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Thesis: The Apollonian and Dionysian Element in Eurythmie

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The Apollonian and Dionysian Element in Eurythmie

With a background in art history and archeology, I was fascinated when Apollo and Dionysus also made an appearance during my training in Eurythmy. Adding to that, I knew that both Gods had reached significance in philosophy as opposing concepts in discussing art, without a deeper knowledge of how this was introduced into scientific discourse. Always interested in the how and why of things, to search for the roots in history and philosophy of the concepts/elements named for the two Greek gods in our performing art was my goal.

My thesis is divided into three parts:

1) In the first part, I examine the history of the Gods Apollo and Dionysus, how their cults were established and evolved over the centuries in ancient Greece and their roots in even older civilizations. As a next step, I follow how the concept of Apollo and Dionysus are received in the modern era, i.e. in the writings of Schlegel, Schelling and Nietzsche and how they were established as a philosophical concept of opposites. In front of this historical background a historical classification in relation to the history of ideas of the mentionings and use of both concepts in Anthroposophy follows, also in relation of Steiner as the editor for a complete edition of Schlegel's works and his intimate knowledge of „Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung“.

2) The second part of the thesis examines the surprisingly meager information given about the Apollonian and Dionysian elements in Speech Eurythmy as described in the „Querband“.

3) Last, I work with practical examples for a selection of these descriptions. For this, the elements given by Steiner are extended by aspects and ideas that accumulated around the information given over the years and performative use that is handed down. These Apollonian and Dionysian elements are described in the way they are expressed in space, through the human form, through selection and fashioning of the letters/phonemes, the character of the feet and step and how the higher parts of being are involved. Having an inclination about the history behind the terms used offers another perspective and insight for the process of developing one's own performance for the elements given by Rudolf Steiner. Part of my talk given about my thesis was a small choreography for each selected element performed to poems or parts of poems that reflected those.