

PHILOSOPHY IN MOTION/ DANCING THE PHILOSOPHY

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■ ABSTRACT

The paper starts from the assumption that the Western philosophical tradition has largely privileged the mind, abstraction and discursive thinking, often neglecting the body as a fundamental dimension of human experience and cognition. The intention of the paper is to explore the concept of philosophy in motion through the idea of dancing philosophy, whereby the body is viewed not as a passive carrier of consciousness, but as an active, embodied subject of thought, meaning and relationship with the world. The paper seeks to highlight how movement, dance and bodily practice can act as legitimate forms of philosophical inquiry and expression. The basic theses of the paper are that thought is always embodied and that cognition does not occur exclusively at the level of rational mind, but through bodily experience, that movement and dance represent epistemological practices that produce knowledge differently, but equally, in relation to language and text, that dance philosophy and philosophy of dance opens up space for understanding the subject as a dynamic, relational, and situated being, and that the body has ethical and political dimensions, because the way in which bodies move, are seen, and are regulated reflects broader social power structures. Methodologically, the paper relies on an interdisciplinary approach that connects phenomenology, especially Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of the body, Foucault's concept of heterotopia, contemporary theories of embodiment, dance philosophy, and aesthetic theory. The scientific contribution of the paper is manifested in the articulation of dance and movement as relevant philosophical methods, thereby expanding the concept of philosophical thinking beyond the traditional logocentric framework.

Keywords: body, dance, philosophy of dance, bodily based knowledge, movement, different voices, embodiment

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My personal story behind the topics that I try to address in bioethics has to do with my life choices, passions, and experiences. It has to do with my artistic inclinations, longings, and passions. It also has to do with my desire to make philosophy more humane, warmer, more corporeal, and more feminine; to bring back to philosophy the embodied subject and a different voice—the voice of those who are silenced, marginalized, forgotten, and those who have no power.

The reference point and main idea of this essay, *The Personal Behind Our Bioethics*, was my consideration of the value of the “other” and the “different voice,” as well as considerations about the contributions and profound meaning of feminine voices in philosophy and bioethics. As a woman in philosophy, I ask myself how and what a feminine voice—a different voice—can give and offer to a Western, traditional, patriarchal, masculine philosophy oriented toward the rational as the only moral and correct path, thus differentiating the body from the mind and neglecting the body. I ask myself how someone who deals with the body through dance and movement can offer an embodied subject to philosophy and make philosophy more feminine, warmer, softer, and more caring.

Therefore, while writing my dissertation (PhD), I decided to focus all my efforts on the ethics of care and dance movement therapy. How can I connect the body and mind, philosophy, art, dance, and bioethics? How can I dance the static image of the body and philosophy? How

can I set or bring philosophy into motion, into movement, and how can dance open up new spaces and new ways of seeing the world and become a certain way of being in the world? How can dance create new spaces for communication and enable, facilitate, and delimit the constraints of seeing the world? I try to find how dance and movement can create new dynamic models of social space—spaces of new possibilities for non-discursive action of the subject. How can dance reverse sets of relationships and constellations of power for those who are left on the edges of society and those who are marginalized? (Rupčić Kelam, 2023).

Thus, in my consideration and also in my practice, I try to bring philosophy into movement and to “dance” the static nature of philosophy. A reference point in my considerations was Foucault’s notion of heterotopia, in the sense that dance is a model and method of constructing alternative realities, opening new spaces, and becoming a means for mobilization (Foucault, 1967.; Foucault, 2008., pp. 13-29).

In that sense, dance can become a counter-space that undermines power relations and imposed, hegemonic discourses of traumatic experience. Through my personal life, I have experienced traumatic events that changed the course of my life and left scars on my mind, but not only on my mind—on my body also. I have experienced that trauma isn’t just something that happens in our mind, but it also affects the body; trauma is a reaction and comes as a reaction to events, not just the event itself.

I was a dancer for my whole life, but at some point, I couldn't dance anymore for a while because my body was not mine at that time. I was disconnected from my body. In time, I started to realize that I needed to do something to reconnect with my body again. I started to dance again and tried to find my own voice and my own story through my body. I started to dance my story, only to discover that through dance I found my voice again and met my wholeness again.

This kind of experience I wanted to convey to everyone who is struggling with this kind of experience and to my students of philosophy, because I started to notice that they are deeply disconnected from their bodies. I wanted to dance philosophy and to set philosophy into movement. There, I found the connection between the philosophy of dance, the body, and the "different voice." (Gilligan, 1982).

I also noticed that we are all affected by some kind of traumatic experience, and we all carry in our bodies personal stories and narratives. A traumatic event changes the course of life and can break the narrative. Our bodies possess the wisdom of untold stories; the body becomes the hub, the archive of memories and stories, and also the place of restoration of meanings after the breaking of stories and the fracturing of the self. In that sense, the body becomes the place of reconnection with the self and the other (Rupčić Kelam, 2023).

In that sense, stories and memories of trauma form hegemonic discourses and systems of power over the individual or society. Dance

resists power, bridging the gap between personal and collective conscious and unconscious. Dance communicates meaning, resists the hegemonic discourses of shame and guilt that often accompany trauma, restores personal narrative, and reconnects meaning. Dance becomes the "other space" or a space of otherness—a space of resistance and rest, a space of refuge, play, imagination, transformation, and a safe place; a space of peace, comfort, and protection (Christofidou, Milioni, 2022).

Dance movement therapy, as a form of psychotherapy, relies on the body as the main medium for expressing and transforming the emotional, mental, and spiritual state of the individual. This form of therapy does not use words as its primary tool, but rather movement, rhythm, and body awareness. On the other hand, philosophy—especially the philosophy of the body, existentialism, and phenomenology—offers a deeper and more profound understanding of human existence, consciousness, and one's relationship to one's own body. In this respect, dance movement therapy and philosophy complement each other, creating a rich space and platform for considering the human being in their wholeness. I wanted to incorporate the therapeutic and creative potential of dance and movement as a means to gain completeness and integrity, to open new spaces of freedom and play, to create the possibilities of new stories, and to develop an Ethics of Encounter (Hamera, 2011).

Philosophy provides us with the context and language for understanding the deeper dimensions of human experience, while dance therapy allows that experience to be embodied and transformed. Combined, they offer a

Philosophy in Movement, in Motion

The body in motion is not just a biological phenomenon. It is an expression of consciousness, feelings, thoughts, and identity. When we talk about philosophy in motion, in movement, we are talking about the encounter between bodily expression and mental reflection. Movement becomes a way of thinking, and the body a philosophical text that can be read, interpreted, and experienced. Philosophy in motion seeks truth not through words, but through movement, presence, and experience. In Western philosophy, the body has often been suppressed in favor of the mind—from Plato, who saw the body as a prison for the soul, to Descartes, who separated it from the mind through the familiar division into *res cogitans* (the thinking thing) and *res extensa* (the extended thing). However, contemporary philosophy, especially phenomenology and existentialism, is taking a radical turn.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty argues that we do not think only with our heads, but also with our bodies. The body is our first and fundamental presence in the world, through which we experience space, time, other people, and ourselves. Movement is, in this sense, the primary language of the philosophy of being. When we

holistic approach to the human being. Philosophy asks questions about meaning, identity, and consciousness, while dance and movement offer the answer in the very act of being, expressing, and experiencing with the body.

walk, dance, or breathe, we not only function but also express. Every movement carries a meaning, an emotion, and even a philosophical message. Movement can be resistance, liberation, a question, or contemplation. In dance, the body becomes a thought in space. Philosophy in movement is also an act of awareness—being in the present moment. This is what Zen Buddhism calls *zanshin*: complete awareness in action (an enactive approach). In this state, thoughts do not take place only in the head, but through muscles, breathing, and balance. Body, mind, and spirit are no longer separate. They are in dialogue. This dialogue is not abstract; it is concrete, alive, and present. Through somatic practices, philosophy becomes alive. Philosophy lives, dances, moves, and feels. Philosophy tells us that it is not enough just to understand the world, but to feel the world through our own steps, breaths, and movements.

In a time when modern man is often separated from his own body, philosophy in motion calls for a return to oneself—to harmonize thought and movement; to search for the truth that resides not only in words, but in the way we move and act through life.

Philosophy in Motion: Silence, Listening, and the Body That Thinks

Philosophy in movement, in motion, is not just a concept. It is the experience of being in a body that listens, thinks, and expresses. In a world dominated by the noise of words, speed, and virtual content, the body becomes a space of silence. In motion, philosophy ceases to be an exclusively verbal, rational, and cognitive discipline; it is transformed into movement, breathing, and presence. The foundation of this movement is not only gestures but also silence and deep listening. In the silence of movement, a space is born to feel one's own being—to hear what cannot be expressed in words.

Philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty emphasizes that the body is not just a machine for action, but a “lived body”—a subject that experiences, communicates, and thinks the world through movement (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). When we move, we actually have a conversation with the world, not with words, but with sensations, muscle tension, contact with the ground, and the rhythm of breathing.

In this dialogue, silence is not a void. It is a condition for listening. Just as in a philosophical conversation true understanding does not come only through speech but through attentive listening, so in movement, the most profound thing happens when we stop “performing” and start listening to the body. Silence allows for presence. In this presence, the body reveals its own wisdom. In such an approach, philosophy is not an abstract thought, but an

embodied consciousness. We become able to listen not only to our body but also to space, other people, and the energy of relationships. Listening in the philosophy of movement is not only a sensory act, but an ethical act. It is a willingness not to impose ourselves, but to be with what is. Listening means admitting that we do not know everything—that the body knows what the mind sometimes does not understand. In the movement that comes from listening, there is room for fragility, intuition, and openness. This movement is philosophical because it asks questions: Who am I when I stop talking? What does the body tell me when I really listen to it?

Philosophy in motion, when combined with silence and listening, becomes a practice of inner ethics. It is a practice of presence, patience, and tenderness toward oneself and the world. In the silence of movement, one does not lose oneself; one finds oneself. Not through a grand thought, but through a small shift, a focused breath, and an awareness of one's feet on the ground.

Ultimately, philosophy in motion invites us to stop thinking of the body as something we “have” and to start experiencing it as what we “are.” Through silence, listening, and authentic movement, we return to our being, not as an idea, but as a living experience which thinks through the body and which is thought in the body (embodied thought).

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