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## Butoh Training and the Quantum Body. An Interpretation of Kasai Akira's Work

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### Abstract

Partendo dal lavoro di Kasai Akira, il presente contributo focalizza la relazione tra la visione corporea della danza butō giapponese e le idee della fisica quantistica, per mostrare il potenziale rivoluzionario che il butō può ancora conservare sessant'anni dopo la sua nascita. Il fondatore Hijikata Tatsumi ha identificato un livello di esistenza corporea che non riguarda tanto l'identità sociale dell'"essere umano", ma riguarda il "corpo umano" come materia. Di quest'entità materiale vivente la danza può rivelare la memoria, sviluppando una percezione interna del corpo. Kasai approfondisce questo concetto di base esplorando la natura stessa della materia, e qui si evidenzia come la sua pratica sia un modo per raggiungere quell'espansione della consapevolezza che la fisica quantistica identifica come chiave per trasformare se stessi e il mondo.

Taking Kasai Akira's work as a reference, this paper aims to focus the relationship between the body vision of the Japanese butoh dance and ideas from quantum physics, to suggest the revolutionary potential that still butoh could keep sixty years after its birth. The founder Hijikata Tatsumi has identified a level of bodily existence that doesn't pertain to the "human being" social identity, but rather concerns the "human body" as matter, a living material entity with its memory. To reveal this memory through dance, it is necessary to develop an internal perception of the body. Kasai develops this basic concept by exploring the very nature of matter, and this paper highlights how his dance practice is a way to achieve the expansion of awareness, which quantum physics identifies as the key to transform oneself and the world around.

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## **Butoh Training and the Quantum Body. An Interpretation of Kasai Akira's Work\***

### **Butoh body**

At its appearance in the late Fifties, the Japanese butoh dance upset the way of thinking about dance, by questioning the nature of the body and the very essence of movement.

By erasing any fixed technical background and the same idea of the body as a tool of expression, the founder of butoh, Hijikata Tatsumi, identified a level of corporeal existence that doesn't pertain to the "human being", with his specific social identity, but rather concern the "human body", as a living material entity. Within Hijikata experimentation, body is not just a physical object occupying the space in a given section of linear time, and movement is not only a body changing of position in order to express feeling, thoughts or emotions. Definitely dance is not just a matter of time and space.

As a material entity the "human body" is a warehouse of memory, both personal and universal, that can be revealed by way of dance. In order to reach this memory of the matter, dancer needs to develop an internal perception of the body. Hijikata's method of verbal stimuli aims to make dancers aware of their bodies as a bundle of sensations and to transform their psychophysical conditions<sup>1</sup>. Kasai Akira further develops this work by exploring the meaning and nature of the matter itself. In doing so, he explicitly introduced the term energy into dance and echoed concepts belonging to the language of new physics. Feeling the movement from within is an act that has to do with awareness of the energetic dimension of the body. When we direct our awareness to the internal side of the body we perceive its energetic dimension. As neuroscience explains, «where you place your attention is where you place your energy»<sup>2</sup>. Consciousness acts like an invisible force that moves energy into our body, since what we think creates networks of neurons in our brain causing a chemical reaction that results in a feeling

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\* The first version of this article has been introduced during the *Butoh Next* Symposium, held at City University of New York (CUNY) Graduate Center, October 31 – November 1, 2019.

1. Cf. the reconstruction of Hijikata's method made by his pupil Waguri Yukio in Waguri Yukio, *Butō Kaden (The flower of butō)*, Just System, Tokushima 1998.

2. Joe Dispenza, *Becoming Supernatural: How Common People Are Doing the Uncommon*, Hay House, Carlsbad 2017, p. 64.

or an emotion, and this finally change our entire state of being:

When you think a thought (or have a memory), a biochemical reaction begins in your brain causing the brain to release certain chemical signals. That's how immaterial thoughts literally become matter – they become chemical messengers. These chemical signals make your body feel exactly the way you were just thinking [...] thoughts are the vocabulary of the brain and feelings are the vocabulary of the body, and the cycle of how you think and feel becomes your state of being<sup>3</sup>.

To transform our body, to change our state of being, we have to change how we think and how we feel. Kasai acknowledges that the real revolution that Hijikata has brought into the history of dance is the identification of dance with «the manifestation of a kind of awareness existing in the body in the here and now»<sup>4</sup>. This means that in order to build the dancing body it is not necessary to train physical power by strengthening the muscles, as much «modifying the body through the training of awareness»<sup>5</sup> by means of imagination. We can no more think about dance as only made by movements in the space; we have to consider energy too, «dance is made by time, space and energy»<sup>6</sup>.

Since he strongly believes that butoh is not a physical art form, but rather a way to reveal one's awareness, Kasai teaches how to transform corporeality by “consciousness training”, in order to build the “dancing body”<sup>7</sup>. Well, this dancing body building process recalls suggestions appeared in quantum physics studies, as well as in new biology and integrative medicine (that have been influenced by quantum physics). In particular, they all share the basic concept of the primacy of consciousness and its power to transform physical matter, in a world where matter is made of energy.

This idea is a challenge to everything we believe about the way our world works and how we define our bodies and ourselves, and it could have several radical consequences in our everyday lives. As a matter of fact, the primacy of consciousness means that a simple thought could play an active role

3. *Ivi*, p. 56.

4. Akira Kasai – Hisako Kasai, *Ima mata odori hajimemashō (Now let's start dancing again)*, in «Gendaishi Techo», n. 9, September 2010, pp. 76-85.

5. Tatsuro Ishii, *Artist Interview. A Look into the Choreographic Art of Akira Kasai, Fifty Years after Entering the World of Butoh*, 26/2/2013, p. 10, online: [https://www.performingarts.jp/E/art\\_interview/1301/art\\_interview1301e.pdf](https://www.performingarts.jp/E/art_interview/1301/art_interview1301e.pdf) (accessed 24/9/2020).

6. Kasai Akira during one of his Italian workshop on July 2011 in Tuscania (Italy). This quote, as the subsequent ones referring to the Kasai workshops, were collected by the author who personally participated in it.

7. The author takes Kasai's body vision as a general view of butoh dance, believing that Kasai developed a new direction of research that maintains butoh original spirit. Exploring the relation among Kasai, his master Ohno Kazuo and the butoh founder Hijikata Tatsumi, the author found that Kasai reopens and delves into the original butoh question – what is body? – transforming it in the other one: what is matter? In doing so he launches a reflection on the body itself that does not only concern dance, but the condition of the individual in the contemporary society, recovering the revolutionary power of the origins of butoh. Cf. Maria Pia D'Orazi, *Building the Dancing Body: Akira Kasai from Butoh to Eurythmy*, in «Teatro e Storia», n. 37, nuova serie VIII, 2016, pp. 139-150; Maria Pia D'Orazi, *Il Butō in Italia e l'esperienza di Akira Kasai*, in Matteo Casari – Elena Cervellati (a cura di), *Butō. Prospettive europee e sguardi dal Giappone*, Dipartimento delle Arti – Alma Mater Studiorum-Università di Bologna, Bologna 2015, pp. 133-147, online: <http://amsacta.unibo.it/4352/>; Maria Pia D'Orazi, *The Concept of Butoh in Italy, from Ohno Kazuo to Kasai Akira*, in Bruce Baird – Rosemary Candelario (edited by), *The Routledge Companion to Butoh Performance*, Routledge, New York 2019, pp. 262-275.

in creating our existence; it could transform the psychophysical state and therefore also affect the body both to be sick or healthy. Moreover, since at the quantum level matter is nothing but a flow of energy, we become part of an interconnected and indivisible whole, and each of our actions could influence the whole. From this point of view, as a kind of “quantum activism”<sup>8</sup>, butoh dance has the tools to launch a new dare for the future and contribute to activate a transformative personal practice, that can at the same time influence the evolution of our world toward a new ethic, animated by archetypal values such as justice, peace or equality.

## We are made by energy

In his book *Karada to iu shomotsu* (A Book Named Body), Kasai states that we have two possible choices regarding the way we think about the relationship with our body: we can live considering our body as a kind of burden that we carry with us without any consciousness, unless it breaks or falls ill; or we can try to get rid of this condition of slavery by learning to read the body as if it were a book<sup>9</sup>. But if we learn to read the “book named body” we could reach an infinite source of energy – thousands of times greater than the one generated by food intake. And we could reactivate, in a conscious way, that process of body growth that unconsciously the sounds of the mother tongue trigger in the foetal phase of our existence up to the age of three, when there is not yet a difference between the “I” and the world. Therefore, learning to read the book called body is a fundamental task for a dancer who has to transform his body into a work of art. And it is an essential practice for anyone who would like to create his or her own life as a creative, original and evolutionary experience.

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8. The expression “quantum activism” refers to the work of the Indian physicist Amit Goswami theorized in his book *How Quantum Activism Can Save Civilization: A Few People Can Change Human Evolution* (Hampton Roads, Newburyport 2011): «Quantum activism is the idea of transforming ourselves and our societies in accordance with the transforming messages of quantum physics and the new primacy-of-consciousness paradigm» (*ivi*, p. 20). According to Goswami, in quantum physics objects are not definite things but possibilities of choice for consciousness and consciousness is the foundation of existence. But the consciousness we choose from is not the Ego, it is a non-ordinary cosmic state of consciousness. And there is an evolutionary movement of consciousness that is shifting toward manifesting the supramental archetypes in us: «Suppose we solidly base our actions on evolutionary ethics, on the very scientific notion of the evolution of consciousness and the demand of evolutionary movement of consciousness on us that meaning processing must be a privilege for everyone. In this way, the active principle of evolutionary ethics is: our actions are ethical when they maximize the evolutionary potential of every human being» (*ivi*, p. 343). Thinking about the nature of movement, in his book *Karada to iu shomotsu* (A Book Named Body) Kasai states: «We will never be able to solve the enigma of body movement without having challenged the mystery of time. Let’s think of Einstein’s theories: if a man moves at the speed of light, time and space, the interior and the exterior merge and a null space-time appears, which I call consciousness. Moving at the speed of light means going beyond the limits of matter. When the speed of light is reached, that is, when the limits of matter are reached, one is instantly projected into the realm of consciousness itself. When we enter this territory by reaching the speed of light or by passing matter, the true aspect of consciousness begins to manifest», that is «all the forms in which the natural world manifests itself, exist as potentialities» (Akira Kasai, *Un libro chiamato corpo*, a cura di Maria Pia D’Orazi, Artdigiland, Dublino 2016 (I ed. *Karada to iu shomotsu*, Shoshi Yamada, Tōkyō 2011), p. 202). And more: «Inside the body that is in a null space-time, all the events that make up the history of man exist not as reality but as potential. [...] We can define dance as a “conscious movement” which transforms potentiality into actuality through the body» (*ivi*, p. 211).

9. Cf. *ivi*, pp. 90-91.

Kasai is the well-known first pupil of Ohno Kazuo who took part, together with his master, in some of the Hijikata's *Dance Experience* that originated butoh in the Sixties<sup>10</sup>. Today is one of the few dancers belonging to the so-called first generation of butoh who is still active on the stage. And he is often saying: «There must be a reason if I am still here dancing»<sup>11</sup>.

When asked about the origin of his dance, Kasai always acknowledges that his dance was born from the meeting with Ohno and Hijikata and it could not have been otherwise. But, in the same time, he is sure that dancing butoh today has nothing to do with Ohno and Hijikata. That is, we can look at Hijikata and Ohno's work and trace from their experience a kind of dance that historically developed in Japan; or we can consider butoh as a way to think about body and nature. In the latter case we have to admit that butoh was born in Japan only by chance, and «Hijikata and Ohno discovered something that already existed, like Newton describing the law of gravity. They have only demonstrated that butoh is possible, and that it can be found anywhere»<sup>12</sup>. The way of thinking about body and nature that is typical of butoh, according to Kasai, is based on the idea that there is no difference between man and nature. And this idea is actually a common notion belonging to traditional Oriental culture and opposes Western culture, which is used to believing that nature is an object to be observed from the outside, rather than something made of the same matter as human beings.

In order to read our body as if it were a book, we need to see first what matter really is. And it seems that we first have to overcome a misunderstanding concerning the matter identity. As Kasai states, «in the West matter is the body, in the East there is ultimately no matter»<sup>13</sup>. To be precise, nowadays things are no longer exactly like that. Modern quantum physics has changed the concept of matter in Western culture too, while the same Japan has been going to loose its identity during a process of forced westernization that changed even the traditional vision of the body – as pointed

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10. In particular, *Bara iro dansu* (*Rose-coloured dance*, 1965) and *Tomato – Instructional Illustrations for the Study of Divine Favour in Sexual Love* (1966).

11. The quote is taken from a video recorded interview by the author with Kasai Akira, which took place in Tokyo in 2010 and was not published. In it, Kasai goes on to say: «I belong to the same generation as Hijikata and Ohno, and I am still active, I might not even be here anymore. And I don't know how many more years I can continue to dance, but the fact that I'm still alive means that I still have something to do, a duty to fulfil. And it is not a question of repeating or realizing what Ohno and Hijikata have done».

12. The author, as a participant, collected the quote during the Kasai's workshop in Rome on 2004. The idea that butoh can be found anywhere, echoes Hijikata statement «Tōhoku is everywhere» (Kurihara Nanako, *Hijikata Tatsumi. The Words of Butoh*, in «The Drama Review», vol. XLIV, n. 1, Spring 2000, p. 21). As the author wrote: «Trying to get to know the substance that made up his body, born from the experience of a young boy growing up experimenting the world in the harsh, powerful and uncontrollable wilderness, Hijikata ended up transforming Tōhoku – his native region – in an imaginary place, beyond time and space. Tōhoku is everywhere since “the utter darkness exists throughout the world” he stated. The desire and the need to face the mystery of the body then could be the birthplace of butoh everywhere. [...] If it is true that butoh can be built anywhere it is also true that “building butoh is a task that is simple and complicated at once: butoh is a dance that is born when you understand the body” – Kasai observes – “but the understanding of the human body implies the understanding of the universe in its entirety. It is a simple question that needs to find an answer: Can we read our body as though it were a book?» (Maria Pia D'Orazi, *Building the Dancing Body: Akira Kasai from Butoh to Eurythmy*, cit., p. 140).

13. Sondra Horton Fraleigh, *Dancing into Darkness. Butoh, Zen and Japan*, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh 1999, p. 234.

out by Noguchi Hiroyuki in one of his studies<sup>14</sup>. Anyhow this shifting of paradigm is still far from becoming a shared common notion, and we can say that Western culture is still based on a worldview dates back to the father of modern physics, Isaac Newton, and his laws of motion and gravity. Newton considered nature as an unchangeable matter that responds to fixed laws, which can be observed from the “outside”. In his universe only what can be observed is considered to be real, every cause produces an effect and everything has an independent existence within its own borders. This mechanistic model is based on the Cartesian idea of separation between matter and consciousness: man is aware of himself as an isolated being living “within” his body. And for hundreds of years we have operated against nature defining ourselves as an “I” living apart from its world. On the contrary, Eastern culture has always studied nature from the “inside”, following an organic model in which a cosmic energy is at work. All phenomena are connected to each another and influence each other; and all are considered different manifestations of a unique reality.

These two different cultural settings produce a different way of thinking about body. As Kasai sums up, «Westerners are used to think body as if the skin were a border. Easterners believe that body stretches beyond the skin to infinity»<sup>15</sup>.

The cosmic energy that Eastern science recognized as final reality of our world is what quantum physics has bumped into when scientists studied the subatomic world. They discovered that, at our most elemental level, matter disappears; atoms, the building blocks of everything in the physical universe, are made out of invisible energy and everything reduce down to being energetic charge. The same body is nothing but energy patterns. And if we want to relate to our body considering its essence, we should necessarily include the awareness of energy.

Kasai recognizes that all our daily experiences produce a corresponding inner bodily sensation, which we usually ignore. As in language every word corresponds to a meaning, in the “body book” to a specific bodily sensation (word) always corresponds a flow of energy (meaning). The energy inside our bodies flows always unconsciously. But if we manage to become aware of whatever bodily sensations and we try to retain them, within our body these sensations turn into “energy ready to be used”.

This is one way to read the “book named body”: we have to pay attention to the most insignificant actions performed almost automatically every day – as the impressions of warmth rather than coldness that give us meeting someone; or the feeling about a city visited for the very first time: bright or gloomy, heavy or light.

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14. Cf. Noguchi Hiroyuki, *The Idea of the Body in Japanese Culture and its Dismantlement*, in «International Journal of Sport and Health Science», vol. II, 2004, pp. 8-24; in particular, cf. p. 11 and pp. 19-23.

15. The author as a participant collected the quote during the Kasai’s Italian workshop in Tuscania (Italy) on July 2011. As already pointed out by the author speaking of the concept of matter, Kasai simplifies here a complex notion that presents exceptions and new directions of research also in the “West”. The author preferred not to take this into account, because it would have opened another substantial chapter on the connection among body-mind-environment that was misleading with respect to Kasai’s present argumentation goal.

The other way to read the “book named body” is to recognize the force of voice emission when you produce the language’s sounds silently into your body. When we talk, we usually don’t pay attention to the energy needed to utter words. But if we do it by silently emitting vowels inside our body, we separate the force of vocalization from the voice and we can perceive this energy. Separating the force of vocalization from the voice, allows us to access a reservoir of pure vital energy.

Specifically, Kasai defines *butoh* as a dance that tries to connect movement to awareness of senses work and to awareness of the process of creating words, both considered as energetic experiences<sup>16</sup>. Of course, it is not a question of simply being aware of feeling sensations and emitting sounds, but rather observing them as if they belonged to someone else. It’s required a great effort of will. This is a dance technique. And the key word in this process is awareness.

## Enter inside the body

At the age of 19, Kasai started to attend Ohno’s dance studio in Yokohama and did so for almost three years. He talks about the meaning of that time summing up it just in one sentence: «Enter inside the body»<sup>17</sup>. Kasai reports that, on the second day of class, Ohno gave him this theme: «Observe the world with lead eyes»<sup>18</sup>. Then explains that if we observe lead from the “outside”, as in Newtonian physics, we must think about mass, weight or colour of lead. And we, as subject of this observation, are passive; we are not generating a reality. We just can imitate the external qualities of lead.

But, if we look at lead “from within”, we have to consider the word “lead” beyond its meaning and perceive it as a flow of energy – as happens to a child who does not yet know the language and has not yet the memory to condition his perceptions. So, in this latter case we are active observer, since starting from the image of the object we have to create a new reality. About “observing the world with lead eyes” exercise Kasai says: «I planted two masses of lead in the place of the ocular globes and slowly started to move, feeling myself gradually descend into stillness, into the darkness that rejects all that is human, in the place where time and space no longer exist»<sup>19</sup>. The inner space is an active space appearing with the action of imagining. Imagination binds man and matter from “within” projecting them in a space of unlimited possibilities. To really grasp the matter from the inside you have to get beyond the memories of your life. You have to be no-body in no-space and no-time and merge into the form of the-object-that-shall-remain-nameless, so that you can have perceptions that originate from other points of view. When you bumped in something that your mind might label as “not-me” and

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16. This quote was collected by the author, who personally participated in it, during the Kasai workshop in Tuscania (Italy) on July 2011.

17. Akira Kasai, *Un libro chiamato corpo*, cit., pp. 117-118.

18. *Ivi*, p. 118.

19. *Ibidem*.

you don't leap into your known concepts and labels, you can experience it as a kind of energy. And you must lose the grip of your Ego.

The field where experiences are already present as energy patterns (or invisible frequencies carrying information) and all possibilities exist, is what quantum physics calls Zero-Point field. Here everything exists as potential choice for consciousness, and you bring a reality to life with your attention and your intention. It's what is called *Ki* in Japan and China, *Prana* in India, *Plērōma* for ancient *Gnosis*<sup>20</sup>, and even *Collective unconscious* in Jung psychoanalysis. This field of infinite energy has always been known as a metaphysical concept, until quantum physics scientifically demonstrated its concrete existence. And that is what the human beings usually think possible to reach when they abandon their physical existence.

On the contrary, Kasai believes we can enter this field before we die; and that «there is a deep connection between the perception of death and the reason why human beings dance or perform the conscious movement we call dance»<sup>21</sup>. And this connection regards the relation between body and consciousness. Or to put it better with Kasai's words: «Dance can achieve the unity between life and death»<sup>22</sup>. To escape the paradox of this sentence, we must take a step back and return to the “inside-outside” difference.

Kasai explains that «if you want to know “the inside of the watch”, you can open the case and observe the mechanisms inside it»<sup>23</sup>, and you can also «observe the inside of the human being by opening the belly with a scalpel and exposing the bowels»<sup>24</sup>. But, in this latter case, «you would not observe the interior, rather a “further external layer” usually hidden from view»<sup>25</sup>.

This means that the awareness that we usually think existing “inside” the body – as well as the

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20. «In the world of consciousness, everything is complete and everything is satisfied, nevertheless this world is seething with excess energy: it is that inexhaustible superabundance that the ancient Greeks called *plērōma*. [...] Daily actions, both conscious and unaware, are always sequences of movements aimed at a purpose. The movement of dance, on the other hand, gradually frees itself from the chain of causality and necessity that flows from the past towards the future and becomes pure movement. This movement free from finality has much in common with the “movement of consciousness in which everything has already been realized”, even if the difference between the two remains between the material body and the invisible consciousness» (*ivi*, p. 210). This argument appears also during the rehearsal of Kasai's *Eliogabalo Project* in Rome, as reported by the author: «It is essential to perceive the air as a human being, to duet with the air. In butoh dance the air is a transparent human being and every time we breathe, we ingest it and let another human being out, and each breath has enormous consequences on the whole. The human being is in the air even if he is not visible. And this phenomenon concerns something like an infinite energy which in Europe is called *plērōma*, in India *prana*, in China and Japan *ki*» (Maria Pia D'Orazi, *Il demone di Mezzogiorno. A proposito di Trasformazioni e del Butō*, in Samantha Marenzi (a cura di), *Trasformazioni. Rassegna internazionale di danza butō. Fotografia di un'esperienza*, Editoria&Spettacolo, Riano 2010, pp. 21-57: p. 49).

21. Akira Kasai, *Un libro chiamato corpo*, cit., pp. 211-212.

22. Quote collected by the author during Kasai's *Eliogabalo Project* rehearsal in Rome, on May 2010. The *Eliogabalo Project* was a collaboration by the author with Kasai, and the author video recorded rehearsal and performances. The first version of this project took place in Rome on September 2009, after one month of Kasai's artistic residence. Afterwards, there were two other versions of that performance: one on May 2010 without two members of the original version; the second in Palermo and Rome on September-October 2010 together with Kasai's Japanese Eurythmy Dance Company.

23. Akira Kasai, *Un libro chiamato corpo*, cit., p. 114.

24. *Ibidem*.

25. *Ibidem*.



products of consciousness such as words, thoughts and feelings – does not actually exist “inside” the body. Moreover, «the idea of possessing a body is in itself a great illusion»<sup>26</sup>:

If I had been born in the darkness and I have never seen my body or myself moving, I would not be able to understand when I move my arm how far I lift it, nor the distance I travel with my leg. [...] The whale is large but perhaps it has never been able to see its body, and perhaps the only thing she has seen since her birth is the blue of the ocean; so for her the body is the ocean that stretches infinitely in front of her and will not think she is stuck in the body or maybe will think to be a punctiform like a virus<sup>27</sup>.

The point Kasai wants to get to, is that «in reality we do not have a body but only the consciousness of the body»<sup>28</sup>. And if we consider consciousness as an entity independent of matter, and we think that man does not interact with matter but only has the consciousness of matter, then «we can affirm that everything in the universe was generated by consciousness»<sup>29</sup>. Kasai refers to esoteric sources like the founder of anthroposophy Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) and the religious form of knowledge identified as *Gnosis* – since both share the same belief «that men were not born from the universe but the universe was born from the inside of the men»<sup>30</sup>. But, actually, this idea that consciousness is the foundation of being is what the Indian physicist Amit Goswami points as a fact that can be scientifically demonstrated<sup>31</sup>. If we adopt this perspective, as a consequence we have to change our way of thinking about death. And we have two options: if we consider consciousness as a result of neural cells interactions, then death is the separation of consciousness from the body. But if we consider consciousness as an entity independent of matter, death is only the annulment of the consciousness of body.

If we consider man's consciousness as a product of the complex interactions of neural cells, death is the cancellation of consciousness. But if instead of a material phenomenon we considered consciousness as an autonomous entity with respect to matter, and we thought that man does not interact with matter but only has the consciousness of matter, then we would conclude that everything in the universe was generated from consciousness. If we put ourselves in this perspective, death is only the annulment of the consciousness of matter, while consciousness as such is not touched by death<sup>32</sup>.

When Kasai defines dance as a small death, he is not speaking about the separation of consciousness from the body. He refers to the annulment of the consciousness of the body that occurs when consciousness fills every corner of the body. It's when you become pure consciousness. And this death is a big challenge to the body, since body finds its creative energy and nourishment into consciousness.

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26. Quote collected by the author as participant during Kasai's workshop in Rome on July 2012.

27. *Idem*.

28. The quote is taken from a video recorded interview by the author with Kasai Akira, which took place in Tokyo on November 2012 and was not published.

29. Akira Kasai, *Un libro chiamato corpo*, cit., pp. 211-212.

30. Maria Pia D'Orazi, *Il corpo eretico*, CasadeiLibri, Padova 2008, p. 124.

31. Cf. Amit Goswami, *The Self-Aware Universe*, TarcherPerigee, New York 1993.

32. Akira Kasai, *Un libro chiamato corpo*, cit., pp. 211-212.

In fact, death as the separation between body and consciousness does not pertain only to death people:

If we consider death as the complete separation between body and consciousness, and life as that state of constant unity between body and consciousness that allows the conscious movement of the body, then we can describe death as a common phenomenon both to those who die and to those who live<sup>33</sup>.

Movement is a complex and delicate relationship between body and consciousness. And Kasai believes that this relation should not be limited to dance, but it could work for every human being. In everyday life, the body becomes a victim of its habits and loses its connection with consciousness, thus losing its creative power.

From the perspective of neuroscience, learning means making new connections in the brain. Experiences enhance the brain circuitry, and create emotions as the chemical feedback. The brain is a kind of living record of everything we have learned and experienced, and for this it is mainly a product of the past. As Dr. Dispenza explains, «when your brain is in action – as you drive your car, for example – you are turning on a specific sequence, pattern, and combination of neurological networks»<sup>34</sup>. And «if you keep doing the same routines over and over again, they will become a habit»<sup>35</sup>: set of automatic, unconscious thoughts, behaviours, and emotions that you acquire through frequent repetition. Over time it become easier to automatically think and feel in the same way, and your body is conditioned into the past. It is what happen for example when driving a car, you have driven so many times that your body automatically knows how to do it better than your brain or conscious mind, and your body becomes the mind: «You just switch on the autopilot and go unconscious, which means you'll wake up the next morning and essentially do the same things all over again»<sup>36</sup>. And it is as if you were always living in the past.

Every time you take your attention off your ordinary life – like in meditation – you return to the present moment unfolding your attention and energy into unknown field beyond matter. You become pure consciousness. And then your life should turn into possibility, since you are telling your body that it is no longer the mind – you are the mind. When you take your attention off your ordinary life, you invest your energy into the unknown, and you become the creator of your life instead of a victim of your life. New possibilities in your life mean also a new state of health, because when you change your state of being, that is your thoughts and emotions, you can change the expression of your genes “turning” some on and others off:

This is because you are sending a new chemical signal to your DNA, which can then instruct

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33. *Ivi*, p. 212. Just some lines before, Kasai defined “dance” as the «the conscious movement of the body».

34. Joe Dispenza, *Becoming Supernatural: How Common People Are Doing the Uncommon*, cit., p. 55.

35. *Ivi*, p. 57.

36. *Ibidem*.

your genes to make different proteins – up-regulating or down-regulating to make all kinds of new building blocks that can change the structure and function of your body<sup>37</sup>.

Moreover, removing attention off our daily routine, also activates the self-healing ability:

When you are in the present moment, you get out of your own way. As you become pure consciousness, pure awareness, and change your brain waves from beta to alpha and even to theta, the autonomic nervous system – which knows how to heal your body much better than your conscious mind does – steps in and finally has an opportunity “to clean your house”. That’s what creates brain coherence<sup>38</sup>.

In the world of Kasai becoming pure awareness means become aware of senses activity even in our most infinitesimal perceptions and to recognize the force of voice. That is what happens when we succeed in reading the book named body.

To use quantum physic language, when you get beyond your physical-world identity you are unfolding into a field where you can tap infinite energy to create dance as well as your life and health. It’s also the place where you can merge with people’s thought, feelings and sensations as energetic frequencies, and you can learn how to take care of all humanity broadening your identity.

Kasai points out that the body limited by the skin that marks the border between inside and outside is only one limited part of our identity, the individual one. But this body contains in turn three other bodies: the *ethnic body* that is common to all those who share the same mother tongue; the *earthly body* that exists in unity with the planet Earth; and the *cosmic body*, that represents the totality of potentiality and corresponds to consciousness<sup>39</sup>. His idea is that, living – and dancing – using only the individual body limited by skin, ends up draining and destroying the body itself. But learning to read the book named body, or to read life in its essence, we can find a new source of energy to reactivate body and to feel ourselves part of a whole that contains and goes beyond the individual. The task that butoh can afford today is how to achieve and preserve this energy which is in the essence of dance; how to return to the origin of the body, which is where body and consciousness move together, in order to build a powerful body, capable of creating a meaningful life and positive values to be introduced into the collective unconscious, and contributing to the evolution of humanity.

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37. *Ivi*, p. 69.

38. *Ivi*, p. 97.

39. Cf. Akira Kasai, *Un libro chiamato corpo*, cit., pp. 127-128.