

Primitive Virtualities and Historical Actualisations in the Dance of Pina Bausch. For a Sociology of the Archetype

Linda De Feo ^a

Abstract

This reflection is founded upon the indissoluble connection between archetypal transcendence and archetypal immanence. It is hypothesized that the archetypes of the collective unconscious, identified by Carl Gustav Jung, can be historicized and that, therefore, their unfolding in the world can be the object of sociological analysis. This examination focuses on archetypal “formulas”, defined as “historical” (Jung, 1968, p. 5), which coincide with choreographic expressions. The focus will be on one of the effects of the development of the Western Terpsichorean model. The latter originated in the vital core of the dithyrambic chorus, the place of the first imaginative manifestation of the emancipation of the human subject from *animalitas* (Nietzsche, 2012). An ideal thread connects the gestures of the chorus members disguised as satyrs, who inherit the *primordial scream*, to the subsequent articulations of the history of dance. That scream resonates in all the artistic turning points that reflect the epochal junctures marked by the crisis of value systems. From such traumas emerges the reactivation of archetypal cores. This paper aims to highlight the importance of the conjunctions between aesthetic inspiration and analytical intent promoted by *Tanztheater*, founded in the seventies of the twentieth century and following the trail already traced by the German expressionist dance of the twenties. Particular attention is dedicated to the work of an influential figure in dance theater, Pina Bausch, and her transposition of archetypal elements into the rhythm of collective, erotic, *political*, and sacred dance rituals. The choreographer revolutionises academic codifications by creating figurations in which dancers mime and interpret the ordinariness of everyday movements. She captures the contradictions generated in individuals and society by the archetypal polarisation between meaning and meaninglessness, pacification and conflict, good and evil, life and death, antinomies that will find

^a University of Naples Federico II, Naples, Italy.

Corresponding author:
Linda De Feo
E-mail: linda.defeo@unina.it

Received: 16 September 2025
Accepted: 20 November 2025
Published: 13 March 2026



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their full expression in the subsequent traumas represented by the post-organic transgressions of the performance.

Keywords: archetype, imaginary, Pina Bausch, body, contemporary dance.

1. Introduction. Rewriting the world

Criticism addressed at Jungian theory of archetypes regarding their alleged metaphysical nature is unfounded. Instead, it is considered appropriate to hypothesise that the archetypal dimension is constantly expressed throughout History, offering itself as a legitimate subject of study in the field of sociology. The intention of the paper is to reject purely essentialist interpretations, which are dysfunctional, and rather attempt to examine particular turning points in social change, animated by the interplay between the rational and the non-rational, the occult and the manifest, the visible and the invisible.

The concept of the archetype in Carl Gustav Jung has long appeared contaminated by remnants of Freudian psychoanalysis. According to Sigmund Freud, the unconscious, a “place” where “forgotten and repressed contents are collected”, is endowed with an exclusively personal character, despite the existence of “its archaic and mythological thought-forms” (Jung, 1968, p. 3). Jungian position is fully expressed in the *Introduction* to the first edition of a 1934 work, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, republished in 1954, in which the author, dwelling on the archetypal dimension of psychic life, conceives the unconscious as a layered structure. The personal unconscious represents the superficial dimension while the collective unconscious is a “region of the psyche”, meaning that it is “neither a speculative nor a philosophical but an empirical matter” (Jung, 1968, p. 44). If “the contents of the personal unconscious are above all the affectively toned complexes”, which are part of the private sphere of psychic life, the archetypes constitute instead the “contents” of the “collective unconscious”, which is “identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in everyone of us” (Jung, 1968, pp. 3-4).

The constant existence of the archetypes in society is due to their being handed down from one generation to the next and their reappearance in the imaginative universe of the inhabitants of all times and places on the planet. Establishing an uninterrupted dialectic with the succession of epochs, fundamental archetypes identified by Jung, such as the Animus, the Anima, the Shadow, and the Self, take shape, depending on historical constellations, in a series of representations with heterogeneous profiles. Through processes of

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symbolic, allegorical, metaphorical elaboration, the archetypes, which are links of indefinite virtuality, tend to unfold in actualised configurations. Being both principle and structure, the archetypal matrix presents itself as a simultaneity of repetition and difference, re-signifying, from time to time, the *locus* of its own occurrence and producing an infinite series of narratives.

At the centre of this reflection is the inseparability of the knot between archetypal transcendence and archetypal immanence as it is intertwined in dance, a pure “figuration of the possible” (Gasparotti, 2008) in perpetual metamorphosis, the moving limit of artistic bodily dynamism, which never exhausts its potential. A set of iconic operations in the history of ideas, choreography, which is knowledge experienced through the body, stages basic aspects of social reality. Artists who are *physiologically* sensitive to change reveal a marked ability to react to the categorical structures of the spirit of the time, constructing a contemporaneity (Augé, 2008) marked by reference to the past, rooted in the present and recalling the future.

“There are as many archetypes as there are typical situations” (Jung, 1968, p. 48). During the coincidence of particular sets of social conditions, certain archetypal motifs can manifest themselves. From conditions of possibility, they become realised forms, always ambivalent, constantly ready to show themselves in their beneficial or malefic versions. The archetypal “formulas” – defined as “historical” by Jung (Jung, 1968, p. 5) – are of interest here. In the present reflection, they coincide with one of the precipitates of the unfolding of the Western terpsichorean art model. The latter originated in the vital nucleus of the dithyramb, sung by the dancing chorus in honour of Dionysus, the site of the first manifestation on the imaginative plane of the definitive sortie of the human subject from the obscure *animalitas* (Nietzsche, 2012). An ideal thread links the gestures of the members of the chorus disguised as satyrs, who inherit the *primordial* scream, to the subsequent articulations in the history of dance. That shout echoes, in a metaphorical sense, especially during dramatic epochal turning points and their artistic reverberations, marked by the lacerations of value systems that generate forms of reactivation of archetypal cores.

Since the dawn of the 20th century, and especially after the Second World War, gestural aberrations and moments of improvisation appeared in the choreographic scores, manifestations of the traumas suffered by humanity in conflict. An undoubtedly interesting phenomenon, in this regard, is the *Tanztheater*, founded in the seventies of the twentieth century. It followed the pathway already traced by the German expressionist dance of the twenties, whose poetics was linked to the theories of Rudolf Laban and his pupil Mary Wigman. Circumscribed to a specific geo-cultural area and established thanks to the German artists Reinhild Hoffmann, Susanne Linke, Gerhard Bohner and Hans Kresnik, the *Tanztheater* spread to other European and American contexts.

The themes addressed by this aesthetic movement in the Seventies and Eighties were inspired by Expressionism. The forms created were linked to the American avant-garde, the happening, the Living Theatre, Jerzy Grotowski's laboratory theatre, and the perceptual frontiers expanded by Bob Wilson and Meredith Monk. Particular attention is devoted here to some works choreographed by Pina Bausch, an eminent author of German dance theatre and a leading figure on the international scene, who re-elaborated the set of motifs characterising *Ausdruckstanz*, a dance of expression developed in the climate in which the *Jugendstil* movement and the historical avant-gardes were fully established¹.

The choreographer attests to the oscillation of the imagination between discourse and anti-discourse, between thought and anti-thought. She traces the auroral motion that emerged from the ancient darkness of the ever-resurgent *ingens sylva* and retraces the path of the Ego, who identifies itself, differentiating itself from the unconscious while remaining bound to it.

The energy of *physis* penetrates the fusion of the dreamlike realms and everyday life, reconnecting Bausch's characters to an ancestral wildness, recognising in dance an ancient ritual, an inexhaustible source of beginnings. The language of the body generates obsessive decomposed movements and scattered uncoordinated steps, that struggle to reorganize, depicting the dramatic transit of disoriented figures faced with the horrors of the "short century" (Hobsbawm, 1994), and the devastating repercussions of war.

Bausch stages a body that takes on psychological and, at times, psychopathological relevance, with its multiple alterations. A thoughtful desire to scrutinise the hidden implications of interiority moves the tormented gaze of the author, who, with brilliant mastery, seems to carve and sculpt the dancing bodies in their mutual contact. A gaze *born* in a West that, since the end of the sixties of last century, has been *contaminated* by Eastern philosophy, a mutation that leads to emphasise the centrality of the body and its care, as well as the intuition that certain modes of contact exert a real impact on the physical and spiritual state of health of the "person" (Secondulfo, 2009a, p. 9). A gaze that comprehends the emerging features of the metamorphoses in progress, through which the choreographer processes data socially stored in memory, in a non-

¹ Born in Solingen in 1940, Pina Bausch died in Berlin in 2009. After studying at the Folkwang-Hochschule in Essen, she danced with the Folkwang-Ballet under Kurt Jooss. She moved to the USA and later returned to Essen to direct the Folkwang-Ballet. In 1973, she founded the *Tanztheater in Wuppertal*, of which she became the director. Her experimental dance gave rise to creations that were co-produced with major international theatre organisations.

formalised action, and achieves the point of coincidence between the image and the imagination (Morin, 1956), drawing her own trajectories on the terrain of a *living culture*.

In the context of the process of aesthetic criticism, initiated between the end of the 19th century and the first half of the following century by various scholars and artists, such as François Delsarte, Émile Jaques Dalcroze and Paul Valéry, questions concerning the role of dance in society had already been raised. This intellectual “movement”, considered “revolutionary”, intended to emphasise the immediacy of body language, welding together the categorisations that for centuries had distanced the body from its sacral dimension. Bausch’s theatrical events, sumptuous evocations of the “omnipresent immensity” (Sala Grau, 2017, p. 80), contrasting the dichotomous Western epistemological model, pander to the founding principles of that Gnostic-type spiritual orientation, acquired by Eastern culture (Secondulfo, 2009a, p. 10), namely making the abstract concrete, binding the particular to the universal, and “venerating the invisible through the visible” (Sala Grau, 2017, p. 80).

The present sociological-cultural examination is based on the use of a historiographic perspective, in order to identify in the theatrical intersection of relevant themes – the centrality of the collective, both conscious and unconscious, the coexistence of irreconcilable antitheses, the perpetual redelineation of identity physiognomies - the “aesthetic mirroring” (Lukács, 1971) of the stable although changeable presence of vibrant archetypal tensions, underlying the incessant work of imaginative rewriting and rereading of the world.

2. Perceptual *analogia*

The imaginary is a set of representations. These images can be mental or concretised in both visual and sound works (Wunenburger, 2003). The imaginary is the manifest result, “formalisé aux niveaux individuel et collectif” (Dubois, 1985, p. 17), of latent nuclei of psychic energy, which are to be identified with one of the fundamental semantic levels of the archetypal dimension (Jung, 1968). The imaginative encyclopaedia is marked by a dynamism tending to construct a coherent complex of forms and contents. It consists of both memorised and autopoietic images (Wunenburger, 2003). If, therefore, on the one hand this heritage contains the set of mnemonic traces, sedimented in the different civilisations (Védrine, 1990, p. 10), on the other hand it consists of insurgent elements, animated by the social context and at the

same time propelling centres that exert their own influence on reality (Koyré, 1971, pp. 96-99).

The evocation of images that reproduce the unconscious world is enabled through the symbolic universe. What is “inaccessible to observation and reasoning”, buried in the depths of socio-cultural existence, is thus “brought to light” (Turner, 1982) with the attribution of meaning to perceptual *analoga*, such as shapes, colours and sounds. In dance, the *analogon* is the body itself, which, being prior to language and, in general, to any formalisation, does not require communicative mediation. It is an anticipation of operations such as signification and naming (Lisi, 1999, pp. 121-133). Both gestures are defined as abstract, which demonstrate virtuosity and technique, and gestures defined as representative, which denote dramatic actions, constitute cultural strategies (Foster, 1996). The latter are given as recurrences of a “referral” and, as such, are *symbols* of a “common root of meaning” (Melchiorre, 1991, p. 11).

The affirmation of the conception of the subject as the union of *res extensa* and *res cogitans* was fostered by the development in the human sciences of a holistic vision, freed from Neoplatonic and Christian Manichaeism. This vision produced repercussions in the conception of choreography, which dissolved the ancient image of the ballerina into innovative figures. The dancer floating on the notes of a rigid musical organisation was a representation of the romantic ideal of an ethereal and elusive femininity. In the second half of the twentieth century, the art of ballet redefines its principles and restored ontological organicity to the performer, rejoining the project of reconstructing dance from a return to its origins, already embodied at the end of the previous century by artists such as Isadora Duncan. As an expression of natural laws, the body started to unfold its imaginative potential in the conscious imbalances, in the sudden falls, in the flow of pulsations marked by the breath, revealing the inner impulses that generate them, passing over the horizon of the *hic et nunc* and the conjunction of art and life.

Reflecting a world view dominated by the idea of “energy”, an idea realised fully through the concept of vibration (Secondulfo, 2009b, p. 139), the conjugation of flesh and intellect produced a reconceptualisation of the means of expression, breathing new life into an art not nourished exclusively by the reiteration of its formal stability. An aesthetic typology was imposed that continues to recall ethnic suggestions, cathartic values, metaphysical meditations.

Connected to the historical events of the late 1960s, Bausch’s experimentation reflects the theorisations focused on the social articulations of human identity. Aesthetic events are configured as heuristic moments, based on the search for meaning that underlies the processes of redefining subjectivity. They record the junctions of the transmutation undergone by corporeality and

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of the related *political* way of elaborating its conceptions. Through the reconfiguration of perceptual and cognitive systems, cultural constructions crystallise in working tools, machines, and methods, which transform both the “social imaginary of the body” and the “modalities through which the collectivity perceives itself in its totality”, as a “social body” (Combi, 2000, p. 105).

The body becomes a paradigmatic nucleus in which the aporias of existence converge, reflected by operations of extremization of expressive codes.

Bausch is among the authors who revolutionised Terpsichorean art by recovering the archaic nature of relationship between gesture and action, and between gesture and voice. Compared to the nineteenth century ballet ideal, movement, music and words coexist again in a radically different interweaving. The fusion of the choreographic, lyrical and recitative dimensions realises the idea, of Wagnerian inspiration, of the total theatre, of the global spectacle, of the opera as a concentration of multiple communicative forms, which contribute to the achievement of an effective diachronic and synchronic reconstruction of heterogeneous imageries, of different archetypal horizons. These syncretic works recognise the needs of the spectators to identify with alternative cultural models to classical tradition and gratify the increasingly sophisticated gaze of citizens who want or have to indulge in the accelerated complexity of metropolitan and post-metropolitan reality. The 1968 polemic, directed at the concept of art as aristocratic privilege, shook the world of choreography, making it the product of a reflection on a democratic body, the subject-object of sequences of representations of ordinary physicality. While preserving its discipline, the dancer from Solingen has contributed to dissolving the aura of dance, freeing it from academic codifications and allowing it to be contaminated by elements still unknown to the choreographical invention. The emotional dynamics, by means of a danced *grammar*, allow for remembrance, celebration, and healing.

The first major works, *Iphigenie auf Tauris* and *Orpheus und Eurydike*², presented for the first time in 1974 and 1975 respectively, were based on classical texts. The representation of the contemporary tragedy of existence took shape in the late 1970s. Introspective reflections and ideas of universality, alongside avant-garde inspirations and ideological aspirations have animated and, thanks to the dancers of the *Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch*, continue to animate collective rituals, leading the audience back into the unexplored recesses of being. The commonality of traits between stylised theatrical gestures

² The titles of the works, which appear in the repertoire in various languages, are taken from the site set up by the Pina Bausch Foundation: <https://www.pinabausch.org/>

and concatenated functional gestures produces a sort of iconic mimesis that echoes archaic motifs. Dance once again becomes the staging of elements relating the primal being in the world, with human bipedal movement originating from quadrupedal movement. The choreographer goes through the ages redelineating the postures of the dancers, and, in her turning to past, to the present and the future, she outlines within metalinguistic horizons the profile of a body identifiable with images or sounds that actualise the archetypal potential.

The body of the *Tanztheater Wuppertal* dancers is a *metabody*, as an *epiphenomenon* of the articulation of social change. It holds messages to be decoded, in which each element is a sign that refers to universal archetypes. The performances reaffirm how these archetypes are generated by unresolved tensions, which take on peculiar forms in each person's experience, activating themselves as dynamic energy.

The irrational is translated into deformations of experience, that lead to the creation of surreal spaces into the folds of an existential absurdity. The solos or soliloquies of the characters, teetering on dangerous precipices or floating on bright horizons, follow errant destinations. The inglorious dancing heroes, thrown into the world, live in a state of constitutive precariousness and fathom an unconscious that allows abysmal restlessness to surface. Inspired by the aesthetic category of uncanny, of perturbing estrangement (Freud, 2003), arising from the loss, real and metaphorical, of one's home or from the impossibility of recognising it, *Café Müller* was presented in 1978. It was composed to the music of Henry Purcell and it represents the blind search for a passage through the maze of life. The piece confirms that for those who, in different ways, experience the condition of nomadism or existential drift, the narrative universe indicates a probable refuge, helping the disoriented subjects to recover the "irreducibility" of their being born in a precise space-time context, of their 'being situated' (Jedlowski, 2009, p. 13) in the continuous production of the world.

The function of expressing the unspeakable is delegated to the body, thanks to the proliferation of signifiers that replace the canonical verbal and gestural languages. Once the epoch of expressive dance ended, the *Tanztheater* and all subsequent forms of European dance theatre were marked by a motor over-excitement, which prevailed wherever the word or conventional act continued to reveal their communicative inadequacy.

A force that aims at fusing together the imperceptible with the tangible, visible and audible sphere has superimposed itself on the *affectus* for ideal beauty. This research connects the archetypal world and the sensible world in a doctrine of the correspondences between infiniteness and finiteness, between immutability and transience, drawing the archetypes from their concealment

and making them manifest, drawing them from their silence and making them ring together. The translation of the archetypes into moving forms highlights the polarisation between matter and knowledge, nature and artifice, peace and war, life and death, antinomies destined to manifest themselves fully in the traumas subsequently represented by the post-organic transgressions of performance.

3. Material imagination, collective imagination and *mundus imaginalis*

Bausch's creations evoke "*représentations collectives*", an expression used by Lévy-Bruhl to refer to the symbolic "figures in the primitive view of the world" (Jung, 1968, p. 5): in the doctrines of origins the fundamental archetypes have already been transformed into formulas subject to conscious elaboration (Jung, 1968, p. 5). These representations, shaped as mythological motifs, have always produced, both on a subjective and social level, psychic processes of transformation (Jung, 1956). Like individual mental life, collective mental life is made up of representations generated by interpersonal relationships and consisting of notions, values and practices. As sets of cognitions, produced by socially determined processes (Moscovici & Hewstone, 1983, pp. 98-125), collective representations constitute a decoding grid of the world, reshape the environment, redefine behaviours and incessantly intersect around words and gestures (Galli, 2012, p. 17).

Bausch's spectacular horizon can be interpreted as the transposition into dancing acts of theoretical assumptions aimed at understanding basic aspects of society.

The abandonment of dedicated spaces and the relocation of the pieces in the streets and squares of the cities lead the protagonists to recognise, from time to time, the territory where they can exercise their fascination with engaging mass performances. The yearning for artistic renewal creates forms that are articulated on *concrete* music, consisting of sounds that are not produced by musical instruments. Whispers and cries, evoking the scream of the mock satyrs of Greek tragedy, give sonorous substance to the expansions and contractions of eccentric virtuosités. Segments of everyday life are described by dancers free to experiment with athletic skills that reinvent the laws of gravity. In the reviving of the apotropaic value of tribal dances, the staging of an effervescent rituality (Durkheim, 1968) reflects the flow of an emotional current that promotes the representation of characters invested with a sacred force.

Bausch's *The Rite of Spring*, choreographed to music by Igor Stravinsky and presented in 1975, recalls the awakening of the senses, the Dionysian frenzy, the rawness of *eros*, aimed at the perpetuation of the species, the sharing of a

mystical exaltation and a potential contiguous to human sacrifice. In the representation of this imposing pagan rite, celebrated by the most ancient Slavic populations, human body is a guardian and an interpreter of a knowledge that precedes consciousness. This body is “rooted in the particles and atoms of physics, in the stones, planets, molecules and organs of biology” (Longo, 1998, p. 98) and reconnects explicit and rational knowledge to the “much more robust” (Longo, 2003, p. 70) tacit and immediate knowledge. Some reflections on art come to mind and suggest that it should remain as wild as possible (Badiou, 2013). It is no coincidence that Nietzsche’s Zarathustra is an eager dancer (Nietzsche, 1978). In every interpretation of *The Rite of Spring*, since Vaclav Nijinsky’s version, *Le sacre du printemps*, from 1913, a turning point occurs in the story of the body-form, of the life-form that can save - at least partially and temporarily - art from possible processes of mathematical consumption (Badiou, 2013). In Bausch’s experiments, one works in body language until one discerns its roots (Volli, 1992). The choreographer acts as an archaeologist of movement, who digs into the gesture in order to identify its origin, its history, its changes. She relaunches an art powerfully marked by the flow of organic life, subtended by the evident *dominium* of concept, of semantic *ratio* and of abstraction.

Bausch considers the constitutive complicity between human sensibility and natural elements, recalling the reciprocity of perspectives, typical of primitive cultures, between human beings and their environment. She suggests the need to renew alliances between the history of communities and their adventure, which explores nature (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984, p. 288). A participatory horizon is redefined in such a way as to join to the postmodern ecological inspiration (Secondulfo, 2009b, p. 164).

The depicted cosmos is not merely a scenic decoration but allows a confrontation with the becoming of the existence. It is a guiding root, a place of infinite gestation, *natura naturans*, which initiates the characters into the world, revealing their meanings. The artist animates the turbulent movements that burst into the scenic linearity of *Kronos*. Unchanged figurative stanzas recur among other visual stanzas and, at regular intervals, interrupt the choreutic sequence, creating a visual refrain that is a cadenced assumption of discontinuity. Bausch’s pieces are powerful anthropopoietic practices and realise a harmonisation of spatial and temporal rhythms.

It should be remembered that in the atomism of Leucippus and Democritus, *rythmos* was equivalent to *schēma*, namely “form”. The word *rhythm*, therefore, did not refer to time, but to a design in space, made possible by the movement of atoms thanks to the vacuum. Unlike *schēma*, however, which was a fixed form, *rythmos* designated the form in the instant in which it was assumed by what it moved. In Ionian philosophy, rhythm was not a measure, rather the

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appearance of a distinct configuration, a replica that made the unequal happen, an archetypal operation par excellence. It was Plato who transformed rhythm into a principle of harmony. And he did so precisely in relation to dance, conceiving rhythm as a form of movement that the human body performs while dancing: this form is now determined by a measure and subject to an order. The notion of rhythm influences a large part of human activities. It proves useful for distinguishing between types of individual and collective behaviour, making one aware of the durations and repetitions that govern them, even when, beyond the human sphere, a rhythm is projected into events (Benveniste, 1966) and phenomena.

Work rhythms are combined with landscape rhythms. Rhythm is in every substance, in the air, in the water, in the earth (Bachelard, 1963).

The earth, which often covers the stage, is represented in its archetypal ambivalence. It can protect and nourish, proving to be a giver of life, but it can also devour and poison, revealing itself to be a malignant mother. It is the realm of the dead, as it happens in the muddy abysses of a tomb that continues to be unceasingly excavated in *Viktor*, first staged in 1986. This piece was composed to music that travels through time and space, from the Middle Ages to the 1930s and from Italy to Russia, and that reworks archetypal acoustic images.

In Bausch's phenomenology of the elements, a central figure is the mixture of soil and water.

Water is alive and concrete as the images of the collective unconscious evoked by the author.

The stage is sometimes flooded with crystal clear water, reflecting luminosity. At other times it is covered by dark water, a receptacle of suffering, or by water that leads to unknown places, or by raging water, symbolising the pleasure of challenge and intrepid voluntary affirmation. Water is the protagonist in works such as *Agua*³ and *Vollmond*⁴, presented in 2001 and 2006 respectively. In the first work water is, at least apparently, transparent. In the second one it appears instead turbid and pervaded by vibrations of death.

In *Vollmond* water is represented as the "most commonest symbol for the unconscious". Water is defined by Jung as "tangible" and "earthy", the "fluid of the instinct-driven body", "blood and the flowing of blood", "odour of the beast" and "carnality heavy with passions" (Jung, 1968, pp. 18, 19). Water is a metaphor for the process of self-knowledge. It is described by the Swiss

³ Musical collaboration: Matthias Burkert, Andreas Eisenschneider, Marion Cito, Irene Martínez Ríos, Robert Sturm.

⁴ Musical collaboration: Matthias Burkert, Andreas Eisenschneider, Robert Sturm, Daphnis Kokkinos, Marion Cito.

psychoanalyst through the dream image of a dark lake and corresponds to a descent of what is aerial into the “prison of the chthonic world”. Water means “spirit that has become unconscious” (Jung, 1968, pp. 18, 19). It is a mixture of good and evil. Bausch brings art to matter, revealing the impure nature of the latter. On the hand, matter embodies an anti-value from a traditional formal point of view, on the other, it indicates the rootedness of *homo humanus*, who populates *humus*, inhabiting contaminated swamps and wastelands. Like Narcissus, the dancers, who reflect themselves in the puddles, glimpse at their own image, risking, Jung would say, an encounter with their own shadow. The choreographer willingly exposes them to this danger, exhorting them to narrate on stage the vicissitudes of their own stories, referring to the shared matrix of the collective unconscious. During these confessions, that are often lacerating, fragments of truth burst onto the stage, concerning desires for freedom, lust for escape, dysphorias of identity. Bausch knows that only becoming aware of one’s own dark side allows an inner growth.

In the play of reverberations, the imagination is constantly rooted in the archetypal substratum. It is articulated in a duality, which, although it is ambiguous, makes it possible to identify the *Animus*, masculine vigour, tending towards conflict, and the *Anima*, feminine inclination, tending towards pacification. This dichotomy modifies the narrative register at times, transforming itself into the reflection of a conciliatory synthesis, realised in the moments of abandonment of the *Ego*. During these temporal fragments the protagonists no longer appear as subjects opposed to objects but embody archetypal realities. They become objects of the collective unconscious and, in the indistinction of opposites, recover a sort of original identification with the whole.

Nature provides hormones of imagination (Bachelard, 1987), namely forces that induce one to inhabit the planet poetically. Bausch’s creativity is innervated in the porous weave of elementary substances and inextricably linked to the unconscious underlying conception and interpretation. It could be defined as material imagination (Bachelard, 1987, 1989, 1992). Imagination rooted in the meanderings of humanity. Imagination as the search for the *archè* and the principles of *rêverie*. Imagination capable of transforming natural elements into the free elements of artistic creation. The material imagination is grafted onto the analogous Sartrean theme of the *imaginaire* (Sartre, 1966), and then moves away from it. The material imagination moves either towards the Jungian active imagination (Jung, 1968), which aims to give tangible form to the images of the unconscious through the mediation of consciousness, or towards Corbin’s conception of a *mundus imaginalis* (Corbin, 1993), an intermediate realm in which the intelligible world manifests itself through concrete figures. Sartrean imagination is within a subjective horizon. Jungian imagination and imaginal

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theorised by Corbin bring psyche, fantasy and dream back to the plane of the elements, which annihilates the presumed superiority of the *Ego*. Bausch's choreographies are marked by metaphors in action and symbolic inventions. These works start a harmonic progression towards the Terpsichorean crossing of the elements. In this way, the author stages a meditative exercise and traverses what has been called the vale of soul-making (Hillman, 1996). Popularized by John Keats and further explored by James Hillman, the expression soul-making refers to a practice through which the human subjects intensify their connection with themselves, with others and with the world.

The protagonists express truths belonging to a universal heritage and act in a hermeneutic reality that makes manifest a latent order, a deep layer that underlies relations of production, relations of power (D'Agostino, 1983, p. 134) and institutional order. The tremor of the sacred in Bausch's performances coincides with a state of undifferentiation in which the sense of individuality is lost. In the rituals inspired by African animism - performed after the choreographer's stay in Brazil - dancers take centre stage in dialogue with their divine *alter ego*, yearning for a connection with their surroundings and with *the beyond*. Their ancestral gestures express a sort of pantheistic voluptuousness that allows them to shun datable time.

The aesthetic reflection of a threefold push is constantly represented: the focus on interiority of the dancers, their turning towards otherness, understood as the world in its totality, and the tendency that potentially penetrates all relationships (D'Agostino, 1977, p. 65). This inclination is identifiable with the exposition to the mystery of life, concerning birth and death. The compulsive iteration of motion corresponds, at times, to a sort of gestural mantra, a mimed prayer, a form of continually interrupted mystical delirium.

It is precisely within this tension, produced by the individual's admission of not having the ultimate explanation of themselves, that lies the foundation of the symbolisation process.

The author develops an aesthetics that emphasises the animic necessity of contact with a planet to be restored to its natural elements and that evokes the imaginative inspiration of the inscrutable.

"I would only believe in a god who could dance" (Nietzsche, 1978, p. 41), says Nietzschean Zarathustra. And just as in *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, the impulse to dance exhorts the members of the *Wuppertal* to narrate the tale of a body that is not antithetical to the mind, to release pulsating energies, to reinterpret archetypal expressions, and to experience the impetuous, implacable faith in some god who must have used them to see himself dance.

4. Conclusions

Rather than merely forming images that correspond to reality, imagination coincides with the ability to freely represent reality, narrating it, singing it, dancing it.

The aim here has been to observe how the process of artistic interpretation of contemporary events flows into Pina's choreographies, just as the dancer is remembered in the essential title of the documentary, directed by Wim Wenders in 2011, dedicated to her theatrical modulations of action. Bausch's works are extraordinary conjunctions of artistic inspiration and analytical intent. They are animated by universally shared archetypal elements that, throughout history, have been revealed through symbolisations. The artist has produced streams of figurations by staging the constitutive ambiguity of the symbol, bearer of a superficial meaning and at the same time of a deeper meaning.

In *Tanztheater*, the body is the starting point of a perspective that is continually transcended in the incessant motion of cognitive transgression. In this regard, it is legitimate to attribute to the definition of the term *body* a meaning relative not only to the physical support on which human activities are based, but also to the complex of connections established with the territory, with reference to the vital functions that human beings perform, to the passions that they ignite, to the interactive fields in which they are placed (Abruzzese, 1988, p. 94), to the archetypal horizon that inevitably appears.

The author's radical opposition to passive acceptance of tradition continues to gain new relevance.

Her imaginative power does not aim to attract the contemplator to the contemplated object on a purely ideal plane. Her representations are marked by the dialectic between *dynamis* and *energeia*. They are played on the rhythms of physical activity and are endowed with an intense power of signification. The choreographer hopes for a change in History, based on the hope of a more intense participation of individuality in the intersubjective web and on the conception of nature as the privileged seat of social subjectivity.

She has staged a reality pushed beyond its own institutionalisation, noting that, because of numerous historical reasons, social structures can undergo disempowerment. During the complex social processualism, unfolding beyond the line that defines the *status quo*, new formations emerge, susceptible to deconstruction and reconstruction, promoted by the dynamics with which non-rationality operates. In order to indicate the area in which the actualised archetypal virtuality can surface, the concept of the "nascent state" (Alberoni, 1977) is particularly effective, as it is always also the *locus* of the ethical dilemma and the site of the reconfiguration of the worldviews.

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In addition to the relationship between time and consciousness on which absolutely individual dynamics are based, Bausch explores the relationship between individual, environment and community. As was typical of archaic thought, the actions depicted in her scenes are expressions of mythologically conceived collectivities. The counterbalance to gravity is a celestial attraction, an ascending force, like that of vegetation, which populates the settings of numerous works and which exhorts dancers to imitate beauty, guarding and serving it. In *Palermo Palermo*, conceived in 1989 and presented in 1990, the rubble, decaying matter, evidence of an entropic process, underlines the need for an order, *nomos*, to face History.

Dancers are also exhorted to keep and serve the divine. The choreographer is well aware of the intense human propensity to project into the universe the meanings of the constructed social structure. This leads to a cosmicisation of the social world and a cosmicisation of the sacred (Berger, 2011). The chorus members of Greek tragedy inherited the primordial scream, but they and contemporary dancers respectively danced and dance in the eurythmy of an ecstatic union, which can only be sacred. The *ek-stasis* refers to an original foundation (Cacciari, 1989). The author nurtures a feeling inspired by sacredness in composing elegies of natural life and scores that can be handed down as a means of human *resistance*.

The contiguity between human bodies, as well as between human bodies and habitats, symbolises a *mélange* of indiscernible co-belonging and stimulates desiring practices that transform dystopia into utopia, the latter understood as good place, *eu-topos* in Greek language. The sociomorphic representations of the body are accompanied by an imagination defined as the “fonction générale du possible pratique” (Ricoeur, 1986, p. 225), which participates in the potentiality of collective action.

Dance holds the flight of movement in the body and, at the same time, attributes meaning to what seems to escape. As the archetype of the action of living beings (Valery, 1957), Terpsichorean art offers Bausch the possibility of establishing again harmony with a single entity that comprises both immanence and transcendence, as well as psyche and body, air, earth and water.

The author’s gaze focuses on the dialectic between collective *catastrophes* and individual lives, where narratives are intertwined with the *political* life of humanity.

Art builds synaptic dynamics and promotes structures and rhythms of action that generate possible worlds.

The etymological root *ar* of the Latin word *ars*, art, alludes to redemption. Artistic practices, in Bausch, are posed as a remedy against the anguish caused by the danger that envelops existence, in particular as a last refuge in a nature that, in its archetypal ambiguity, can be both malevolent and benevolent

(Severino, 2011, pp. 8, 22). Rather than transporting the spectators into a condition of ecstatic contemplation, Bausch's dance is animated by heuristic principles and inspired by ethical motives, confirming how creative activity can lead to reflect on society and historicise archetypal paradigms. The author's poetic imagination does not produce vague replicas of real objects, but represents virtualities perpetually stretched out to unfold in actualised configurations. A symbolic power is attributed to choreographic rites, conceiving the latter term in its original meaning. We refer to the etymology of the word symbol, which alludes to union, and which in Bausch evokes the capacity, on a theatrical level, to reconcile the oppositions of atomised societies, to bring together a plurality of bodies and a polyphony of voices, to annihilate the conflict of a life that tragically continues to contradict itself, and to rediscover the inescapable and widespread presence of an archetypal re-enchantment of the world.

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