LIGHT DANCE:
Light and the Nature of Body Movement
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ABSTRACT

Light Dance is a conscious transfiguration of the body, its movement and the encompassing space; a transposition of matter to light exalted in the dance. This corresponds to the conceptualized spirit of the performer whose body is "consumed" by light. A transposition occurs between the performer and audience. The audience experiences the dissolution of the body into light.

In this thesis I assemble fragments of visible and inner light experiences and concepts of the body by an intuition of the spirit. The purpose is to equate visible and inner light. The writing is based on light as the physical self of the spirit; the significance of the body and movement. Specific examples are cited to create a contextual fabric for the inspired design of Light Dance.

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INNER LIGHT

Inner light describes an experience of mind and body unison which inspires Light Dance. It is a revelation induced by ritual movement and experienced as an inner sensation of light which overwhelms the body. Light Dance transforms inner light into visible light through the body's movement. Inner light is not definitive, but appropriately applied considering what is described. Illumination is the impulse of the spirit sensed as subjective light. Descriptions of light phenomena are consistently used in translating a variety of religious experiences; a conceptualization which exalts visible light because of its efficacious qualities and identifies visible with subjective light. Appropriately, the experience of visible light can induce inner illumination. Further, a bodily experience of physical light, that of ritual movement, is akin to the conceptual transfiguration of the body into light in the spiritual experience. In both cases the body is overcome by light.

A conscious awareness of a spiritual life remains and weaves itself into the human existence. Inner light alludes to the intuitive apprehension of light. Its inspiration antecedes the conception of visible light, and inversely, visible light is used to describe inner light experiences. A departure from physical existence is ushered by an
overpowering sensation of light with a radiance that supersedes manifest luminescence and symbolizes vitality. It pervades the private body and the sense of self. The sensation indicates a passage and enlightenment towards the spiritual world. The revelation is instantaneous, but the culmination of a disciplined preparation of the self. Recurring symbols of conceptualization are being light, emanating from light and emitting light.\(^1\) The body is necessarily involved in process or by consequence. The inner sensation of light is the intuition of the spirit.

Visible light renders the dynamics of the natural world. Body movement is an application of the body to light. The sense of light intersects with the sense of the self and issues the presence of the spirit. It is with this purpose that movement becomes ritual.

**Light Dance** is a conscious transfiguration of the body, its movement and encompassing space, a transposition from matter to lightexalted in the dance. The change is equivalent to the performer's perception. A transposition occurs between the performer and the audience. The audience experiences the dissolution of the body and the embodiment of light.

CHAPTER I
THE BODY

The Supernatural Body

Conscious discoveries of the meaning of light originate in the natural world and are ultimately personal. They involve a process of conceptualization and the intuition of the physical self and body as a modality to perceive and exhibit the significance of light. Light is the body of the spirit in a world of divine meaning.

The body is both spiritually vital and physically manifest. It embodies the spirit and invents the material world. The form of the body and physical experience are inherently creative, exemplified by the sensation of inner light. The transfigured body represents the self imbued with the unconditioned fire of the spirit radiating its divine nature.

The ontological significance of the human form is illuminated by the metamorphic body of the revelation. The body absorbs qualities of light. The subsequent changes sensuously exemplify the worldly relationship of the body and light.

The spiritual experience is a physical comprehension and the instigation of a ready self. The spirit comes to the material world issued by its own physical being, conceived in affirmation or revelation.
of the spiritual self. The body is an intermedium between the physical and spiritual experiences; the creative embodiment of the self that conceives the natural world.

All conceptualization of the spirit is an individual and ideological process. The morphology of subjective light and corporal change is diverse. There is however, a congruency of the forms conceived and a unity in what is symbolized. All are apprehensions of the ontological significance of light. As light effects metamorphic change it is the figure of the spirit and the extensible body is the emanation of a spiritual idiom.

The Corporeal Body

Oskar Schlemmer considered human existence as cosmic being. The significance of the concept is only apparent when conceived within a universal continuum. The human being is not an object, but a cosmic integral, complete in itself within a unified cosmological system. The

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concept of the cosmos is made of "the mind - the inner aspect of nature, nature - the physically manifest, and the psyche - the domain of space."\(^3\)

These are interdependent, constant forces which compose the physical present.

The human being is the image of cosmological unity and process; a being bound by the continuity of forces and vital by their synchronic effect. Cosmic order resides in the equilibrium of the body. The nexus of corporal systems is the codified incarnation of related forces, given shape by the microcosmic body.

"Line which connects sight with what is seen"\(^4\) is the most yielding element of the body image. The outline is a rhythmic abstraction impulsed by the form of the body in space. It is an intellectual counterpart of the form, the result of an objective intuition inspired by the visible nature of the body.

...It [musical harmony] is composed in no other manner than the contour lines made around the limbs and from which human beauty is generated.\(^5\)

Leonardo da Vinci

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\(^4\) Ibid., p. 24.

The outline is the essential geometry and sublimation of the body. It visually resolves the image of the body to a divine unification with space. The singularity of the body and space is the source of a shared geometry.

Proportion

Albrecht Dürer sought to measure the beauty of the body in line. An absolute rendering transposes beauty from the corporeal to delineated form. Dürer formulated the body's harmony through a determination of component relationships which were used to guide rhythmical line through the process of drawing. Dürer's sense of bodily proportion was the negotiable advocate of beauty he could quantify and regenerate. The symmetry of the whole determines the dimensions of any part. Dürer's idealizations created numerical systems of body part synthesis and an ideal whole - the synthesis of body types.

6 The purpose of Dürer's art was the replication of beauty as created by god; beauty extracted from the diversity of the world, constituting the ideal. "Deficiencies are not beautiful." The ideal represents complete accordance with the cosmos, and the elimination of deficiency. Beauty is the image of the unified design of the universe. The beauty of art is the image of the ideal. Walter L. Strauss, The Complete Drawings of Albrecht Dürer, 6 vols. (New York: Abaris Books, 1974), vol. 5_Human Proportions_, pp. 2454-5.
The transference of beauty from corporal to linear form is catalyzed by the sight of the drawer and impulsion of light; the visual harmony perceived of the body in whole. A timeless balance of the body and space is profiled. A dualistic beauty is the symmetry of cosmological unity.

The harmony of the human form is its sublimity. The embodied spirit, central to the form, governs the parts. The body exists in necessary accordance with the cosmic structure. Conceptualization of the body disunites it and neutralizes its sanctity. The summated sense of wholeness is a proportional balance which supersedes disunity. The divinity which visibly manifests the body equilibrates its components. Equilibrium is the divine nature of the body and cosmos.

Dürer's studies of proportion culminated with the integrated and dynamic balance of the moving body and space. He visibly blended the form and space by their congruity, in geometric abstractions of the body. Dürer rendered the movement of the body and space at once in stereometric modulations.

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7 Ibid., p. 2635.
The Body and Space

The integrations of Dürer's example influenced Schlemmer. He geometrically reduced the natural outline of the body further into squares. This was box man. The squared body then assumed a consonant, three-dimensionality in cubes and became ambulent architecture.

The rhythm of the body outline is described in horizontal and vertical line, reduced to the cardinal axes of the plane. The squared body, endowed with the volume of three dimensionality, is elaborated into a rhythmic composition of cubes. A visual blending of cubic geometry and the relative rhythm of the body illustrates the geometric reciprocity of the body and space.

The transfigurative simplification of the body describes the nature of its shape in the mathematics of two and three-dimensional space; and space, by the visual rhythm of the body.
CHAPTER II
SPACE

Supernatural Space

There was a symbol of a rope that connected the earth with the sky and assured communication between human and divine beings. Human ascension up the rope vividly bound the earth and heavens, and the body and soul. Everything is interwoven.

The symbol that joins the natural and the sublime reveals the weave of the wind that unites all existing things as breath binds and integrates the body. This is the thread with which living beings are woven and worlds are strung together. Within the web of existence beings are sewn into life, individually unified and boundlessly disseminated by the thread of their own breath that attaches to the weaver.

The sun is a weaver and binds the worlds to itself by the wind. It emits and sustains all life by the threads it holds extended to the four points of the compass.  

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10 In mythical times, the earth and sky were palpably connected. Worldly communication with heaven was possible by human ascension or descent of the gods. As a result of a catastrophic event, the rope was cut and all communication between heaven and earth was severed which changed the structure of the cosmos and the human condition; their separation of the body and soul. Eliade, The Two and the One, p. 167.

11 The four points of the compass attached to the weaver by threads, signify the temporally faceted wholeness of three-dimensional form and space in concept - the four divergent designations, united by their creator. Ibid., p. 170-77.
As the sun weaves with wind it manifests with light. The corporeal fabric woven is bound by air and materialized by light. Space is the fabric of air and light, conceptualized in time. The ensemble of body and space, and the intercourse of the body and air by breath signify the cosmic fabric.

Corporeal and Created Space

Necessity\textsuperscript{12} of Leonardo's naming is the uniformity of the universe and the necessary affirmation of the unity by all constituents. The allusive correspondence of the body and space describes the universal accordance of the microcosmic body. The proportional equilibrium of the body balanced by the centralized navel echos through the structure of the universe. The stability of the body is the result of the correspondence of microcosm to macrocosm, and was appropriately transferred to the centralized architectural designs of Leonardo.

The whole body is not the aggregate of constituent parts, but the concord of the body and space; the divine weave of space and form. The mesh of the fabric is symbolized in the proportional harmonies of the body, divided in the measure of concept, but inconceivable separated.

\textsuperscript{12} Kemp, Leonardo da Vinci, p. 150.
The golden section is the visual measure of the existent equilibrium of being. It delineates the manifest relationship of natural space and form in accordance with the numerical ratio of the golden mean. The abstracted values symbolize the unison of space and form quantified.

The Modulor\textsuperscript{13} is a quantified scale of the body that emanates patterns of measurement. The graduated harmony of the body resonates infinitely through the numerical scale, transposed by the golden mean and extended by the Fibonacci principle.\textsuperscript{14}

The Modulor quantifies and delineates a visual instance of equilibrium - the body and space of one fabric. The instant isolated by the Modulor is a two dimensional abstraction, and is manifested in the architectural facade. Three-dimensional space is created by a combination of facades resulting in a volume balanced with the body.

The infinity of measures generated by the Modulor correspond to the flexibility of the proportional relationship of body and space in the fluxional equilibrium of the visual experience. Specifically, the

\textsuperscript{13} Le Corbusier developed the Modulor to unite separate concepts of measurement; a universal standardization imparted by the cosmic measure of the body. Le Corbusier, \textit{the Modulor: A Harmonious Measure to the Human Scale Universally Applicable to Architecture and Mechanics}, trans. Peter de Francia and Anna Bostock (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954)

\textsuperscript{14} The Fibonacci principle is a numerical series in which each succeeding term is the sum of the two preceding.
Fibonacci multiplicity rendered by the Modulor corresponds to the perspective cone of vision.\textsuperscript{15}

The dilation of space apprehended by the eye, from its point into the distance parallels the Fibonacci expansion of figures rendered by the Modulor. Similarly, the cone is a temporal composite of visual instances comprising the concept of three-dimensional space. It parallels the juxtapositioning of architectural facades in the composition of a three-dimensional space created by the Modulor. Both the visual cone and architectural space are balanced by the harmony of the body. The infinite variability of both is the flux that comprises the visual experience.

The temporal combination of instances is the composite perception of three dimensional space. Its balance is the effect of a cosmic equilibrium, perceptually endowed by light and manifested in concept by the self.

The harmony of the architectural space created by the Modulor is a function of the body and a kindred volume; a microcosmic and quantified rendition of the visual world.

\textsuperscript{15} Le Corbusier, \textit{The Modulor}, pp.78-80.
Supernatural Movement

Divine play exists outside the governance of cosmic laws and the boundaries of the natural world, spaceless and timeless. The unconditioned spontaneity motivates the free manifestation of the universe and is the inherent creativity of its dynamic order. It is the fountain of the cosmos.

Transcendence from the human condition is a passing from physical to spiritual being. The instance of this transubstantiation coincides with the genesis of the cosmos. In passage, cosmic structure is dissolved by personal acquisition and nullification of the whole systems of time and space. The integration of the self with the cosmos annuls the perceptual separation of the being and world that is physical comprehension.

Redeemed through dissolution is the inception (a point origin) of the cosmos, which precedes its manifested structure. From this navel, the world spread into the four cardinal directions and time proceeded by the movement of the cosmos around this axis. An arrival at the point is the attainment of existential liberty.

—Eliade, The Two and the One, pp. 170-77.
Liberation is signified by ascension. The body is released from the earth's grasp. The sublimated body rises towards the heavens in the absence of corporeal limitations.

The flight leads up in opposition to the pull of gravity and the physical order it sustains. The course of the flight progressively disassembles the order of time and space. The conceptual process of the transcendence is the symbolically apportioned passage of the self from the body to spirit.

The Body Center

The significance of gravity lies in the palpability of the order it distinguishes; an order light reveals. The body moves by this sensory structure and shares the divine axis it defines. Movement displays the patterns of the physical world and accordance of the body. Its effusive motions like the dance of fire,\textsuperscript{17} translucently flaunt the divine play of the cosmos.

From the umbilical center burgeons the shape of the embodied spirit. The body exists in constant harmony with the point. The navel is

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., P.44.
the doorway between physical and spiritual worlds and the eternal orientation of sensorial consciousness.

...She [nature] creates limbs filled for movement in the bodies of animals, but puts within them the soul of the body which forms them, that is the soul of the mother which first constructs within the womb the shape of the man, and in due time awakens the soul that is to be its inhabitant. For this at first remained asleep, in the guardianship of the soul of the mother, who nourishes and gives it life through the umbilical vein, with all its spiritual members; 18 ... Leonardo da Vinci

The navel is the origin of the circle which circumscribes the balance of the whole body and the reciprocity of the body and space in the visual measure of its harmony. The circle that encompasses the extended limbs, and the square marked by the four points of the cross shaped by the body were envisioned by Vitruvius 19 and illustrated by Leonardo's Vitruvian Man. The proportional balance of the body in space is delineated by the circle and square; repercussive descriptions that blossom into the geometry of space and form. The point of visual convergence and subjective equilibrium of the body rightly originates the suffusive geometry that orders the physical experience.

Time and space are poised by the body which is encompassed by the flowing balance of their expanse.

Limbs move the body and mediate the will and the structure of the cosmos. The moving body temporally circumscribes its center and centralizes the flow of time and space. The temporal geometry swept in space by the body creates volumetric harmonies. The original geometry of the body orders the efflorescence of two dimensions into three in time.

The nature of the spirit is articulated in light by the time and space of the body's design.

The center of the body conducts both the visible harmony of its image and the bodily experience - sensory perception. The body is "the
measure of all things." It is the relativity of the visual experience and harmonizing center of the visual world.

The divine form of the cosmos is reflected in the nature of its embodiment. Inversely, by the form of the body, the self perceives and manifests the cosmic world.

In the visual pattern of the world, light materializes the symmetry of the self and soul.

...They (the gods) contrived that all such fire as having the property not of burning but giving a mild light should form a body akin to the light of every day. For they caused the pure fire within us, which is akin to that of the day, to flow through the eyes in a smooth and dense stream... So whenever the stream of vision is surrounded by mid-daylight it flows out like unto like, and coalescing therewith it forms one kindred substance... And this substance, having all become similar in its properties because of its similar nature, distributes the motions of every object it touches, or whereby it is touched, throughout all the body even unto the soul, and brings about that sensation which we now term seeing.

Timaeus

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21 In ancient Greece there was a concentrated effort to determine the link between the visual world and the eye. Proposed was the emission of an invisible fire from the eyes, which streamed forth to caress objects seen and reveal their form and color to the self. The fire of the eyes was akin to the elemental fire of the earth and was the issue of the soul. The fire of the body was the light of the world. Seeing was the circulatory process of cosmic manifestation, and the conception of the self. Vasco Ronchi, The Nature of Light: An Historical Survey, trans. V. Barocas (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 4-10.
The illuminated order that is seen to manifest the natural world perceptually originates with the body at its center. The proportional harmony seen is the balance felt, and the nature of light coincides with the force of gravity. The centralized equilibrium of the human form is shared by the natural world in visible and palpable acquiescence. The concept of the body burgeons from the point of origin and shapes the sensory world. It is the axis of corporal existence.

Movement defines the force of gravity and the sensual structure of space which exists in union with the visual world. The body center is the nucleus of visual and sensual symbiosis. The moving body subjectively and objectively integrates the natural forces by its focalizing center.

Integration

The unity of the cosmos, underlying all fragmentary perception is the seed of yogic integration. A stilling of the cosmic flux is subjectively achieved through practiced body control. The corporal fluctuation is fixed by a conceptual harnessing of psychophysical processes, tethered into unison by the equilibrating rhythms of the cosmos. Subjugation of the inner body transforms the flux to unity by a ritualized coalescence of the conscious self and the cosmic rhythms found
in the microcosmic body. Physical being is reduced to a unified modality. Control gained reflects the acquisition of the cosmos and the subsequent dissolution of the body by unification.

The self contemplates itself and excludes corporeality. The spirit is freed from the disparity of physical consciousness and unifies. The self withdraws into its own center and transcends secular existence, attaining an unconditioned and divine being.

Mastery of the body's function in space integrates sensibility and the spatial structure. Ritual subjugation of the outer body and what encompasses it unifies the concepts of the self and surroundings. Equalizing intent and the cosmic structure, patterned movement transforms the body into a rhythm centered at the navel. Corporeal systems combine in movement and the integrated mover transcends the secularity of the process.

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22 Yogic subjugation of the inner body is cosmicization. Control is the product of a intentional equilibrium between the self and the rhythms of the cosmos. Assimilation of the cosmos precedes emancipation. The symbol of a cosmos and body blend is the \textit{man-god}. Through the process of integration the body absorbs the form of the cosmos; the celestial bodies, earth and motions. the body is conceptually magnified to cosmic proportions. The spinal column is the axis of the universe. The limbs are the continents and the head holds the sun and moon as eyes. Breath is the cosmic wind which weaves the universe and the body. The sensation of the body is that of the cosmos, and by homologization perceptual distinctions are equalized. Unified, the spirit transcends the cosmos. Mircea Eliade, \textit{Yoga: Immortality and Freedom}, trans. Willard R. Trask, Bollingen Series, no. 56 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), p. 97-8, 227-41.

23 Eliade, \textit{Yoga}, p. 98.
Ritual and Performance

Light articulates the cosmic rhythms. Ritual movement is designed by light. Control of the outer body is achieved by the meditated coalescence of the body image and visible world in the synthesis of movement. A fusion of the self and the cosmos is realized in light.

The ritual is a rhythmically ordered and recurring passage, existent and known by persistence of the form. The ritual act incites control by the requisites of its embodiment, and transfigures and transcends by integration. In the motions of ritual effect is the uniformity of cosmic movement.

Transposition is symbolized in movement. Symbols shared are the sanction and ceremony of the ritual, existent by collective consciousness and signification. The transposition of the body to spirit is symbolized by a pervasive harmony of movement. Ceremony is the objective form of the exaltation.

Integration imbues the visible harmony of the moving body. Exaltation inspired by light is revealed in light to the viewer. The spiritual effect of the moving body is materialized by a circuitry of vision and light. The motions of ritual integration and their boundless
issuance are inspired by the spirit and constituted by light. through the rhythmic form of the symbol the viewer is imbied with the illuminated sublimity of the moving body. The moving body is the mutual means of passage through the gate of the navel which is the pinnacle of physical and spiritual convergence.

The divine mutuality of the symbol is the principle of performance. The metamorphic body is the centralized inspiration of spiritual experience. The focus of the exaltation is the origination of the stage and design of the theater.

"The man as dancer is the medium of transition into the great world of the theater."24

Oskar Schlemmer

The eminence of the moving body pervades the space of its encompassment. Experiential communication is determined by the visual relationship of the viewer to symbol fixed by the setting of the stage within the theater. Ultimately, the metamorphic body of the performer perspective seen by the viewer, emanates a circumambience that embraces the sense of the viewer's own space; the moving body affects the light of the theater that contains the visual experience of the viewer. The viewer

adopts the moving center and the performer and viewer move in perceptual concentricity.

The *Spherical Theater*\(^{25}\) of Andreas Weininger is a unified design. Spatial unity between the performer and audience is a consequence of the architectural form. The axial staging of the performance coincides with the axis of the sphere. The transposition of the performer originates from the stem of the theater form and necessarily encapsulates the audience.

\(^{25}\) Ibid., p. 89.
Control of the outer body is a coalescence of consciousness and the cosmos. The visible materialization of the intercourse is the shape and movement of the body, and symmetry of the embracive world. Degrees of coalescence are measured by skill; qualified by sport and valued and quantified by competition.

The body is animated and built by the impetus of the spirit that is the force of divine play. A purity of spiritual figuration is the channeling affect of an "unbending soul." 26 The religious alignment of the spirit is the Greek origin of athletics. Manifested purity was the form of the Greek ideal and proportional canon.

An enduring alignment is consummated by ritual exercise. The body does not develop in opposition to environmental conditions, but in synthesis. The elaboration of the body is also the subjective diminution of natural forces and the polarity between the body and outer world. The form of an ethereal existence is inspired and expressed by movement.

The body blends with the design of the world and reflectively displays its structure in exemplary movement.

Performance was the source of the athletic festival in ancient Greece; a glorified display of humanity in celebration of an earthly life. The universality broadened the festival into the Olympic Games, ritualized and exalted in macrocosmic reflection of the athlete's experience. The Olympics are a global integration of humanity and the cosmos by the unifying power of athletics. Exaltation spreads over humanity by the movement of the body, human vision and the fabric of light.
Light Dance is inspired by the sublimity of movement and the causality of light and exaltation. Its purpose is to equate visible and inner light, secular and spiritual experience.

Light Dance materializes in performance: phenomenal integration, the nullification of physical disparity and dissolution of the body in exaltation. The audience imbibes the disembodied spiritualities.

The centralized body of the performance moves in the absence of light. The image of the body and its ritualized patterns of movement are amplified and reconstituted by four delineations in light that circumscribe the performance space. The reconstitutions that encircle the body originate from it and the movement of the light is directed by the limbs.

The light sweeps the space in the circumambient rhythm of the moving body. The performer sees within to move the light and the entirety of the space. In the eyes of the viewer the space becomes the moving body governed by its center. The viewer's space moves by the thrust of the performer's body. They engage in a shared exaltation.
Light becomes the body and by the rhythm of its own making, embraces the sum of its incarnation; overwhelming the body like the sensation of inner light.

Within the depthless deep and clear existence of that abyss of light three circles shown—Three in color, one in circumference:

The second from the first, rainbow from rainbow; the third, an exaltation of pure fire equally breathed forth by the other two.

O Light Eternal fixed in itself alone, by itself alone understood, which from Itself loves and glows, self-knowing and self-known;

That second aureole which shone forth in Thee, conceived as a reflection of the first—or which appeared so to my scrutiny—

Seemed in Itself of its own coloration to be painted with man's image."²⁷

Dante

Light Dance
CHAPTER V
LIGHT

The Divination of Visible Light

Inner light is the concept of the spirit perceived with the qualities of natural light. The spirit assumes consciousness by the foreknowledge of light. The spirit and light unite in revelatory concept.

Implied is a duality in the nature of visible light. It manifests the visible world and elucidates the presence of the spirit.

Light is the physical self of the spirit. The spirit is the self of the body. The body and light embrace the same origin of spirit.

The twofold origin engenders the harmonic compliance of the body and natural world. It binds all visual severance of the body and space and of the wholeness of each. It is the geometric affinity of the body and space, the temporal continuity of three-dimensional perception and the integration of movement.

The physical self uses light to move in rhythm with the outer world. The self applied to light conceives the nature of its own spirit, conceptually eliminating the world by perceptual inversion.

Divinity fills the sensibility of the seer. Seen is the omnipresent spirit that engenders the form of the cosmos, and its reflection in the form of the body, the spirit incarnate.
...fix my eyes on the eternal light...

I saw within its depth how it conceives all things in a single volume bound by love, of which the universe is the scattered leaves; \(^{28}\)...

Dante

Physical being is divinity in perception of its own incarnations. This is the circularity of consciousness.

Light carries the soul of divinity that inspires human being and the sight of its own creation. Light is the materialization of space and movement; it is the form of the body and the binder of these.

Light is the life of the spirit.

\(^{28}\) Ibid.
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