, and which is driven by desire. Desires are the endless postponement of our needs. On the one hand, we have needs that can be satisfied: a person has food and water needs, i.e. physical needs, which can be satisfied (or not) by eating and drinking. But desire is a residual need, it is endless. This is also the drive or motivation of the psyche, and this part also forms the study of psychoanalysis. It is worth noting that the drive is an area of later Laban studies that has yet to be delved into. Lacan constructs psychokinesis as the movement of mental energy (conscious and unconscious thought). At the same time, Laban makes us understand the connection between the kinetic and dynamic movements of the body and the 'action-moods'. The two complement each other. In a narrow sense, both traditions, Laban and Lacan, are close to movement psychology, considering psychoanalysis and dance as a form of movement. Their comparison and combination may yield a new approach to movement psychology and research that relies on an in-depth exploration of the complementarity between Laban and Lacan visual approaches.

Torus: We Are Beings With Holes
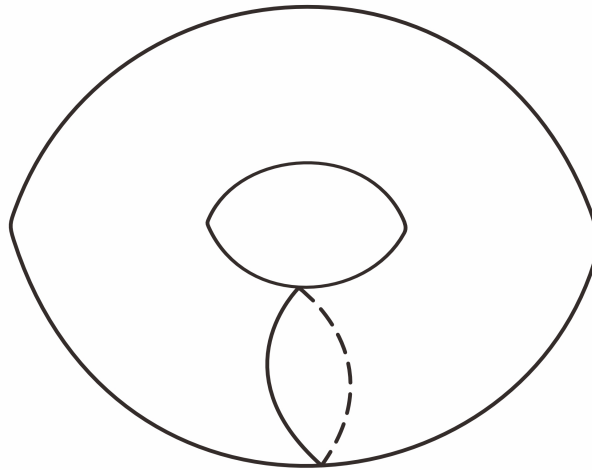
Figure 42. Torus[9]

Before we begin our introduction to Laban's action-psychology research, we can begin by analysing what affects us mentally/psychologically, that is, the relationship between the self and the other/external, with the help of the torus, a Lacanian figure. Torus is a donut. According to Lacan, we are all donuts. For the self has a centre, but the centre of the self (the centre of the donut) is outside of itself. This centre is outside the area or volume of the self and outside the volume of the object. Lacan's definition of the self is that he regards our centre as "the Other", which is outside ourselves, in the external sphere. This is a profound reflection on the nature of the self. The donut forms a 'ring' and the beauty of the ring is that it shows the middle area, our centre, and that our core is continuous with the outer area. In other words, we have a hole in us. This region outside the self, the Other, is continuous with this region within us. Thus, we are like a hole, or rather we have a hole within us, through which the outer world enters, folds and fills us, thus making us porous, permeable and changeable. At the same time, it makes us

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[9] This image was redrawn by the author.

totally connected to the outer world. Therefore, our inner self, our spiritual self, or in Laban's words, our dynamic self, becomes a hole through which external things keep falling in. This also forms a reflection on art/artists. That is, what makes artists. One might argue that artists are those who realise the hole and find a way to fill it, and in this way express their work as art. But I think that artists and those who realise their Torus nature do not cover up this hole. Repression is the artificial covering of the hole that creates the alienated self, and the self that has no desire to penetrate and connect with the outside world. The artist or the true 'self' is one that has enough richness in this fallen centre, but at the same time is willing to open up that hole to allow as much access as possible to the outside world. From there, everything in the external world can be processed and transformed into art.

The Möbius Belt and the Lemnastic: A Continuum of Opposites

Through Torus, we realise that the centre of the self is the Other, that the self is a being with a hole at the centre. The observation and analysis of the Möbius strip leads us to a deeper understanding of the continuous wholeness between the self and the external environment. The Möbius strip, a topological three-dimensional object, is at the centre of Lacan's later work. When Lacan studied the psyche, he believed that we needed to understand the psyche from a symbolic point of view. Later in his career, he realised that a linguistic approach was not enough and that the psyche needed to be understood from a visual and topological approach. Mathematical topology is a modern geometric study of space and the continuity and deformation of objects in space. As such, it is not a study of discrete, numerically quantifiable points. Instead, topology is concerned with objects that have no metric properties and are always changing in topological space, known as 'mapping'. Topology special shapes help us to visualise and conceptualise continuous and endless transformations.

Like Lacan, Laban regards movement as a combination of two poles, i.e. the coordination or disharmony of polarised tensions. Laban applies this visual approach to the study of 'inner form' and 'outer form' of movement, which becomes another key point of Laban's spatial theory, that is, he regards movement as a combination of two poles, a continuum in space between 'inner' and 'outer'. This is another key point of Laban's spatial theory, that is, he

regards movement as a combination of two poles, a continuous unity of 'inner' and 'outer' in space. His focus on the Möbius strip is one example. This figure has only one surface, but it is folded. Therefore, it looks like it is made up of two different strips of paper. However, it is only a folded strip that goes from inside to outside and back again, so we see different sides of the same ring. It is therefore the same surface, even though it goes from inside to outside. This is its topological property, i.e. sameness and continuity, both of which are topological features. Analysing it philosophically or psychologically means that inside is outside and outside is inside, that we are never completely outside and never completely inside, that we exist within this continuum. The Möbius strip is thus a model for understanding the continuum of polarisation in life. It helps us to understand that we are constantly transforming from inside to outside, from outside to inside, in this endless Möbius-like seamless continuum. Life is polarised, tense, drawn out. But there are processes (psychological and kinetic) that allow us to fold these tensions and create a continuity. Thus, in Laban's thinking, the emotional and psychological aspects of movement and the external form of movement are one and the same thing in the movement continuum. Such an idea was fully demonstrated in the study of the 'dynamosphere' (Laban, 1966: 27-45) in *Choreutics* (1966). In it, Laban uses different spatial models to introduce the shadow-form that accompanies the process of movement at all times, and juxtaposes it with the trace-form of movement to illustrate visually that human movement is accompanied by action-moods in space at every moment.
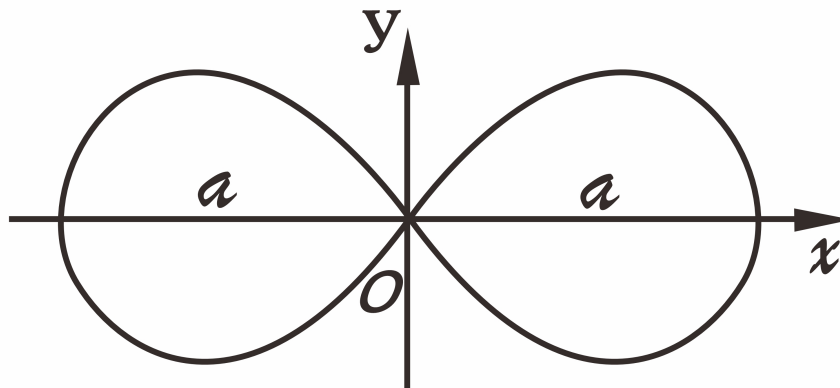
Figure 43. Lemnastics[10]

The lemnastics is a mathematical model and Laban's reference to the Möbius strip, and has been used to explore a variety of Möbius-type "continuum" motions and spatial sequences. Laban developed one of these into the Knotted Dynamospheric Standard Scale. The spatial order of this sequence is (Laban, 1966: 99):

back left - high left - low front - low right - low back left - front left - high front - right - low left; front left - high front - front right - low left - back left - high left - low front - low right - low back.

Laban emphasises that rings or strips with lemnastic properties, due to their innumerable nature, should be attributed to the intrinsic qualities investigated in the dynamosphere, rather than to the extrinsic qualities contained in the kinesphere. This shows the importance he attaches to the non-discrete and non-digitally quantifiable nature of the topological model. He put this feature into the visualisation of movement psychology. His theory of the dynamosphere provided a model for the visualisation of psychological factors in the later development of force effects and the classification of "drives".

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[10] This image was redrawn by the author.

Desire and Drives
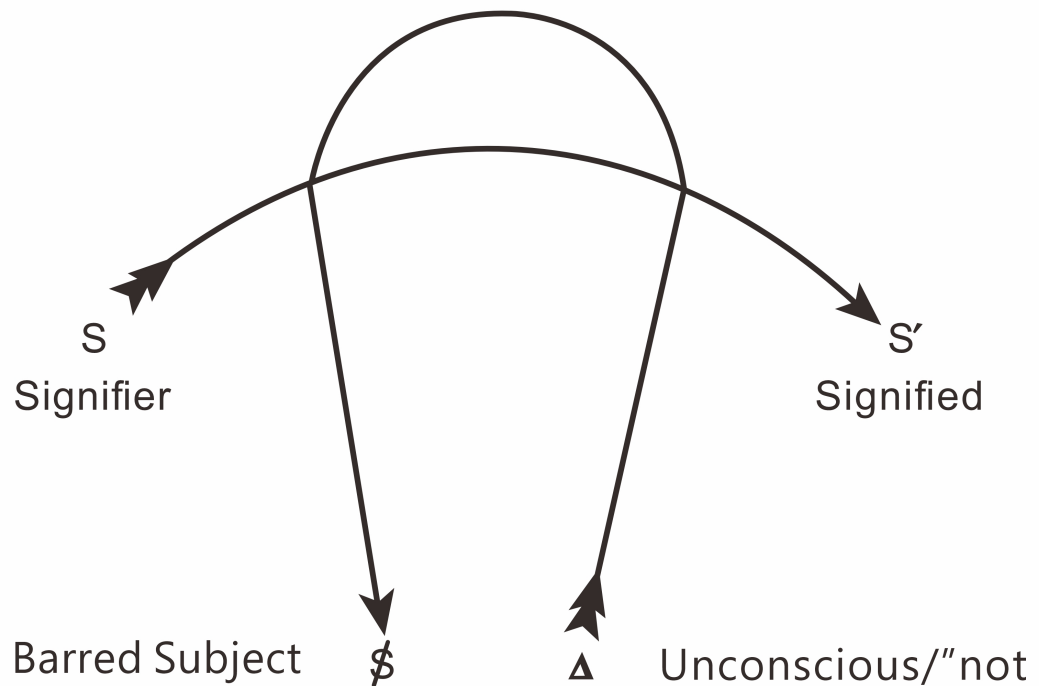
Figure 44. the diagram of desire[11]

Lacan has systematically studied desire and placed the drive at the centre of "desire". Desire drives us to move, to drive our mental world. He used the diagram of desire to help us understand "desire" visually. The line in the middle is a vector of symbols or language. The curve is the curve of desire. Lacan drew on his mentor, Sigmund Freud, to give the example of a baby calling out to their mother. Desire begins when the infant is torn away from the mother, and being torn away from the mother's intimate love creates what Lacan calls the first sense of 'lack'. The baby experiences the meaning of "absence", the absence of the mother. From that moment on, the self begins to use language as a symbolic vehicle of reality to retrieve the mother. The start of the vector (left end) is symbolic and the end (right end) is symbolised. This vector crosses the curve of desire twice. This means that desire always crosses language at the level of consciousness. Because language is a substitute for the absent mother. We attempt to

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[11] This image was redrawn by the author.

return to our mothers through the symbolic resources at our disposal, whether consciously or subconsciously, by calling out to them in language, using language as a substitute for the mother, for the lover, for the baby. They are all linguistic substitutes for the lost mother. So the symbolic language tries to bring back this curve of desire, but always fails. This is what drives the psychological self's movement. The never-ending longing to bring back the mother through an inadequate language - a language that is always missing, that never achieves the feeling of true motherhood. What we see here is the intersection of language and what cannot be accommodated by language, which always transcends language.

To use the terminology of Lacan and Freud, desire cannot be reduced to need. Desires are not reducible to food and water, nor are they reducible to the words food and water. When we say, "I want food" or "I want water", language is trying to reach something real. But this is not the case, because desire always delays the realisation of reality, and desire is an endless delay. But what's interesting is that this is what motivates us to persevere. It is failure that keeps one going. In Lacanian psychoanalysis, the word "jouissance" refers to the feeling of failure after the fulfilment of a desire - because pleasure is short-lived, it leaves us with an insatiable desire for more. This disappearance is a repetition of the original 'lack'.

This is crucial to the psychological understanding of how movements are designed, how they are consciously performed and how they are taught. Desire is also a desire to know. We realise that in the process of understanding something, 'desire' pushes us to know more about something, but this desire is never complete. What psychoanalysis does or makes us aware of is the 'process' that drives us to pursue it. Therefore, as a researcher or an artist, one can utilise and tame this desire and the driving force behind it to achieve the purpose of research or artistic creation. This is also Laban's original intention of categorising the various drives in the latter part of his work.

Laban has not explored desire. He was interested in the details of movement, i.e., the various factors of movement (weight, space, time, flow) and their relationship to psychological factors. However, in Laban's later work on movement psychology, he began to categorise drives. He studied what actually drives us to move. In Laban's work, this topic becomes an

afterthought that he poses at the very end of his life. It was later explored by William Carpenter and Yat Malmgren. [12]

Laban and his collaborator Carpenter's categorisation of drives was a product of borrowing from Carl Gustav Jung's psychology, the four types of mental functioning. It was initially intended to be used in psychotherapy. Thinking, feeling, sensing, and intuiting are further categorised into eight psychological types[13], roughly based on rational and irrational categories. This categorisation is a reminder of the imbalance of psychological factors. For example, Extraverted Thinking, according to Jung, is a personality type motivated by the pursuit of objective knowledge. In this type, thinking (rationality) tends to outweigh emotion, so that in abnormal extroverted thinkers there is often an over-suppression of emotion, which can lead to psychosis.

Before categorising the drives, Laban uses space, movement, weight and time to correspond to each of these four mental functions. **Thinking** is regarded as a mental function that, according to its own rules, places specific representations in a conceptual connection, and it represents an act of judgement. In Laban's classification, it is linked to space and represents the cognitive faculties of attention, organisation, etc. of the mover. **Feeling** is interpreted by Jung as an entirely subjective 'process' that takes place between the self and the content of a particular object. Laban puts it in the same category as flow, where the mover presents a developmental process of bound or release through interaction with the self or with the environment. Jung regarded **Sensing** as the mental function that directs external stimuli towards perception. Thus, sensing is consistent with perception, which relates not only to external stimuli but also to internal stimuli such as changes in internal organs. Laban's correlation with weight reflects the bodily perceptual acuity of the mover. **Intuiting**, the mental

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[12]The Laban-Malmgren System of Movement Psychology and Character Analysis was a highly influential post-war training method that helped shape the minds and work of the most expressive actors of the time, from Anthony Hopkins to Tom Hardy. The system stems from work developed in the early 1950s by Rudolf Laban and one of his later collaborators, William Carpenter. Working with Laban, Carpenter attempted to combine Laban's ideas on movement expression with aspects of Jung's psychology, drawing in particular on Jung's highly influential book Psychological Types (1912). The meeting of these two great traditions of thought, Jung and Laban, has begun to bear fruit through Carpenter's diligent reading of Jung, and he plans to publish a work on the classification of human types according to their psychological characteristics and their reflection in movement. However, following Carpenter's unexpected death in June 1954 (Preston-Dunlop, 1998: 263), Laban felt that he could not do the work on his own, and entrusted the notes left by Carpenter to Yat Malmgren. In the years that followed, by linking Laban's and Carpenter's work to Stanislavski's ideas about character and movement, Yat Malmgren began a career of developing the general movement psychology that Carpenter had envisioned into a narrower, but coherent and usable system of actor training.

[13] Extraverted Thinking, Extraverted Feeling, Extraverted Sensing, Extraverted Intuiting, Introverted Thinking, Introverted Feeling, Introverted Sensing, Introverted Intuiting.

function that transmits perception in an unconscious manner, is understood by Laban as a response of the subconscious of the mover and is classified with time. Such a response, combined with the three factors, distinguishes drives that, in addition to suggesting a particular movement preference, also encompasses Laban's and Carpenter's emphasis on a harmonious balance between the factors. This is because the fundamental tenet of Lacan's study of Effort is that all movement elements cannot be simply reduced to an independent symbol, completely separate from the other elements. In the following, we will combine Lacan's Three Orders to further elaborate the importance of mutual checks and balances of psychological/mental factors.

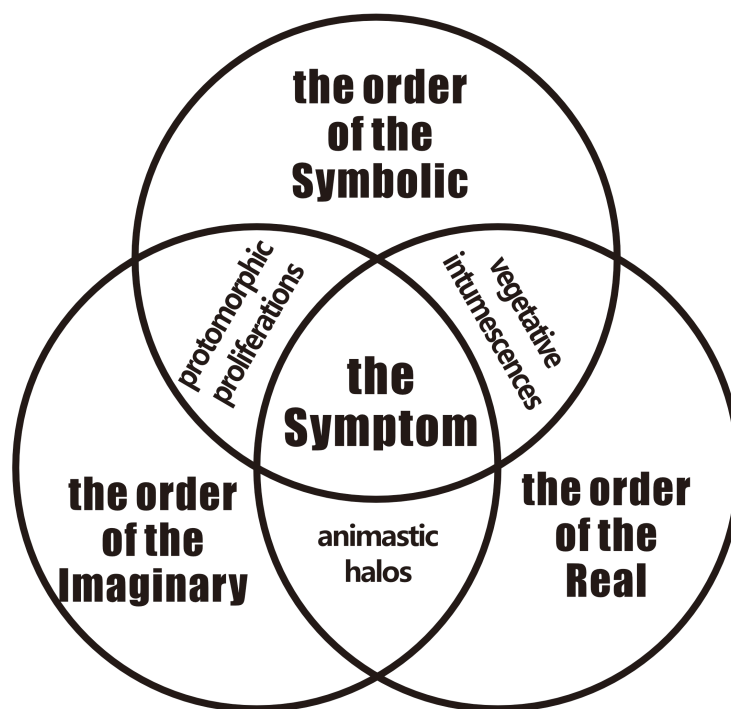**Borromean knot: The Three Orders of the Psychological World**

Figure 45. Borromean knot[14]

This diagram gives us a snapshot of the panorama of Lacanian psychoanalysis. In Lacan's system, there are three orders in the spiritual world: the symbolic order, the real order, and the imaginary order. If we combine Laban and Lacan, then this diagram corresponds to the psychic

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[14] This image was redrawn by the author.

element of Laban's space, or his concern with inner engagement. This means that there are three ways in which thinking and engagement can be realised in space: the symbolic, the real and the imagined. Thinking is symbolic. This means that thought relies on a symbolic language in order to become thought. My ideas can only be known through the symbols/textual symbols that are written in the text, i.e. the written language. Thus, these ideas are being communicated to others through 'symbolism'; these meanings can be conveyed to others using diagrams in the text, symbolically; in the dance classroom these meanings can be transmitted using movements and rhythms, still symbolically. So in Lacanian terms, these are the things that make up thought or mind.

In addition to the symbolic order, there is also the real order. Lacan's real is almost the opposite of Plato's definition[15], which refers to everything one touches. So the real, in Lacan's sense, is something that exists in concrete matter. And thought exists in the real order, because we think in terms of material, concrete, physical things. This table, is part of my thinking, my hands are part of my thinking, my feet are part of my thinking. So, Lacan and Laban are the same. Mental factors/various movement factors cannot be seen separately. We can't separate space from weight, we can't separate weight from time ...... Here in Lacan, one should not separate thought from weight, that is, one should not think of thought as mere symbols and language; it is also a substance, with a weight of its own.

The Borromean Knot helps us to understand that thinking is the chain or the knot. What Lacan means is that thought is not a single thing, but that the three things are knotted together, or chained to each other. That is, the real is linked to the symbolic and the imaginary, the imaginary to the symbolic, the real to the symbolic, and the imaginary to the real. If the symbolic order is cut off, if my ability to convey meaning to you symbolically is cut off, reality collapses. That is to say, I have no words to describe this table, no words to describe this diagram, no words to describe my hands, and my material world collapses, and my ability to imagine collapses. If my ability to imagine collapses, so does my symbolic world. It is the chain of these three orders that defines the 'self'. In the middle of these three orders are the so-

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[15] Plato based his theory of Ideas on the theory of imitation. According to the theory of imitation, the world is divided into three levels: the world of Ideas, the world of reality and the world of artistic imitation. Plato believed that art was an imitation of the real world, which in turn was an imitation of the world of Ideas. In Plato's threefold world, the world of Ideas is the only true entity, and the sensuous real world is only an imitation of the world of Ideas, and what it imitates is only an approximation of the true entity.

called symptoms, the broken chains that psychoanalysis looks for. Psychoanalysis detects the problems that lead to the breaking of the self and the transformation of the self into a 'mobile ego'.

If a professional dancer experiences trauma and their psychological distress intensifies, leading to the gradual collapse of their symbolic order, they may be unable to comprehend their situation through language and symbols. As their imaginary order also breaks down, they begin to experience confusion regarding their body and identity. In this context, Lacan's Borromean knot and the concept of symptoms can help explain their psychological and physical experiences. They may exhibit certain symptoms and processes:

1. **Compulsively repeating a dance movement.** At this point, the "symptom" becomes something that maintains their subjectivity. They are unable to process their emotions through the symbolic system (language, logic), so the dance movement itself becomes their symptom—a repetitive behavior pattern that they cannot stop.

2. **Their movements become fragmented.** Improvised dance may lack logic, rhythm, and organization. Their body language resembles a disordered symbol system that cannot be organized into stable meaning.

3. **As their psychological distress intensifies, they replace language with bodily perception.** They may feel that their legs are becoming heavier, as if roots are growing from them, or that they are fixed to the floor, unable to dance. This is an attempt to restore a sense of stability.

4. **In extreme cases, the dancer may experience a "dehumanizing" state.** They may no longer feel like a human being but as pure dancing energy, like a flexible cat, a swirling wind, or an undefined existence.

This diagram and these concepts collectively describe how a subject with a mental disorder fills the gap in their psychological structure by relying on other means (bodily sensations, hallucinations, proliferation) when the symbolic order fails. The "symptom" serves as a "patch," helping the subject to barely maintain a sense of self. Lacan's Borromean knot tells us that the symptom is not merely a "disease," but an integral part of the subject's structure. For

the dancer, dance may serve both as a therapeutic tool and as an expression of their psychological distress. When bodily language replaces symbolic language, the dancer may struggle but could also come to understand themself in a new way.

For Laban, the dynamosphere is also formed around the knot. The dynamosphere, our inner world, is a knot, a lemnastics or an inverted circle. Thus, our outer movements and our inner world are a continuum or crystalline body of opposites. He develops the self-constructive capacity of the body and mind by means of the connection between the structure of the body and the representation of spatial patterns. In the expression of the movement stages invented by Laban, the unity of mind and body can be seen in the strong spatial mapping of the movement, which exists in the bipolar opposites and continuity of movement, such as rising, sinking, crossing, opening, retreating, and advancing. Thus, Lacan's and Laban's concern with knots reminds us that it is the disassociation of the real, the symbolic and the imaginary that leads to the disintegration of the idea of the self. Laban's approach can be seen as an attempt to reshape the chain.

We are concerned that Laban studies and psychoanalysis often go back to the world of the child to try to find the broken links in the adult psychological world. This research touches on something powerful and comes back to the question: What is language? Are we made of language? Looking back at the state of children, they do not make sense of the world through linguistic means, but through the energy in sound, movement, temperature, and touch. Kurt Lewin, another giant in the study of combining movement and psychology, in his film *The Child and Her World* (1931), recalls that we were all babies, toddlers, learning about the world in what Lewin called the space of life. We learnt to live with life through the love our mothers gave us and through the fear caused by energies and stimuli we didn't understand. Looking back at that period is a way of regaining our energising connection with the world and altruism, bringing us back to the area of being folded, away from the traps of language and meaning and all the arbitration of the reality of the adult world, and back to the way the body initially perceives. It is therefore feasible that Laban and Carpenter attempted to bring the functionality of movement expression into the therapy of psychopathology. They had a long history of observation and experimentation with Jungian analysts. What we now see in Laban's later work

on motivation is an empirical summary that, like many other dimensions of Laban's research, constitutes the starting point for a cross-approach.

In the following chapter, this section analyses the case study in Beijing, the square dance group of Beijing seniors by using the above concepts - through the family disco that was popular in the 1980s amongst the younger population in China, and the current square dance activities of this age group, thus exploring the psychological/ movement characteristics of the 1960s-born population.

Chapter XI

The Movement Psychology Characteristics of People Born in the 50s and 60s: A Survey of Square Dance Groups in Beijing Parks

In the case study of "elderly individuals participating in street square dance," the author found that the dance forms they are interested in are similar, including ballroom dancing, fitness-oriented disco dancing, and folk dances with social functions/etiquettes, such as Xinjiang dance. Additionally, it was observed that those young people who were enthusiastic about ballroom dancing and breakdancing in the 1980s are now in the same age group as the elderly dancing in parks and on streets today. The dance craze in community public spaces prompts a reflection on what contributes to this phenomenon of collective celebration, analyzing the deeper social and psychological connections behind this entertainment form's popularity among this generation, as well as how to understand issues of self-artistic education and identity recognition among Chinese citizens through this phenomenon.

If we shift our focus to the period of China's reform and opening up in the 1980s, we can observe that young people at that time were engaged in group dance frenzies, dancing ballroom and family disco everywhere. The reform and opening up, which began in 1978, revitalized ballroom dancing and introduced new phenomena such as disco dancing and square dancing. It can be said that ballroom dancing and other dance forms in people's daily lives are closely related to the westernization and modernization processes in modern China, as well as the political, social, and cultural changes in contemporary China. These body-centered entertainment forms, with their specific dance movements, music, venues, and the life, bodily experiences, and emotional forms of the dancers, have extensive and complex interactions with contemporary national macro forces regarding their rise and fall, evolution.

Collective Identity and the Reconstruction of Symbolic Order

An important point to note is that these elderly individuals have experienced two of the most tumultuous periods in Chinese society: the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and the period of reform and opening up. During the Cultural Revolution, there was an overwhelming experience of collectivism. At this time, the People's Commune system became the primary form of agricultural organization in rural areas. This highly organized agricultural production system organized farmers to work collectively, with all land, tools, and other production materials owned by the collective. Members were compensated based on work points rather than individual output. In both rural and urban areas, the concept of collective living extended to all aspects of life. In rural areas, beyond collective labor, farmers were organized to participate in various forms of political learning and cultural activities. Daily schedules were often determined by commune leaders or brigade cadres, with activities like labor education and Mao Zedong Thought study classes becoming part of daily life. In some places, collective dining halls were promoted, especially during the Great Leap Forward, but due to management issues, this practice became less common during the Cultural Revolution.

Factory workers in urban areas also lived under a collectivized system, with factory dormitories, collective dining halls, and collective cultural activities becoming vital components of workers' lives. The leadership and party organizations of workplaces not only managed workers' production tasks but also intervened in their daily lives, including marriage and housing. This lifestyle emphasized the "work unit system," wherein individuals' lives were inseparable from their work units, which served as both places of economic production and small societies, requiring personal integration within collective supervision and management.

Collective labor during the Cultural Revolution was not only aimed at producing material wealth but also carried significant political and ideological education functions. It was viewed as an essential way to learn and practice Mao Zedong Thought. Through labor, individuals could strengthen their identification with collectivism, labor values, and revolutionary spirit. An article published in the People's Daily in 1969 stated, "Labor is not only a need for production but also a means for ideological transformation." By participating in collective labor, people were taught to shed individualism and accept the concept of "serving the people." This

ideological transformation was not only manifested in production labor but also reinforced through regular political learning, struggle sessions, and other collective activities. Struggle sessions, as part of collective activities, were often held after labor and became public venues for criticizing "capitalist roaders" or other behaviors deemed inconsistent with revolutionary spirit.

During the Cultural Revolution, collectivism was not only manifested in the actual organization of labor and life but was also reinforced through various propaganda tools. Mao Zedong and other leaders frequently emphasized the importance of collectivism, criticizing individualism and liberal tendencies. Cultural products such as literary works, dramas, and films promoted heroic images of collective life and labor. For instance, the model opera "The Red Detachment of Women" showcased the collective spirit of labor and revolutionary struggle through artistic expression.

It can be said that during this period, language, social norms, and cultural rules formed a symbolic network and order that defined individuals' positions and identities in society, with people constructing their self-identities in relation to their positions and identities within the collective society. This generation experienced extreme collectivism and unified social lifestyles, and their daily lives and identity recognition were deeply embedded in the symbolic order of the state and collective. Through participation in political movements, collective labor, and cultural performances, they became accustomed to collective activities and found self-identity within them.

However, significant changes occurred with the onset of the reform and opening up. This transition happened after the end of the "Cultural Revolution," a period when Chinese society was undergoing profound chaos and restoration. The decade of the Cultural Revolution led to enormous social turmoil, with political, economic, and social order nearly collapsing, and the entire country falling into stagnation. Political persecution, social struggles, and the extreme polarization of class struggle during the Cultural Revolution resulted in a severe loss of social trust, with family and neighborly relationships disrupted and social life highly politicized. In the early stages of reform and opening up, the primary social task was to restore order and rebuild social trust and harmony.

Economic reform became the central task of the reform and opening up period, set against the backdrop of China's economy having long been shackled by a planned economy. However, the reform and opening up represented not just an adjustment of economic policies but also the liberation of thought. As Li Zehou (1988) noted, post-1978 China entered a period of "thought liberation," with the political constraints and ideological control of the Mao era gradually being broken. For example, during the Cultural Revolution, the social status and roles of intellectuals were belittled. After the reform and opening up, intellectuals were reinvigorated and played important roles in social and economic development. The government began to value science and technology, emphasizing the importance of education and research, promoting technological innovation and the modernization of education.

Culturally, as the policy of opening up to the outside world advanced, Western culture, thought, and lifestyles gradually entered China. Young people in cities began to embrace new cultural phenomena such as pop music, films, and fashion, leading to a trend of cultural pluralism. Despite the new vitality and ideological collisions brought about by cultural openness, contradictions in ideologies emerged during this process.

Following the reform and opening up, with the infiltration of Western culture, ballroom dancing and family disco became popular among the masses. It can be said that ballroom dancing and family disco are continuations of the symbolic order produced by the collectivist society of the Cultural Revolution. Through regular collective activities, they could rebuild social relationships and restore their positions within the symbolic realm.

After the "Cultural Revolution," public displays of affection between couples, such as holding hands, embracing, and kissing, as well as intimate actions in films, sparked intense social controversy, often being criticized as bourgeois decadent lifestyles, sometimes even associated with activities deemed criminal or immoral. Nevertheless, these intimate actions among lovers gradually appeared in the public social environment. In dimly lit private spaces at night, family dance parties further reinforced these intimate interpersonal connections. Gradually, people came to realize that the most important part of daily life was to cultivate and enjoy these intimate relationships. When various social and cultural changes, including dancing, reached a certain intensity, the political ideological field began a cleanup of "spiritual pollution" in the latter half of 1983, while the legal realm launched a "severe crackdown,"

rapidly and heavily punishing criminal activities to address the chaotic social security situation at the time. In the same year, the Propaganda Department, the Ministry of Culture, and the Ministry of Public Security issued a notice about the prohibition of vulgar and decadent dance parties, further tightening the regulation on dance events.

However, in October 1984, the Propaganda Department, the Ministry of Culture, and the Ministry of Public Security issued a notice on improving the management of dance parties, announcing the cancellation of the previous "ban on dancing." Shanghai established its first commercial dance hall in July 1984. Shortly after, the Chongqing Daily prominently published an article titled "Dancing to Joyful Songs, Youthful Vitality Abounds—City's Summer Music Dance Party Popular Among Young People," signaling the return of dance parties to the public. Other large and medium-sized cities quickly followed suit. By 1987, the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Culture, and the State Administration for Industry and Commerce jointly issued a notice further recognizing the legitimacy of socially organized dance parties. These events indicate a competition and negotiation among various social forces regarding dance parties, making the popularization of ballroom dancing a "tug-of-war."

Once a form of entertainment deeply embedded in people's daily lives, it can mobilize social, market economic, and new electronic media forces, creating sustained confrontation and coordination with specific regulations, moral concepts, and political ideologies. Through this confrontation and coordination, various cultural forms based on people's daily lives have painstakingly and persistently expanded their space for existence.

Modernity Experience Amid Social Turmoil

The ballroom dancing parties that became popular during the reform and opening up period represent a public society composed of countless private relationships, characterized by rapid acquaintances and separations among strangers—an experience of modernity that is "casual, transitional, and fleeting." Therefore, as a metaphor for life, dance parties condense the experience of an era full of contradictions and complex situations. Dance becomes a manifestation of individuality, an arena where young people experience body feelings and

enjoy emotional exchanges, enabling them to temporarily escape the complex relationships of a highly regulated society.

Elderly individuals today often recall their youthful experiences in ballroom dancing and disco dancing, noting how these dances served as venues for social gatherings and emotional exchanges among youth. The dancing forms of ballroom dancing and disco have persisted in their communal function, transforming into the popular square dancing among the elderly, enabling them to gather, socialize, and engage in physical activity. The communal attributes of square dancing hold significant value for the elderly today, offering them the opportunity to share their life experiences and emotions while building social connections in a public space. In essence, through the dance forms of ballroom dancing and square dancing, one can witness the reconstruction of identities among the elderly within the transformation of collective identities and personal expressions.

In summary, through analyzing the context of these elderly individuals engaging in street square dancing, the research aims to investigate how their experiences can reveal the complex interactions between social, political, and cultural forces. As dance forms evolve in public spaces, they provide insights into the shifting dynamics of identity, community, and belonging within the broader social fabric of contemporary China. The phenomenon of street square dancing serves as a lens through which to understand the interwoven narratives of individual and collective identities, allowing for deeper reflections on the cultural significance of dance as a means of social connection and personal expression amid the realities of modern life.

Conclusions

In my research on the contemporary value of Laban's dance philosophy, I have integrated multiple case studies from social practices. These cases not only demonstrate the diversity of dance as an art form but also reveal its broad impact on social life.

The study of Community Art and Community Life, the chapter 2 and 3 shows that dance, as a collective activity, it can help participants find a sense of belonging within cultural and social groups through physical interaction. This establishment of collective identity highlights that dance can be act as a bridge connecting individuals to the community; it is not merely a means of personal expression but also a reproduction of group culture and values.

The cases in the chapter 4 and 5, the research on residents' autonomy over public living spaces in Hong Kong and Beijing illustrates how dance empowers individuals with the freedom to act and the right to express themselves in public spaces. Through dance, individuals can reclaim control over their bodies and spaces, reflecting the power of dance at the social level- art becomes an intervention in public life and a part of driving social change.

In the cases of Movement Language (chapter 6 and 7) ,the perception-driven dance language and research methods emphasize the connection between the body and consciousness. Through these methods, dancers not only understand their own bodies but also establish new modes of interaction with others and the environment through deeper bodily perception. This process reinforces Laban's exploration of the dynamic relationship between the body and space, granting dance greater cognitive and perceptual value.

In the comprehensive education and physical and mental training of adolescent professional dancers, chapter 8, dance is not just a skill training but also a crucial means of mental development and physical health. Through dance training, adolescents can enhance their sense of self-efficacy, cultivate perseverance and creativity, and this multidimensional education reflects the long-term value of dance for youth development.

In the case of Movement Psychology, research on the movement psychology characteristics of the Cultural Revolution and the Reform and Opening-up generation reveals the profound influence of historical periods on dance and bodily expression. By analyzing these generational characteristics, we can see that dance is not only a tool for expressing individual

emotions but also a carrier of social historical memory, reflecting changes in collective psychology and culture.

Research Findings and Contributions

Community Dance: Decentralization and Inclusivity as Future Keywords

Laban's "Movement Choir" presents a vision of social integration and resonance achieved through large-scale collective dance, a concept that was pioneering at the time. By enabling individuals from different professions and social backgrounds to express and interact through physical movements, Laban created a form of social dialogue that allowed strangers to break down barriers through a shared physical engagement, thereby forming a symbolic community unity. This emphasis on collective action and shared experiences became an important experiment for reflecting on social order and relationships in the early 20th century.

Modern community art emphasizes that artistic creation is no longer the privilege of a few professional artists but a public practice accessible to all. Similar to Laban's Movement Choir, contemporary participatory art also promotes community cohesion and social interaction through group artistic experiences. However, modern community art places greater emphasis on the individual voices and social issues of participants compared to Laban's era. In the domestic worker theatre and Hong Kong art community, it was evident that focus was given to facilitating participants' abilities to express their experiences, address social issues and/or personal responses through art. This more personalized mode of participation differs from the concept of "mass unified action" explored by Laban, yet it similarly seeks to enhance collective consciousness and foster social integration through artistic practice.

At the same time, modern community art places greater importance on democratic and decentralized creative processes. Participants are not just performers; they are also creators, and even organizers and planners. In this regard, contemporary participatory art shares similarities with the creative principles advocated by Laban, such as "equality and freedom" and a pluralistic approach to art, emphasizing collaborative actions in artistic creation and the openness of the process. However, today's participatory art is increasingly seen as a tool for addressing the diversity and complexity in contemporary society, including issues such as social inequality, identity politics, and urbanization. Art becomes not just a means of bodily

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expression but also a platform for discussing social issues. They explore societal problems within specific communities, such as poverty, immigration, race, and gender, providing a visible and public space for discussion on these topics.

In summary, Laban's concept of community unity has found new forms in today's community and participatory arts, but modern artists pay more attention to the uniqueness and voice of the individual within the community. It is evident that through co-creation and collective action, community art will continue to play a vital role in enhancing social cohesion, promoting social reflections, and driving positive change.

Public Spaces: Mobile Homes as a Feature of Globalization

Truth Mountain emphasize the harmony between individual freedom and collective living, but maintaining this balance in practice is challenging. The ideal gradually collapses amid conflicts with reality, as economic pressures, war contexts, internal divisions, and the departure of core members collectively lead to its end. This prompts a reflection on the ethical sustainability of community art and organizational methods, involving multidimensional considerations, including equity, inclusivity, power governance, the balance between individual and collective, environmental responsibility, and intergenerational fairness.

Modern society has become highly differentiated and specialized, and artistic life is no longer centered on collective actions but is more reflected in diverse individual creations and expressions. At the same time, modern community life no longer relies on large-scale collective Labour or shared artistic practices for sustenance; the development of technology has also changed people's understanding of community. The rise of virtual spaces allows individuals to transcend the limitations of physical space for communication, but it may bring new feelings of loneliness and alienation. The artistic utopian ideals advocated by Laban attempted to dissolve the opposition between individual and collective through shared bodily movements, but today's needs are more complex. Modern individuals desire not only freedom and liberation through art but also wish to construct inclusive and open communities within diverse cultural backgrounds. Modern community life must address more varied issues, such as race, gender, class, and cultural differences; how to create an environment that respects individual

differences while allowing for collective coexistence has become an increasingly urgent issue in contemporary community life.

On the other hand, in today's context of globalization, global mobility and migration have become significant characteristics of many societies. In the process of globalization, individual identities have become more layered and complex. A person may be a citizen of one country, a member of a global professional field, and possess an independent identity within digital communities. This overlap of multiple identities signifies that a person's sense of belonging is not limited to one country or community but presents multidimensional and transnational fluid characteristics. This also implies that the definition of community life must become more open, accepting those individuals who are in a transitional phase of identity or cultural integration. Globalization has not only facilitated the transnational movement of people but has also triggered temporary changes in living arrangements. Many no longer pursue traditional long-term settlement; instead, they frequently move between different cities or even countries based on job opportunities and lifestyle choices. This temporality and uncertainty lead to a shift in the concept of "home." Traditionally, home is no longer a fixed geographical location; it may instead be an emotional aggregation point or a fluid space that can be redefined at any time.

Therefore, in today's globalized world, the definition of home is gradually evolving into a social space characterized by fluidity, openness, and emotional significance. It may exist in the connections with family and friends or in the continuation of certain cultures, habits, and lifestyles, referring to the links between individuals and others, cultures, traditions, and memories. This transforms "home" into a fluid concept that can be redefined at any time based on personal experiences and emotional states. Home may also represent a shared community life. In such a shared community, resources and support are collectivized, and people create a sense of common belonging through cooperation and mutual aid. This type of home is not limited to the bonds between family members; it also includes the collective home created by individuals from different backgrounds. In this sense, home becomes an open and diverse

shared space, where participatory art plays a critical role in creating inclusive and collaborative environments for individuals from varied backgrounds to express and shape their identities.

For immigrants and transnational workers, home is often closely linked to culture and identity. Even when they find themselves in a foreign land, home can still be maintained by preserving traditional cultures, languages, and customs. For many mobile populations, home is no longer synonymous with birthplace or nationality but signifies a sense of cultural identity and belonging constructed through daily behaviors, social interactions, and participatory art.

Movement Language: Persist in the development of dance language and return to the complexity of perception

The establishment and development of dance language help us understand the complex structures in dance from a rational perspective. It not only provides dancers, choreographers, and researchers with tools for expression and communication but also offers a multidimensional knowledge framework for dance research. This linguistic system endows dance art with a rational cultural form, allowing it to be accepted as a profound knowledge system within the academic realm. However, this study contemplates that, as dance evolves in the waves of technologization and commodification, we will face a trend of oversimplifying dance knowledge and experience. This simplification not only undermines the independence of dance language but also threatens the diversity of dance aesthetics and culture.

Returning to complexity, returning to perception, rejecting simplification, and insisting on the establishment and use of dance language are profoundly significant issues in contemporary dance art. The rapid pace of modern society and the development of information technology prompt us to simplify and structure various experiences, especially when facing art forms like dance that heavily rely on bodily perception and emotional expression. This tendency is particularly pronounced. However, as an art form mediated by the body, the complexity of dance is not only manifested in the execution of movements but also in the intricate operations of perception and the complex relationships between body, space, time, and dynamics. Thus, rejecting the simplification of dance experience and returning to

perception means we must re-understand the essence of dance, returning to its intertwined complexity with body, senses, and environment.

Rejecting simplification does not equate to rejecting technological progress; rather, it serves as a reminder that we should always maintain a keen awareness of bodily perception and complexity when confronted with technology and simplification tools, preserving the richness and depth of dance language. Therefore, insisting on the establishment and use of dance language is a vital means of maintaining the multidimensional complexity of dance. On one hand, we need to return to the depictions of movement behind the symbols and terminologies of dance, exploring condensed perceptions, cultures, histories, and human experiences. On the other hand, combining rational culture with perceptual awareness and applying this concept to the study of dance theory and practice becomes a fundamental professional skill that can ultimately provide a foundation for establishing a consensus on a dance language system.

Youth Dance Education: Self-education and the development of a well-rounded personality begin with cultivating self-reflective awareness

In the mid-20th century, the mechanized and repetitive labor of industrialization suppressed the natural movement of the body, leading people to gradually recognize the negative impact of this lifestyle on their physical and mental health. Consequently, dance, as a form of free bodily expression and creative exploration, can help individuals reconnect with their bodies and nature. Laban's educational practices emphasized releasing individual potential through bodily movement, resonating with the anti-industrial cultural movements of that time.

Returning to today's society, the purpose of education is not only to impart knowledge or develop skills but also to shape well-rounded individuals who can adapt to a rapidly changing society and prepare for future challenges. For adolescent professional dancers, their education should not be limited to the cultivation of dance techniques and competitive abilities; it should also focus on the holistic development of their personalities, including psychological health, self-awareness, and social responsibility. The professional transformation that dancers face

after ending their competitive careers, as well as how they can reshape themselves in new environments, lies at the core of this comprehensive education.

As ballroom dance has entered the higher education system in China, it has come to symbolize not only entertainment and competition but also the important task of shaping individual character and social responsibility. Therefore, the educational goals and methods for professional dancers must be reexamined and adjusted to meet societal needs. This research begins with changes in the curriculum and daily training concepts of the profession to influence the new generation of dancers. It integrates movement methods and philosophies that enhance bodily awareness and self-reflective abilities to transform their approach to dance during daily training and influence their aesthetic perceptions. By entering the study of dance through an ethical aesthetic perspective, students can gradually appreciate the free and spontaneous movement of the body, fostering their introspective abilities and spontaneous creative consciousness.

By incorporating this concept of *choreosophy* into teaching practices, we can provide adolescent dancers with a deeper level of mind-body education, enabling them not only to become technically skilled dancers but also to develop into well-rounded individuals with creativity, a sense of responsibility, and social adaptability.

Movement Psychology: The enrichment and direction of movement psychology in the future
The movement psychology research of Laban and William Carpenter is indeed greatly inspired by Jungian psychology, particularly in terms of Jung's typology. Jung's psychological typology provides a structured framework for human psychological functions, especially through the four primary psychological functions (thinking, feeling, sensing, intuition) to explain individual personality tendencies. However, this typology has evident limitations, mainly in its rigidity and oversimplification of classifications. It emphasizes individual preferences for certain psychological functions while failing to adequately consider the plasticity of individual psychology and the ability to adapt to different situations. Modern psychology has recognized that human psychology is highly dynamic, capable of flowing and transforming between different functions based on environment, stress, and social interactions.

This critique of the limitations of Jungian psychology has similarly influenced Laban and Carpenter's classification systems in movement psychology, especially Laban's application of "Effort" classifications. While this classification can help us understand and analyze the dynamics and intentions behind movements, like Jung's typology, it remains too static to fully encompass the emotional, dynamic, and psychological complexities carried by movement. Movement is not a singular functional expression; it is influenced by multiple psychological and environmental factors, meaning that classification systems cannot capture the entirety of human movement. It is more of a useful analytical tool or a starting point for stimulating creative thinking rather than a comprehensive explanation of movement behavior. This has led to their theories in movement psychology being developed primarily within the methods of performing arts, without sufficient capacity to advance the psychological therapy they initially envisioned.

However, Laban's unique insight lies in his study of movement through visual methods of imagery and symbolism, attempting to unify the inner and outer experiences of movement. This approach goes beyond mere classification and description of movement, connecting it to the multi-layered complexities and dynamic changes of psychological phenomena. His study of the Möbius strip is a typical example; the Möbius strip symbolizes the continuous unity of the inner and outer, demonstrating the inseparable relationship between movement and psychology. By using images and symbolic systems, Laban visualizes the interactive processes of psychological phenomena, enabling us to understand more intuitively the emotional content, underlying motivations, and their changes within movements. Lacan or contemporary psychoanalysis similarly recognizes the important role of imagery and symbolism in studying human complex behaviors and emotional expressions. Through visual symbols, the layers, complexities, and dynamic interactions of psychological phenomena can be presented. This method remains scientific and viable today, especially in understanding how individuals express complex emotions and psychological states through movement; Laban's approach provides us with a more vivid and multidimensional analytical tool.

This also brings us to points of convergence between Laban and Lacan's thoughts. Lacan chose to use topological models to explain the structure of the unconscious primarily because he believed that these geometric models could avoid traditional binary thinking. Many issues

within psychological phenomena, particularly the relationships between consciousness and the unconscious, the self and the other, cannot be simply explained in a linear or binary manner. Topology offers a more flexible way to showcase the complexity and fluidity of the subject's psychological structure. Topological models also assist Lacan in emphasizing some "invisible" processes within psychoanalysis. For example, the functioning of desire is not fixed but exhibits properties of self-folding, twisting, and connecting, much like topological structures. Through these models, Lacan can better describe the multiple connections between the subject and the unconscious, linguistic symbols, and social order.

Jung's psychology focuses more on the inner development of the individual and often overlooks the influence of social environments and symbolic systems on individual movements. Lacan's theory of subject construction helps us understand how individuals' expressions of movement in society are constrained and shaped by symbolic systems. Lacan's "mirror stage" theory reveals how individuals form self-awareness through feedback from the external world, which often appears in the form of symbols, images, and language. In analyzing the Chinese population born between the 1950s and 60s in this study, Lacan's theories fully illustrate this connection. In movement psychology, an individual's movements are likewise not isolated; they are profoundly influenced by culture, social norms, and symbolic systems. Therefore, Laban's movement analysis should not remain solely at the psychological symbolic level but should draw from Lacan's theories to further explore how movements are constructed and interpreted within symbolic systems.

In summary, over the past century, the world has undergone profound changes, and dance and art, as important media for human emotion and social expression, have always played an irreplaceable role. From Laban's movement philosophy to contemporary participatory community art, we see that dance and art not only satisfy humanity's need for beauty and emotional expression but also promote collective identity, cross-cultural communication, and social critique in complex and changing social contexts. The introduction of theories such as perception-guided dance language, comprehensive education for adolescent professional dancers, and the symbolic systems in Lacan's theory further deepens our understanding of the relationship between body, movement, and psychology. Dance is not only an individual form

of expression but also an important vehicle for social memory, cultural interaction, and identity construction.

My research and community dance practices are actively integrated with broad societal trends such as social justice, inclusivity, and the evolving roles of public spaces and community-based practices. My dance projects in the community focus on providing platforms for marginalized groups, particularly migrant workers and domestic workers, through artistic creation that allows them to express themselves and promote social equity. By organizing community-engaged dance workshops and creative projects, I enable these groups to participate in artistic practices, thereby challenging traditional power structures in art and creating more opportunities for social participation and self-expression.

At the same time, I am exploring how to utilize public spaces (both physical and digital) to promote social engagement and artistic exchange. I collaborate with multiple communities through open dance performances and public art activities, breaking down the boundaries between art and audience, and allowing a broader group of people to access and participate in the arts. My work is not only taking place in physical spaces but is also extending into digital spaces, utilizing social media and online platforms to expand the accessibility and inclusivity of the arts, ensuring that art is no longer exclusive to a few elites but is a public resource that everyone can engage with and enjoy.

Future Directions: Bridging Dance, Community Practice, and Social Change

In my future work, I aim to continue deepening my engagement with community-based initiatives, expanding my connections with diverse communities, and integrating these into my academic research. By combining theory and practice, I will be able to explore the practical applications of dance within various community contexts, foster social change, and contribute to ongoing dialogues about art, identity, and ethics.

One of my key goals is to encourage broader societal participation in dance as a form of social practice. Through collaborative projects such as workshops, residencies, and community-driven performances, I hope not only to enhance the understanding of dance as a

cultural practice but also to demonstrate its potential to shape social values and transform collective identities. These efforts will be supported by academic publications and conference presentations, which will allow me to share my findings with a wider scholarly audience. Through publishing research and engaging in discussions with both academic and non-academic communities, I aim to bridge the gap between theory and practice, fostering a dialogue on the role of dance in shaping social structures and ethical values.

Furthermore, I am particularly interested in the intersection of movement psychology and dance. By continuing my research into the psychological aspects of movement, I plan to integrate dance with psychoanalytic theory and explore its application in clinical practice. This fusion of dance and psychoanalysis offers a unique perspective on the therapeutic potential of dance, particularly in understanding unconscious processes that influence bodily expression and emotional processing. As part of this research, I aim to develop methodologies that combine somatic practices with mental health support, exploring how dance can be used as a means of self-expression to help individuals process emotional challenges and contribute to psychological therapy.

These future directions not only provide new perspectives for the development of art and social ethics but also aim to push dance to play a more significant role in societal transformation. I hope that through these interdisciplinary studies and practices, I can contribute to advancing social equity, fostering collective identity, and building a more inclusive cultural environment.

Original Contribution

The originality of this research lies in the organic integration and practical application of dance studies with multiple disciplines, including philosophy, ethics, phenomenology, and psychology, within the social context of the Asia-Pacific region. This research creatively advances the multidimensional understanding and application of dance as a socio-cultural practice. My original contributions are specifically manifested in the following areas.

In this research, I introduced and adapted Western dance theories - particularly those concerning social communication, cultural identity, and individual empowerment - for application within the Asia-Pacific context. Rather than merely transplanting these concepts, I engaged in a critical process of contextualization, using case studies grounded in local social conditions and cultural traditions. My originality lies in this methodological adaptation, which moves beyond replication and seeks a deeper alignment between theoretical frameworks and the lived realities of the communities involved. Instead, I thoroughly analyzed and understood the unique social and cultural contexts of the Asia-Pacific region and its localized practices, designing dance art models that are better suited to local needs and circumstances. In this process, I particularly focused on dance as a tool for social communication in the Asia-Pacific region and explored how dance could promote cultural identity and empowerment, especially in community art projects involving migrant workers and domestic workers. By researching the cultural traits and social situations of these groups, I reflected upon and adjusted certain concepts from Western theories, making them more relevant to local practice and cultural identity. This exploration not only expanded the social function of dance but also made its application in local cultural contexts more practical and sustainable.

I redefined the concept of Choreosophy - traditionally understood as dance philosophy - by proposing a new interpretation that positions it as a form of dance practice ethics. Through extensive fieldwork conducted in diverse regions, I reconstructed its research framework to emphasize the ethical and social functions of dance. Rather than treating dance solely as an

aesthetic endeavor, I argued for its role as a medium of ethical construction, rooted in practice and social engagement. This revised framework expands the scope of Choreosophy, allowing it to adapt across varying cultural and social contexts, and integrates notions of social responsibility and ethical values into the practice of dance art.

I proposed and implemented an innovative interview method grounded in phenomenological description, with a particular focus on the micro-perceptions of the body.This method emphasizes the detailed recording of dance practitioners' bodily sensations and emotional experiences, uncovering the psychological and emotional aspects of dance practice. It aligns dance studies more closely with practical needs and better connects with individual bodily experiences and emotional worlds. This innovative approach provides a new perspective for research in dance studies, particularly when exploring the relationship between dance, psychology, and bodily perception, showcasing unique value.

I revisited and expanded the theoretical framework of movement psychology, integrating it into the ethical dimensions of dance practice.By integrating the theories of Lacan, Jung, and Laban-Carpenter, I attempted to combine psychology and dance art, exploring the complexity of psychology through the lens of bodily movements. This approach rejects the labeling or oversimplification of personality traits, especially in the process of constructing social identities for groups and individuals. I proposed that this methodology not only helps understand the interaction between dance and psychology but also provides new theoretical support for the social function of dance, making the theoretical foundation of dance as social practice more diverse and adaptable.

Appendix I

Choreosophy

Rudolf Laban regarded choreosophy as the leading concept of his theory. However, this concept has been less frequently mentioned than in his other theories, i.e., Space Harmony (Choreutics), Effort, Kinetography (Labanotation). There may be several reasons for this:

a. its discussion in Laban's own publications exists only in the discourse of two books, *Die Welt des Tanzers* (The World of the Dancers 1920), and *Choreutics* (1966);

b. the concept has been in a continuous state of development and change since its use in the 1920s, so that scholars have been contesting its definition rather than focusing on how it guides their theory, or how it is latent in Laban's entire system of movements and terminology;

c. in understanding this concept, the reader is somehow left with the personalized interpretations of different authors and finds it difficult to discover the substantial connection of choreosophy to the whole Laban system and its contemporary relevance.

It is worth noting that these researchers' interpretations of Laban's choreosophy have two main commonalities:

a. starting from the broad and ancient philosophical values and the experience of movement throughout life, and seeing choreosophy as a "danced worldview";

b. starting from the educational significance of choreosophy and focusing on the social value of dance.

Choreosophia, originally composed of two ancient Greek words: "choros", meaning "circle", and "Sophia", meaning knowledge or wisdom. It was in use among the followers and devotees of Pythagoras throughout Plato's time (Laban, 1966, vii). However, Laban, in his preface to the Choreutics (1966), argues that this knowledge originated even before the time of Pythagoras and mentions that "the wisdom of circles is as old as hills" (Laban, 1966, vii). Gabriele Brandstetter also considers that "as a mythical form of knowledge, choreosophy is, however, much older" (Brandstetter, 2015, p. 359), and "dance means movement, the flow of life in its most general sense. The cycles of nature and life and the

integration of human movement in these cosmic cycles are considered part of the reference system of micro- and macrocosm" (Brandstetter, 2015, pp. 359-360). A similar understanding to the "flow of life in its most general sense" appears in Aurel M. Millos's interpretation. He argues that all human emotions are reflected in his actions, bending his head in sorrow, trembling in fear, jumping in joy, all of which constitute the original sound of dance, or its most basic expression (Milloss, 2002, p. 64). Likewise, sound is produced by movement, i.e., by the vibration of the vocal cords. Thus, "choreosophy, is intended to analyse in general the appearances and manifestations of dance in human life" (Milloss, 2002, p. 64).

In the early 20th century, Rudolf Laban reused the term in his publication *Die Welt des Tanzers* (1920) and in part in a manuscript entitled Choreosophia\Choreosophy. In *Choreutics* (1966), Laban explains the term as "the wisdom (knowledge) of circles" and argues that Choreosophia can convey the central idea of this book (Laban, 1966, vii). Significantly, from this concept he derived almost the entire branch of his system, i.e., choreography, choreology, and choreutics. Each branch has a different task: choreography refers to movement writing/design, or notation; choreology can be seen as the study of the grammar and syntax of movement in its external form and emotional content; "Choreutics, may be explained as the practical study of various forms of (more or less) harmonized movement" (Laban, 1966, viii).

However, Rudolf Laban had been developing Choreosophy. In *Die Welt des Tanzers*, he argues that choreography describes dance through terminology, symbols and music, but it is only through choreosophy that the beliefs behind the design can be illuminated in order to provide a meaningful movement design (Laban, 1920, p. 7). Behind choreosophy is a series of beliefs that contribute to the tenets of the concept: the cosmology from Pythagoras introduced by Plato in the *Timaeus*; the Sufi worldview that understands the world as a dance of spheres; the particular way in which dancers exist in various national myths and religious rituals; Confucius' attitude to dance as a means of education (ritual education); and Nietzsche's conception of the dancer as a complete being (Laban, 1920, pp. 7-8). However, Vera Maletic highlights Laban's changing definition of the term throughout the 1920s: in 1920 he emphasised the choreosophy as the dancer's beliefs and

assumptions about the spiritual content of dance; in 1927 he explained choreosophy as an awareness of the spiritual relationship between the content of dance; and in 1929 he considered this idea to be about the ethics and aesthetics of the new dance and dance education (Preston-Dunlop, 1995, pp. 614-615).

Brandstetter, Dick MacCaw and Alessandro Pontremoli interpret choreosophy in terms of its education, pedagogy and the social value of dance. Brandstetter's study of choreosophy is mainly based on the written dance (choreography) and illustrates its cultural and pedagogical significance: "The individual aspects of choreosophy, choreography, and choreology, which define the comprehensive, holistic meaning of written dance, are ultimately oriented toward a cultural and pedagogical program defined by dance" (Brandstetter, 2015, p. 360). Dick MacCaw explains choreosophy as "the theory of ethical and aesthetic influences on fostering movement and the knowledge of the ethical effect of all art" (MacCaw, 2011, p. 134). Alessandro Pontremoli highlights two lines of investigation that Laban followed in his study of choreosophy, the first being dance as having aesthetic value, or dance as art, as Laban describes it (Pontremoli, 2004, p. 70). According to Pontremoli, Laban also regards dance as an experience with a high social value (Pontremoli, 2004, p. 70). In the first case, it is what Laban calls the concept of "Tanztheatre", a discipline for professional performers. It is destined to be performed in front of an audience, learning and studying the principles involved. In the second case, i.e., his concept of "Tanztempel", this confronts the social, educational and community potential of dance. This is at the same time a significant part of his work. Everyone can gain an awareness of themselves through dance in relational experience. For example, everyone can connect to the movement of the universe through a "chorus of movement" and recover a sense of belonging to themselves (Pontremoli, 2004, p. 70).

After recognising the main concepts led by Choreosophy, it is possible to see that behind it lies a system of values that are harmonised with each other in polarity. Namely, the emphasis on spatial awareness is combined with its expressive dynamics content (cf. the conceptual map following the paragraph). Laban was almost the first person in the field of dance to claim that "our world lacks the vocabulary and language to describe dance" (Laban, 1920, p.7). In later years, especially after the 1920s as English replaced German as his main language, his English

works did condense the previously descriptive language into terms. The use of English vocabulary constructed a clearer but more sophisticated system of technical terms than before (Maletic, 1987, viii).

Notably, Brandstetter reads Laban's writing dance (dance notation) in a choreosophical context, arguing that it is not only a kinetographic system of notation in this context, but also becomes a medium for creating holistic concepts (Brandstetter, 2015, p. 360). This stems from Laban's consideration of the symbolic system branch of choreosophy, choreography, as a medium for translating knowledge within the intellectual sphere into corporeal knowledge, and again conveys the research aim of providing a language for the dancer's world. "The goal is written dance, and to intellectualize the corporeal and thus liberate the corporeal through notated and composed dance—the desire and intentions of our age" (Brandstetter, 2015, p. 360). Among Laban's 27 spatial symbols, the three spatial structures (dimension, diameter and diagonal) represent the spatial qualities of stability, flow and instability respectively (Laban, 1926, p. 64). But those who have experienced 'reading movement' can easily find that when their body tries to embody the spatial structure of the symbol in space, she/he involuntarily carries with her/him a unique dynamic experience that creates spatial tensions of varying degrees/rhythms. These symbols become the medium because, unlike the mechanistic process of command-response and demonstration-imitation prevalent in some dance\movement teaching, they provide the space for the body to be creative, in which the unique experience of the individual body is naturally embodied.

Danced worldview: the investigation into the practice of studying the social value of dance
Gabriele Brandstetter regards Laban's choreosophy as the "danced worldview" (Brandstetter, 2015, p.360) and the "monism of dance" (Brandstetter, 2015, p.360). This monistic worldview of dance explores dance's participation in social construction. With its own dynamic properties, it emphasises the process of interaction between the subject and the environment and the subject's entire perceptual experience of the environment.

According to Maletic (1987, p.14), Laban was passionate about the social choreography form of the movement choirs. He performed choral dances in Munich and Ascona for a large number of amateurs. In the following years he and his colleagues developed it systematically

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into a dance form with corresponding gymnastic exercises and creative forms (Maletic, 1987, pp. 14-15). As choral dance developed, it evolved into a more organised activity in the 1920s and took on a new name - Movement Choirs (Maletic, 1987, p. 14). The Zentralschule Laban, founded in Hamburg in 1923, also has a special department for movement choirs (Maletic, 1987, p. 37). Laban conceived the movement chorus as a medium for interpersonal communication and mind-body education through dance, as in the formation of a dance community: "Thousands of people can now experience the benefit of the rhythm and flow of dance, not only as spectators but also as active players in the joy of moving" (Laban, 1975, pp. 140-154, p.174). He emphasised however, that in addition to sharing the joy of movement, the key task of movement choirs is that movement is a way of educating the mind and body, for both adults and children (Laban, 1975, p. 184).

In the 21st century, there seems to be a shift in the understanding and approach to dance in terms of its involvement in social construction as researchers have refined past ideas. The choreographer is concerned with accommodating participant-performers from a wide range of contexts in the work. And attempts are made to allow participants to interact with the whole event in an immediate way by circumventing choreographic strategies. At the same time, they bridged choreographic thinking onto their surroundings, they choreograph people, immediate events, and weave together authentic subjects in the dynamic happenings of their environment. In such weaving, therefore, there is no "audience", only "participants", which also means that performance and physical skills are not required.

The dividing line between audience and performer is broken in Forsyth's collaboration with non-dancers and\or visual artists based on his choreographic methods. William Forsythe's work revolves around two core interests, namely Counterpoint and Unconscious Competence. He defines the former in this way: "a field of action in which the intermittent and irregular coincidence of attributes between organizational elements produces an ordered interplay" (Forsythe and Shaw, 2009, p. 1). For "unconscious competence", he explained that it points to what "your body will do automatically" (Forsythe, 2012). These two cores are reflected in his project Nowhere and Everywhere at the Same Time No. 2 (2013). This project is open to all of the public. They installed more than 400 pendulums on the ceiling and initiated 15 sections of rhythms, spatial juxtapositions and centrifugal force gradients of counterpoint, providing

participants with a complex labyrinth of constant metamorphosis. Thus, participants "are free to attempt a navigation this statistically unpredictable environment, but are requested to avoid coming in contact with any of the swinging pendulums. This task, which automatically initiates and alerts the spectators innate predictive faculties, produces a lively choreography of manifold and intricate avoidance strategies" (Forsythe, 2013).

Dana Caspersen, a leading collaborator and member of the renowned Frankfurt Ballet and Forsythe Company, argues that Forsyth's "practice of developing agile physical and mental response strategies" has influenced her work in conflict resolution (Caspersen, no date). She combines her expertise in conflict analysis and her forty years of choreographic experience into her own conflict resolution work. In the public 'action dialogue' she designed, participants are invited to enter a highly structured choreographic framework and use physical means to help people communicate. During this event, participants reflect on the various questions given and share their experiences and beliefs on issues ranging from immigration to violence to racism. They engage in actions such as standing, sitting, gesturing and walking in relation to sound and language in order to reflect and relate to issues that are important to them and their communities (Caspersen, no date). One of her projects, Knotunknot, for example, focuses on what people beliefs are, what their experiences are, and what the motion in their life is. She embodies people's different beliefs from a choreographic perspective: she has designed different physical zones for different positions, and people express the beliefs they hold through their choice of physical stance (Caspersen, 2015).

Michael Klien worked with William Forsythe to develop an avoiding strategy approach to choreography (both non-linear and distributed choreography) and improvisation in dance. This approach to choreography differs from the traditional choreographer's approach of pre-designing body movements. He regards choreography as a "wide-ranging metaphor" (LSC, 2021, p. 4). it is "not necessarily pre-planned in time and space, but describes the myriad relations and forces at play, that shape the way life unfolds" (LSC, 2021, p. 4). In 2012, he became the founder of the Institute for Social Choreography in Frankfurt. His name is thus often associated with 'social choreography'. He interprets that "the social choreography is a holistic practice originating from the field of dance seeking to unify organizational dynamics as held in the body, politics and social relations" (LSC, 2021, p. 4). In 2020 he launched The

Laboratory for Social Choreography at the Kenan Institute for Ethics at Duke University. It "is dedicated to fostering human relations that are unbound from our assumptions about mind, body, society and environment" (Klien, 2020). Klien's social choreography looks at the cultural aspects of the individual body in society and the relationship of each body to a particular culture. In the LSC proposal for 2021-2022, he proposes (LSC, 2021, p. 4):

> Social Choreography is concerned with the manifestation of truth on the level of the body, examining the constructed nature of our deepest assumptions and recognizing the embodied reality of our senses, each deeply entwined with, and developed according to, context-specific cultural evolutions. Hence humans across different epochs, cultures and generations move distinctively different in every aspect of everyday life, poignantly expressed in the dances they dance.

In a conversation between William Forsythe and Alva Noë, Noë argues that,

> Maybe we are looking for consciousness in the wrong place, maybe we should not think of it as something that happens inside of our heads and brains. Let's think of consciousness as something we do, enact, achieve, or perform……I cannot swim if there is no water. Its availability is part of that which enables me to be a swimmer and likewise the world around me and other people are part of what enable me to perform my experience (Noë, 2009).

Implicit in this dialogue is Noë's view of the construction of human action and perception in the environment, as he identifies it in *Action in Perception* (2004). He proposed "the enactive view" (Noë, 2004, p. 25), arguing that perception itself is the result of the subject's action in the environment, and that the dynamic cycle of sensorimotor in the interaction between the subject and the environment is an integral part of the content of perceptual experience (Noë, 2004, pp. 1-33).

It was the focus of the previous 100 years that people saw dance as an independent art form to be presented and viewed. The kind of dance with superior techniques that belongs to the audience became the habit that people held when they looked at dance. A century later, we are now beginning to see participants from a wide range of backgrounds in dance, showing their 'unable' 'inability' on stage. It is not those physical movements of beauty

that the viewer is used to seeing, but they are tiny things that literally grow from within and relate to their own kinesthetic perception. In parallel, it is possible to perceive that some questions are beginning to emerge in the reflections of dancers/choreographers: What can dance do? Can I go beyond the physical techniques I have? Can I translate my training into something else? Behind this is a series of questions about what art can do and, as Noë says in the conversation, "what philosophy can do" (Noë, 2009). In this context, therefore, consciousness becomes a movement, a concrete and perceptible solid, and dance becomes a way of thinking. Arguably this understanding is a central area of concern in the work of philosophers working in perception theory and dancers\choreographers who consider the social value of dance in the 21st century.

Appendix II

The Historic Review of Body Philosophy

The early challenge to Cartesian dualism

The seven-year-long personal correspondence between Descartes and Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia began with an exploration of the mind-body issue. In a letter to Descartes in 1643, Elizabeth raised the crucial question of how the mind and the object (the body) could causally interact with each other if their natures were positively different. She questioned, "how the soul of a human being (it being only a thinking substance) can determine the bodily spirits, in order to bring about voluntary actions" (Descartes, 2007, p. 62). A similar question was asked by Gassendi: "how can the soul move the body if it is in no way material, and how can it receive the forms of corporeal objects" (Descartes, 1985, p. 275).

Descartes introduced the concept of the unity of mind and body in response to the question of the interaction of mind and body raised by the Princess. In the first letter (21.5.1643) he sent back to Elizabeth, he declared that we have a basic concept of the "unity" of mind and body together, and that our concept of the power of the soul acting on the body, and our concept of the power of the body acting on the soul, is dependent on this concept, which is often called the unity of mind and body (Descartes, 1985, p.218). He distinguishes between two kinds of unity, namely, "the unity or identity of their nature" and the "unity of composition" (Descartes, 1985, p.285). In his view, reason and will are united by nature, while body and mind are merely united by composition (Descartes, 1985, p. 286). Descartes gives the example that our notions of shape and motion are different, "but nevertheless we clearly perceive that the same substance which is such that it is capable of being moved, and hence that that which has shape and that which is mobile are one and the same in virtue of a unity of nature" (Descartes, 1985, pp.285-286). For unity in composition, Descartes gives "bone and the flesh" as the example. He argues that because bones and flesh are completely different in nature, they can only be seen as a combinational unity. And the two are seen as unified only because the body with bones and the body with flesh are in the same body (Descartes, 1985, p.286). In the end, the mind-body connection is still a combination of two essentially different things that fit together in a single

bodily container, so that at its core it is still dualistic if we follow the sense of different elements in the first place.

Phenomenological description: complementary on intuiting-analyzing-describing

a.   Phenomenological Intuiting

For the phenomenologist, any quest for knowledge of phenomena begins with an immediate intuition of the phenomenon, rather than any prejudice, expectation or reflection. This immediate intuition is pre-reflective. That is, it emerges without any preconceived explanations or beliefs (Sheets-Johnstone, 2015, p. 9). If this understanding is placed on the body as an object, the immediate intuition emphasized here is not that of a body with bones, muscles, tendons, joints, and nerves in the anatomical or scientific sense, because there is no knowledge of these things and their number and position in our immediate experience (Spiegelberg, 1971, p.662). It is therefore able to realise that the pre-reflexivity emphasised by intuition brings one naturally into attention to the subtle perceptions of the body, making it possible to think from the body.

According to Spielberg, there is rarely any instruction in intuition other than metaphorical words like open your eyes, don't close your eyes, don't cover your eyes, and listen while you look. But intuition is precisely a demanding operation that requires a high degree of mental concentration on the object being intuited, without being so assimilated to it that one can no longer observe it critically. At the same time, it is difficult because it is insensitive to certain nuances of phenomena as well as over-sensitive (Spiegelberg, 1971, pp. 659-660).

In his introduction to intuition, Spielberg gives an example of intuiting "force" (Spiegelberg, 1971, pp. 660-666). In his view, there are two situations that occur in our bodies that clearly show force. One situation is the active use of our own force, the other is when we are subjected to an external force (Spiegelberg, 1971, p.662). In the first case, the active experience of force, there are two stages, the first of which can be called force "mobilization" (a state of readiness. Spiegelberg, 1971, p.662) and the second of which is the "released" of force (a response to a signal. Spiegelberg, 1971, p. 663). In preparation for action, the body is filled with a dynamic force and a unique flow of change occurs internally. When the mobilized force is released, changes occur not only in the body posture but also in the internal perception, which is

summarised as "kinesthetic" (Spiegelberg, 1971, p.663) and which occurs simultaneously with the body posture. Markedly, he refers to the possibility of maintaining some reserves after our mobilised forces have been released; or of further mobilization through more or less effort, often by replenishing these reserves in a supply known as the "second wind" (Spiegelberg, 1971, p.663). In the second case, the passive experience of force, our body is attacked or assaulted by an external force. When our whole body is driven by this force, the body feels a sudden vibration. This vibration is different from the experience of a sudden spasm inside the body. When the body is struck by such a blow and becomes the bearer of such a force, the body is aware that it is always different from us, but at the same time the part of the body that is attacked becomes the main area where the force is carried (Spiegelberg, 1971, pp.663-664).

      b.   Phenomenological Analyzing

The analytical task of phenomenology is to identify the elements and structure of the phenomena obtained by intuition; it involves distinguishing between the components of phenomena and examining their relationships and connections with adjacent phenomena (Spiegelberg, 1971, pp. 669-670). Sheets-Johnstone argues that descriptive analysis of dance is an approach that does not break up the totality of the dance into externally related units, but instead focuses repeatedly on the totality of the work (Sheets-Johnstone, 2015, p.5). Spielberg goes on to analyze the experience of force from the point of view of phenomenological analyzing: when force penetrates our mobilized body and then is released from it, or when force invades the body from the outside, force constitutes a continuum which cannot be distinguished into individual parts and individual structures of parts. Rather, it penetrates as a whole into a certain area of the phenomenal body - for example, our arms or legs in a particular posture. Thus, force fills the arms universally and is definitely not present only in their frontal parts, i.e., in the various nerves and muscles of different natures identified by anatomists (Spiegelberg, 1971, p.671).

   At the same time, Sheets-Johnstone's point of view can be used as a complement to a phenomenological attitude to analyze. She sees the phenomenological analysis of movement as first and foremost a description of movement as it is lived, rather than dissected in a laboratory, recorded by an observer and presented in a third-person narrative (Sheets-Johnstone, 2015, xxxiii). It is through experiential analysis that one begins to realise and appreciate the

significance of creating time and space, rather than using them as containers for movement (Sheets-Johnstone, 2015, xxxiii).Also, any true phenomenological analysis is not for the sake of argument but for the sake of demonstration, that is, not to support a certain point of view or state of affairs, but to discover and elucidate the essential nature or character of a phenomenon through a precise and rigorous method (Sheets-Johnstone, 2015, xxv).

      c.   Phenomenological Describing

Spielberg argues that phenomenological descriptions are always nothing more than selective descriptions, since it is impossible to exhaust all the features of any phenomenon or object, especially the relational ones (Spiegelberg, 1971, p.673). Phenomenological descriptions thus force us to concentrate on the primary or defining properties of phenomena and draw away from those that are not essential (Spiegelberg, 197, p. 673). In this regard, the description is already an examination of the essence.

In the case of dance, the lived experience of it cannot be reduced to the verbal equivalence. The most we can say is that the pure form of dance itself expresses a purely sensory phenomenon. The most we can do is to describe how the expressive properties of a particular dance phenomenon are expressed in its form (Sheets-Johnstone, 2015, p. 67).

It is important to note that phenomenological descriptions are ones that are based on intuitive experience. Sheets-Johnstone recognises that for dance, whether from the perspective of the dancer, choreographer or critic, researcher or educator, the immediate experience of movement is the foundation of dance. Phenomenological describing by its very nature provides access not only to the immediate experience of movement, but to do so in such a way that neither the integrity nor the quality or structure of the experience is compromised (Sheets-Johnstone, 2015, xxxiii).

Embody in Phenomenology

Husserl's understanding of embodiment emphasises the individual's sense of self-being. Every perceiving consciousness has this peculiarity, that it is the consciousness of the embodied (leibhaftigen) self-presence of an individual object (Husserl, 2012, p. 73). In this sense, Husserl further discusses perception: "perception in the normal sense of the word does not only indicate generally that this or that thing appears to the Ego in embodied presence, but that the Ego is

aware of the appearing thing, grasps it as really being there, and posits it" (Husserl, 2012, p. 231).

In Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, embodiment goes beyond what is considered in the ordinary sense of 'appearance being manifest'. It relates to what phenomenology calls the immediacy and continuity of intuition, while emphasising the intertwined relationship between the 'I' and the world around the 'I' embodied in a dynamic process of continuity. Merleau-Ponty argues that the error of intellectualism is that it separates the intellect itself from the material that realizes it, trying to make it dependent only on itself (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p.126). This leads that "error, illness, madness, and, in short, embodiment – is reduced to the status of a mere appearance" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p.126). For the body, again, it cannot be defined solely by its own existence. "So long as the body is defined through existence in itself, it functions uniformly as a mechanism; so long as the soul is defined by pure existence for itself, it will only know objects laid out in front of it" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p.125). Thus, the body, the sensory organs, the mental functions contribute to a place where my experience is interwoven with many (rather than a single) causalities (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p.86). Merleau-Ponty further identifies that what makes up the rhythm of life is not the cause of what I choose to be, "but rather have their condition in the banal milieu that surrounds me" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p.86). He concludes that "I engage myself with my body among things, they coexist with me insofar as I am an embodied subject, and this life among things has nothing in common with the construction of scientific objects" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p.191).

The Concept of Body in Ethics from Spinoza to Deleuze

Baruch Spinoza's conception of the body is rooted in his pantheistic philosophy, viewing the body as an extension of thought rather than an entity in opposition to it (Spinoza, 1996). In *Ethics*, Spinoza introduces the well-known theory of "parallelism," positing that body and mind are two aspects of the same existence (Deleuze, 1988). He asserts that the human body is a "capacity" (conatus), an intrinsic inclination to maintain and enhance its existence (Bennett, 1984). In Spinoza's ethical framework, the body is not merely a passive object subject to external influences but rather an active and creative subject. Spinoza's understanding of affects is central to his conception of the body. He believes that affects are the powers arising from the interplay of body and mind, capable of enhancing or diminishing a person's state of existence

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(Lloyd, 1994). Consequently, Spinoza argues that understanding and managing affects are key to achieving personal freedom and happiness (Sharp, 2011). This viewpoint has influenced many thinkers, particularly Deleuze.

Gilles Deleuze's understanding of the body is significantly shaped by Spinoza, yet he further develops this theory through the lenses of Nietzsche and Bergson. In *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, Deleuze points out that Spinoza's conception of the body is "the core of ethics" because it emphasizes the capabilities and actions of the body (Deleuze, 1988). Deleuze perceives the body as a collective of multiple forces, with its state of existence and ethical condition defined through interactions with external forces (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Deleuze introduces the concept of "becoming" to explain how the body changes and evolves in different power relations. He posits that the body is not a fixed entity but is in a constant state of change and flow (Deleuze, 1995). This "becoming" occurs not only at the physical level but also encompasses the spiritual and emotional dimensions, making Deleuze's ethics an embrace of "diversity" (Patton, 1996).

Although both thinkers regard the body as central to agency and action, their focal points differ. Spinoza emphasizes how the body can achieve self-perfection through rational control of emotions, while Deleuze is more concerned with how the body can transcend established identities and boundaries through "becoming" (Smith, 2007). Spinoza's conception of the body has a rationalistic tendency in ethics, while Deleuze leans towards a non-normative, decentralized ethical view (Hardt, 1993). Nonetheless, both agree that the body is not merely a passive material vessel but the core of ethical subjectivity. In their philosophies, the body does not passively receive external influences but continuously generates new states of existence through interactions with the environment (Massumi, 1992). This generation includes not only the physical realm but also encompasses emotional and intellectual dimensions, showcasing the rich potential of the body in ethical life.

Many contemporary scholars have further explored Spinoza and Deleuze's views on the body. Braidotti (2006) points out that Deleuze's conception of the body has significant implications for contemporary feminism, as it emphasizes the fluidity and diversity of subjects. Marks (2000) argues that Deleuze's concept of "becoming" is particularly important in discussions of posthumanism, as it provides a new way of understanding human and non-

human relationships. Additionally, Smith and Protevi (2012) suggest that by studying Deleuze's reconstruction of Spinoza's notion of the body, we can better understand the role of emotions in contemporary ethical considerations. They contend that in a globalized and highly digitized context, the body is no longer a closed system but an open "ecological entity" that interacts with the external world.

The Biopolitical Body from Foucault to Agamben

Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben share a close theoretical connection regarding the concept of the body, both exploring how power shapes and controls individual bodies from the perspective of biopolitics. However, their theories exhibit distinct characteristics: Foucault focuses on how modern power mechanisms discipline and manage bodies, whereas Agamben examines how sovereign power reduces bodies to "bare life."

In the 1970s, Foucault introduced the concept of "disciplinary society," investigating how modern society controls individual bodies through surveillance, discipline, and punishment systems. In *Discipline and Punish*, he points out that institutions like prisons, schools, and factories exert "micro-powers" on individuals, making bodies the targets of power (Foucault, 1977). For Foucault, the body is not only the target of power but also the domain in which power operates; it creates a ubiquitous network of control through what he calls the "political anatomy of the body" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982).

In his later works, particularly *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault introduces the concept of "biopolitics," describing how modern states manage collective bodies through public health, population policies, and racial classifications (Foucault, 1978). Biopolitics links individual bodies to the health and safety of the collective, with the state consolidating power by managing life (biopower). In this manner, Foucault illustrates the central role of the body in modern political systems and highlights the profound impact of biopolitics on individual freedom (Dean, 2010).

Agamben further develops the concept of biopolitics based on Foucault's work. In *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, he argues that "bare life" refers to a state of existence stripped of political rights, where life merely survives at a biological level, devoid of social and

political significance (Agamben, 1998). He posits that modern sovereign power reduces individuals to bare life, placing their bodies under extreme control by power. This state of bare life can be observed in extreme cases like concentration camps and refugee camps, where individuals are reduced to "sacrificial beings" completely dependent on sovereign power's decisions (Esposito, 2008).

Agamben historicizes the concept of bare life through an exploration of the ancient Greek "sacred man" (homo sacer), asserting that bare life is not a product of modern politics but rather a power operation that has existed since ancient times (Agamben, 1998). In his view, while Foucault's biopolitics reveals how modern power manages life, it fails to fully address how sovereign power strips individuals of their political identities, rendering them bare life (Zartaloudis, 2010). Agamben's uniqueness lies in demonstrating how, when stripped of all political identities, the state of the individual's body becomes the ultimate object of power.

Although Foucault and Agamben's conceptions of the body overlap significantly, they also present notable differences. First, Foucault focuses on how power shapes individual bodies through disciplinary techniques at the micro level. He emphasizes that power does not emanate from a singular sovereign authority but operates through a pervasive network (Gros, 2005). In contrast, Agamben concentrates on the mechanisms of sovereign power, illustrating how individuals are stripped of political identities, becoming bare life. He argues that sovereign power has not disappeared in modern society but continues to manifest its strength through the form of bare life (Lemke, 2011).

Second, Foucault's biopolitics focuses on how modern governments manage populations, incorporating individual bodies into statistical and regulatory systems, whereas Agamben is more concerned with how individuals are reduced to pure biological existence in the face of sovereign power. Agamben criticizes Foucault for not sufficiently recognizing the extreme deprivation of individuals by sovereign power, tending instead to focus on the micro-operations of modern governance (Agamben, 2005).

Some scholars argue that both Foucault and Agamben's focus on the body may overlook the potential for individual agency and resistance. For instance, Nancy (2000) notes that while Foucault's biopolitical framework reveals how power operates, it fails to adequately consider the body as a potential subject of resistance. Similarly, Hardt and Negri (2000) argue that

Agamben's focus on bare life may be overly pessimistic, neglecting individual resistance and creativity within the context of globalized capitalism.

Nevertheless, the body concepts of Foucault and Agamben have profoundly influenced modern philosophy and social sciences. Their theories provide crucial analytical tools for understanding the mechanisms of body control within modern power systems and have sparked widespread discussions regarding bodily politics, identity, and ethics.

Appendix III

Investigation of Migrant Workers' Theatre in China

With the rapid acceleration of urbanization in China, millions of migrant workers have become the backbone of urban construction. These workers leave their hometowns to take low-income jobs in cities, becoming an integral part of urban development. However, despite their significant contributions to the urbanization process, they face a series of challenges, including social exclusion, identity crises, and a lack of spiritual and cultural life. In recent years, theatre arts have begun to intervene in the lives of migrant workers as a form of social engagement, attempting to express their experiences and hardships through artistic creation and performance while providing a platform for their voices. This literature review will explore existing research on theatre arts for migrant workers in China, analyzing its impact on social culture, education, and psychological aspects.

Ways Theatre Arts Intervene in Public Life in China

Participatory theatre originated in the 1960s in Western theatre movements, particularly the Theatre of the Oppressed created by Augusto Boal. Boal's theory posits that the audience should not merely be passive recipients but actively participate in the theatre's creative process, becoming "spect-actors"—both audience and performers. This form of theatre aims to stimulate social change and personal awakening by encouraging audience engagement with the story's context, questioning social power structures and individual social roles. The concept of participatory theatre has since been promoted globally, with various cultural and social backgrounds adapting and innovating it locally.

The rise of participatory theatre in China can be traced back to the cultural revival period after the economic reforms, especially after 2000. With the transformation of social structures and the opening of the cultural market, more artistic forms began to enter China, including experimental theatre and community drama. Against this backdrop, participatory theatre gradually came into the view of Chinese artists and developed through localized practices and promotion. As Chinese society rapidly modernizes, conflicts between individual and collective

identities, and between tradition and modernity, have become increasingly evident. Sociologist Wang Mingming (2005) noted that Chinese society is undergoing a complex process of identity formation, where the tension between individual self-awareness and social norms has fueled the demand for multicultural expression. Participatory theatre, emphasizing individual participation and social interaction, perfectly aligns with the need for self-expression and exploration of social relationships during this period. Additionally, the development of participatory theatre in China is closely linked to the rise of community theatre and the public art movement. Public art advocates integrating art into daily life, promoting social interaction and cultural sharing through community cooperation and participation. Li Hua (2017) pointed out that the emergence of community theatre has provided fertile ground for participatory theatre, as community theatre essentially emphasizes residents' participation and interaction, particularly through drama to explore social issues within communities.

The rise of participatory theatre is also closely tied to recent educational reforms in China. The traditional education model in China has focused on knowledge transmission and examinations, but in recent years, more schools and educational institutions have begun to emphasize quality education, focusing on nurturing students' creativity, critical thinking, and social participation skills. As a tool to promote comprehensive student development through theatrical experience, participatory theatre has gained traction in this context. According to Wei Dedong (2016), participatory theatre has gradually been integrated into the Chinese education system, especially in drama education in primary and secondary schools, helping students develop self-expression skills while fostering a sense of social responsibility.

Case Studies in Workers' Theatre

1. The Workers' Art Troupe

Founded in 2002, the Workers' Art Troupe is dedicated to reflecting the living conditions and psychological states of migrant workers through drama, music, and other art forms (Liu, 2013). Representative works such as "Song of the Workers" and "Pneumoconiosis" have not only garnered widespread attention on domestic and international stages but have also prompted the public and policymakers to pay attention to migrant workers' rights. "Song of the Workers" is one of the troupe's signature pieces, expressing the struggles and hopes of migrant workers striving in cities through simple and direct lyrics and melodies. The creation of this

work stemmed from the real dilemmas faced by many migrant workers—long working hours, low wages, harsh working environments, and estrangement from their hometowns and families. The songs in the play have become a "voice of the workers," conveying calls for dignity and rights through artistic expression. This piece resonates with workers and has sparked societal attention to migrant workers' rights through multiple performances in domestic and international theatres.

"Pneumoconiosis" is another socially significant work by the Workers' Art Troupe that directly addresses common occupational health issues among migrant workers. Pneumoconiosis is a chronic disease caused by long-term exposure to harmful dust, commonly affecting miners and workers during China's industrialization. This drama presents workers' personal experiences, realistically depicting how they confront the dual torment of physical and psychological suffering after falling ill, as well as the severe realities of inadequate medical resources and lack of injury protection. Through live performances and interactions, the Workers' Art Troupe not only showcases the helplessness and hardships faced by workers but also advances public calls for legal assistance and medical support for those suffering from occupational diseases.

The Workers' Art Troupe typically employs a non-professional performance style, with many troupe members being ordinary workers without formal theatre training. This non-professional approach often makes the works more authentic and relatable, relying more on workers' genuine narratives and life portrayals rather than lavish sets and complex lighting designs. For example, in "Song of the Workers," the actors often engage directly with the audience, inviting them to participate in performances, thereby bridging the gap between workers and the audience. Domestically, the Workers' Art Troupe's works have also sparked social and policy responses. For instance, following performances of "Pneumoconiosis," media and public attention have pushed some local governments to enhance medical protection and compensation for pneumoconiosis patients. The troupe has collaborated with several NGOs to conduct legal aid seminars, helping workers understand their rights and using theatre to disseminate legal knowledge. The Workers' Art Troupe is not merely a group of performers but also a catalyst for social change.

2. Caotai Ban

Caotai Ban, which began its activities in the spring of 2005 under the leadership of writer and theatre director Zhao Chuan, focuses on staging contemporary theatre that addresses marginal yet socially significant issues. Over more than a decade, Caotai Ban has garnered increasing attention and influence. The members encourage ordinary people to engage in theatre and creation, emphasizing awareness of issues and the relationship between drama and surrounding life. They meet weekly to discuss topics, hold performance workshops, and engage in individual and collective creative activities, actively expanding the aesthetic imagination of art and society. Over the years, they have utilized various venues to conduct non-profit rehearsals, discussions, and host events like "Cultural Stations," making their theatre a grassroots gathering place for diverse groups, continually shaping fluid public spaces. Caotai Ban's works have been performed in numerous cities across China and abroad.

One of their collective creations, "The World Factory," runs for 80 minutes. It employs an innovative documentary theatre format to recount the timeline, space, and changes of the world factory from its origins in Europe to its current development in China; it intertwines the personal growth experience of a young person involved in the creation of this play. "The World Factory" was inspired by Zhao Chuan's visit to Manchester, UK, in 2009, which is one of the industrial revolution's strongholds and the first city to be known as the "world factory." The rise of the textile industry in 19th-century Manchester and the accompanying revolutionary thoughts and social movements provide a starting point and reflection for exploring the rapid changes in contemporary China. From the Industrial Revolution two centuries ago to the present, the world has undergone countless transformations; yet today, people continue to perpetuate the tragic history of the "world factory" in production, consumption, and development. In the face of historical opportunities and the arrival of technological innovations, can workers seize their destinies? How should the younger generation confront this difficult topic that has persisted for two centuries? The creation and preparation of this play took four years, during which Zhao Chuan visited and engaged in dialogues, planning workshops and discussion activities. The content was continually developed and accumulated during collective creation and rehearsals that began in 2014. Since then, "The World Factory" and "Apples and the Moon" have been performed in over ten cities, leading to vibrant discussions after performances.

Ethical Issues in Community Theatre

One key ethical issue is how to avoid the commodification and romanticization of migrant workers' lives. Artistic works about migrant workers often emphasize their suffering, struggles, and tragic lives, which can sometimes simplify their actual circumstances into an emotional commodity. Schneider (2006) critiques social theatre, noting that audiences often tend to consume these "marginalized stories" to attain a sense of sympathy, ultimately failing to grasp the workers' complex situations and deep-seated structural issues. Such romanticized narratives not only risk reducing workers' lives to a "tragic symbol" but may also overlook the multifaceted nature of their daily lives and their real struggles within different social contexts. Moreover, scholar Bharucha (2014) points out that in some worker theatre projects in developing countries, international audiences and Western sponsors often prefer to support those narratives that evoke emotional resonance, rather than encourage explorations of the complexities and diversities of workers' lives. This pressure can lead to artistic creations that must cater to Western audiences' expectations, further exacerbating the commodification and stereotyping of workers' lives.

The sustainability of artistic projects is another significant challenge faced by participatory theatre and worker communities. Scholar Thompson (2009) discusses that many participatory art projects often lose momentum quickly due to lack of funding support or waning interest from artists, making them mere short-term, one-off performances that fail to provide long-term social benefits to worker communities. Particularly in the absence of a stable financial model and sustained creative engagement, many theatre projects become vulnerable to external pressures and limitations, resulting in incomplete narratives or superficial artistic works that do not fully engage with the lived experiences of workers. To ensure these projects' sustainability and integrity, fostering partnerships between local communities, government organizations, and NGOs is crucial, alongside securing stable funding and support for the long-term development of community theatre.

Another essential ethical issue in participatory theatre is how to empower participants and grant them agency in the creative process. Participatory theatre aims to provide a platform for marginalized voices, but it must also ensure that these voices are genuinely heard and represented rather than manipulated or distorted by artists or organizers. Scholar Ewen (2007)

emphasizes that artists and facilitators must be cautious about power dynamics within collaborative processes and work to establish equitable relationships with participants, enabling them to express their narratives freely and authentically. Without careful consideration of these ethical aspects, theatre projects risk becoming mere spectacles that exploit the participants' experiences rather than facilitating genuine social dialogue and change.

The emergence of migrant workers' theatre in China marks a significant intersection between art and social justice. It has become a powerful medium for addressing social inequality and fostering dialogue about marginalized communities. While participatory theatre faces challenges such as commodification and sustainability, its potential to empower migrant workers and engage audiences is profound. By continuing to critically engage with these ethical issues and refining methodologies to ensure authentic participation, migrant workers' theatre can further contribute to social change and community resilience in China.

Appendix IV Publications, Presentations, and Creative Works Based on the Doctoral Research

- **Wang, L. (2023).** *The Handbook of Dance Movement Analysis: Ballroom Dance.* Shanghai: Shanghai Conservatory of Music Press. ISBN: 978-7-5566-0814-0. This textbook analyzes the movement styles of ballroom dance and the injury characteristics of dancers from the perspectives of body, space, time, and force. It is tailored to provide self-education methods and tools for ballroom dance teachers, dancers, and choreographers. The content of Chapter 8 in my doctoral dissertation is based on this textbook.

- **Wang, L. (Trans.) (2025).** *Body Space Expression: The Development of Rudolf Laban's Concepts of Movement and Dance.* Jinan: Shandong University Press. ISBN: 978-7-5607-6460 3. This is the Chinese translation of Vera Maletic's 1987 work *Body Space Expression: The Development of Rudolf Laban's Concepts of Movement and Dance*, originally published by De Gruyter. The first edition was released in 2019, and the reprint is in 2025. This book comprehensively organizes the core and branches of Laban's system, as well as its derived frameworks, and provides in-depth interpretations using a wealth of archival materials. It has been frequently cited in my doctoral dissertation.

- **Dwelling in the Body**
  A Documentary Film by the Author

  This documentary captures the creative journey and everyday lives of migrant domestic workers in Beijing as they participate in a community-based dance theatre project. Filmed and directed by the author, the work explores how marginalized individuals negotiate identity, agency, and belonging through embodied artistic expression. By following the participants from rehearsals to performances and into their domestic

environments, the film offers an intimate lens on the intersections between art-making, urban mobility, and social welfare within the context of China's internal migration. It also reflects on how dance can serve as a medium of self-articulation and community formation in the face of precarity.

- **Applying Phenomenological Methods in Intercultural Choreographic Research:** *ArtsCross 2022*

  In 2022 ArtsCross cross-cultural choreographic research project hosted by Hong Kong SWEAT Dance Festival, the author presented a report on the application of phenomenological interview and descriptive methodology in dance research. Representing the Taipei scholars, the presentation explored how embodied experiences and dancers' subjective narratives could be accessed and analyzed through phenomenological approaches, contributing to the understanding of intercultural creative processes and choreographic thinking.

- **Decentralised Choreography and Movement Approaches** *Presented at the Singapore International Dance Festival, 2024*

  This presentation introduced key findings from a collaborative project with migrant domestic workers in Beijing, focusing on inclusive and participatory choreographic practices. By decentralising authorship in the creative process, the project challenged traditional hierarchies in dance-making and emphasized the role of bodily experience and collective authorship in movement research. The work demonstrated how alternative movement methods can empower marginalized groups and foster new models of community engagement through dance.

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