

Ways of Knowing in Dance and Art

Editor-in-Chief Leena Rouhiainen

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Repercussions on a Dance-Making Project

The Meaning of Bodily Knowledge in a Creative Dance-Making Process

Mind the Body: Unearthing the Affiliation Between the Conscious Body and the Reflective Mind

In a Spiral: Cycles of Words, Dance and Strange Images

A Mono-Trilogy on a Spatial and Performative Process

Becoming an Active Agent in Dance and Through Dancing: A Teacher's Approach

I See a Kaleidoscope Dancing: Understanding, Criticizing and Recreating the World Around Us

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The Ways of Knowing and the School Reality

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Contents

Introduction	5
Riitta Pasanen-Willberg Totentanz – A Strange Dance in Life: The Inspiration for an Artist’s Work	11
Paula Salosaari Repercussions on a Dance-Making Project	41
Soili Hämäläinen The Meaning of Bodily Knowledge in a Creative Dance-Making Process	56
Eeva Anttila Mind the Body: Unearthing the Affiliation Between the Conscious Body and the Reflective Mind	79
Kirsi Heimonen In a Spiral: Cycles of Words, Dance and Strange Images	100
Leena Rouhiainen A Mono-Trilogy on a Spatial and Performative Process	111
Heli Kauppila Becoming an Active Agent in Dance and Through Dancing: A Teacher’s Approach	133
Isabel Marques I See a Kaleidoscope Dancing: Understanding, Criticizing and Recreating the World Around Us	144
Leena Hyvönen The Ways of Knowing and the School Reality	159
Authors	179

Introduction

Ways of Knowing in Dance and Art addresses bodily knowledge and procedures in the field of dance art as they are understood by a number of dance artists, pedagogues and scholars. It explores the nature of the choreographic process, discusses the experiential aspects of dancing, scrutinizes issues in teaching and learning dance from a holistic perspective and also addresses challenges related to writing about dance practice and conducting artistic research. In linking these issues together, this anthology makes a valuable contribution to the practice of dance art and the field of dance research.

During the past decade, practice-based research has won increasing attention by artist-researchers working in the field of dance. What do dancers, choreographers and dance pedagogues know? What is the nature of their practical knowledge and how can it be theorized? How are movement, the body and social conventions and contexts related to this knowledge? These questions brought a group of dance artists, pedagogues and researchers together to explore, especially, the nature of bodily knowledge in dance. *Challenging the Notion of Knowledge: Dance, Motion and Embodied Experience as Modes of Reasoning and Constructing Reality* is a research project that was carried out at the Department of Dance and Theatre Pedagogy of the Theatre Academy between 2005 and 2007. By investigating various somatic strands of artistic practice in dance, the project aimed to illuminate the nature, meaning and possibilities of embodied knowledge. In doing so, it also searched for means to utilize this knowledge as a tool of investigation and creation for both scholarly and artistic ends. The overall aim of the project is to substantiate the paradigm shift towards a holistic notion of knowledge and to affirm the body as integral to the process of knowing.

The project involved ten dance artists, pedagogues and scholars. The director responsible for the project, Leena Rouhiainen, and the other postdoctoral researchers, Eeva Anttila, Soili Hämäläinen, Riitta Pasanen-Willberg and Paula Salosaari, worked as lecturers or part-time lecturers at the Theatre Academy of Finland. The doctoral students, Kirsi Heimonen and Heli Kauppila, were based at the Dance Department and Department of Dance and Theatre Pedagogy of the Theatre Academy. The senior scholars and artists, Leena Hyvönen (University of Oulu, Finland), Efva Lilja (University College of Dance in Stockholm, Sweden) and

Isabel Marques (Caleidos Art and Teaching Center, São Paulo, Brazil), participated in the project from their home universities or institutions. This anthology is the outcome of the interesting artistic and scholarly exchange that the members of the research group had with each other. This exchange permeates the texts of the anthology, since they were written with the support of the commentary that the writers offered each other.

The nine articles of this anthology offer insights into the nature of the bodily knowledge that dance practitioners work with and the meaning this knowledge has in diverse artistic and pedagogic processes. It also introduces views on the challenges and possibilities of exploring bodily knowledge both in practice and by theorizing about it in writing. More particularly, the articles introduce different approaches to the choreographic process, underlining its collaborative and creative features. They offer insight into holistic and socially aware means of teaching dance and empowering the student's agency. In addition, by exploring the nature and meaning of immediate experience as well as emotions in dancing, bodily consciousness is addressed as a form of knowledge that dance practitioners work with. Likewise, the problems and possibilities of writing about the dance experience and doing artistic research are touched upon in several articles. Finally, the rational paradigm that arts education has traditionally relied upon is criticized and the necessity of educating the senses and the body are demonstrated. In the end, since this anthology contains different views on dance and art by several different authors, it in fact discusses diverse bodily *knowledges*. After all, we are embodied and situated beings with a historicity of our own, and in a postmodern perspective knowledge is related to the local and particularized practices through which we construct our experiences, understandings and conceptions (Ihde 2002, 67–68).

Riitta Pasanen-Willberg discusses her choreographic method by introducing a dance-making process she had with a group of dance students. Her paper *Totentanz – A Strange Dance in Life* introduces the manner in which she, as a choreographer, has come to relate to the choreographic motif, and somatic approaches to dancing as well as the collaboration with dancers. These themes are illuminated through a description of the re-creation of a dance piece that was previously performed by professional dancers and with students and includes the students' commentary on the process.

In her article *Repercussions on a Dance-Making Project*, Paula Salosaari describes the process of creating a co-authored dance piece with ballet teacher students.

She discusses the dance-making project at hand through the strands of the dance medium and their nexus. She sheds light on the preconceptions, challenges, and choices that emerged while making a dance piece in collaboration with the dancers, using open-ended tasks based on the ballet tradition.

In *The Meaning of Bodily Knowledge in a Creative Dance-Making Process* Soili Hämäläinen illuminates how interest in bodily knowledge among dance educators and artists is not a recent phenomenon. She also points out the connection between dance therapy, dance education and dance art, and explores the nature of bodily knowledge, emphasizing its emotional characteristics. By combining conceptions from dance professionals, phenomenologists, neuroscientists and psychologists, she explores the meaning of bodily sensations, emotions and feelings in a creative dance-making process. Her rich descriptions substantiate the importance of feelings and emotions for creativity.

Under the rubric *Mind the Body: Unearthing the Affiliation Between the Conscious Body and the Reflective Mind* Eeva Anttila addresses the nature of bodily knowledge. She clarifies the nature of our immediate bodily experiences theoretically and argues that since we are linguistic beings in making sense of these experiences we can also communicate them to others. By interpreting a rich empirical body of material retrieved from dancers and dance students about their bodily experiences, Anttila also sheds light on the qualitative nature of these experiences and, in fact, on what dancers know in their bodies.

In her paper *In a Spiral: Cycles of Words, Dance and Strange Images* Kirsi Heimonen discusses what the relationship between dancing and writing means for her. In this very poetic text, writing is understood as an embodied and meaningful act similar to dance improvisation. Heimonen describes how her research material urged her to make interpretations by creating a dance film. In this process the themes of silence and otherness became important concerns and are contemplated in the paper.

In her article *A Mono-Trilogy on a Spatial and Performative Process* Leena Rouhiainen discusses artistic research. She gives a thorough view of the topic and links her methodology to an on-going performative collaboration with a musician-sound designer and an architect-scenographer. Her account of the roles of a researcher and dance artist, and the notions of language and time, give immediate insights into the on-going process and the challenges related to writing about it. Her interest in space intertwines with phenomenological concepts, narrative writing, and her

bodily experiences in the workshop as well as with a shared space with the practical collaborators.

Heli Kauppila focuses on the opportunities for personal growth and subjectivity in the dance class. Her paper, entitled *Becoming an Active Agent in Dance and Through Dancing: A Teacher's Approach*, is based on her on-going doctoral study, where she explores the teacher-student relationship in dance, and where she looks for approaches for dance teaching that enable students to become active agents in dance and life. In this paper she discusses how personal bodily knowledge can help students in building a meaningful relationship to dance and to their surroundings.

In her paper *I See a Kaleidoscope Dancing: Understanding, Criticizing, and Recreating the World Around Us*, Isabel Marques revisits and discusses a pedagogical approach that she has developed since the 1990s. In her notion of "context-based dance education" she uses the image of a kaleidoscope as a metaphor, highlighting the opportunity to make infinite shapes and designs with the same pieces. She also focuses on the web of relations typical of contemporary life and global issues, as well as the meaning of dance-embodied knowledge in developing clear, conscious, and related ways of teaching dance in contemporary society.

In her article *The Ways of Knowing and the School Reality* Leena Hyvönen addresses the current position of arts and crafts education, which has, over the past four decades, continued to deteriorate within the Finnish basic education and teacher training systems. She investigates the decline of art education through studying the traditions of Western thinking and their presence within, on the one hand, the different schools of education and, on the other hand, the subjects taught at schools today. She approaches these questions from the point of view of Merleau-Pontyan phenomenology and discusses the applicability of the phenomenology of the body as a theoretical framework for art education.

This anthology was published at the culmination of the project entitled "Challenging the Notion of Knowledge". As the final event of the project, the dance pieces, films, and the audio-video material the articles discuss were performed by the members of the project at the Theatre Academy for the general public. The research group wanted to share their practical work and thoughts in an open discussion with other dance students, artists, pedagogues and scholars.

The anthology was edited by the members of the research group based at the Theatre Academy. The editors are grateful to all who have contributed to the

anthology and want to warmly thank, especially, the senior scholars and artists who participated in the project: Leena Hyvönen, Efva Lilja and Isabel Marques. Their insightful commentary and practical examples were an important source of inspiration. The whole group also appreciatively acknowledges the Finnish Academy's and the Arts Council of Finland's help in funding the research project as well as the Theatre Academy's support in publishing this anthology as well as in offering the artistic and scholarly environment and physical premises in which to work.

Helsinki, October 2007

Leena Rouhiainen
Editor-in-Chief

Eeva Anttila, Kirsi Heimonen, Soili Hämäläinen, Heli Kauppila and Paula Salosaari.
Co-editors

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Ihde, Don 2002. *Bodies in Technology*. Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press.

Totentanz – A Strange Dance in Life

The Inspiration for an Artist's Work

Riitta Pasanen-Willberg

During that autumn, the light was especially bright, an angel's light or love. I sat at the table in my childhood home with a shiver of translucent air around me. At the time it was warm, I felt safe and the future looked promising. I, mother, wife, dog breeder, dancer, choreographer, teacher, researcher, project manager, caught up in the secrets of people's lives. Today, I am an aging dancer, strong and mighty even after a hip operation, a turning point in my life. (Riitta Pasanen-Willberg 2007)

In this article, I will discuss my choreographic approach from the perspective of a specific choreographic process. In 2007, I recreated a dance work on a group of dance students from Northern Karelia that I had originally choreographed for professional dancers. The name of the work, which premiered in 2006, is *Totentanz – A Strange Dance in Life*.¹ In my article I will present the dancers' views and experiences from the rehearsals and the performances and how these ideas



Totentanz – A Strange Dance in Life (2007), choreography Riitta Pasanen-Willberg, dancers second year students from the North Karelia College, Outokumpu, Finland, photo Maria Elste

reflect my goals as a choreographer. The empirical material consists of the dancers' writings on the working process and their final essays as well as videos of the rehearsals and performances. The theme of the essays was *analysis of shape from a physical perspective*. I recorded my own observations in a diary and, while reading the dancers' observations, I noticed how the various physical exercises I gave affected the refining of the movement material that was offered or created at the moment. In this article I use these writings to create an open dialogue in order to learn how effective the exercises were. Thus, they are an important tool for my research. I have not aimed to construct generally applicable knowledge, what I am concerned with is a study of my own work and the influence it makes on my choreographic practice. I will utilize the information I retrieve in my future works whatever their contents and motifs may be. This is not an analysis of the choreography itself, in which I would study the relationship and connection between the exercises and particular sections of the dance, either. I will introduce the main features of somatics, the heuristic method as well as release and alignment techniques and how they are related to my approach in the different stages of creating choreography. Above all, the recreation of the choreography that was originally performed by professional dancers in Helsinki on the students was very interesting. However, I will not do a comparative analysis of the two performances in this article.

Background and Starting Points

I completed my doctorate in dance in 2000 (Pasanen-Willberg, 2000). It dealt with the problems of an aging dancer from a choreographer's perspective. This seven-year project, which consisted of many different artistic sections or productions, involved dancers between the ages of 30 and 65. On my own behalf, I tried to strip the mythical beliefs of the aging dancer and present new ideas about being a dancer and choreographer – about dance art and the meaning of art in general. With the works of Finnish philosopher Lauri Rauhala (1998, 1996), American psychologist Clark Moustakas (1994, 1990) and Austrian philosopher Martin Buber (1878–1965) (1995, 1937/1970), I was able to create a philosophical framework for my ideas. In the creative process I searched for new vocabulary, which enabled verbalisation of the physical experience – conceptualisation. It also opened up understanding on the meaning of the interaction or dialogue between the dancer and the choreographer in the working process. The dancer is not a machine and the choreographic methods

should not instrumentalise the dancer. Furthermore, I continue to consider the nature of different approaches and means used as the material and manifestation of my art is the body of another person. How does one encounter another and understand the knowledge expressed through another person's body?

According to Martin Buber, we are able to encounter another when we understand that "every means is an obstacle. Only where all means have disintegrated encounters occur" (1995, 34, 1937/1970, 63). With contradiction, I began to wonder how my own presumptions on the significance of the means and Buber's observations on allowing them to collapse, as contradictory views, affect my way of working with dancers. Is it not a question of actually encountering the other, the dancer, and a consequent opening up of understanding? In any case, we always work together somehow – is working without means or measures a method?

I understand the nature of knowledge that is embodied in dance to be skills evolved from experience and "recorded" in the memory of the body. The present moment that is embodied and lived in dance is ephemeral; a movement idea that has materialized in motion and space is shaped into another, a third, a fourth – a flow of motional moments is formed. Then the movement stops; it continues to vibrate in the breath of the dancer; there is warmth in the body, a strange heat and a tangible feeling. Experience and action always leave their mark. They exist in a different manner somewhere in the back of the brain or a memory in the mind, muscles and the spine making way for the next dance. What is written, documented, remembered of it by the creator of the work, the choreographer, or by the spectator is an attempt to grasp and capture, somehow or another, the fleeting moments. These formulations no longer reveal what the act of movement that has pierced the dancer does.

In the past three years I have created three dance works related to this paper: *Canadian Poems – Stories of Mermaids and Whale Watchers* (2005, Helsinki), *Totendanz – A Strange Dance In Life* (2006, Helsinki) and *Morality Game* (2007, Helsinki). I also recreated *Canadian Poems* (2006) and *Totendanz* (2007) with two groups of dance students. These three works form an autobiographical retrospective of my own productions. In my works I have studied the "historical" movement that is inscribed in our memories and bodily memory. I have contemplated what is visible in the body during the moment, how transparent we are and what we wish to reveal or hide? Do we lie or tell the truth? How do we play with our bodies, physical being, minds and morals without leaving any traces? Each work was concerned with a kind of movement play and movement meditation, in which the relationship between

life and the game of life is reflected quite dramatically. The works were connected to each other in theme and content that dealt with time as a spatial and experiential element; the course of time, evolution and the circle of life.

Another feature that connects the works to each other are the working methods that include release and alignment techniques, improvisation and contact improvisation. All these methods belong to the sphere of somatics. During rehearsals, the dancers were able to produce and work with the movement material according to their own interests and bodies, while still deepening the quality of movement towards the intentions of the choreographer. These methods were successful in helping the dancers create movement as well as receiving movement material from the choreographer.

Somatics

*The yielding can overcome the strong;
The supple can overcome the stiff.
This is known by all,
But practiced by none.
Are you able to gather your intrinsic energy
To attain the state of suppleness of a newborn baby?
(Laotse as reported by Bradford 2004, 2)*

I will discuss the choreographic starting points and work methods of Totentanz according to a somatic point of view. Somatic practices² are not necessarily dance techniques, but they can be applied to different dance techniques and to the creation of choreography. One of the most important goals of learning related to the somatic approaches is to arouse kinesthetic awareness and to listen to one's physical sensations, instead of basing learning on visual perception and a superficial imitation and repetition of movement. Typical to these practices is to work with simple movement schemes and small movements, to allow for space and time for the practitioner to listen to the felt-sense of moving and to become conscious of it. (Caraker 1994)

Slowness, working with ample time is important in somatic processes. By working slowly, sensory knowledge has time to reach the motor-cortex and the motor command has a chance to become re-patterned (Bradford 2004). Re-patterning is mentioned, especially, when one is trying to find one's centre: how the spine aligns

itself correctly and how its natural curves are lengthened perpendicularly through gravity. Then the musculature, a part of the body-weight, can become grounded, and the weight is counterthrust and carried upwards in the opposite direction to support the body. Images that are based on anatomy and anatomical illustrations help to understand the body's structure and create movement. Movement produces new images and images new movement. The ideokinetic cycle is continually in use when movement is produced. Stillness is also considered movement because as human beings we cannot achieve perfect balance. Perfect balance requires immobility. Often somatic work starts from being still, from a kind of zero-point, and requires relaxation and awareness of one's own body as it is in the moment in order to initiate movement. This process is often done in a constructive rest position (Rolland 1984; Fulkerson 1976; Clark 1975, 1968, 1963; Sweigard 1974). Eva Karczak³ describes the rest position as follows:

The time of resting during class is the most important time. People think that moving around a lot and being active is more important but, unless you can receive the information and process it within a time of stillness, you can't utilize the weight of it. It's not yours from a depth. (Karczak 1985)

Utilizing a somatic approach is meaningful for me because it offers me the opportunity to learn about the principles of bodily function and to utilize them in my own movement as well as to understand the depth and quality in other people's movement. It requires changing the perspective from which one observes dance and dancing. We, often, talk about dance from the audience's perspective and observe dancers' interpretations of a choreographer's vocabulary as it pertains to a cultural or social context and its conventions or, when dance is seen as a semiotic sign or symbol, from the perspective of different theories related to gender, for example. But it still remains the case that performance becomes meaningful for a spectator according to her or his personal perspective and understanding. We are never truly pure, only our actions and interpretations are always the product of certain contexts. Jill Green states:

Whether looking at bodily experience from an inner perspective or more globally through a social lens, our constructions of body are influenced by the interaction of our somas with the world. (2002,118)

Marja Sakari points out that an inter-textual point of view especially connected to conceptual art, does not aim at presenting the effects of a work or the artist's intentional determination as "the only right interpretation". In the visual arts, the problems related to linguistic and literary theories are relevant. Texts are not only understood to be related to written or spoken language but as visual factors susceptible to contextual interpretation. Sakari clarifies this in the following manner: "According to Roland Barthes and Julia Kristeva, a work of art is the meeting point of continuously moving texts in which a host of texts are potentially present" (Sakari 2000, 83-84).

In my opinion, the dance work is a kind of field where different texts, as we can consider movement to be, cross, pass and meet each other randomly. Some of these seize the perceptual field of the spectator and do so despite the choreographer's wishes. Critique is often based on a similarly randomly opened field, and the choreographer's intentions and actions are not necessarily significant for the spectator. One must keep in mind that the choreographer is also a spectator and makes the work meaningful according to her or his experiences.

It is not so common to examine the experience of the artistic process from a first-person perspective. More often, it is done from a theoretical point of view by dance critics, analysts, historians and scholars. The purpose here is not to understand dance through a theoretical lens but to conceive what kind of theory practice can produce. I am conducting a subjective dialogue with a few more theoretical observations to broaden my own understanding about the essence of dance or my journey towards it. Discussing the essence of dance could mean that the dancer becomes astute to her or his own inner movement senses and to expressing the form that is borne from it. During rehearsals it is interesting to study how far and how close one comes to the core. According to Clark Moustakas:

My primary task is to recognize whatever exists in my consciousness as a fundamental awareness, to receive and accept it, and then to dwell on its nature and possible meanings. With full and unqualified interest, I am determined to extend my understanding and knowledge of an experience. (1990, 11)

The Heuristic Method

Through exploratory open-ended inquiry, self directed search, and immersion in active experience, one is able to get inside the question, become one with it, and thus achieve an understanding of it. (Moustakas 1990, 15)

I consider the heuristic method to be a good aid to help delineating and following the emergence of the process; it is a means and ground for one's own thinking. During the first rehearsals I share my thoughts and ideas about these premises concerning the work process with the dancers.

The term 'heuristic' comes from the Greek word *heuriskein*, which means seeking or finding out. It denotes those internal investigations in which a person is committed to discover oneself through self-dialogue. Clark Moustakas, who developed the heuristic method, perceives its main objective to be the understanding of human experience. Research questions and methods evolve from inner awareness, meaning and inspiration. The researcher's task is to recognize the levels of awareness in her or his consciousness, accept different states of consciousness and the related experiential meanings. Heuristic research is a process in which the researcher questions his relationship to the contents of the research phenomenon. The researcher is personally involved in the contents and searches for answers with discipline and devotion. The goal is to come up with stipulations, qualities, space and relations, that form the foundation for the essence or nature of the phenomenon investigated. (Moustakas 1990, 9–11)

Moustakas emphasises that descriptions of one's experiences about both the observed phenomenon as well as about oneself as a researcher are significant. Heuristic research is not concerned with how scientific viewpoints, conceptions of art or history and politics determine reality. The objective is not to produce disconnected or scattered text, but rich, full or complete stories based on one's life-experience. These stories may appear in different art forms such as in poems or paintings. Portrayal without interpretation is sufficient. According to Moustakas, interpretation distances itself from the essence of the experience, its roots and significance (1994, 19).

The different stages of the heuristic method are 1) initial engagement, 2) immersion, 3) incubation, 4) illumination, 5) explication and 6) creative synthesis (Moustakas 1990, 27–32; Kurki 1995, 129–130). According to my observations, the artistic work process does not always follow the described order. Progression is not

necessarily linear and the phases might overlap or be cyclic. These cycles repeat themselves and always return to the beginning, deviating slightly but always in a bit more developed form. The performance itself is only a small part of the spiral. I feel that a somatic approach to working, the study of movement and the heuristic method compliment each other and help me with my work. The most important thought that unifies and directs my work underlines the importance of listening to one's own inner experience and manner of experiencing things.

Artistic processes are always very personal and unique. When using the heuristic method in them, the events or perceptions require reflection throughout the whole process. It requires self-dialogue as well as listening and surrendering to the feeling of the experience. All of this must be shared with those participating. This kind of an approach or attitude should permeate the work holistically, even if we do on occasion talk about the mind and the body separately.

Totentanz in Outokumpu

In this section, I will depict the methods I used in the rehearsals in Outokumpu and the starting points of the choreography, Totentanz. I will also present the students' own accounts of the various stages throughout the choreography.

Release and Alignment Technique

What moves us and what makes us move? The spirit? The soul? Muscles? How do we inspire ourselves to move in a modern, odourless, silent, invisible culture of existence? When did you actually see your friend, sit down, spend time talking about this and that?(Pasanen-Willberg 2007)

What I really believe is that it's the spirit that moves us. So maybe they weren't looking at the external form as much as what was moving inside. When I dance, I look for the inner motivation to give me the external form. I don't want to make a particular shape and then go for that shape. (Karscak 1985)

Alignment philosophy is based on the studies and ideas of Mabel Elsworth Todd (1880–1956). According to Todd, the mechanical laws that appear in nature affect the movement of humans and inanimate structures in the same way. The principles and application of the mechanical laws in relation to the movement of the human



Totentanz – A Strange Dance in Life (2007), choreography: Riitta Pasanen-Willberg, in front dancers Sofia Gabrielsson and Troll Nordeck, in the back dancers Eveliina Niva and Joel Gabrielsson, photo Maria Elste

body are a theoretical starting point for alignment work. (Rolland 1984, 10–14)

Already in the early 1900s, Todd discussed the human being as a psychophysical entity. In 1974 Lulu Sweigard, who was Todd's student, presented the term 'ideokinesis' to describe Todd's ideas. Ideokinesis is a practical form of alignment and release technique that relies upon the notion that imagination and kineasthethia have a stimulating effect on changes in the body. The effects are two-directional; imagery produces movement and movement produces imagery. (Rolland 1984, 24–25)

Sweigard depicts the chain of events of a person moving as a neuro-muscular-skeletal -event. The nervous system initiates movement and controls its patterning. The muscles are seen as the workhorse that is stimulated by the nervous system and that makes the spine, skeleton, movement machine move. (Sweigard 1974, 39)

Practical alignment technique is based on the usage of anatomical imagery. As we are only human, it is not possible for the body to ever achieve perfect mechanical balance. However, one can apply the laws of balance (inertia, momentum and gravity) related to inanimate structures as imagery in order to enhance the structure

of the body; that is, correct the alignment of the bones into a more functional and healthy direction, so that one can move better, freely and with little effort. At the same time one is able to follow one's movement energy and inner movement flow. Working in this way demands inner flexibility, openness and listening to one's own body and (with this) eventually an increased kinetic sensitivity. What does the body say, when one listens to its physical messages?

According to Sweigard, when working with images one must first progress through conscious thinking. Then the thoughts descend to the subconscious, to the area of the brain (motor cortex) where movement originates. The nervous system is the coordinator of all movement. Some parts of the movement processes we have conscious control over and others are automatic, directed by an internal system of tacit knowledge. If the dancer is given the possibility, she or he will react accordingly. In fact, the nervous system reacts relevantly in relation to specific nerve stimulation. (Sweigard 1974, 3-4)

According to Rolland, alignment technique entails that change must begin from within. If one tries to change only the external form, little change will occur. Rolland calls this process a personal trip into one's physical inner world. Imagination and intuition stimulate an inner wisdom that works as a guide through physical and psychological barriers. (Rolland 1984, 24)

Release and alignment methods often work together as a pair. The work can begin with alignment exercises and then lead to release exercises. In my own work these elements intertwine, nourish each other; they are two entwined spirals that occur simultaneously and, still, can also be used separately. In my view, one of the main characteristics of release technique is that through it one can deepen one's physical knowledge by developing movement qualities and movement vocabulary according to one's physical limitations and possibilities as well as personal interests. In other words, through this practice one can search for good or sound movement form.

Todd's student Barbara Clark confirms the previous notion of good movement form. In this context, good movement form means movement produced through proper body alignment, which then is seen as extra skill and ease in the movement of a dancer, for example. She considers all movements to originate from the spine and this emphasis on the spine as a source of movement is important for her. Initiating movement from the spine requires one to believe in an image of a vertical gravity line, which penetrates the centre of the body and, thus, gives a prerequisites for movement. (Clark 1963, 2)

Developing kinesthetic sensitivity also enables one to read another's movement better. When we perceive someone else's movements in space and the trace forms they create, the information that our visual sense transmits resonates throughout our bodies. Supported by our senses and reflexes, we move and act inadvertently; we are guided by a tacit knowledge. For this reason it is beneficial to learn to reflect on one's movement experiences as well as to become aware of and to comprehend the nature of bodily knowledge. Among other things, Anna Halprin (1995) speaks of awareness of the internal experience, which becomes possible when the dancer understands the importance of developing one's kinesthetic sense. With this movement achieves new dimensions and the ability to communicate grows (Halprin 1995, 32).

Working with movement involves many thoughtful elements that are nurtured inside movement itself, for example, thinking and imagination. A thought can grow into movement through image work. I think when I move, and when I move, I think, and this reflects my personality and reveals something about me. The fixed point is the holistic integration of the body and the interconnectedness of it all. Because my own choreography places emphasis on pure movement, I feel that alignment techniques as well as an open and supportive attitude during rehearsals have been significant tools in the creation of the Totentanz-production. Although I was inspired by a painting, Dance Macabre, the choreography was not an explicit illustration of the painting or the music used in the piece. I had freedom to work on the quality of movement.

The Application and Impact of the Methods

I don't teach specific movements, I teach how to move. The grounding happens through an understanding of your anatomy. You're grounded by your body. The fluidity, the energy flow, happens from a sense of the weight of your body and the ability to release. Being like steel which is flexible but superstrong inside and being like cotton on the outside. (Karczak 1985)

In processing choreography, similarly to Eva Karczak, I place important emphasis on obtaining a certain movement quality. By quality I do not mean evaluation on a continuum of good and bad. The way one moves is what is most important and each dancer dances in her or his own way. The way one dances depends on many factors. Often a determining factor is the choreographer, work based on

the choreographer's movement language and sequences; in the case of which the material is received by the dancer as given. My choreographic way of thinking comprises of the following features: 1) original inspiration for the basis of my work, 2) encouraging the dancers to create their own movements and combinations, 3) defining the guidelines for the physical work, 4) teaching my movement content, 5) delineating the composition and outlining the structure, 6) integrating the dancer's technique into the choreography, 7) personal direction, and 8) taking control of the whole performance.

When starting to choreograph, I begin from an empty place; forgetting is the beginning of something new. I begin working without steps, trusting that I am near to something substantial, which is invisible, odourless, silent, unknown and searching for a mode of shape becoming visible. Something that does not always appear as it is felt, when I focused on listening to my body and mind. To be conscious and to forget at the same time is paradoxical. An empty feeling in the beginning, and being freed upon completion.

For the past twenty-five years I have produced many choreographies and improvisation performances. Applying and integrating release and alignment methods has deepened the quality of my work as a teacher and choreographer. For me, all movements are equally important, as long as the dancer works from the inside out. The dancer is allowed to explore and perceive her or his physical possibilities: dimensions and boundaries, as well as experiment with her or his movement experiences. The dancers I worked with in Outokumpu experienced this way of working to be remarkable:

... everything is connected to each other: the legs, arms, neck and back. The whole body breathes in the movement. It gives the movement form, making it three-dimensional; so it is more than just step after step. We shouldn't forget that the body doesn't have only a front and a back but depth and spiral. (Hynynen 2007)

Combining technique and images and personal discovery of the two with the aid of improvisation work brilliantly for me. Anatomical technique becomes my own when I have time to create a personal relationship to it. And it is not just given from the outside or learned from a model. Through improvisation, technique is used automatically and remains in the muscle memory as a feeling, or certain atmosphere to which I can easily return to later. (Niva 2007)

In this way it is easier to absorb and understand movement material and ideas of another person, whether it be the dancer or the choreographer. This work could be described as an active exploratory process that involves a course of disclosing and becoming disclosed. When reflecting in movement, we do not separate thought from action but we study the interaction between the two. The process is very personal because people reflect in different ways. Every possible way of portraying reality is a function of the describer's feelings or point of view. However, in reflective work, the borderline between what is encountered and who encounters becomes narrower. In this way, the process becomes part of the self of the dancer (Turunen 1998, 43–49). According to Jill Green “... everyone's bodily experience is different and that there is no universal construction of the body nor is there an ideal body type, alignment, or correct way to be in our bodies” (2002, 118). By reflecting one encounters surprising things, all of which can not be conceptualized at once. After all, in any case, all experiences cannot be conveyed to others, since experiences are not transmitted to others directly. (Turunen 1998, 51)

While working on a dance piece together with the dancers, I think about the meaning of reflection and how one applies it to the movement process. How do I guide a dancer to become aware of her or his experience of dancing? When dealing with these issues in Outokumpu, the process-orientedness of our work became underlined and the focus was in what the events of the process produced. The departure point can be a blank slate, in which case the movement is created, worked out and developed with the help of different working methods. The painting *Dance Macabre* was visually a powerful inspiration for the creation of *Totentanz* as were the ideas and feelings about death that it aroused in me. They worked as a motor for choreographing the work, keeping creativity alive as we worked on the movements and combinations. It was also easier to see where the work process would lead because the choreography was a recreation.

Bowl Work

Fullness of the body-bowls: shoulder-bowl, pelvic-bowl and the skull. How do these bowls coordinate with each other? Think about the bridges in the bowls. Bowls connect arms and legs with the spine and they support the movement of the spine. Imagine the bowls filled with water: imagine the flow of water inside the bowls emptying and filling. Is the flow of water the same as the flow of the movement? Follow the sensation of the flow of water streaming inside. (Pasanen-Willberg 2007)

The central exercises we used to delineate the structure of our own bodies through anatomical imagery were related to the interactive coordination of the spine, limbs and body-bowls, directions of movement, transference of weight and reaching out into space. We refined these themes through improvisation. The most important connecting theme connecting the different features to each other were the quality images of water and water elements.

I feel that using the water element as an image supports movement and enables me to move freely. Water is a familiar natural element. Everyone has experienced swimming, lightness in water and can imagine plant life moving under water. The body itself contains a huge amount of water so the element is close. In dance we study water externally and internally and also the nature of sea creatures for example the octopus and its way of moving . . . all in all, with the aid of water imagery one can help static shapes to become free-flowing movement. (Hanhineva 2007)

Searching for water qualities, we began our rehearsals by shaking and wobbling in order to get the internal fluids moving. Does movement flow in the same way as the bodily fluids? When we worked with the bodily fluids, we also delineated the bowl structures of the body. The structure that comprises of the clavicles and scapula is called the shoulder-bowl. The clavicle or collarbone continues in length down the arm and through the hand joints to the little finger and returns back through the thumb up to the shoulder blade. This bony route creates a functional connection between the spine and the arms and supports the movement of the spine. We can see and feel how movement of the arms begins from the spine. Connecting the arms to the legs is thought of as a path from the shoulder blades through the sacrum to the centre of the pelvis, where the weight is distributed evenly onto each leg. Similarly to the arm and shoulder-bowl relationship, we can also experience the relationship between the legs and the pelvic-bowl. The body bowls, the skull, shoulder and pelvic-bowls, are considered to be filled with water that alternately empty out and fill up again (Fulkerson 1976, 16). The water in the bowls circulates from the arms to the legs along the same skeletal path. Water images aid in experiencing body weight and in discovering the flow of movement. The dancers seemed to have found new qualities in their movement.

The pelvic-bowl, back of the head, head support-bowl and the connection between them: it was interesting to see how difficult it is to bend the head forward and at the same time move the pelvis from side to side. We practiced this for quite some time and then finally it began to flow. As a coordination exercise it was good and doing the “eyes closed eyes open” exercise helped in delineating the bowls and balance; the senses worked in different ways. With our eyes closed, it felt more delicate. The bowls are a good image: the hip felt more open and flexible and I found more range of motion. The bowls helped to understand circular movement. The movement flows throughout the body and floats through the bowls creating wavelike ripples. It is carried forward becoming an extroverted movement. (Risberg 2007)

From the body’s various connectivities, we studied the body bowls in the head, chest and pelvis. Already because of their anatomical shape, the pelvis, chest and head are easy to imagine as round, bowl-like, three-dimensional structures. The bowls are conformable to the spine and the centre line, but they also connect to the arms and legs. The pelvis is an especially interesting area because it is the body’s fulcrum or centre and from it strength moves towards all the limbs. The body is supported upwards but is also grounded. In turn, the chest-bowl is strongly connected to the arms. We drew a line from the collarbone to the little finger and from the thumb to the shoulder scapula. The collarbone and the scapula belong to the chest-bowl, when again the fingertips belong to the arms outermost edge. This connection spirals down the arm and accentuates the body’s dimensionality, rotations and movement possibilities. (Hanhineva 2007)

From the body bowls my body became three-dimensional and I found movement especially in the pelvis and lower back, which was an area that had little movement. (Hynynen 2007)

During those whole three weeks, time after time, I discovered something new from the bowl idea, shoulder-bowl and pelvic-bowl. Especially the range of movement and my consciousness of the chest area increased considerably. The bowl work is beneficial for bending and curving the upper body. As I imagined the bowls emptying and filling up again, I found a new way to lift my legs and curve my torso. The idea brought continuum and toughness without moving completely away from the centre of gravity. (Niva 2007)

How Alive is Your Spine?

In order for the movement to be alive and elegant, for the body and movement to play music and for the shape to appear, it is important to imagine that the movement comes from the centre and to develop throughout the body all the way to the fingertips. The floor works as a support and pedestal which grounds us and helps to find depth in movement. (Risberg 2007)

I have often begun working with the dancers by first outlining the relationship of the spine to the line of gravity that penetrates the body. This is also called the centre line. The spine is a pillar that supports the weight of the torso (Rolland 1984, 30). When the spine, with its natural curves, is situated along the body's centre line, the effect of gravity is so concentrated that the body's weight falls to the earth freely. With its curves, the spine is also more flexible than the straight pillar structure, but, at the same time, it is hard to stabilize the spine without losing movement (Rolland 1984, 31). In fact, it is a question of recognizing and experiencing small, sensitive movements and deep physical sensations. This is why I often start working with the feet, which bear the weight of the whole body. Because the structure of the body is three-dimensional, it can be depicted as a pyramid where perfect balance is realized. On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, it is not possible for a living organism to achieve perfect balance. It is possible only with lifeless objects. In our urban and shoe-using culture, our feet and their flexibility and strength are often neglected. How is weight distributed on the feet, how does it sift from one foot to the other and what information is transmitted through our feet up through the body? The exercises I use are simple and slow, so the dancer has time to understand, register and pattern the movement. When we walk, the focus goes to the spine and its two focal points: towards the atlas-axis joint, which balances the skull and directs us upwards and towards the direction that we are going to and towards the tailbone, which directs our weight towards the ground. These two utmost points of the spine are in constant dialogue with each other and make it possible for the spine to lengthen. I applied these exercises to my technique classes. During improvisation, we also observed the sensations of movement. I told the dancers to be aware of and listen to what happens in their bodies.



Totentanz – A Strange Dance in Life (2007), choreography Riitta Pasanen-Willberg, dancers second year students from the North Karelia college, Outokumpu, Finland, photo Riitta Pasanen-Willberg

Heel of the Anklebone and Heel of the Vertebra Connection

Unable to see inside ourselves, we try to understand the functions of the body based on anatomical images. Anatomical pictures work as images while we examine how we move. When approached through imagery, studying a simple everyday movement, such as walking, can bring interesting outlooks on the more internal movements and processes of the body. For example, Barbara Clark presents the following walking exercise: “lengthening the heel of the ankle bone and connecting it simultaneously with the lengthening of the heel of the vertebra: see how the heel lengthens the vertebra and little by little the whole spine. Working with different spots of the spine” (Clark 1975, lesson 2 and 10). During this exercise, one walks backwards focusing on shifting weight from the toes to the heel. Especially the thought of lengthening the heel of the anklebone towards the ground is concretely identifiable. The same idea can be applied to the heel of the vertebra in the spine and to the experience of the lengthening of the whole spine.

Focusing on weight shifting from one leg to the other leg. First I feel a little clumsy. My thighs hurt because of horrible muscle soreness; it is getting slightly better as I get warm. Different weight shifts, side to side or into space following lines from the tailbone. Concentrated atmosphere, simple focus. After lying on the floor free movement. Good ideas. Nice freedom. Forgetting the tricky focus on detail. Trusting that I can do weight shifts; they serve me at any moment. (Nordeck 2007)

We study the connection from the pelvis to the legs and simple weight change: how the pelvic curve moves, changes weight from one side to another. In my imagination, my pelvis drawing a curve downwards, there is depth and a plié. When again the pelvic curve is more horizontal, the curve is going up and is boosted from the ground. (Hanhineva 2007)

We study balance by changing weight from one leg to another, walking backwards, eyes closed and again playing with images while improvising. It was also a powerful realization to discover the centre of balance, which was supported by walking backwards and the idea of the pelvic bridge connecting one leg to another. Also the idea of lengthening the heel as one steps on the floor and the softening and life of the soles of the feet helped me to find balance. So did the idea of the direction of the backside of the body moving down and the front side moving in an upward direction. (Niva 2007)

The connection between the tailbone and the vertebrae feel powerful. In exploring them, tiny movements release the whole body and make the head and torso heavier allowing them to participate more in the motion, especially when improvising. (Hanhineva 2007)

The most fragile thing is the person her- or himself, no matter what discourse the body is discussed from: as a living body or a material thing, as lived or experienced, tested or vulnerable. The person – you, me, he or she – from the cradle to the grave. What happens on the way should also rest in our own hands. This should happen in dance, as well, so that not everything is directed from the above or outside. A mutual point of departure: a shared way of working (means) and a common goal (dance piece) that gives possibilities for variation, which are realized, disclosed and apparent at the moment. Certainly, the choice of means has its significance.

Dance Macabre – Source of Inspiration

My role in Totentanz . . . I am the empress. I play with death or is it death that plays with me? He swings up in the air, death pulls and goes through me. I rush around the room fighting for my life, then change roles and it is I who manipulates, brakes away and mocks the situation. (Sundberg 2007)

My inspiration for choreographing Totentanz came from the painting Dance Macabre painted by Luebeck master painter, Bernt Notke (1430/40–1509) in 1463. The painting depicts a figure of death, a skeleton, dancing wildly with the pope, emperor, empress, cardinal as well as the king disregarding age, status or sex. The illustrated motif and, especially, the text that is on the bottom of the painting create a particular mode of being, an existential atmosphere for the dancers' expression. This is exemplified in the manner in which death addresses the empress or the cardinal:

The Empress: I know Death means me. I have never known such terror before. I thought he was out of his mind, for I am young and I am the Empress, after all. I thought I wielded power, I never even guessed he was coming, or that anybody at all could touch me. O, let me live a little longer, I implore you!

Death to the Empress and the Cardinal: Highborn Empress, it seems to me, my existence had slipped your mind. Please come here. The time is ripe. You hoped for an easy pardon no, no. Although you were so important, you would have to face the play like all the others.

Stop! Here is my hand, Cardinal, come with me. (Handout, The church of St. Nicholas, Estonia)

The medieval painting and the subject that deals with the fundamental questions of life is always current. Bernt Notke delved into the subject of death after the Plague had killed 25 million people in Europe. Nonetheless, my choreography lives its own life by expressing the many dimensions and possibilities of dance. Totentanz is a dance about life, a strange one, in which the abstract and the concrete dialogue with one another. The music, by the Belgian contemporary composer Nicholas Lens, supports the movement themes and is an important element for the timing of the total structure of Totentanz. The choreography contains parts from *Flamma Flamma – The Fire Requiem (1994)* composition. It is the first part of the trilogy *The Accacha Chronicles* and deals with the theme of death. Lens has spoken about his relation to death in the following manner:

To me, the one thing that makes life bearable is the knowledge that it will come to an end, because accepting this is the only way to unconditionally and freely enjoy life. It has taken many long journeys, both physically and mentally, to reach this obvious insight. (Lens, nd.)

I was enthused by the power of these thoughts, I told the students of my source inspiration – of the moment I first saw the painting at the St. Nicholas Church in Tallinn 2004. The actual rehearsals began in November 2006 when I showed the original Totentanz-production to the students. The following excerpt describes a student's first impressions from this meeting:

The first contact I had with Totentanz was watching a video-recording of the original version. The impression was a powerful and forward thrusting dance piece that was full of tiny details but progressed steadily. It was as if you were watching a flowing river with its whirlpools and small waterfalls or an endlessly burning fire and its wild flames. The colour palette was strong and although it was gloomy, I was left with an energetic and lively feeling. To get deeper inside the piece one would have to see it many times. (Niva 2007)

The most difficult thing was to process the death theme with young students. At first, the subject of death felt frightening.

Based on the painting, the atmosphere and feelings were fairly dark. The characters of the illustration seemed slightly stiff and dry. After watching the original version of the Helsinki production, my point of view changed. The most powerful things that remained with me were a sense of full-bloodedness, life, circulation, warmth and life in people but at the same time cleanliness and light. (Laamanen 2007)

The medieval painting, which was inspiration for the piece, had influence on the costumes and the music. The theme death is universal and always current. Death is a part of life, however throughout time it has always been mystical and fascinating. What is death actually? Is it the end of everything or the continuation or the beginning? Religions have tried to solve the mystery of death. The piece itself is abstract and has a strong emphasis on pure movement rather than stories. Resolving stories and symbols is very personal to the dancer as well as to the audience. The medieval theme brings the mysticism and tragedy of death from that era to the piece. (Hanhineva 2007)

We opened the theme by becoming acquainted with the dvd-material, the figures of the painting, the characters and the text. We did not really discuss the death theme and we were able to work through our own thoughts and ideas independently. The theme of the piece is, in my opinion, complex and abstract, and I haven't had the desire to discuss life or death. The medieval painting from the time of the Plague and the music added a classical feeling to the project, which was communicated to the movement throughout the whole piece. (Niva 2007)

When I first heard that we were going to do a piece called Death Dance (Dance Macabre), I was a bit surprised and also was wondering what it would look like. I guess I was sceptical but now I have heard the background of the idea and why it is given that name. After I saw the pictures, I understood: Death can be sudden or slow. But it does come to all people finally. (Gabrielsson J. 2006)

Nobody close to me has died. So I really don't know what death is. On the other hand, I believe in eternal life. (Gabrielsson S. 2006)

As we had a visual inspiration, my body had an easier time identifying with feelings. Reading the text was also helpful. Having words eased the discovery of movement. Poems and dialogues that the figures had with death gave a deeper perspective to the piece. They broadened my understanding and helped me to regard the work more profoundly. (Risberg 2007)

After watching the video and listening to the music from the piece, we improvised using imagery based on what the viewing brought forth. After that, we continued to improvise and the dancers chose to work with one of the following topics I gave: 1) the gaze of death, 2) the touch of death and 3) a jump into the unknown. Finally, the students reflected on their movement experiences by writing about them:

We began working by improvising to the Totentanz music trying at the same time to remember the elements we had just seen in the performance. The music seemed to have great significance to the piece and its atmosphere and helped to recall the different movement qualities from each section. (Hynymen 2007)

I did not think about death at all when I was dancing . . . movements just came and my body felt nice. (Risberg 2006)

It does not feel so easy to find an abstract way to enter the topic of death. It usually feels very close and real or it is not a topic at all. (Daniel 2006)

The Painting's World, the Period, Subject: Cardinal, Empress

The world of essences, an existential atmosphere, authenticity, honesty, listening to the core of movement. What kind of dialogue develops? The words and the movements are as if they were in-between the choreographer and the dancer: it is always a question where the body is at the moment and its inspiration to move. (Pasanen-Willberg 2007)

The students produced movement material and movement combinations using the human or skeletal figures from the Dance Macabre painting. As an exercise they each had to choose five figures to work with. I asked them to imagine the painting's skeletons as living human beings before they had died: how they looked, what they said and how they felt. What kinds of images do the figures and the thoughts connected to them produce and what kind of movement is created?

We observed five different skeletal figures, which depicted death in the painting. We developed movement material for these figures. Personally, I found it easier to begin to find feeling and movement for the figures in the painting. It was easier to identify with the empress and her situation

and character. The movements came naturally, but most important was to get into the movement and form the feeling of the character and express it. Because this piece was based on a work of art, a painting, it was interesting to become acquainted with these figures and use them in order to create movement. To perceive the atmosphere and the state of mind felt concrete and sensible. Creating movement had idea and meaning; it was not just random movement. (Risberg 2007)

When the students had accumulated their movement material, I asked them to “conceal” their dance combination and to further work with the resultant physical experiences and emotions related to death. I asked them to examine what kinds of new images were derived and again how these experiences helped to produce new movement. We used this movement-image cycle over and over again. By doing this, we applied the method of ideokinesis, where images produce movement and movement produces images. This vice-versa chain of events was in constant practice and could have gone on endlessly. In addition, as the students were simultaneously working with organic movement qualities, we applied imagery pertaining to release and alignment methods (body bowls, spine, change of weight, water elements) inside the movement formation. These methods supported avoiding direct imitation of the poses and forms of the figures from the painting. Finally, I asked them to choreograph movement sequences lasting half a minute that they would teach each other in small groups as an independent work project in December.

The task was interesting because I hadn't worked with images before. Most of the movements I developed by studying the positions of the figures and the movements I imagined them doing if the painting would come to life. The material above the skeletons as well as other objects such as the coffin and flute also affected the movement. It was interesting to observe how a two-dimensional and still painting tends to produce two-dimensional movement. The positions easily become an end in themselves. What happens in between poses and the reason for moving are neglected. The fact that I actively thought about taking the movement into space finally released me from stagnation. (Hynynen 2007)

In January, I presented the students with a composition chart, in which I placed them either together or separately to perform their sequences.

Movement Material – Improvisation

Throughout the whole working process I realized again and again how much freedom of choice and freedom of movement was actually given to us and how precious that freedom was. I have always been interested in structured improvisation and the attempt to consider it something specific rather than something random. Experiencing a part of the structure, in which we created our own movement material, fixed it, taught it in small groups to each other, altered it with improvisation and used all of these as construction blocks to build a dance, was a very enlightening idea regarding how close improvisation and choreography can actually work together. For some of the work we were given a structure by the choreographer but the movements, even the set parts were created by us. I found it liberating to decide what movements I would perform on stage. (Nordeck 2007)

The recreated piece was extremely varied because all dancers produced their own movement material and incorporated it into the original version. In addition, I also had permission to use lifts and movement sequences based on contact-improvisation and ballet technique created by the Australian choreographer and dancer *Russell Dumas*⁴. The dancers independently learned both Russell's and my material from a video.

The work consisted partly of structural improvisation and partly precise movement compositions. As Steinman claims, improvisation is often described as an art of the present, a discipline of spontaneity that underlines immediacy and awareness. Centrally, the work addresses the content of the present (Steinman 1986, 77). In my view the notions of the art of the present and immediate ability to react to momentary existence are essential and important factors in the accurately defined sections of the dance. In both cases, freedom of action and the presence of spontaneity are equally important. Just then, it is essential to be aware of what kind of movement repertoire has been discovered and developed during the process. Although all the movement material worked with in rehearsals is not integrated into the performance itself, in a captivating way, it is still present in the core of the dancers' dancing from which movement spirals into action.

In the production of *Totentanz*, the dynamics is even and requires the movement to be subtly articulated. When working deeply and seeking movement from the

spine, variety in dynamic quality will occur. In addition, water should flow in the form; I repeat the question, does movement flow in the same way as the bodily fluids do?

We tend to think that choreography is just a group of movement sequences pieced together, especially, when the dancers have been directed to create movement themselves according to given premises. It is still not the same thing. Often, the structure is considered secondary, but for me it is the most significant feature of the choreography.

At the end of the process, when the structure became clear, I stressed how to get behind the structure and then inside it again. I tried to support a position, in which the observation point of the viewer would not be in the scrutiny of the structure or movement sequence, but in life and expression surrounding it. It is as if the structure disappears. At this stage, a certain “brain structure”, an invisible world and an opportunity to move in space are formed for the dancer. The dancer is given the possibility to live through movement, to move in her or his own way and interpret and express the contents of the piece.

Since being a dance student is usually more about “taking in” than about “putting out”, I very much value those opportunities where I can come out with my expression and actually speak in the language of dance. I think in order to really embody a quality, an emotion or a character, it is necessary to find some personal connection to it and express something authentic. It is possible to connect to universal human emotions that almost everyone knows to a certain degree (like in this case arrogance, unawareness of our morality and sudden realization, shock and fear of death . . .). (Nordeck 2007)

Movement happens when one lets it happen. There is no such thing as good or bad movement, when it is relevant for the dance work itself and when the dancer is guided into its atmosphere. Exactly in the same way as we talk, as dancers we have a language through which we express our internal needs, relations to the world, other people and things. In this way of working, it is essential that the dancer has the ability and is given the opportunity to produce their own movement material. Thought, guidance, intention, quality, movement articulation and atmosphere are what the choreographer brings to the entirety.

What do We Lack as Artists?

Does this make things clearer and to whom? Does the work open up to the spectator in a more direct, more open, more entertaining, more meaningful way? An inner frame of reference? The problem of perception. The essence of doing, the essence of art, the essence of movement? Is there an essence or is it about travelling infinitely through space without direction? I am not investigating what is said. I am investigating what I do. In this instance, research or investigation does not produce choreography but offers material that I can reflect upon in regard to my choreographic goals. Creativity demands practice. How autonomous can I be? A spiral in which there is neither a beginning nor end. The process – investigation, choreography and understanding – advances slowly. I am here and that is where I can be. Life has its limits. Is creating art a sharing of privacy? One episode, my work. The problem of perception. How to read movement? How does one read my movement and my life? (Pasanen-Willberg 2007)

In conclusion, for me, it is most important that I understand the working methods that I choose in regard to the choreography and its qualities, which are human beings' or dancers' qualities. What view of life do I portray through my choreography: one that instrumentalises people and reifies expression or a culture of thought, in which we can genuinely speak about openness, listening, encountering another person and understanding? Our thoughts and actions should coincide. Method based activity is productive, but, at the same time, through it, we may lose something more crucial, that which comes from within. How can I get close to someone else's experience? Should we believe in the silent wisdom we carry and which guides us to a journey into the body's inner world – despite the fact that it is not possible to understand someone else completely? How can I learn to trust my immediate experience and judgments based on it? Are portrayals of my own experience most essential? All of this has meaning when I contemplate what I would do in my next performance or what went wrong in the previous one. At the same time, I am reaching for the dancer's voice, an account about the dancer's own movement experience. On the other hand, although certain work methods are based on earlier experience, one cannot determine the progress of the artistic process beforehand nor can one predict its success. One cannot even pre-determine how the audience will receive the end product, the dance work. I can only become more conscious about my own choices. This is where I am now.

Student Observations on the Significance of the Work Process

The relation to the You is unmediated. Nothing conceptual intervenes between I and You, no prior knowledge and no imagination; and memory itself is changed as it plunges from particularity into wholeness. No purpose intervenes between I and You, no greed and no anticipation; and longing itself is changed as it plunges from the dream into appearance. Every means is an obstacle. Only where all means have disintegrated encounters occur. (Buber 1937/1970, 62–63)

The insights that the dancers relayed to me in their papers were very important. In our conversations that occurred during the rehearsal process I gave instruction and guidance. Therefore, what they then conveyed was not based upon an open dialogue about how they experience movement, what it meant or what it could mean in the future. I did not attempt to control or manipulate how the movement should feel or how it should look. Even though the dancers were influenced by the painting and the video of the original choreography from the very beginning, they were given a vast amount of freedom to fulfil themselves and develop artistically. I believe that this particular way of producing form, quality or style is not tied to any specific genre, but by nature is more general – any movement is equally important.

The use of videos was significant during rehearsals. I filmed the run-through daily and we watched it immediately following rehearsals. In this way, the dancers received immediate feed-back from their own work and were able to understand the structure of the piece better:

One challenge and developing revolution in this process was the use of video for feedback. I was able to accept myself more. That is who I am, that is what I look like, this is reality and at the same time, most importantly, I am able to learn. A video is not like a text written in stone. It is just an image that can be erased if necessary. The dance can always develop and get better. (Laamanen 2007)

The work moved more from large lines to small details: from forms to meanings. I find that this method was a good way to control the work. The technique classes worked as a good base and preparation for the piece. We had the possibility to concentrate on movement principles and discovering qualities. (Hanhineva 2007)

Somehow, things become more real when information is given in various ways. The video works as a kind of mirror, in addition to getting feed-back and following my felt-sense, I can also see things happen. (Hynynen 2007)

Taking videos has been an essential part of our rehearsals all the time. The rehearsals and run-throughs were taped and watched regularly from the beginning to the end. I paid attention to and concentrated foremost on shape, aesthetics of movement and structure. The feel of and interpretation of the movement became significant in a later stage. The video forced me to see how I move, mistakes, timing and position in regard to others. It has brought an outer aspect to my work and, at the same time, helped me to perceive my movement according to my own sensations and in relation to others. The work felt professional when I realized that movement is about one's feelings and external visibility simultaneously and that these elements do not dismiss each other. (Niva 2007)

Videos today, are no doubt an excellent aid for recording and documentation. On the other hand, when using them as a form of feedback, the verbal dialogue may become flattened and forgotten. The focus of observation may get stuck on form, composition and structure, rather, than the felt-sense and evaluation of the quality of movement. Especially, because pictures do not tell the whole truth and often distort the dancer's proportions and slow down the movement, one must keep in mind that movement feels different from how it appears on the screen. I was slightly surprised that the videos became such an important tool in the progress of the work. It was especially important, that throughout the process, we continued to watch the original version of Totentanz and the dancers used this video when working independently, as well. It is a fact, that, throughout the work process, dance technique and somatics work hand in hand and that from deep within, the bubbling movement and sensation of movement strengthens when one immediately reflects one's experiences visually. Supporting the felt-sense through visual means might have been successful, since in the choreographic process, the contents of the form and movement sequences are repeated slowly and simply. Initially, this might not feel like much of anything and the work might feel somewhat unstructured. Even if they are not recognized immediately, new experiences emerge. Heureka, revelations follow when one immerses oneself into a different way of working. In this respect videos certainly are a significant method. Furthermore, methods and means create possibilities.

In conclusion, I want to ask, if these words are pairs? Means and no means, general and unique, means and general, no means and unique or means and unique? . . . Precision and freedom, to forget and to be conscious simultaneously, or? Paradoxical. Certainly.

Endnotes:

¹ The original piece premiered on September 19th, 2006 at the Ateneum Hall in Helsinki. The dancers were Tanja Kuisma, Kirsi Oinonen, Mickael Stoeckell, Sara Kaustinen, Riitta Pasanen-Willberg and Liisa Pentti. The costume designer was Leena Nurmi and light designer Timo Nurminen. The DVD recordings were made by Riitta Pasanen-Willberg. The recreated version in Outokumpu was danced by students Eveliina Niva, Tuuli Risberg, Henna Hanhineva, Päivi Vettenranta, Tuuli Hynynen, Joel Gabreilsson (Sweden), Sofia Gabrielsson (Sweden), Troll Nordeck (Germany) and Mari Laamanen. The students made their own costumes according to the original designs and lecturer Esko Silvennoinen was responsible for the lighting design.

² Feldenkrais Technique, Alexander Technique, Pilates, Body-Mind Centering and Skinner Releasing Technique belong to somatic education. Thomas Hanna defined somatic education as "the use of sensory-motor learning to gain greater voluntary control of one's physiological process" (Hanna 1989, 37–92). I also consider release and alignment techniques to belong to the realm of somatic education.

³ Eva Karczak has been a long-term dancer in the Trisha Brown Company, USA.

⁴ Russel Dumas is an Australian dancer, who has performed with the Cullberg Ballet, Ballet Rambert, and the Dance Companies of Trisha Brown and Twyla Tharp. His own company, Dance Exchange, works in Australia and France and tours regularly around the world. He was one of my main teachers in the Amsterdam Theatre School modern dance department from 1981–1982.

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Students' papers 2006–2007

Totentanz – A Strange Dance in Life, DVD, Helsinki and Outokumpu versions, filmed by Riitta Pasanen-Willberg

Repercussions on a Dance-Making Project

Paula Salosaari

Prelude

The making of a dance piece for six ballet teacher students from the Degree Programme in Dance Teacher Education at the Oulu University of Applied Sciences, Department of Culture, was an intensive dance-making project. This project and the performances of the created dance piece took place in the school theatre in January 2007.



Repercussions (2007), choreography Paula Salosaari, dancers Laura Linna, Niina Härö, Aleksandra Rustamova, Maiju Virkkunen and Mari Winter, photo Jyrki Halonen

I acted as a teacher and choreographer in the process. A daily ballet class was followed by two daily workshops. The dancers created almost all the dance material themselves, and it was based on the open-ended tasks¹ I gave them. The starting point for movement creation and interpretation was the codified ballet vocabulary. Decisions concerning the performance were made, as much as possible, together with the dancers. My aim was to create a dance piece in co-authorship with the dancers, giving them an open opportunity to create their own movement material through structured improvisation.² In addition, I hoped that they could expand their qualitative range in interpreting movement by giving them an understanding of the versatile qualitative potential hidden in one and the same base movement. My goal was to help the dancers to bring forth varying contents in the dance by corporeal awareness and by making personal choices and carrying out and further developing their qualitative criteria of dance. To finish her feedback writing at the end of the sessions, one dancer addressed the following questions to me:

I would be interested in knowing whether you had some preconceptions of this dance work. Could you have imagined it in just the way it is now? What did you expect of the process and the work? And how do you feel about the process and the finished dance work?

Below, I will express my thoughts and feelings about the process, the twenty-minute dance piece and its performance, discussing them with feedback from the dancers and audience members and by means of some connected literature. This writing began as an answer to the student's question. I hope to be able to continue working with the same students in new projects keeping the discussion alive. Therefore I see this writing as a continuation of the very interactive process of working together. In addition, I hope that it will highlight some events and topics in the process that have a wider interest for the reader.

A couple of weeks before the beginning of the process, I felt anxious, thinking that I needed to somehow prepare for the forthcoming sessions, but did not know how. I knew how to begin but could not envisage how the dancers would answer my tasks and thoughts. Perhaps my brain was buzzing with an expectation often connected with the teacher's role, even more so with the ballet teacher's role, to know in advance. The teacher is expected to have an image of the final result in mind. The success of the end result could then be assessed according to how closely the composition, movement or performance resembles this 'ideal'. This kind of thinking, I feel, prohibits creative outcomes in composition, especially the dancers' or team's creative contribution. At least the creativity would then be the teacher-choreographer's private creativity to which the dancer could respond only by carrying out the director's views as closely as possible. Now the dance work was born out of the way in which the dancers reacted to the ballet based, open tasks and how I reacted to the dance material and suggestions offered to me by the dancers.

To transcend ballet, one needs a balletic starting point. In my mind was the Danish dancer and choreographer, developer of the Royal Danish Ballet, Harald Lander and his ballet *Les Etudes* (1948). It is a plotless dance work introducing ballet's codified vocabulary in a cumulative way. "The ballet develops as a demonstration of the academic school style, starting with the *plié* at the *barre*, via the adagio work *au milieu* through to allegro and *batterie* exercises. The whole ballet is propelled by an irresistible escalation of technical difficulties, with a *pas de deux* à la *La Sylphide* interrupting its drive" (Koepler 1982, 146). I remember dancing in this work as a young ballet student in the 70s. I remember the exact *barre* exercises, adagios, turning pirouettes and especially the diagonal danced by four dancers where I made my first split onstage. I went to the Finnish National Ballet archives to refresh my memory of the piece. I saw a newer version of it made in 1996. It was full of 'abstract' ballet movement skilfully performed by the National Ballet dancers (The premier

was on 3.5.1996). Expecting that our piece would hardly look like its inspirator, I believed that some influences from it would stay alive. It would consist of scenes developed out of *port de bras*, adagio or turning codified ballet movements, which had, however, been altered through the open interpretational and composition tasks I gave the students.

While watching *Les Etudes*, I also paid attention to Josette Amiel's lighting design. In some parts of the piece the dancers were lit only below the waist to emphasise exact and skilful footwork. At other times the dancers moved along diagonal light beams running from one stage corner to another. They moved one after the other, sometimes turning, sometimes making big jumps or some other movements.

Naming the Dance

During the first day of rehearsals I was asked to name the dance for the programme notes. That felt like an impossible task. I had just met the dancers for the first time and we had an open process ahead of us, at the end of which the final meaning of the piece would perhaps be revealed. Nonetheless, the projections of images and light from different kinds of surfaces such as, for instance, glass, had fascinated me for some time. These reflections often go unnoticed in everyday life, unless one begins to pay attention to them. I thought that in the way I treat conventional ballet movements in giving the dancer freedom for different kinds of interpretations, the same form is, as it were, reflected from different dancers in different ways. The forms are embodied by different dancers and thereby spatially separate and subtly modified. At the same time it is possible to recognize them as a variation of the same movement or form. This was my first image of the content of the emerging dance and I named it *Heijastuksia* (*Repercussions*). The movement, which in the dancer's interpretation can transform, is, as it were, a repercussion of the 'original' on another dancer. Later, when listening to other persons' thoughts on the name, I noticed that people interpreted it idiosyncratically. I liked that. Finally, after the process was well on its way, I thought that the reflections could also be echoes of the dancers' personalities and perhaps of the scent of womanliness that had crept into the dance.

Looking at the Dance Content and the Process of Creating It Through the Strands of the Dance Medium and Their Nexus

Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg (2002, 39–61) introduce a way of discussing or analyzing the content of a performance through its different strands and especially their chiasms, which they call nexus. They name the strands of the dance medium as the performer, the movement, the space and the sound. The real interest, however, comes from the connections within the strands as: "...it is the flux of inter-relationships within the medium's parts that binds the work together and provides it with its complex polysemanticism" (Preston-Dunlop & Sanchez-Colberg 2002, 39). When looking at the content of a performance, one can pay attention to the nexus between the performer and movement, for example, or movement and sound, and the content they create together. I had this view in mind to give structure to my description and discussion of the process and the work.

Creating the Performance Space

In the beginning of the working process I was pleased to discover that our group could share enough rehearsal space and time on stage with the other forthcoming performances. This meant that we could perform our dance on stage. I had some preliminary ideas about the lighting, but hesitated, as lighting rehearsals on stage are often scarce and they happen only at the end of the rehearsal process. At that time it is often difficult or impossible to change the dance if the decisions are not working well on stage. Therefore I gave up thinking about the stage lighting until possible co-operation with a musician had been discussed. Even though working together at this time was postponed because of practical reasons, the musician's questions inspired me. He was attempting to get an image of a piece that was yet to be born and which was still an enigma, even to me. The lighting design in *Les Etudes* reoccurred to me and as a consequence I made the beams of light an active part of the process by beginning to imagine them in the rehearsals. I was also asked if I would use



Repercussions (2007), choreography
Paula Salosaari, dancer Mari
Winter, photo Tomas Grönvall

the golden section in my dance. In the original *Etudes* ballet, the beams run symmetrically across the stage from the back corners to the front corners. I thought of letting the beams cross each other in the proportions of the golden section. One of them would be 'original', from the left back corner of the stage to the right front corner. The other beam would be more horizontal. I had no previous knowledge of how this kind of arrangement would work on stage, or how the dancers would look like in the beam or outside of it. Later I found that it worked in the final piece by creating subtle structure 'out of the ordinary', for example when the dancers were walking or turning along the beams in a continuum.

Creating the Performer: Ballerina? – Performer? – Dancer? – Woman?

When an intensive process is ineffaceably in the back of one's mind, it seems to direct one's actions during work and free time alike, while awake or even when asleep. At the same time one acts partly in habitual ways – is it possible for a woman to resist shopping during seasonal sales? With the dancers, we had already selected some tolerable dresses for our dance from the school wardrobe. But then, on the way to my lodgings, I got lost in a ladies clothing shop, which offered sizable reductions. I found myself in front of a rack where dark blue ladies evening gowns made out of gauzelike material with a glittering front were hanging. And just enough for my six dancers! They were such a bargain that I decided to take a small personal risk and buy them. When I later showed the dresses to the dancers they seemed unreservedly enthusiastic about them. That was fun. After that, the dress began to guide the advancement of the piece from its point of view, which led to us bringing high-healed shoes and stay-up socks into the picture – and perhaps also the feminine gestures in the final dance piece. The performer's role began to build around the gender and clothing of the dancers.

The only fact that slightly disturbed me was that the dresses were all alike. That, I thought, had an equalising influence. For its part, I thought at the time, it hid the personality. Thinking of it now, I feel, that it may actually have had the opposite influence. Against the dress you see more clearly the different interpretations and movement style and gestures of the individual dancers.

Creating the Movement Through Improvisation

Many contemporary ballet choreographers expect their dancers to be able to improvise or interpret movement as part of the choreographic process, making

the dancers co-authors of the piece. For instance, the former Frankfurt Ballet choreographer William Forsythe's working process has been called "co-authorship in a multi-stranded embodied dance medium" (Preston-Dunlop & Sanchez-Colberg 2002, 40). A ballet dancer is a co-author and the medium is more than movement. In ballet training this has seldom been acknowledged. Dancers have seldom been offered experiences that would pave the way to mastering improvisation as a tool for creating in the ballet context. In our process we began by creating movement through open-ended improvisational tasks. A few dancers commented on the unfamiliarity of such an approach in ballet. They also expressed their mistrust of the usefulness of such an approach. Improvisation was also understood as being more of a method in contemporary dance than the ballet context as is evident from the following texts written by the dancers of the process.

...the thought of improvisation as a method made me feel uneasy, for I did not consider it a fruitful way of working in the long run.

Before the beginning of the workshops I felt slightly scared of the thought of making contemporary/ballet choreography through improvisation. I had not been practicing contemporary dance before the entrance exams.

Improvisation was a strange thing for me. I thought, that I was not able to work creatively. So even the first workshop was a joyful surprise for me...

The dancers created combinations of movement through structured improvisation. Often, after playful searching, the combinations were fixed and played with qualitatively to form the dance movement. But it also happened, as a student wrote, that the dancers felt like keeping some part of the final dance open for improvisation through the whole rehearsal process and even in performance. It just happened that it was never finally closed. This, I feel, was a significant event, considering the apprehension many students had felt towards improvisation as a working tool at the beginning of the process.

Conventions Transform in Creative Experience and Play

After the ballet-based movement material had been created, it served as a new starting point for playing with qualitative content in the dance. It is not self-

evident to recognise content in the so-called abstract or ‘pure’ movement. As in other arts, the question has been posed: “What is the content in ballet?” For many it is easiest to find content when the dance or music or other performing art has a narrative content or an easily recognizable character or persona. Dancers often miss narrative content in their performance, even to the extent that if it is not there, the content feels missing.

Early on in the process we found out that the dance piece would be based only on movement and its development. The thought felt strange, for I am used to playing a role while being on stage...I was perplexed: no feelings, just movement.

In ballet, as in other dance forms and theatre, interpreting a role is an important element and a performative skill. Ballet, story-telling and movement based alike, also always has qualitative content. The story in ballet is told through creating movement qualities, as there is usually no speech. The divertimentos, dancing for the sheer joy of it, are an important additional part of a story ballet, often one that is kept alive by constant repetition. If we counted as content only the story or role, content would totally evade a ballet class. To understand the quality as content is therefore really important, I find. If we miss that in a ballet class, only the emphasis on technical skill may remain. Feeling thus, my aim was, as I mentioned earlier, to give the dancers ways of interpreting movement – experiencing different qualities and options that emphasized the open opportunity of interpreting the movement itself.

When we interpret a movement genre, the acquired cultural rules and norms bind us. The rules in ballet are so strongly stamped in a ballet person’s mind that it is often hard to see that even ballet conventions can be opened out for interpretation.

In the beginning it was quite hard to have ballet movement as a starting point. The rules of ballet haunted one’s head.

The intention behind the emphasis on perception and structural dance imagery³ is to open out the dancer’s experience: to give him or her a glimpse into the possibility of transformation, the world of new awareness of choices. When the dancer is, for example, paying attention to the transference of weight and balance from one foot or body part to another, it is impossible to say with absolute certainty

where the exact ‘right’ balance can be found. Therefore, when the dancer is tuned through different modes of perception, paying attention to them selectively and in turn, some leeway is always left for the dancer’s personal choices found through experience and awareness of the here and now. Another example is when the dancer listens to the sounds his or her movements make. He or she may become aware of the strength of the movements, or perhaps of the rhythms of other dancers’ movements. In such situations the change may be immediate and instinctive. It may change the movement’s strength or rhythm in relation to others, or perhaps the height or quality of a jump. Feeling touch is yet another way of paying attention while dancing that can inform the dancer with a new clarity of his or her connections to the world, perhaps the floor or a partner, and thereby opens out new particular possibilities to be in a certain way. This is a living, changing state of being, which allows for variation and change. It is also a place to transcend; awareness reveals new possibilities. In my earlier writing, I have called the understanding that this state reveals “revelations” (Salosaari 2001, 55–61).



Repercussions (2007), choreography Paula Salosaari, dancers Niina Härö and Laura Linna, photo Jyrki Halonen

When perception and dance imagery open the dancer’s experience and highlight the leeway within codified movements, this experience may invite the dancer to deviate from the traditional rules or from following the given by validating the new through the accompanying feeling and certainty. This is an important event, which enables the dancer to acquire personal knowledge in the very act of dancing, making the dance truly his or her own and even question the generally accepted way of performing in ballet. (Salosaari 2001, 62–64)

...I realized that it is possible to interpret the movement itself.

Emerging Feeling

Sometimes performing movement alone has been considered negatively, dancing purged of feeling. This is, however, not so when the dancer commits himself or herself with his or her whole being to the movement’s quality and finds new, creative

solutions. “To find something new in the dance is joyful. It (the feeling) motivates and directs the dancer forward. When it (the feeling) has surprised the dancer, the event is completely true just at that moment” (Salosaari 2006, 24). Perceiving ones own dance leaves traces in the body “in the flow of passing moments”, as Pasanen–Willberg expresses it in her article in this book. Therefore the feelings attached to the movement also have a history in the corporeal existence of the dancer. Because of this feeling, when one is perceiving the body moving or paying attention to perceiving the structures of dance while dancing, the dance is not without feeling and does not dehumanize the dancer. Plotless movement-based dance and dramatic movement both have content and feeling. While highlighting the qualitative content in dance, I want to stress the possibility of such content. It is important, especially when non-dramatic or plotless dance is rehearsed. The content does not need to escape with drama. In dance, which is usually expressed through movement, drama also needs dance qualities for its expression. The dancer also tells the story through qualitative movements.

The change effected by paying attention to perception in a new or different way is difficult to describe. It is personal and therefore needs to be experienced in order to be convincing. Sometimes this experience takes time to reveal itself. When it happens, however, it does not leave the person cold. That is why I do not believe in so-called abstract dance. The dancer is always more or less a human being, whose experience creates the feeling climate. The feelings in *Heijastuksia* were not derived from a role or a predetermined story, but appeared out of the dancers’ movements and interpretations, from the world of sense perception and dance imagery. The dancers brought into view something that had not existed before. Finally, they expressed it with their concentration and commitment to quality while dancing.

It was great to play with the finished movement by searching varying movement qualities and tempos.

In the adagio, I was always waiting for the moment when I could, as it were, fall, give an impulse or impetus, which would lead into something totally different. After that, it was great to return to the basic adagio movement.

Finally the dance became more than just movement interpretation. Gradually with

the dress, high-heeled shoes and feminine gestures the dance took on a woman's role, freely expressed by the dancers. That was also challenging to the dancers as one of them points out in her writing.

The most challenging parts in the piece were the walking in high-heeled shoes in the beginning, putting on the sock, and in the turning scene leaving the stage. In these scenes movement alone did not take me through. Something more had to be found. One really had to stand behind one's own doing!

Creating the Sound – Performer – Movement – Nexus

When dance is created for specific music, the sound of the music, instead of other sounds made in the dance space, often prevails or dominates. Other possibilities might be the sounds created by the dancer, voluntarily or often involuntarily, such as breathing or steps. The props may also initiate sound.

For many ballet choreographers in the 20th century, dance could exist only after the music. Only after the music was chosen could the dance be made for it. For the spectator of dance music and movement always co-exist whether the choreographer has meant it or not. Stephanie Jordan describes how in the 20th century many choreographers began to pay conscious attention to the music-dance relationship, especially when narrative dance gave way to movement based dance or when movement descriptive of music was initiated by Mikhail Fokine with his *Les Sylphides*. Dance could visualize music or they could be seen as parallel events having a relationship to each other. (Jordan 2000, 73–77)

Music can also bring images from the surrounding culture to the dance. That was the case in *Heijastuksia*, when the dancers began the piece by walking in their high heels along those previously mentioned light beams. One woman after another becomes gradually illuminated when stepping into the beam from the wings and gradually the stage is filled with women correcting their dresses, bending to fix their shoes, drying their nail polish and so forth while the Icelandic female artist Björk sings “*Where is the line with you?*”. Björk's original femininity, searching for identity (Boucher 2006, 56) and, in my opinion, sexy voice together with the stage image, disclosed the fact, from the very beginning of the piece, that being a woman features in this piece.

The fact that our movement was not music based gave us the opportunity to concentrate first on the movement and then begin to try out different musical accompaniments to the same dance. It also gave the dancer the freedom to form

her own relationship to the music and live it in the dance in a personal way. The relationship to music was not fixed. Therefore it might vary slightly even when the music was finally decided on, in different performances. This appeared in a slightly funny fashion in stage rehearsal, when the dancer in the wings was waiting for the light beam to appear on the stage to begin, while the lighting designer in turn was waiting for the dancer to appear to light the beam thinking that she was reacting to music. But no – both were waiting for each other. That problem was easy to solve when the clue was clarified as not being the music.

Musical choices were done in co-operation with the dancers, who were almost unanimous. The choices could only be done from the CD collection that I had brought with me. And that was mine, and my choice. There was however a wide choice from different musical genres. Because our movements were not based on a particular music or tempo, it was possible to try out different pieces of music for the same scene. In the middle of the process, a pianist came into the picture, improvising with the dance. The spectators whom I interviewed were excited and enthusiastic about this co-operation. But the dancers' viewpoint was strong and unanimous – they wanted to hold on to the choices we had made with the CD music. I thought that this was a pity, but did not want to spoil a well-started democratic process, especially when I saw the good points in the CD as well. This was an understandable choice, when it was set against the background that we had already taken the process half way, and the relationship between dance and music had begun to take shape and feel good to the dancers. The chosen music gave wings, as it were, to the dance. To go ahead with such a process with a musician would demand planning mutual rehearsal times and ways of practice.

It was obvious that we did not try to visualize the music with the dance but to operate parallel to it. As the dancers' view of the music had been so unanimous, I believe an intuitive relationship had developed. At least we were not slaves to the music, not obliged to beat time with the music with our dance. As early as 1939 Edwin Denby had written about the diminishing effect such practice has on the dance.

Keeping time at all costs destroys the instinctive variability of emphasis; it destroys the sense of breathing in dancing, the buoyancy and the rhythmic shape of a dance phrase...
(Denby 1939 as reported by Jordan 2000, 77)

The adagio scene was perhaps where I sensed the core of *Heijastuksia*. It distinctly shows ballet movement, which breathes of the awareness of the dancers'

interpretations and timings, balancing and falling off balance. We tried different kinds of music, even stylistically contradictory ones. When, after a while, we chose Frédéric Chopin's *Larghetto* from the *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra no.2 in F minor, op.21*, I thought it was a gift for those spectators who were expecting to experience ballet in a traditional way. Even then, the dancers reacted to the music intuitively, giving their very personal view of the relationship along with their own interpretation of the movement. The same movement base was soon to be danced along with sounds from violin and electric guitar and transformed into less harmonious, even aggressive duets.

Music can create atmosphere and inspire the dancer. Towards the end of the dance the falling off balance becomes the dominant feature and finally the dancers throw themselves into the dance forcefully and trusting each other in catching their falls, which were slightly different each time, rolling over each other and giving each other impulses to movement. All this to what the dancers named 'jungle music'.

Often in a ballet class, the dancer's musicality is judged according to whether he or she can follow musical pulse exactly and evenly. While working to give the dancer more than usual freedom for interpretation, this kind of devotion to the music would limit the dancer considerably. When we alter some element in the nexus, let's say we change the flow of movement, other parts of the dance are altered as a consequence. That 'other' can be the movement's timing. If we are bound to follow the pulse, 'keeping time at all costs' as Denby puts it, this is not possible. Projecting a form into the surrounding space away from the dancer can be given emphasis by changing the dance dynamics. This often leads to altering the timing momentarily. Dance cannot be fully interpreted if it is a slave to music. But the two can exist together in a meaningful relationship. In Denby's words "The excitement of watching ballet is that two very different things – dancing and music – fit together, not mechanically but in spirit" (Denby 1939 as reported by Jordan 2000, 77). In our project, the dancers chose the music for different scenes and created a personal relationship to it, knowing that they did not have to follow it exactly nor each in the same way. On stage each dancer was creating her personal meaning from this relationship.

It was wonderful when we used different kinds of music in the rehearsals. They gave different qualities and a different atmosphere for dancing. It was exciting to rehearse the performance without knowing what the final choice of music would be for each dance section. When we finally chose the pieces of music, they had a quite different role than they did in 'a normal performance';

now the music was creating atmosphere, not giving rhythm to the movement. Movement was now the main thing and that was grand.

I gained a lot of understanding of how music can serve dance instead of dance serving music. It is also possible to make dance without music. The importance of music as the creator of atmosphere and feeling was emphasised during the course.

Using CDs to provide music for the dance and fulfilling first the needs of our dance, had the regrettable consequence that pieces of music had to be faded away or cut to suit the length of the dance. Even though it happened that some pieces could be used from beginning to end, some regrettable cuts had to be made. During one of the stage rehearsals a musician was sitting in the audience. I asked if the fact that music and dance were not tied together felt bad or perhaps 'wrong'? It did not, but the fact that music had to be cut disturbed him. I can readily agree with this. At the time I made my choices from the point of view of our requirements for the dance.

In addition to music, other sounds were also created by the dance and came across to the audience. The clack of high-heeled shoes was a strong element. Because the dancers heard each other, the clack easily started to happen at the same time, like a march. That was for me, seeking an independent woman, ghastly! Luckily we could make the clacking happen out of phase.

Finale: How Does the Piece Talk to Me?

Although I did not know in the beginning what the piece would look like, what the steps would be, how long the dance would be, and so on, I notice that it carries the values which I treasure and which I carried with me all along: the agency of a woman and the possibility to transform. The particular way of expressing these values was what I did not know in advance.

Although this dance piece is not radical in the sense that it would like to shock, it nonetheless wants to transcend the stereotypical idea of a woman – both in real life as well as in the ballet context. Judith Butler has discussed the development of the feminine identity as a temporal happening, the transformation of which is found in the repetitive acts of womanhood. We are confounded in our learned and culturally adopted ways of acting out our gender. There is no going back to a natural state or the past. We play out our cultural gender in our repeated acts of being a woman. (Butler 1990, 271) A theatrical performance can also be a venue

for playing with the acting out of gender. In *Heijastuksia*, both ballet as the cultural context as well as the everyday life of a woman, are present. In this chain of events through time, we do not need to be passive recipients of cultural codes that we continue to act out in our gender game. On the other hand, “the style is never fully self-styled, for living styles have a history, and that history conditions and limits possibilities” (Butler 1990, 272). The only way out or forward from our stereotypes, is, as Butler expresses it, “in the possibility of a different kind of repeating, in the breaking or subversive repetition” of the style of our existence (1990, 271–272). In *Heijastuksia*, the female dancers acted at the same time as women and as ballerinas, the conventional name for a female ballet dancer. Perhaps both of those roles were shaken a bit when the dancers were given freedom to act as agents. Or how would you see it? There were no soloist dancers contra *corps de ballet*. The dancers came on stage acting as women and left it in a relaxed manner carrying the high heels over their shoulders or hanging on their sides. In between they acted as agents through creating their personal movements and interpreting these movements in their multiple and idiosyncratic ways. Instead of accentuating the bodily gestures in correspondence with the musical beat “a device that rapidly becomes monotonous to the eye and tends to dehumanize the look of the dancer onstage” (Denby 1939 as reported by Jordan 2000, 77), they made themselves agents by making individual decisions about the music-movement relationship. They created their own hairstyle. The dancers’ genuine facial expressions made them personal human beings. The atmosphere of the dance and the dancers’ true feelings motivated these expressions, even when the dancers were smiling. I remember when a dancer asked me in rehearsal if it was distracting to smile. I thought it was wonderful, as long as it expressed the dancer’s true feeling.

I enjoyed in a mysterious way, seeing the dancers bring forth their unexpected ways of producing dance from my open-ended tasks in ballet. I was happy to be able to share this experience with six dancers and through them with the audience. When the whole thing worked well, in rehearsals and in performance, I enjoyed the richness of the movement and the atmosphere. I remember, for instance, when, for the first time in the process, I gave the dancers the first open-ended task, to alter the classical codified *port de bras* movements. In no way could I have imagined beforehand, what would be created. Then, as always, when the dance surprises one . . . that is wonderful.

Endnotes:

¹ Open-ended tasks are created with the understanding of the codified ballet vocabulary to be flexible and open to the dancer's interpretations. The tools for opening out the dance movements are the selective perceptual attention to the dancer's body and surroundings and choreological structures understood as images of the dance. A change of teaching style from learning through a model to divergent production is essential. More about the structures of the dance can be read in Preston-Dunlop 1998. The way in which these structures are used as imagery can be read in Salosaari 2001.

² Dance improvisation, in which the creating of dance movements is guided by giving dance structures as images and starting points for the movement. This is one version of an open-ended task.

³ In her book *Looking at Dances, A Choreological Perspective on Choreography*, Valerie Preston-Dunlop gives a wide view of the choreological dance structures. In my work I have used these structures as dance imagery, as a tool for divergent production.

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The Meaning of Bodily Knowledge in a Creative Dance-Making Process

Soili Hämäläinen

Introduction

Bodily knowledge has recently been a topic of particularly active debate. Interest in the subject is not only a recent phenomenon; many prominent dance educators who worked even from the mid 20th century onwards, such as Margareth H'Doubrer ([1940], 1957), Alma Hawkins (1964), Ruth Foster (1976), and Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen ([1993], 2003), and dance therapists such as Marian Chace (1964), Mary Whitehouse (1963), Trudi Schoop (1974), and Janet Adler ([1972], 2006a) have recognised the importance of bodily knowledge in their work. The significance of bodily experience was also emphasised in the early days of modern dance by such artists as Isadora Duncan (1877–1927), Doris Humphrey (1895–1958), Rudolf Laban (1879–1958), and Mary Wigman (1886–1973) to name a few. It is important to note that Chace, Whitehouse, Schoop, and Adler started their careers as dance artists, but developed their work towards dance therapy and ended up working as therapists. Hawkins was also originally a dance educator, but expanded her work to dance therapy. Since the 1950s modern dance and dance therapy have developed side by side with professionals working in both areas. These pioneers did not use the concept of bodily knowledge but used other expressions such as “the body as a vehicle for feeling, a fundamental way of knowing” (Hawkins 1991), “knowing in your bones” (Foster 1976), “inner knowing” (Cohen 2003), and “knowing in our bodies” (Adler 2006d).

In this article I will not present a historical review, however interesting that might be, but I will consider the nature of bodily knowledge by focusing especially on *perception, sensations and feelings as sources and forms of bodily knowledge*. In so doing I will place notions from neuroscience, phenomenology, psychoanalysis, dance research and dance therapy in dialogue with each other, in order to open a dance-specific understanding of the dimensions of bodily knowledge. All in all, the researchers that I have referred to hold opinions regarding the body and how it operates that differ by varying degrees. In my opinion, however, these different approaches complement each other and offer a richer soil for describing the topic

of my research. I am not therefore scrutinising the conflict between their views but highlighting the similarities.

After that I shall examine the meaning of the bodily sensations and feelings in a creative dance-making process by considering what dance professionals have written about the subject. In addition, I shall explore this issue further by presenting my collaboration with a dancer where my own past experiences' and research (Hämäläinen 1999, 2006) on the creative dance-making process became intertwined with our mutual reflections.

The dance-making process, which emphasises sensations and feelings can aim towards therapeutic or artistic goals. Even if the goals differ the processes resemble each other to a great extent. It would be interesting to explore their similarities and differences. However, because of my own background as a dance educator I shall focus on the creative process with artistic goals. In spite of that, I am also utilizing the knowledge created in the practice and theory of dance therapy, which I have experienced as a valuable approach in a creative work.

Bodily Knowledge and Knowledge in Motion

The changes which currently affect knowledge culture challenge the traditional boundaries, which separate art from science and natural sciences from humanities and focus on the human body with its movements and senses as an instrument in the production and staging of knowledge (<http://www.tanzarchiv-leipzig.de>). It seems that there is a growing interest in not only what we know but also *how we know*. In the latter question the body plays an integral role.

The body carries in itself a specific form of knowledge that is tied to movement. Dance practice creates bodily knowledge, which is not only cognitive but also intuitive. It is not only verbal or conceptual, but it is also tacit and cannot always be put into words. Bodily knowledge provides the ability to remember, reproduce and create movement. Dance practice and research have studied bodily knowledge as a practical and theoretical phenomenon. (see Parviainen 1998, 2002; Rouhiainen 2003; Monni 2004) Recently when neuroscientists started seeing the brain as a part of the body, they also became interested in bodily knowledge. At present there is more and more collaboration between these two research areas. This common interest can act as a starting point for discussion on the intersections

of neuroscience and movement research and thus create new knowledge of the subject. (see Damasio 2003; Cohen 2003)

As I mentioned earlier dance artists, educators and therapists have considered the meaning of bodily knowledge for a long time. In the late 1960s dance educators became interested in the phenomenology of the body and since then discussion between dance and phenomenological research has been active. (see Sheets-Johnstone 1966; Foster 1976; Fraleigh 1987) Foster (1976, 13) points out: "We are in the world through our body, and the basis of knowledge lies in sensory-motor experience, the most intimate mode of knowing." She quotes Maurice Merleau-Ponty and writes: "My body is the fabric into which all objects are woven, and it is, at least in relation to the perceived world, the general instrument of my comprehension." Today, keen interest in phenomenology among dance scholars is evident. Relying on Martin Heidegger's phenomenological philosophy Kirsi Monni considers that a dancer's skill cannot be understood as a technique of production, but as bodily knowledge which generates disclosedness. She writes:

A dancer's bodily knowledge is the ability to stay within the immediate and instantaneous "here" moment, in the integrity of the body-mind, in which the instrumental and habitual everyday way of conceiving the body is released into revealing the non-concealed, a poetic manner of being. (Monni 2004, 413)

William Forsythe also considers bodily knowledge as a source of his work. Monni describes his approach:

Forsythe allows, or his choreographies demand, that the dancer lets his/her own bodily knowledge arise as the primary canvas on which the choreographic thinking materializes. This bodily knowledge is not "invisible" instrumental skill, but the unfolding of split-second body-mind integrity happening before the eyes of the spectators, not hidden or lost in representative intentions of dance. (Monni 2005)

The body is a place of memory where knowledge is stored. Efva Lilja claims that the foundation of her work is her trust in "movement as the memory of the body". She points out that "what one is thinking can be seen. Our thoughts are reflected in our bodies" (Lilja 2006, 94). Leena Rouhiainen, who relies on Merleau-Ponty's work, suggests that the way in which we comprehend our own body is reliant on

a history of bodily responses to surrounding circumstances, the way it has been used and the experiences we have had of it. Bodily memories also direct the way in which we conceive of our own body in certain situations. Bodily memories are not something we can grasp through mental or representational images. They are something we trust as a capacity to act and relate to the world. (Rouhiainen 2003, 248) Eeva Anttila has used embodied memories as a research method in studying dance learning as the practice of freedom. She considers a conceptual difference between body memories and embodied memories:

Body memories in my study mean actually embodied memories; although it is quite obvious that memories related to learning dance are memories related to the body, there is at least a conceptual difference between body memories – memories related to the body – and embodied memories, i.e., memories brought up through body movement instead of verbal language. (Anttila 2004, 30)

Bodily knowledge is essential in somatic practices where dancers aim to become aware of sensations and feelings of the body using proprioceptive senses. Jill Green uses the term somatics to describe "body–mind practices that tend to focus on an inner awareness and use a proprioceptive sense of an inner sensory mode" (2002, 5). She quotes Thomas Hanna who started using the term in a new way in the 1970s and developed research around it. Hanna defines the term in the following way: "Somatics is a matter of looking at oneself from "inside out" where one is aware of feelings, movements and intentions, rather than looking objectively from the outside in" (Hanna 1995 as reported by Green 2002, 5). In the somatic approach the body is treated as a subject, as a lived body. The lived body is significant to a dancer and a choreographer, and is revealed to the dancer through bodily awareness and knowledge. With the help of bodily awareness and knowledge, a dancer or choreographer can sense the original, immediate experience and activate the non-conceptual, tacit knowledge that lies within the self.

In Authentic Movement², which evolved out of the art of dance, bodily knowledge is also a greatly valued and central basis of the work. According to Musicant (2007b, 133) Authentic Movement has developed both in and outside the field of dance/movement therapy. It is based on the wisdom of the body and the embodiment of experience and the relationships between the conscious and the unconscious, and the physical and the symbolic. Both in theoretical formulations and in practical

applications, dance therapy and Authentic Movement involve attention to the ongoing stream of felt bodily information (Musicant 2007a, 117). Sullwold and Ramsay also point out that “we need to trust that the body has its own wisdom, that it is enough for the experience just to stay in the body. The body wants to tell its own story by moving. Movement is the body’s story” (2007, 49).

In her research on the epistemological questions of bodily knowledge, Jaana Parviainen points out that bodily knowledge is a question of knowing in and through the body. All knowers are situated – historically, culturally, socially, spatially, temporally, and kinesthetically. Knowledge is always self-referential and reveals something about the knower. (Parviainen 2002, 12) We do not have a common understanding of what bodily knowledge is but there are different views on the subject. Parviainen considers that “the intuition of bodily knowledge is not yet articulated adequately” (2002, 13). Studies on the subject have appealed to cognitive psychology and phenomenology, which has caused conflicts and discrepancies. However, it seems that bodily knowledge is closely related to and generated through such elements of action as *perceiving, sensing and feeling* (see Cohen 2003; Hawkins 1991). These areas always work in connection with each other and create our bodily knowledge.

Perception

Perception plays a central role in obtaining bodily knowledge. Without perception, humans are incapable of experience and without experiences we are unable to acquire knowledge (Reisch 2006). Alva Noë, who is a philosopher working on perception and consciousness, argues that perception is not something that happens to us, or in us, but it is something we do. Noë gives an example of “a blind person tapping his or her way around a cluttered space, perceiving that space by touch, not all at once, but through time, by skilful probing and movement” (2006a, 1). Perception is not a process in the brain, but a skilful activity of the body as a whole. He has developed, with Kevin O’Regan (2001), a theory of perception called the sensorimotor or enactive approach. The central claim of the enactive approach is that our ability to perceive not only depends on, but is constituted by, our possession of sensorimotor knowledge. According to this approach, which is a phenomenological answer to the neurosciences, dance can be considered as a tool to understand movement and the ways in which movement shapes consciousness (Noë 2006b).

Cohen, too, who is looking at perception from a dancer's point of view, argues that "perception, when it is working, is an action. It is not a perception, it is not perceiving of itself" (2003, 65). She points out that movement is the first perception. Like Noë, Cohen describes how a person with a visual problem can, by sensing, become aware of, which muscles are pulling in a certain way. Sensual and perceptual information becomes part of a behavioural repertoire and can become unconscious. She considers that we receive information through our senses from our internal environment (ourselves) and the external environment (others and the world). The manner in which we filter, modify, distort, accept, reject, and use perceptual information is part of the act of perceiving itself. She names this aspect as "active focusing" and argues that it patterns our interpretation of sensory information. Without this active focusing our perception would remain poorly organized. Touch and movement are the first of the senses to develop. They establish the bases for future perception. Through perception we can acquire sensations, feelings and thus bodily knowledge. (Cohen 2003, 5)

Sensation

Perception, which is an action and requires active focusing, uses senses in the process. Thus sensing is related to the nervous system through perception (Cohen 2003, 64). In sensory physiology the senses are divided into external and internal senses. The external senses are those of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. The internal, proprioceptive senses provide information on, for example balance, joint movement, muscle tightness and other internal bodily sensations.

With regard to the senses Eugene Gendlin (2002), who is an expert in the development of experimental psychotherapy, begins with the body, rather than with the five external senses because according to him a more deep-going approach starts with the body. He writes: "Our bodies sense themselves and thereby their situations" (Gendlin 2002, 234). He claims that our body senses what is behind it, without seeing, hearing or smelling it. We do not sense just the things there, but our situation. "The body senses the situation more encompassingly than cognition" (Gendlin 2002, 234).

Adler (2006c, 166, 168) considers that sensations are what the body perceives. They can be experienced as the perception of an image, of light, of a sound or a kinaesthetic sensation. Sensation is perception through any or all of the five external senses plus another sense, which she considers nameless. With this she

refers to mystical experience and its direct effect on the body, which is visibly altered. It is connected with the transformation of consciousness, which means the transformation of the body. Gendlin, too, considers the “nameless” body sense and uses “...” in referring to it³. He writes: “My “...” expresses the fact that your body-sense includes more than we can list, more than you can think by thinking one thing at a time. And it includes not only what is there. It also implies a next move to cope with the situation” (Gendlin 1992, 346). He gives an example:

Suppose you are walking home at night, and you sense a group of men following you. You don't merely perceive them. You don't merely hear them there, in the space in back of you. Your body-sense instantly includes also your hope that perhaps they aren't following you, also your alarm, and many past experiences – too many to separate out, and surely also the need to do something – walk faster, change your course, escape into a house, get ready to fight, run, shout... (Gendlin 1992, 346)

Gendlin points out that there is no word or phrase to describe a “...” and considers that “kinaesthetic refers only to movement; proprioceptive refers to muscles. So there is no common word for this utterly familiar bodily sense of the intricacy of our situations, along with rapid weighting of more alternatives than we can think separately” (1992, 346). He argues that this nameless body sense is more determinate than anything that is already formed. “You can see this because the next move, when it comes, will have taken account of more than anything formed can bring” (Gendlin 1992, 347). In therapy it is called “felt sense” but according Gendlin “that phrase can *say* the... – but only if it brings the ... along with it” (1992, 347).

According to Gendlin the sensations are connected to our bodily felt sense. Felt sense, he discusses is not an emotion. It is not a mental experience but a physical one. It is bodily awareness of a situation or a person or an event. However, he considers that as a person focuses on the felt sense of her or his body she or he may gain further insight on the emotions that the felt sensation contains or relates to. Felt sense is a sense of an individual's total emotional situation, “a feel of many things together, in which an emotion can be embedded or from which an emotion is produced” (Gendlin 2003, 101).

It is interesting that Adler (2006b) and Gendlin (1992) do not refer directly to the kinaesthetic sense or the proprioceptive senses, but suggest that there is

still another sense which is nameless and which is connected to transformative experience and it includes more than what is there. I consider that this nameless sense is closely connected into the intuitive wisdom of the body.

Cohen looks at sensing on a more practical level and suggests that in acquiring bodily knowledge sensing should not itself be the motivation; the motivation should be the action based on perception. She writes:

One of the things that I think is essential with sensing, is that we reach a point where we become conscious and then we let it go, so that the sensing itself is not a motivation; that our motivation is action, based on perception. What often happens that once we become aware of perception, we forget about the action. The perception becomes the key thing: what am I perceiving. (Cohen 2003, 64)

Perceiving, sensing and acting all work in close collaboration and affect each other. The process happens in and through the body thus allowing the body to create knowledge that it can remember. Sensation is connected to bodily felt sense, which is physical; it is a sense of a person's total emotional and bodily situation.

Feelings

Feelings are an integral source of bodily knowledge. Hawkins (1991, 142) sees the body as a vehicle for feeling, a fundamental way of knowing. "Our interactions with the surrounding world, nature, objects, people, and situations are accompanied by feelings. But often our awareness of these inner sensations or feelings remains vague and unclear" (Hawkins 1991, 7). She also considers that our culture undervalues the feeling dimension of experience, even though feelings are a central part of people's lives. According to Hawkins, by denying the significance of feelings a person is cutting off an element that has an important influence on the functioning of the organism as a whole. Instead of ignoring or blocking feelings, one needs to respect them and to learn to get in touch with them. So she or he can get in touch with the inner world and nurture the intuitive-imaginative response.

The importance of sensations in the dancer's work has been emphasized in recent times, and somatic approaches, especially, have underscored their importance with regards to movement, but it seems to me that the significance of feelings and their use has received less attention. I think that becoming aware of one's feelings and bodily felt sensations and researching them in and through the body can be a therapeutic

process in understanding the self. The process can also act as a source for a creative process with artistic goals. Feelings play an essential role in creative work.

Generally from a biological – especially neurobiological – point of view, feelings are not as well understood as sensations; science is apparently unable to pin feelings down. However, feelings are an expression of a person's vigour or travails in the way that they are manifest in mind and body. (Damasio 2003) Antonio Damasio, the well-known neuroscientist, distinguishes between feeling and emotion. He thinks that we react to all objects and events through our emotions and the feelings that follow. Emotions precede feelings, and are the foundations for feelings (Damasio 2003, 18). Damasio stresses the bodily foundation of emotions and the fact that feelings are mental representations of bodily events. These representations help us give names to feelings. According to Damasio, the emotion of grief is born before and gives rise to the feeling of grief, and this might bring to mind thoughts which are in accordance with grief. In other words, the feeling of grief is powerfully physical. By linking the feeling with the situation that produced it, we learn to call this bodily experience, which we call a feeling, grief. We react to every object and event through our emotions and the feelings that follow them. Feelings are first bodily and subsequently mental sensations. We sense that our bodies are in a different state if we feel happy or sad. (Damasio 2003, 76–98)

Damasio suggests that, while the senses of vision, hearing, touch, taste and smell function by nerve activation patterns that correspond to the state of the external world, emotions are nerve activation patterns that correspond to the state of the internal world. The somatosensory system, which senses internal bodily phenomena, is the essential foundation of feeling. The manifestation of a feeling presumes that a person knows its content. (Damasio 2003) Consciousness is thus a prerequisite of feeling; if we are not conscious we cannot feel.

Damasio's way of thinking follows Spinoza's insight that mind and body are parallel and comparable processes, two sides of the same coin. According to Damasio the mind is the body, they are in practice inseparable in their normal circumstances of functioning. The mind is full of images born of the body, and the body is full of images born of specific sensory experiences. The mind is connected through the brain to the tangible body. (Damasio 2003, 177) Damasio claims that the mind is simply an idea of the body. Damasio's thinking resonates well with the recent dance research which emphasizes the body as a feeling subject which can perceive, sense and know where bodily perception and sensation are ways to join the mind and the body at the same

place and time. Damasio distinguishes between emotion and feeling. However, I shall use both terms in meaning the whole emotion-feeling concept.

Leila Keski-Luopa (2001) examines feelings from a psychoanalytical point of view but stays close to Damasio's line of thought. According to her, the starting point of psychoanalytical research which deals with the development of the personality is the subjective experience of the individual. It could also be said that psychoanalysis has from the very beginning followed the path marked out by existential phenomenology. Keski-Luopa highlights the fact that feeling is in a key position when we try to get in touch with our unconscious mind. Feeling is however somewhere between our conscious and unconscious minds because it represents the unconscious in consciousness⁴. Freud's way of thinking often views the conscious and the unconscious as opposites, but Wilfred Bion, an important current researcher of thought and learning, sees the unconscious as something that a person is not aware of, but could in principle be aware of if they observed the situation more closely. According to Bion the conscious and the unconscious cannot be spoken of as separate concepts, but always in connection with a certain quality or phenomenon of which one is more or less aware. (Bion 1967 as reported in Keski-Luopa 2001, 246)

Feelings do not come out of nowhere but are rather born of mental images which themselves usually remain on an unconscious level, only entering conscious thought through the feelings they produce. A feeling is a sign that we are becoming conscious of something – it shows us where we should pause to get a deeper understanding of a certain situation at hand. Feeling leads us to a deeper experience, to the edge of the unconscious, if we pause to explore it. (Keski-Luopa 2001) Keski-Luopa's thoughts resonate well with Damasio's, thinking about how feelings are born, although Damasio does not take a stand on how we should work with mental images and feelings but merely shows that they are connected.

Keski-Luopa (2001, 320) sees feelings as the core of the self, its content. They are not tools that the self uses. Feelings are the internal structures of the core of the self, the components that the self uses to recognise the content of the experience at hand. A feeling is a reaction to a certain situation that is created in the core of the self.

Cohen introduces an interesting connection between feelings and organs. She points out that through experiencing the mind of the organs universal feelings are also recognized within the context of one's own life:

As the primary habitats of our emotions, aspirations, and memories, of our past experiences, the organs imbue our movement with personal involvement and meaning. The movement of mind within and through an organ, reveals the specific mind of that organ. Through experiencing the mind of the organs, universal symbols and myths are recognized. It is through this recognition that empathy is established, that universal feelings are recognized within the context of one's own life, and that we understand and know. (Cohen 2003, 30)

When we are in touch with our feelings, which are connected to our bodies, and in touch with the mental images behind the feelings, we are in touch with a very deep understanding of our consciousness and personality. It is for precisely this reason that I consider feelings offer important starting points for the work of both artists and therapists.

Bodily Sensations and Feelings as a Source in a Creative Dance-Making Process

In the previous sections of this paper, I have presented some philosophical and theoretical views on the nature of perception, sensing and feeling as a form of bodily knowledge. Now I will turn to look at how these have been understood through a dance-related practice and creative process. I shall ponder how to get in touch with bodily sensations and feelings, which are stored in the body, in order to use them as a source for creative work. How can one transform sensations and feelings into motion? How can one find a form for spontaneously created movements? These are essential questions in a creative dance-making process. In searching for answers I shall look more closely at how dance artists, educators and therapists have approached bodily sensations and feelings and used them in their creative work. I shall also discuss a collaborative process I was involved in from the dancer's point of view. I shall present excerpts from the material she wrote about her sensations and feelings that were triggered by our process.

Many artists have emphasized the value of sensations and feelings in a creative process. Anna Sokolow states: "Movements are not intellectually contrived but are evoked by emotional images" (1965, 33). Aaron Copeland, the composer, writes: "What, after all do I put down when I put down notes? I put down a reflection of emotional states; feelings, perceptions, imaginings, intuitions. An emotional

state, as I use the term, is compounded of everything we are: our background, our environment, our convictions” (1959, 117).

Likewise, dance therapists and educators appreciate sensations and feelings as a source of movement in a creative dance making process. Whitehouse (1963, 17) describes the origin of movement as: a specific inner impulse having the quality of sensation. This impulse leads outward into space so that movement becomes visible as physical action. Following the inner sensation, allowing the impulse to take the form of physical action, is active imagination in movement, just as following the visual image is active imagination in fantasy. Whitehouse (2006, 82) differentiates between the expressions “I move” and “I am moved”. “I move” means that I am moving, I choose to move. The opposite of this is the sudden moment “I am moved”. She points out that when the moment “I am moved” happens it is astonishing both to dancers and to people who have no intention of becoming dancers. It is a moment when the ego gives up control, stops exerting demands, and allows the self to take over moving the physical body as it will. It is a moment of unpremeditated surrender that cannot be explained, exactly repeated, sought or tried out. The dance therapist Wendy Wyman-McGinty describes this moment: “When the mover’s attention is focused on the bodily felt level of experiencing, there is a quality of allowing oneself to be moved from within, as one attends to an almost imperceptible inner shifting of energy of the body, a kind of kinaesthetic free association” (2007, 223).

Whitehouse claims that if the material created in Authentic Movement ”is used as raw material for dance, something is lost, but something has to be lost since that moment was an instant, a happening in and of itself – the structure needed for a lasting work of art is something else” (2006, 82). I am aware that Whitehouse and Wyman-McGinty are considering the phenomenon from the point of view of Authentic Movement and the self growth of an individual. However, I argue that there are many aspects in the practice of Authentic Movement, which can enrich the creative process, which aims at artistic goals in dance.

Hawkins (1991, 29), who also has a background in therapy, considers sensations and feelings from an educational and artistic point of view and indicates that they are basic ingredients in the creative process. She claims that a piece of choreography must emanate from a deep inner-sensing and reflect a constant interplay between the internal felt sense and the externalized movement. It is essential that a dancer gets in touch with her or his feelings and bodily felt sense, to become conscious of

them and examine their different aspects. Sensory experiences provide the stimulus and material that can be transformed and given external form. External and internal senses are in constant dialogue with one another. If we sense something with, for instance, our sense of smell, it also immediately influences our bodily feelings, perhaps creating memories and images, which can act as an impulse for movement. Transforming sensations and feelings into motion is a core of dance making. (Hawkins 1991)

Whitehouse, Wyman-McGinty and Hawkins emphasize the value of sensations and feelings in a dance making process. The internally created movement is the focus of their inquiry. They are interested in finding and creating movement from the body itself, moving from within. According to them this can happen when a person gets in touch with her or his feelings and bodily felt sense, and becomes conscious of them and examines their different aspects. In addition, they use movement as a means of opening up to the unconscious. Next I will look more closely at the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious in a dance-making process.

Dialogue Between the Conscious and the Unconscious

As early as 1916 C. G. Jung considered that expressive body movement was one of numerous ways to give form to the unconscious (Chodorow 2006b, 281; Jung 1916). He developed his technique of active imagination the same year. Whitehouse, who studied at the Jung Institute in Zürich, uses Jung's term "active imagination" for a process "in which, while consciousness looks on, participating but not directing, co-operating but not choosing, the unconscious is allowed to speak whatever and however it likes" (2006, 83). Active imagination is an attitude toward the unconscious and a dialogue with one's own body. It opens itself to the unconscious and gives free rein to fantasy, while at the same time, it maintains a conscious viewpoint. (Zenoff 2006, 223) Stewart (Chodorow 2006c, 308) indicates that active imagination and creative imagination are the same process. However, creative imagination is turned to the creation of cultural forms like pieces of art while active imagination is turned to the creation of the personality. I consider that both active imagination and creative imagination are precious in a creative dance-making process. They bring the conscious and the unconscious together in an equal partnership, which I consider is essential in creative work. Active imagination

and creative imagination in movement offer a chance to get in touch with bodily sensations and feelings, which allows a spontaneous movement to emerge.

I agree with Chodorow that in order to differentiate between and explore the worlds of the conscious and the unconscious, we should approach them from the perspective of movement and the body. Leaning towards Jung's thinking she considers that "the relationship between consciousness and the unconscious is basically one of mutual compensation and complementarity" (Chodorow 2006a, 237). These complementary worlds function under an entirely different set of laws. Her approach to comparing them is to distinguish how time and space are known in the conscious world and how they are known in the world of the unconscious. There are many similarities between Chodorow's and Bion's thinking about consciousness. Wyman-McGinty, too, points out that when a mover begins to focus attention on her or his internal bodily felt experience, "this seems to evoke material from the personal unconscious, including preverbal experiences in the form of affective or somatic memory" (2007, 224). It seems that the dialogue between the conscious and the unconscious is a core of creative work. By sensing, feeling and moving we can get in touch with the unconscious and the place between the unconscious and the conscious.

According to Hawkins (1991) between the conscious and the unconscious there is another level of mental activity that has been identified as a pre-conscious level. She considers that: "This mode of thinking enables the effortless formation of fragmented and isolated elements of experience into new constellations" (Hawkins 1991, 7). D. W. Winnicott (1971) describes this intermediate area of experiencing, a transitional space between the inner and outer world, in which image and affect are linked and which gives rise to fantasy and imagination. Winnicott suggests that this transitional space is the source of creativity. Harold Rugg (1963, 214) also identified this special state of consciousness as the transliminal mind, the critical threshold between the conscious and the unconscious where creativity takes place. In transliminal functioning, the organism has access to both internal and external resources to support creative work.

In order to get in touch with bodily sensations and feelings and allow movement to emerge one needs *to listen to the body and to let it go*. It takes courage to let it go. Stromsted and Haze suggest that shutting out external visual stimuli can facilitate listening to the body and letting the movement happen:

Shutting out external visual stimuli thus facilitates deep sensing experience, which has the ability to reach into the very tissues of the body and evoke imagery, emotion, body sensation, memory, and dreams. It also allows the ego and conscious self to take an active interest in and become receptive to the knowledge stored in the body. (Stromsted & Haze 2007, 58)

According to Musicant inner listening involves attending to images, sensations and feelings and transforming them into motion. Listening to the body opens up a process which allows “the weaving and interaction of emerging unconscious material with the conscious elements of weight, time and space. Inner listening is often spoken of as “surrendering”, because it involves giving in to the unknown and waiting for the bodily felt sense, rather than making something happen” (Musicant 2007a, 117). Marcia Plevin (2007, 108) points out that surrender can be stated as a letting go. However, there is a fear of letting go. She considers that “the place between will and surrender, between the “ I move” and “being moved” holds vast dimensions of what could be pre-egoic and regressed states as well as the superconscious and transpersonal realms” (Plevin 2007, 113).

Focusing and listening to the inner sensation and opening up to the unconscious require trust and a physically and psychologically safe place in which to happen. It also needs a non-judgemental environment, in which dancers respond intuitively without being afraid that their creative work is judged too soon. It is also vital that in a dance-making process a dancer stays away from her or his own judgements and mental control. These elements allow her or him to find movement from within, which has meaning for her or him as the creator and performer of a dance. Schoop warns about the danger of mental control in a creative process:

The longer a body can stand the absence of mental control, the more its feelings will be set free and become displayed in the very moment that engendered them. In this way, it comes about that a person suddenly hears his body crying, sees his body hitting, feels his body falling or running... In these physical expressions of his feelings, the person confronts himself. He catches himself in the act. (Schoop 1974, 144)

Transforming sensations and feelings into externalized movement with qualitative substance is an essential aspect in a creative dance-making process. As I mentioned earlier, the process requires deep concentration on bodily felt sensation trusting that the moment will happen from within. Genuine involvement and opening to

the dialogue with one's body are also needed. Movement that is based on sensations and feelings has a spontaneous quality. How can this spontaneous movement find a form? I agree with Hawkins that when we get in touch with an inner source, an inner voice takes over and guides the unfolding of the externalized form. The forming process happens "when the creator is in a state of relaxed concentration and special mode of thought. The focus is on inner experiencing and the scanning and searching for completion" (Hawkins 1991, 77).

How can a dancer moving without mental control remember movements that were created by transforming sensations and feelings? How will internally generated movements not be lost to the memory of the body? I consider that a dancer can flash back over the process and bodily remember the most vivid parts of it. In different ways a dancer can transform them into a repeatable choreographic statement that has a form. (see Chadorow 2006, 243) In this forming process a dancer stays not only focused and involved but is also able to look at the dance from outside. She or he moves between these two separate conditions in a state of relaxed concentration. The focus on sensations and feelings alternates with the focus of forming trusting the intuitive bodily knowledge.

Creating from Sensations and Feelings – A Dancer's Experience

In spring 2007 I worked with a dancer, researching how sensations and feelings work in practice as a starting point for creating movement. We have met ten times between January and May and our rehearsal process continues. The aim of this project is to produce a dance work as well as a piece of text describing the experience. The dancer has worked with me as a fellow researcher throughout the whole process. Outside the rehearsals, we have maintained an e-mail conversation about our experiences. They form our data, through which I have revised the dancer's story. I do not highlight my own questions or experiences because they are implicitly revealed by the dancer's comments. I have condensed our conversations, keeping things that I find significant, observations that are connected to my topic, and used them to construct the dancer's story.

I find it very interesting that the dancer's story comes so close to the thoughts I presented earlier about sensations and feelings. In our conversation she pondered about the bodily perceptions created by dancing and the meaning of these perceptions from the perspective of sensations and feelings. She points out that,

while dancing, one is more aware of sensations than feelings, and that she is not in the habit of looking at and recognising feelings. The particularly interesting part of her story, however, is about the challenge of recognising and making use of feelings in dance. When this is done successfully, she thinks, it adds to the substance, making the movement more integrated and holistic. She writes:

Affects and bodily sensations contain kinaesthetic knowledge, i.e. the information that tells me where I am and what I am physically doing, and also about emotional matters. In my opinion dance training emphasises the observance of these very kinaesthetic sensations. Is it so that in dance we live in a world of affects, sensations and feelings, but we have got used to turning these experiences into language using terminology from physiology and dynamic elements, e.g. the experience of weight and looseness, observing the relationship between movements and different parts of the body, instead of describing them as experiences of freedom, frustration, anxiety, delight and joy? Is using the language of emotions too vague or sentimental?

I notice that through dance I have learned to observe the nature of my bodily sensations more than anything else. I have learned to recognise what different parts of my body feel like and what meanings these sensations have for moving or dancing. What I mean to say is that I have learned to observe bodily sensations and their significance for movement or dance. I recognise, for example, that breathing in produces pressure in the chest as the ribs expand. This pressure suggests some kind of direction of movement, and perhaps suggests that I round out my chest to emphasise the expansive movement and allow even deeper breath. So I sense quite specifically the area of the body that something is happening in, and I become conscious of how the motional event causes a change in the volume and form of and relationship between different parts of my body. I also become aware of a certain pressure, tension. But do I listen to the emotional charge that the experience of expansion and pressure contains? Most often not, and I wonder how capable I actually am of recognising my emotions. I seem to recognise them only when an emotion totally overtakes me – when I am so sad that it makes me cry, so joyous that I laugh or so angry that I yell. Going through strong emotions can be very taxing. Perhaps we protect ourselves in the midst of a job that is in any case physically exhausting.

I don't think I would find it difficult to use emotions as the starting point of my work. The question is: does what I do differ from using emotions as the starting point? When we dance we often give ourselves entirely to the movement, and our whole consciousness and all our experiences become

entwined: affects, emotions, sensations, memories, observations, thoughts etc. I have not been very much in the habit of recognising feelings and separating them from this tangle.

I think that not recognising emotions or at least not discussing them is common in dance work. I cannot recall many discussions with the choreographer or other dancers about the fact that I find a certain part of the piece sad or happy. I have more often discussed things such as the fact that I need to be heavier and more in touch with the floor, or, for instance, that the centre of my body should be lower and my upper body should move more freely. We also discuss the timing, the direction of the movement and the relationship to the other dancers. I do, however, think that I recognise the feelings I experience when a sensation becomes so big and so heavy that I cannot dismiss it. What I was wondering earlier was whether it would be possible for me to recognise the tiny beginnings of emotions which actually happen at an affective or pre-reflective level.

...it was very emotional when I was doing the reveal-conceal exercise and you asked me what kind of emotions were involved. I realised that I was looking for the movements and somehow feeling unsure while doing them. At that moment I had difficulties in revealing and concealing through movement. It did not happen spontaneously. When I realised that I was hesitating, that I had this kind of searching attitude, I started making use of it and moving hesitantly while revealing and concealing my movements, my body and the surrounding space. This dance improvisation of revealing and concealing that I described earlier manifests the revelation I had about the emotions that are involved in how I experience movement. When you posed the question I realised that I moved in an unsure manner. I felt unsure. That turned a slightly demanding rehearsal into an interesting one. I got into trying to move in a concealing, revealing and unsure manner. Recognising an emotion and using it made the task at hand somehow more holistic, and I was able to concentrate on it better.

I think about the possibilities of recognising expressions of feeling. Feeling is perhaps always there in dance, but we do things through wordless and bodily dance expression and convey more complex messages than those that are expressed directly through speech. I still think that our bodily strategies for dealing with issues concerning feelings are diverse. And at the same time our bodily attitudes and feelings and sensations could be keys to gaining a better understanding of ourselves. Experiencing is a key factor here, whether I'm listening to my own body or watching others expressing themselves bodily.

It seems that it was more natural for the dancer I collaborated with to work from sensations than from feelings. She also pointed out that in dance training there is more discussion, for instance, about the centre of the body and the direction of the movement than about emotional aspects. I agree that dance education is more interested in paying attention to sensations than feelings. That also resonates with Hawkins' vision that our culture tends to fail to appreciate the feeling dimension of an experience. Cohen also considers that if one is sensing, it is not such an emotional space. But if one is feeling, the one can be in touch with one's emotions, too. A lot of sensing work that is done in dance or diverse somatic practices is an escape from emotions. It actually represses emotional integration, if sensing, emotional and physical work are not balanced. (Cohen 2003, 65)

Conclusions

Bodily knowledge has recently been a topic of active debate not only in dance practice and research but also in neuroscience, psychology and philosophy. In the conversation between dance and phenomenological research, interest focused on the phenomenology of the body. Bodily knowledge is related and created through perceiving, sensing and feeling. It plays an integral role in somatic work where an important aim is to become aware of sensations and feelings of the body using the proprioceptive senses. Likewise, bodily knowledge is valued in dance therapy and Authentic Movement. Many dance educators and artists also appreciate bodily knowledge in a creative dance-making process.

The body is the origin of perceptions, sensations and feelings. The body is full of images born of sensory experiences. Sensations and feelings create images and vice versa. Sensations and feelings can lead to new movement but movement can also lead to a new sensation and feeling. They work together constantly. They and their interaction form a central source in a creative process. How we can become aware of and get in touch with our feelings and bodily felt sense as well as utilize them in creative work is an essential question. I find that such dance work that emphasises these elements is a somatic approach to creating movement. With this emphasis the body is treated as a subject, a lived body which creates movement from within. In this way the lived body is an entity of bodily experiences that is present in the here and now, and the body is not instrumentalised.

A dialogue with one's own body is essential in transforming sensations and feelings into movements with a qualitative aspect. This dialogue evolves through listening to the body and opening up to the unconscious. The process involves a deep focus on bodily felt sensation and requires trust that the movement will happen from within without mental control. If a dancer is deeply involved in the process the spontaneous movements will find an externalized form, which also has artistic quality.

In collaborating with the dancer I learned that she was more inclined to work from sensations than from feelings. She points out an interesting thought that dance training emphasises the observation of kinaesthetic sensation and uses terminology from physiological and dynamic elements rather than from the language of emotions. That makes me ponder whether current dance education neglects the feeling dimension and pays more attention to sensations. I also consider the feeling dimension important because when we are in touch with our feelings we are in touch with a deep understanding of our consciousness, which allows creativity to happen. I suggest that bodily sensations and feelings as forms of bodily knowledge should work in balance in order to create a fruitful source for a creative dance-making process.

Endnotes:

¹ During the years 1985–86 and 1991–92 I participated in Alma Hawkins' research project in choreographic pedagogy as a dancer, and researched Hawkins' method in the empirical part of my doctoral work (Hämäläinen 1999). In addition, I have applied Hawkins' approach in my teaching over 20 years.

² Authentic Movement as Mary Whitehouse used to describe it, is movement that is natural to a particular person, not learned, not purposeful or intellectualized – this in contrast to moving by thinking I should move to be pleasing, to be powerful, to be beautiful or graceful. Authentic Movement is an immediate expression of how the mover feels at any given moment. The spontaneous urge to move or not to move is not checked, judged, criticized or weighed by the conscious mind. (Adler 2006a, 122)

³ Rouhiainen (2003) has considered the body sense and Gendlin's "... " in relation to experiencing dance as an integrated motional style of being in her dissertation which explores the life-worlds of Finnish dance artists. Her rich description also relies on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology.

⁴ Many dance therapists who base their work on Jungian psychology also emphasise bodily experience as a bridge between the conscious and the unconscious (Pallaro 2006, 2007).

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Mind the Body

Unearthing the Affiliation Between the Conscious Body and the Reflective Mind

Eeva Anttila

Introduction

The nature of human consciousness has fascinated scholars for centuries. Despite immense efforts and remarkable philosophical and scientific breakthroughs our understanding of the basis of our existence as humans is still much debated. This present study is, by no means, a comprehensive literature review or a summary of what is known so far about this vast topic. It is a modest, albeit honest attempt to look at a specific question related to consciousness. I have articulated the question as follows: *What kinds of mental reflections does bodily presence generate?* This question is related to another, more wide-ranging question on bodily knowledge as a mode of cognition.¹ As I have collected empirical data for this study with dancers, the study can also be conceived as a window on *what dancers know*.²

The study is based on a presupposition that bodily knowledge and mental reflections are intertwined, and that it is possible to facilitate their relationship. I will substantiate this premise by means of literature, but rather than proving that the relationship exists, my purpose is to shed light on the qualitative shades and nuances of this relationship. I will also suggest how enhancing this relationship might facilitate awareness of ourselves, of other human beings, and of our life situations, and how appreciating the bodily dimensions of consciousness might change our ideas of knowledge and learning.

Theoretical and Methodological Foundations for the Study

For the purposes of this study, I am using the concept of *bodily presence* when referring to being attuned to our current bodily sensations and states as they become present to our consciousness. Bodily presence, however, is always intertwined with bodily consciousness that also entails historically and culturally constructed bodily knowledge, or body memories.³ The manner in which the past and the present merge in shaping our experiences is a fascinating, but complex question that I am not exploring here. Bodily consciousness is, indeed, a very complex topic. Even

Thompson (2007, 249) speaks about “prereflective bodily self-consciousness” as consciousness of the body-as-subject. Being aware that the relationship between bodily consciousness and proprioception is an unresolved matter and depends on how proprioception is defined (see Thompson 2007, 464), I am focusing on the aforementioned notion of bodily presence, that is, on immediate bodily sensations and states that are by and large mediated by the proprioceptive system.

The proprioceptive system is a part of our nervous system and it provides information on our bodily posture, balance, position in space, and muscle tone, as well as sensations related to organic and physiological processes like pulse, breath, digestion and pain.⁴ The proprioceptive system works together with the external senses (vision, hearing, touch, smell and taste) in guiding us in our daily actions and interactions with the environment. In our everyday lives we do not necessarily have to pay attention to these internal messages. They work for us without our conscious efforts, and most of the information these senses provide goes unnoticed. It is usually only when we encounter problematic or novel situations, or when our internal sensations become painful or distracting to us that we pay attention to our bodily sensations or states. (Cohen 1993, 115; Klemola 2005, 85–86; Todd 1937, 26–27)

It is, however, possible to direct our attention consciously to these internal messages and to develop our sensitivity to them. A wealth of practices, often called somatic practices has been developed for facilitating awareness of our bodies, or body-mind integrity. (Klemola 2005, 85; Rouhiainen 2006, 13–16) In the Eastern world, these practices have a long tradition as they have been used and developed for thousands of years.⁵ In the Western world interest in these traditions has increased at the same time as new somatic practices are being developed. However, being internally aware does not require any specific discipline. It can simply be conceived as listening to our bodies.⁶

According to the Finnish philosopher and psychiatrist Lauri Rauhala (2005b) consciousness (in Finnish, *tajunta*) refers to the whole sphere of human experience. He uses the Finnish word *tajuton* to distinguish processes that are absolutely *not conscious*, like the functioning of the spinal cord or the production of blood cells, i.e., organic processes that cannot be experienced. Its counterpart, *tajuinen*, then means processes that can be experienced, or are *possibly conscious*. Bodily sensations belong to the sphere of the possibly conscious. When we attend to them, they become contents of our consciousness. In this study I am focusing on such contents of consciousness, or *mental reflections* that arise when attending to the body.

According to Rauhala the contents of our consciousness differ in the level of clarity, that is, they can be more or less conscious.⁷ The process of clarifying experiences is simultaneously a process of meaning-making and understanding. Human beings construct their identity and worldview through making sense of their experiences, and thus, the ability to access and examine unclear experiences is highly valuable. (Rauhala 2005b, 37–38)

Rauhala's views are based on existential phenomenology, and do not correspond to the psychological view on conscious and subconscious mental processes. According to the philosopher and body therapist Jeffrey Maitland (1995, 73), what psychology considers subconscious belongs to the sphere of prereflective consciousness. Concurrent with Rauhala's thinking, Maitland claims that we can access our prereflective experiences (1995, 73).

Georg Lakoff and Mark Johnson, authors of *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (1999) speak about the "cognitive unconscious", referring to the nature of our cognitive processes. These processes are fast and complicated, and mostly remain beyond the sphere of our awareness. Thus, they claim that most of our thought is unconscious and that cognitive unconscious "must be operating for us to be aware of anything at all" (1999, 11).⁸ Besides this notion of the cognitive unconscious, Lakoff and Johnson have developed a theory on conceptual and abstract thinking according to which the mind is embodied "in such a way that our conceptual systems draw largely upon the commonalities of our bodies and of the environments we live in" (1999, 6). Thus, our abstract, conceptual thinking is largely metaphorical, drawing from our embodied experiences in the world.

The extent to which it is possible to become aware of some processes that we usually do not attend to in everyday life is a question of relevance here. The meanings that our prereflective, or bodily experiences generate when attended to are the exact focus of this study. The basic premise here is that most of our bodily sensations are prereflective until they become objects of our attention. In Rauhala's terms, they belong to the sphere of "tajuinen", which can be conceived of as "possibly conscious".

Prereflective consciousness also refers to connectedness between subject and object. Reflective consciousness tends to separate the subject (who reflects) and the object (that is being reflected). The word "I" is often present in reflective consciousness, as the "I" observes objective reality as separate from itself. Maitland writes,

Prereflection is a form of understanding. It is also the prior condition of reflective understanding. Prereflection is also an orientation, a capacity for experiencing reality without separating from it. Reflection is an orientation, a capacity for experiencing reality by separating from it . . . Unless the world were already opened up to us prereflectively, there would be nothing to step back and reflect on. (Maitland 1995, 74)

The relationship between bodily presence and mental reflections can thus also be conceived of as the relationship between prereflective and reflective consciousness, or between “possibly conscious” and “already conscious”. Understanding and facilitating the interplay between these qualitatively different modes of consciousness is thus, the focus of this study.

Thompson (2007, 236–237) suggests that we reject the dualistic framework and cease talking about the “mind-body problem” altogether. Instead, he proposes that we start investigating the relationship between the living body and the lived body. This leads us to a “body-body” problem. The ontological gap between the living body (organic, biological) and the lived body (phenomenological, subjective) is neither absolute nor radical. For me, this makes quite a lot of sense, as the proprioceptive system, situated in the living body, relays messages that we can interpret as personal meanings, the substance of the lived body.

Initially, I was quite bewildered when I started to consider how to go about researching this issue. Luckily, I came across Fransisco Varela and Jonathan Shears’s publication entitled *The View from Within: First-person Approaches to the Study of Consciousness* (1999). Pierre Vermersch’s article on introspection, in particular, inspired and encouraged me. Vermersch connects the development of introspection with “reflexive conversion” (*epochè*), referring to the method of phenomenological reduction, which is based on suspending our natural attitude and replacing it with a phenomenological attitude (1999, 20).⁹ Several founding figures of 19th century psychology, for example William James valued introspection as a method “that we have to rely on first and foremost and always” (James 1890, cited by Vermersch 1999, 20). Bruce Mangan (1999, 249) also recognizes James as someone who broke new ground in the study of consciousness with his explorations of the connection between neural dynamics and phenomenal experiences.

Mangan points out how 20th century empirical psychology, with its positivist inclinations, rejected the method of introspection. Recently, this methodology and its theoretical premises that link neural and phenomenological structures are being

employed by a growing number of scholars, including Antonio Damasio (1994, 1999, 2003), Francisco Varela (1991, 1999), George Lakoff & Mark Johnson (1980, 1999), Rolf Pfeifer & Josh Bongard (2007) and Evan Thompson (2007). Their work is based on the claim that our neural and cognitive systems are connected. Put simply, our bodies shape the way we think.¹⁰ According to Lakoff and Johnson this is so because the “same mechanisms that allow us to perceive and move also create our conceptual systems and modes of reason” (1999, 3–4). Introspection means observing this inner reality that positivist science refused to accept as a part of physical reality.¹¹

James also introduced the concept of “fringe”. As we focus on a certain aspect in our field of consciousness, other aspects fade into the background and become less clear to us. It is possible to attend to several aspects at once with a loss in articulation and clarity. The connection to Maitland’s and Rauhala’s view is evident here. According to Mangan, high articulation means that the focal object becomes more detailed than we usually experience. (1999, 251–252)

It is my presupposition that during our everyday activities, our bodily states and sensations are on the fringe, vaguely attended to and articulated. Rouhiainen’s (2007) view substantiates mine; citing Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1995/1962, 108) she claims that our perception of the body is vague when there is no movement. She also points out that the felt-sense of the body can be heightened through movement and that different forms of paying attention to things and perceiving are learned. Whereas visual artists learn to discern the hues of colors, dancers become specialized in perceiving qualities of movement and bodily sensations. The following journal entry, written by myself during the research process, illustrates this from an experiential point of view:

*Something comes to my mind when I walk –for example. The body sends or gives or generates its own state for me to read. It is not very difficult to read it.*¹²

The Finnish philosopher Jaana Parviainen (2006) has examined the role of bodily practice in phenomenological research. According to her analysis, the relationship between reflexivity and bodily activity is highly complex. Some phenomenological philosophers, like Timo Klemola (2005), consider phenomenology as bodily practice, some think that reflection on bodily practice should happen afterwards. Parviainen claims that Merleau-Ponty did not consider phenomenology altogether

as bodily practice, rather, he saw it as “wondering the world” through suspending our natural attitude. (2006, 56–57) As we are in the world as bodily subjects, our reflections are always situated in and mediated through the body.

The approach that I developed for this study employs reflection during and after bodily practice. This approach is quite challenging. My own reflections illuminate these difficulties:

The desire to be whole, to listen to the body is difficult if at the same time, you try to understand, reflect and analyze what is going on . . . I am limited, limited by these aspirations. How do I resolve this? . . . How can one access truly prereflective experience when one already knows and understands so much?

In my view, the difficulty here is largely related to language. As we attend to our bodily sensations and states, they become contents of our reflective consciousness. It is difficult to explore, or wonder at them without simultaneous linguistic processing. Because human beings are “language creatures” (Damasio 1999, 185) this translation into language takes place without conscious effort. Suspending or slowing down this process of translation is hardly possible. Moreover, being naïve about our prereflective life is extremely difficult. Our past experiences, beliefs and habitual ways of thinking shape the way we interpret our prereflective life. This is how bodily presence is always tied to bodily consciousness and our historicity.

On the other hand, our “language nature” makes it possible for us to communicate our experiences to others. Antonio Damasio (1999, 185) has carefully examined how language arises from bodily, prereflective experiences. He speaks about nonverbal narratives that form a “primordial story of self and knowing.” This imaged, nonverbal narrative is swift and barely explicit, but it creates core consciousness. Narratives or imaged accounts are nonlanguage maps of logically related events, comparable to film. Damasio claims that this wordless storytelling is connected to our desire to make up stories, create drama and movies, and write books. According to Damasio, we convert these nonverbal narratives into language immediately: “Whatever plays in the nonverbal tracks of our minds is rapidly translated into words and sentences. That is in the nature of the human, language creature” (Damasio 1999, 185). This verbal translation of nonverbal narratives makes an extended consciousness, and the autobiographical self possible.

In the previous sections I have argued that it is possible to focus on bodily

sensations, that they are part of observable physical reality, and that movement and practice in perceiving bodily sensations heightens our awareness of this prereflective realm of experience. Also, as it is possible (or even intrinsic) for us to translate these experiences into comprehensible meanings and into language, we can share these experiences with others. Based on these insights, I decided to combine movement, or bodily activity, introspection and writing in collecting empirical data for my study. Introspection combined with physical activity makes it possible to direct attention to bodily sensations, and thus, obtain more clarity and articulation about these sensations and accompanying mental reflections. Writing immediately after physical activity and introspection leaves a trace, a record, of these mental reflections. I am aware that this trace is an incomplete and inaccurate representation of the actual sensations and reflections. According to Damasio our verbal translations are often not attended to and thus, they are “performed under considerable literary license . . . the creative “language” mind is prone to indulge in fiction” (1999, 187). With these limitations in mind, these traces offer a glimpse into the fascinating world of mental reflections that bodily consciousness generates.

Collecting and Analysing the Empirical Data

I started with myself as a subject in May 2006. The movement activities were varied, they included walking, biking, yoga, and other bodywork, in altogether eight sessions during about one month. During the activity I concentrated on my bodily sensations and accompanying mental reflections as closely as possible, and at the same time, focused on “recording” them. Immediately after the activity, I wrote down everything I could recall, and also the new reflections that evolved while writing.

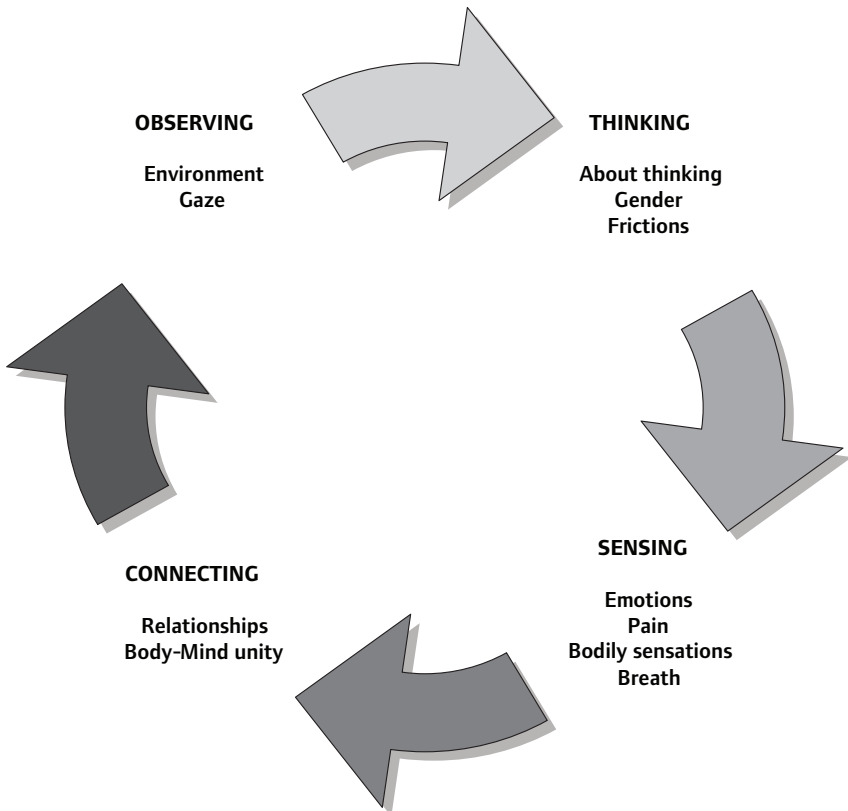
After this personal exploration I asked four other persons to take part in my study. All of them are female dance professionals, aged 30–40 years. In addition to discussing the purpose of my research and the procedures, I gave them written instructions that outlined the central concepts and the procedures for combining physical activity and introspection.¹³

By November 2006 I had received material from each participant. The data contains 22 pages of written material. I started analysing the data by reading through it. My first impression was that there was too much material to comprehend and to

analyze in any traditional manner. The data seemed to be formidable in its beauty and richness of meanings escaping rational analysis and categorizing. I was quite bewildered, again.

Without clearly understanding why, I transformed the data that had been written by five different individuals into a narrative form as if it had been written by one person. I arranged the passages into a chronologically flowing order. After creating this narrative I was able to get a sense of the whole, and immerse myself in the data. Having the sense of the whole, I was able to start “chopping” it, because I knew I could always return to the narrative, the whole.

I then carried out a rather straightforward procedure of classifying and labelling data according to the issues that the participants (and I myself) had written about. This analysis generated 11 topics that I then grouped in the following way:



This cycle represents in itself something significant that I have discovered about the nature of mental reflections that arise from bodily presence. I have witnessed an apparent ease and swiftness of the movement between different ways of perceiving, sensing and thinking. At one moment we are observing something that happens to cross our way. This leads us to think about something that connects this present moment with our history as women, dancers, human beings. Our inner life seems to be spontaneous yet purposeful at the same time. One thing leads to another, but where and how, is beyond our control. Our experiences and meanings that arise resemble improvisation where surprise and purpose become intertwined. At the same time, an intricate interplay between the outer and inner worlds evolves into a multilayered fabric with different contours, colours and shapes.

“Observing” starts from the outer world. Under this category I have placed two topics, *Environment* and *Gaze*, both related to external senses. “Thinking” includes topics that are characterized by “inner talk” and are indirectly connected to outer perceptions or inner sensations, and this talk is often related to personal life situations. It includes three topics: *About thinking*, *Gender* and *Frictions*. “Sensing” includes four topics, *Emotions*, *Pain*, *Bodily sensations* and *Breath*, all directly connected to inner awareness or sensations. Sensing is most related to the notion of bodily presence. The instructions that I gave to the participants also emphasize inner awareness. Thus, it is understandable that this category includes a lot of material. On the other hand it is quite interesting to me that there are so many accounts that do not directly refer to inner sensations. To me this supports the interconnectedness between the outer and inner in our lived experiences.

The fourth and final category “Connecting”, reflects this interconnectedness. It includes two topics, *Relationships* and *Body-Mind unity*. Relationships refer to a sense of connectedness with others and the world, and accounts that fall under the Body-Mind unity are characterized by an apparently effortless transfer from a bodily sensation to reflective thought, a phenomenon that is of great interest to me, because I consider it relevant for understanding how meanings are situated in our lived body.

I will now briefly describe the topics, beginning from “Observing” along with some accounts that represent a topic. Space here does not allow for a thorough discussion of each category and topic. I will present just a few examples of topics that fall under each category.

Observing

The first topic, *Environment*, includes accounts of observations that refer to something concrete in the environment, like sounds, colours, or objects. Observations are almost always followed by a reflective statement, albeit a brief and passing one, as in the following accounts:

The air in the studio is quite bad and thick, even though the door is open. The blinds on the windows are closed, and we are completely in our own world. Women together.

When I walk on the street . . . I make a note of people that pass me, like a male model who looks quite short in comparison to pictures. On the other hand, it is about the only profession where women are taller and also earn much more than men.

These accounts illuminate, for me, how a simple observation from the environment quite effortlessly seems to generate multifaceted reflections. Both accounts also refer to gender issues, and I could have placed them under gender, as well. This immediately illustrates the difficulty in categorizing this kind of rich data.

Another topic that I placed under “Observing” is *Gaze*. Although there were only a few notions about this topic, it contains a lot of meanings. When directed towards the subject, gaze seems to be disturbing, and to create tension and feelings of anxiety:

Why does being a focus of gaze make me feel so tense? Partly because I feel that I have to concentrate so precisely on what I am doing, every detail. It consumes energy.

Gaze can also be directed outwards, from the subject to the outer world, when it seems to be a connecting and integrating force.

Again I noticed . . . the vastness of the surrounding space – all these dimensions – and how the gaze supports reaching towards the space – the world. The connection through gaze – important!

To me, this account depicts intentionality, a central concept in phenomenological philosophy. According to Maitland (1995, 78), intentionality refers to our spatial

and bodily orientation to and engagement with the world. It is a way of being present and occupying space, as well as a way of “spatializing our intentions, purposes, energies and desires” (1995, 78). Here, the outer and the inner merge, and although *Gaze* was supposed to be neatly categorized under “Observing”, I have to confess again that categorizing this material is bound to be deficient.

Thinking

The participants thought a lot *About thinking*. The accounts that I have classified here, thus, are accounts related to the nature and experience of thinking:

Somehow, through gentle movement this morning I was also able to control my mind . . . As I was doing the exercises my mind and my thoughts were wandering in other things, but it was always easy to return to breath . . . In this way my physical state became present in my consciousness, and I did not think about work or everyday chores.

There is a lot of tension in my forehead – as if my thinking action took place there . . . I realize how thoughts and concerns are located in my head – my forehead and face. How thinking generates tension in the face and in the muscles of the head. So, thinking blocks me. How could I be not thinking for a moment . . .

To me, these descriptions vividly illuminate the physical reality of thinking, its embodied nature and its relationship to bodily processes, substantiating Lakoff and Johnson’s claim that “the mind is inherently embodied” (1999, 3; see also Thompson 2007, 243). They also seem to point towards a need to control thinking, or slow down the stream of thought. Striving towards inner peace or calmness is apparent here, and this is, to me, related to the aims of somatic practice and meditation (Rauhala 2005b; Klemola 2005; Shear & Jevning 1999).

The next topic, *Gender* also came up in many accounts, as I mentioned earlier. The accounts under “Thinking” represent gender as part of the person’s situation, that is, the conditions (being a woman) that is part of the person’s life world (Rauhala 2005b, 41):

Feminine weakness – arms, powerless. Arms, those victims of everyday life. The victims of wiping, laundrying, scouring – and those victims of academic life, those mediators of thought, unhappy

extensions. Completely misunderstood, underused, neglected. Why couldn't my arms bear the weight of my body?

According to Rauhala (2005b, 44–45), different components (like gender, nationality) of a person's situation are significant in his or her identity construction. Identity and situationality are reflected in everyday language about ourselves and others, as in the accounts above.

The data also contains a wealth of inner reflections on a multitude of issues related to personal life, written from the first person perspective. They are like talking to oneself, as if trying to make sense of one's life. These reflections are indirectly connected to bodily sensations, or in some, there seems to be no connection. I have labelled this topic *Frictions* because the accounts here seem to contain a personal conflict or predicament that is being reflected on:

I would be the responsible nice dancer, who does with her body what is asked for despite her tiredness, bodily pain and unwillingness to react. With this experience a whole trajectory of self-neglect that living as a dancer and disciplining my body has imposed upon me was brought to my attention.

How could I have all the time a peaceful awareness and a life style that is friendly to the body? Although, life is not completely under control, why should the body be? I sense my dancer self demanding and imperfection-nagging somewhere far away. I push it away. Every body contains some wisdom. Imperfection does not mean inferiority. . . . I do not want and will not work against my body, whatever it takes . . . My ruthless friend . . . But it is not only bone and muscle, it is my whole life.

These reflections are related to the body, and represent the profound significance that the body bears to dancers. The accounts above are only a fraction of issues related to the “dancer's life” that the data contains. I would also like to claim that these accounts speak about the *female* dancers' life, as they indirectly refer to a multitude of roles, tasks and responsibilities that the participants wrote about. This makes me think that bodily consciousness may lead to a heightened awareness of self and towards a greater self-understanding.

Sensing

The next topic, *Emotions* takes us to the sphere of inner experiences and “Sensing”. I find this topic quite difficult, since most accounts that appear to refer to emotions; emotional states or feelings are at the same time, descriptions of bodily states. (see Damasio 1999, 2003) One participant reflects on this connection between physiological state and feeling, or psychological state, in the following way: “*I have a calm feeling however, but I am thinking about the relationship between calmness and tiredness . . .*” The following account is an example of how the bodily state is merged with the emotional, or mental state.

I feel that my neck is tight and there is a point close to my throat in which it becomes difficult to breathe. Here I feel constricted . . . I feel that I am trying to retreat, to withdraw from being seen and addressed.

The data contains some accounts that can be definitely labelled as descriptions of an emotional state. The following is one of them, and to me, it is very touching:

In the end we drew a picture of our own face in the air and then we danced with it. I cried all the time, my shirt became wet from the stomach up. At first I did not want to deal with myself . . . It was hard to look, I noticed that I was harsh towards myself. Then I felt gentleness and compassion towards the person I drew. I stroked her a little. That was the only movement that came out.

This account also illuminates the possibility for increased self awareness, or self-understanding through dance or bodily activity, when connected with reflection.

The next three topics are the most “inner”, dealing with bodily sensations. The first of these three is *Pain*, a topic all too familiar to dancers.

At the beginning of the butoh class we run for quite a long time. My legs start to hurt, lactic acid. A question arises: Is it through pain and agony that we have to go in this life? Is this one of those areas where we work through pain? Maybe pain belongs to life?

Mapping the body through its locks and points of pain. Why always this way? What part of me is sore today?

When I find the right position, pain appears first. I feel it in the whole body and consciousness, mind, in my thoughts, everywhere . . . How do I make myself so sore? How much should I stretch so that it would not hurt? Will I ever find that kind of existence? . . . The pain starts to ease, or not, it stays, but I adapt to it.

The experience of pain is intense and it involves the whole person. It may well be that dancers are also experts about different kinds of pain, and that they have acquired different methods with which they try to manage and ease pain.

Pain is a clear bodily sensation, and it often seems as if it is the first and most obvious sensation that directs our attention to the body. When there is no pain or no fatigue, for instance, we easily forget about the body. However, the data includes different descriptions related to *Bodily sensations* that are, to me, of great interest in terms of our ability to listen and understand our bodily sensations. This may also be related to dancers' heightened ability to discern these sensations and to reflect on their meaning.

The body is warm and it feels alive, strong . . . I locate pains, but they do not take away the feeling of strength and alertness that seems to flow under my skin . . .

I felt my blood circulation get going and my muscles warming up. The air stroked my skin. I began to relax, the speed accelerated. Ease and strength. Breath. wonderful lungs, wonderful oxygen – I feel that its flow in my body increases, I feel how much strength I get from oxygen . . . I started to feel my pulse pounding on my neck. My lungs expanded like an accordion, strongly, and I felt how my diaphragm pushed air out, and suddenly again retreating to make space for the next “load” . . . Today I was not heavy and weak, but strong, light.

Sometimes, However, the Body Seems to Be “Mute”:

Listening to my inner space generates an experience of “muteness” . . . When I try, I do not perceive much. My organs feel flat and very mute.

To me, this kind of insight seems as meaningful as any other insight concerning our bodily sensations and states.

I will now turn to the fourth topic, which is concerned with the inner world, that is *Breath*. Breath is a significant topic in many ways. All the participants wrote a

lot about breath. Being attentive to one's breath seems to be the first step towards bodily consciousness, and breath also seems to lead to changes in a person's physiological, physical and mental states (Klemola 2005; Parviainen 2006; Shear & Jevning 1999).

If focusing on my breath generates a pink feeling for me and I like it, it is just fun! I am waiting for a pink feeling.

. . . As his/her hand settled down softly into a light contact on my sternum, on the surface of my body, my breath changed immediately. It shifted sharply to move my stomach and left my chest hollow, narrow, stiff and lifeless. It felt like it had escaped, retrieved from its touch. A superficial consent to touch! My body told me that it did not want to open up to touch, that I did not want it and did not trust its comfort. My breath had a powerful and obstinate manner of controlling my opening to or shutting out the situation.

Breath is still a clear movement, human and painless. I notice that I think about whether communication among human beings were so clear; in, out and wait. And again.

It must be quite obvious by now that the topics are interconnected. It is difficult to find an account that would be just about one topic. Bodily sensations are connected with breath, breath is connected with thinking, and so on. In a way, all the topics are interconnected.

Connecting

However, there is still another meaning to "Connecting". Here, it means relationship between body and mind, and finally, between a person, other people and the world. In interpreting the accounts that seem to fall under "Connecting" I have tried to honour the complexity and richness of the meanings that are embedded. In looking at *Body-Mind Unity* my intention has also been to focus on the movement between bodily consciousness and mental reflections, and to contemplate on the possibility of seeing these modes of consciousness as one. The following account is, to me, a beautiful example of this movement:

I become warm and sweaty, energy is bubbling in me. Play arises from somewhere in my body.

It starts with a clear description of a bodily state, that is, being warm and sweaty. The next part, referring to energy, is still clearly connected to physiology, but it also contains another level of meaning, “energy bubbling” is almost a metaphor. To me, it refers to a holistic feeling, to a feeling of vitality, of the life force (Klemola 2005). Then, the last part connects body physiology and this holistic feeling to a cultural concept of play. This is, to me, a rich and complex expression that connects cultural and situational knowledge to a bodily sensation. It is a poetic expression that evades explanation and analysis, and tells about human experience in a way that only poetic language can.

The following account is, for me, quite poetic as well. It begins with a statement that describes a situation, a condition that the person experiences as awareness, in both the mental and bodily senses:

Awareness of everything that I still must have time to take care of today pounds and weighs. Every cell gets filled with worries and things, and it feels heavy . . . If I feel that my body is full – it is full of worries and responsibilities, that feeling is a concrete sensation of being full. Would I be empty without tasks, worries, responsibility? Is my existence thus, about being full? What if I tried to be empty? . . . If I were empty, would be light? Would I float?

I see quite a loaded existential question embedded in this account, in the Sartrean spirit. It is grounded in the bodily sensation of feeling heavy, but it also contains a metaphorical sense of being heavy, or full. Then, this sensation and idea of heaviness is being connected with the concept of responsibility, and all of this is being contrasted with emptiness and lightness, again in both the literal and metaphorical senses. Citing Lakoff and Johnson (1999, 50–52): “Our conceptual systems and linguistic categories consist of metaphors that link our bodily existence with the way we think.”

Finally, the participants wrote about connecting to others and the world:

Today I was able to concentrate on my own bodily sensations and still observe the environment more than usual. Am I more open or more careless? In a way, it feels free. There is no need to doodle. The inner and outer worlds settle into quite a good relationship without effort.

It feels good, when dance and one’s own movement . . . feel real. “Real” can be of course many different things . . . Sensing each square centimetre of one’s own body and the other’s body,

warmth. Simplicity . . . It also feels good to find a way to be honest to oneself and not to go along with something that is not important to oneself. Now I feel strongly that only in this way I can also be in true connection with other people. In dance and elsewhere . . .

The embrace – the embrace and touch of the world. The world carries me, it touches me, it enters me and becomes me. I am in the world, I am of the world – air and earth. Now I am sitting on the ground, it pulls me towards it, into its lap, deep, into sleep. It presses, invites, thought of death, darkness, end – under the ground but still in the sky, in the air, in a dream – dream brings me belief, love. Dream. Plunge. I plunge into a dream, float and glide. I withdraw from the earth, from death . . . The will to live, to continue, the will to caress the world, its continuity. I am part of it, I breathe it, it becomes me and gives me life and strength . . . Air, oxygen, wakes me up, strengthens me. Creates a will, a desire to be right. To do right. To take care of the world. To take care of myself. To be good. Towards myself, the others, the world. To be good and alert.

Conclusion: Why Mind the Body?

This study has been focused on the dynamic movement, or “heavy traffic” that goes on between our conscious thought and bodily experiences. It seems to me that the nature of this movement itself is still vaguely understood, and that we have not even begun to appreciate the richness of meanings that are being generated through it.

As I have mentioned earlier, dancers may have a special ability to distinguish and give meaning to bodily sensations. Also, meanings related to the body bear special significance for dancers, since the body is their “whole life”. Thus, dancers know through their bodies and about their bodies. They seem to be able to access the prereflective realm quite easily, and generate rich meanings and varied mental reflections based on their bodily experiences. Moreover, often these reflections are poetic and metaphoric in nature, and are related to existential questions and complex issues related to oneself, others and the world.¹⁴

According to Klemola (2005, 10) by practicing conscious movement it is possible to learn to understand ourselves and our place in the world, and to comprehend the ethical and aesthetical dimensions of human existence. Based on this study, I am willing to think likewise, and encourage dancers and non-dancers to take on this kind of personal journey. In other words, this means leaving our natural, everyday attitude and taking on a phenomenological attitude towards our experiences (Parviainen 2006, 46–53; Thompson 2007, 20). In the near future,

I will examine the relationship between phenomenological attitude, introspection and mindfulness.¹⁵

I also think that understanding that it is possible to “increase the traffic” between prereflective and reflective consciousness bears considerable pedagogical implications. Listening to the body and deriving meanings from bodily experiences can support young dance students’ self-understanding and personal growth as dancers, artists and human beings. Sharing one’s own reflections with others can widen the intersubjective horizon within a dance community, and develop a more caring and compassionate attitude towards one’s fellow dancers.

Having access to meanings based on bodily, prereflective experiences is not, and needs not to be, only the privilege of dancers. Everyone can learn to “mind” their bodies. I want to emphasize, however, that attending to prereflective experiences changes them, and as they become conscious mental reflections, they are no longer prereflective. On the other hand, I believe that our prereflective consciousness is so vast that there is probably never the danger of “emptying” it and our life becoming entirely reflective. New experiences arrive at our prereflective consciousness constantly. Strengthening the connection between these modes of consciousness is a matter of finding more complexity and clarity at the same time; and this, to me, is one way towards a meaningful life.

Endnotes:

¹ See Soili Hämäläinen’s article on bodily knowledge in this publication.

² I am thankful to Dr. Carol-Lynne Moore for pointing this notion of “What dancers know” out to me.

³ I explored the notion of body memories in my previous study (Anttila 2004). While this study was largely based on Damasio’s (1999) views on body memories, i.e., on the role of the body in the development of consciousness and the autobiographical self, I also acknowledged that he did not invent the notion of body memories, or the body as a site of memories. According to Reiners (2001, 241), the roots of a memory technique based on bodily memories are deep in French culture. For example Margalit (2002), Casey (1987) and Merleau-Ponty (1995/1962), among others have brought up the idea of body memories when referring to the process of remembering. There is a wide body of literature concerning the historical and cultural body that I cannot address within the scope of this current study.

⁴ The proprioceptive system is associated with a more familiar term, the kinaesthetic sense, that is, the sense of movement, muscle tension, position etc. Another related “lay” term is the sense of balance, or the vestibular system, which is located in the inner ear, and can be seen as separate from the proprioceptive system. In addition, some authors distinguish interoceptors from these systems. They transmit information from organs, glands, blood vessels and nerves. (Cohen 1993, 115).

⁵ During the course of this research project, I have become increasingly interested in Eastern philosophy, especially Vedantic philosophy and Buddhism, as well as in meditation that can be conceived of as the

practice or study of philosophy. The idea of consciousness in these philosophies differs greatly from Western conceptions. In the West, humanistic or transcendental psychology is interested in studying the spiritual aspect of human existence, as well as alternative states of consciousness, for example, cosmic and pure consciousness (Rauhala 2005b, 81–86). Recently, the scientific study of consciousness has been extended to the study of, for example, the state of pure consciousness that can be reached through meditation (Shear & Jevning 1999).

⁶ It may be helpful to distinguish a notion of “natural intelligence” from the idea of bodily consciousness. Natural intelligence refers to “cellular consciousness,” the complex system of our cellular life that consists of the intricate activity of transformation and interaction with other cells and the environment regulated and monitored by each individual cell (Aposhyan 1999, 150–154). While it is common to consider our cellular life as autonomous and unconscious, there are approaches to body psychotherapy and somatic practice that are based on attending to our cellular life, or, for example, on a certain organ (Cohen 1993, 28–31). These approaches are based on the relationship between our organic, physiological processes and our emotional and mental processes. While this relationship is certainly related to the question studied in this present study, space here does not allow for a comprehensive exploration of this issue.

⁷ Rauhala (2005a, 32) uses the Finnish words “tietoinen” (conscious) and “tiedostamaton” (unconscious) as subcategories within the main sphere of consciousness. Unconscious, thus, belongs to the sphere of consciousness. It can be accessed and brought to a conscious level. Unconscious is then, “possibly conscious”.

⁸ Cognitive unconscious is not equivalent to prereflective experience (or possibly conscious); it also refers to cognitive processes that we cannot become aware of. We cannot derive meanings from such processes. I wonder whether the cognitive unconscious could be conceived as “tajuton”, using Rauhala’s terminology. This analogy would level our cognitive processes and organic processes in terms of our ability to become aware of them. Maybe we could even conceive cognitive unconscious as organic. It does take place in the brain and in the nervous system, and thus, in the material body.

⁹ According to Depraz (1999, 99), “. . . the *epochè* corresponds to a gesture of suspension with regard to the habitual course of one’s thoughts, brought about by an interruption of their continuous flowing.” See also Parviainen (2006, 46–50) or Thompson (2007, 17–22) for clear descriptions of phenomenological reduction.

¹⁰ According to Pfeifer & Bongard (2007, 128–129) “the embodied turn” has revolutionized the study of artificial intelligence. Whereas cognitive science was formerly based on the premise that the brain controls the body, this notion has been recently been re-evaluated: the body controls the brain just as much as the brain controls the body. The body and the brain mutually determine each other’s behaviour. This is because the neural system that receives and transmits information from the organism and from the environment is itself embodied, that is, is situated within the body.

¹¹ I have taken the liberty to adapt the term introspection here, and modify the method according to current theoretical and philosophical understanding. I am aware of some limitations that were considered problematic at the time when introspection was introduced. Also, some scholars, like Varela and Lakoff & Johnson demand that first-person methodologies, like phenomenological reflection and introspection need to be supported by “third-person” approaches. Recent technological advances in neuroscience and biology are being increasingly employed in the study of consciousness. The current trend in consciousness studies is multidisciplinary. See Thompson (2007) for a comprehensive and recent account of this matter.

¹² Translated by me from an original account that was written in Finnish. This article includes several accounts originally written in Finnish. All translations are mine, but they have been verified by other readers/researchers. Original accounts are not included because of limitations of space.

¹³ The instructions were the following: “The main principle is that any bodily activity, like walking, swimming, stretching, dancing etc. can be the focus of introspection. Bodily activity supports focusing the attention to the body. It is possible to practice introspection without bodily activity, but it is more difficult. During the activity, focus your attention on your bodily events and sensations. Try to record these as closely as possible, so that you can return to them afterwards, that is, recollect them. At the same time, pay attention to your stream of consciousness, where your thoughts and attention turn to, how your bodily events are reflected in your mind. After you have finished the activity, write down your observations immediately. During the writing process, the flow of consciousness continues and generates new contents. Let this happen freely and write down everything that you can easily and effortlessly. However, try to stay focused on the previous activity and mental reflections that evolve from it. The length of bodily activity and writing do not matter.”

¹⁴ See Kirsi Heimonen’s article on dancing and writing in this publication.

¹⁵ Mindfulness is a method developed in the US by Jon Kabat-Zinn (2005). This method is based on Buddhist tradition, but it has been adapted to suit the needs of people who live in the contemporary Western world.

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In a Spiral: Cycles of Words, Dance and Strange Images

Kirsi Heimonen

In this article I shall start my journey between the actions of writing, dancing and film making in the field of research. These actions are interwoven with stillness, and somewhere there in the borderline, in the midst of darkness, a sense of otherness has landed on the skin. It begs to acknowledge something that is beyond knowing and controlling to maintain its integrity, its nature. Something is known in the bones and it is hidden; it pushes one to sense, see and act differently.

By doing research I have found myself in a circle where dancing has led me into writing and back to dancing. There does not exist any direct way to validate writing by dancing; both of them belong to different realities. Dancing keeps me alert while writing about bodily experiences in dancing. In writing the bodily experiences resonate; they guide the writing. Lived experiences in dancing bring a sense of validity that resonates in the bones. Dancing and writing are alive alongside each other; they keep their own territory and at the same time they can support each other; they can show their differences. Dancing reminds the other reality that escapes the strict concepts; dancing as a bodily experience does not belong to the enclosed circles of fixed reality. In turn I have immersed myself in these realities; the listening body is alive in both actions.

Writing – Marks from the Body

Writing as a method of inquiry¹ has led me into a state like improvising (Richardson 2000). I am totally awake, in the middle of the thing at hand, but I do not have a clear thought about what will become of the writing, it will be revealed step by step. I am being sunk into something where the writing itself will be in constant transformation. Writing is a state where many directions will open up; I am being pulled toward the unknown where images, smells, touches intersect. I am being drawn somewhere where the contours of my body are in motion; my former knowledge dissolves; certainties turn pale. The only certainty is the changing situations, the emerging sentences. In the midst of writing I suddenly do not know where I am; I find myself writing in another way; new connections are being

made; many things keep their uniqueness, their singularity. I find new landscapes in myself; I visit places I did not know about. Still, in my flesh they are strangely known. I am tightly intertwined with the world. Writing is a physical act² (Cixous & Calle-Gruber 1997). I am rooted in my bodily being in the midst of words and sentences. I am aware of layers of dancing experiences in the body while writing; I write through bones and muscles; I am surrounded by the wholeness of being. At the same time I dwell in an unknown reality. I land upon another reality; my body guides me to the unknown. Sometimes it happens: writing as action takes over; it possesses me; it has routes of its own. I am not totally responsible for the developing text at that moment; something half hidden wants to be revealed. Something similar happens at the moment of improvising: I am attuned to a particular focus in dance; the senses are open and in a moment some unintentional discoveries can be made. The world shows itself differently at each moment.

Writing is an experience as such. Words do create an experience. Though it is not the one like that while one is dancing, it is still rooted in bodily experiences; it is being supported by sensibility, by all the journeys I have gone through. Sometimes I feel breathless; my fingers jump fast on the keyboard, and images hold in their grip; the sensations are very alive. At other times the breath travels through the whole body: with each breath writing travels with force and calmness. The writing takes me to a land I do not know, a wave of strangeness. Eventually there is the touch of familiarity; there is a taste in some words that hit straight to the bones.

Tere Vaden writes about the locality of language, locality that embraces language, thinking, and the human being. This locality does not mean only physical location but lived distances and intimacy. Language carries meaning and it is thoroughly pierced by the experience. In many cases language and experience are inseparable. The experience is not free from the effects of language, and language changes; it flows, lives and dies. (Vaden 2000, 25–26) Vaden stresses the uniqueness of language and its tight relation to the experience. Words create a particular atmosphere. The experience will get another life by means of words that describe it. The words are like guideposts towards particular places, places are being created by the words that arrive; nuances also dwell in rhythms and silences between the lines.

Language makes a difference in writing. This language is alien to me; it is not rooted in me. This strangeness is an advantage: I can tell things differently by writing in English; other things can be revealed through this language. The words touch the surface of my skin; they do not hit the bones. There exists a completely

different echo with words in my mother tongue, Finnish. Here I am, thrown into this play of words with a foreign language to communicate my thoughts, some routes in my pathway of research. I get lost in the jungle of words; they sometimes seduce me; they take me somewhere else; the clarity disappears; the traces of dancing melt into a foggy landscape. Writing in English alienates, but at the same time it may reveal other things. It gives a particular distance to see, to observe, to recognise. The bond between words and their meaning that has been rooted in one's being since the cradle will loosen while one is using a foreign language. The airy space between the words and their meanings creates an opportunity to write in another way, the opportunity of seeing in another way, or to be lost in a strangeness, in a foreign landscape.

Writing about bodily experiences in dancing becomes an endless game: to circle around something, the intention is not to nail them through the definite concepts into something fixed. The impossible cannot be included in the circles of the possible. The game is to say something, to keep on repeating, to fold and to unfold – though not to fix it. The text will remain obscure; it still exists: the sensation, the lived experience. Emmanuel Levinas writes about the saying and the said. Saying is communication as a condition for all communication. The subject is vulnerable to the other. Saying is being exposed to the other where no slipping away is possible. (Levinas 2006(1974), 48–50) This exposure means that the subject is corporeal and sensitive to the Other; one's own identity absolves. There is something radical in the Saying; it goes beyond being thematized or totalized. By contrast, the Said belongs to the area where everything can be known, ruled, determined. It is concerned with truth or falsity. Everything that can be said, everything that manifests itself in the Said consists of the Said. In the Saying, the subject is already directed towards the other by its concrete presence. (Levinas 1996, 22) The question that Levinas asks is how is the Saying, my exposure to the Other, to be Said so that it does not betray this Saying. He answers by letting the Saying reside as a residue, or an interruption, within the Said. The manner in which Levinas writes, particularly in *Otherwise than Being*, means a spiralling movement; the inevitable language of the ontological Said and the attempt to unsay that Said in order to locate the ethical Saying in it. (Critchley 1992, 7–8) In that way the Saying is intertwined with the Said, the ongoing play with the Saying and the Said means that all the time something that becomes said will be denied. Something emerges in this constant interplay between the Saying and the Said. Still, these two are irreducible.

I recognise this continuous play with words; something emerges, something hides and disappears at the same time. The exact language does not totally serve the way in which the bodily experiences emerge, how they affect the body. In the midst of research, my route travels between writing and dancing. There is a gap, an abyss in between; there is a strange possibility that they inform each other in an unpredictable, untranslatable way. They do inform each other through their own means. And, inevitably, dancing hides from writing; it reminds one of Levinas's endless play between the Saying and the Said. Writing is able to create obscure scenes, to search more than to make statements. The gap will stay; it remains. That is consoling.

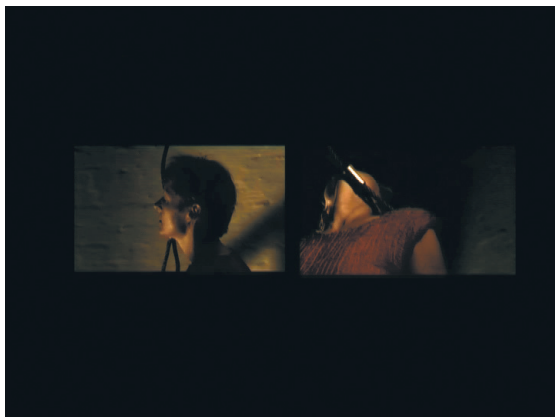
On a Research Journey: A Land of Shadows

My ongoing research journey started with a movement improvisation workshop with non-dancers, and their writings about their bodily experiences have been a lighthouse in my writing. My written interpretations about the dancing experiences of the non-dancers pushed me to move; the urge to dance out the discussions became evident. The embodiment of the written text and the memories pulled me to unknown landscapes where I do not cease to be amazed. This cycle has contained movement as well as stillness; the movement has been exposed differently to the senses through stillness. I have enjoyed a state of being where I just wander aimlessly or I am in stillness – emptiness folds into the flesh.

In the research process, the need to move, to make short dances pushed me to act. I embodied some writings of the non-dancers from the workshop as well as some written lines of mine: thoughts, ideas and some memories. The students' writings form the basis of my material. I know their sentences by heart. I did not translate or represent the discussions; movements came alive as I attuned myself to the discourses. The word became flesh³. It does not mean literal correspondence between words, ideas and movement, but a sensed approach that took me on various journeys. It was of the utmost importance to live out abstract ideas in the flesh, to sense how movements would be created in the embodiment of words. It was about attuning oneself to the ideas and letting the body lead to the other reality, the reality of movement. Layers of flesh, layers of lived experiences, became activated during those days. The textual reality ended up in my making a short film of those dances. The short film of dance solos will become an appendix to my doctoral thesis; it is one way to communicate the

discourses. The title of the film is “*Routes from here to here*” (2007); the journey has gone from dancing to writing and back to dance, back to my dancing. I embodied some written notes of the students’ lived experiences that originated from the movement improvisation workshop and my discoveries that have emerged in the act of writing. Various memories are tightly connected to the tissues of my body; they are glimpsed in the turn of the head, in the pauses, and in the breathing.

The places chosen for the solos became meaningful. One place in particular became important. I was drawn to it; the place invited me; it forced me to dance there. It presented something weird, strange, and unknown that I had been writing about in relation to the non-dancers’ bodily experiences. I could reason why I made a dance



Routes from here to here (2007) director, choreography and dance Kirsi Heimonen, cinematographer and editor Raimo Uunila

there, though I still do not understand it. Something more powerful than my will certainly appeared, and I let it happen. One may call it intuition. The dance was being created day by day for months; I visited the place at different times of the day, under various lighting conditions. It was not until the editing studio that the images started to speak to me, and more: they started to haunt me. I looked at the woman who moved with a metal rope: I looked at myself dancing. I sensed the pulls, the turns, the touches of the metal rope on her neck; those images froze me. I was there and I was somebody else: all the writings about otherness, the other, started to make sense; the visible images on the screen pushed me to see differently.

In the editing studio, where time has its own sway, where daylight does not exist, I confronted something of the otherness in me. I was watching the film being processed – I always spoke there in the third person in order to see myself more clearly – when the moving image started to speak to me. It pierced my flesh. I was stunned. The experience was powerful; it was an inexperienced urge. The images haunted me; they pushed me to write about it.

I am being reflected onto the plastered wall. I multiply. In each of those images, in those shadows, dwells somebody else, not the one here: me. My darkness triples patches on the wall; each of them has its own way of being. I am being moved slowly; a metallic rope invites my neck to touch its surface lightly; its coldness emanates. With eyes closed I travel in the fog; I wander in the thicket of not-knowing, in the landscape of impossibilities.

Strangeness moves in my flesh; sweat incorporates me into this corner, this cage, this cave. I am the space where I am; the shadows form lives of their own and I do not know where I am. The shades lead me to the darkness; the darkness in my body breathes loudly; it conquers me. I do not know myself; I can rest. I do not know.

I touch the velvet of the darkness; I sense how it folds around me, around the mouth, on the breasts. The movements fade away; only the drops of sweat travel along the spine. I take some steps along the handrail: the abyss opens; my shadows keep on moving along the wall. I sink deeper into a state which I do not know. Calmness lands smoothly on the jawbone and the temples. I let go and the smoothness of darkness embraces me; I am immersed in moss. The outlines of my body move. The threats disappear; there is everything in darkness that I do not know – salvation from the insecurity, a purge.

The writing itself took over me. Still I cannot exactly explain the writing above; I believe the otherness in me wants to be acknowledged; the darkness in me wants to be acknowledged. It is not about shedding light on the darkness but about letting it be even darker, unknown, sealed from intentions, desires or the will. Embodying some ideas and thoughts from my research made an unpredictable impact on me. To circle around dancing, writing and film making took me to a place where I had to stop and to acknowledge that there was something of great importance, but it was impossible to say so clearly. There is another reality to which I have no entrance. A door without a handle. No exit.

Perhaps the flesh of the other people, the people in my research study, started to show itself in other ways. This way of writing leads to unknown pathways; I have peeled off some layers by writing. The moving images made me see differently; they made me write with an urgency I had not experienced before. Something was made visible through the dance; it started to show its nature in darkness.

In Stillness the Outlines Move

The moments of stillness at the editing studio with the editor were also covered with the darkness; the darkness took into its embrace. This happened on both sides of the monitor: there in the editing studio and in the moving image in the film. This strange touch on my skin was evident in both; something was recognised. We decided to darken the lighting of this particular scene; it needed it. The dim light in the moving image was similar to the atmosphere in the editing studio. I can exactly recall my still posture, and also that of the editor⁴. The connections to the dancer in the film and to the people related to the making of the dance were also present: students from the workshop, various people from my life – they were all present in an unexpected way. The image often stops in the editing process and I face the still posture of the dancer ready to move anywhere at any moment. The echoes of the movements are present in stillness; the moving parts contain the presence of stillness; they are intertwined. They guide each other, they do not mingle; there is clarity in each. My still posture there in the editing studio echoed the stillness there in the film – something strange was born in between.

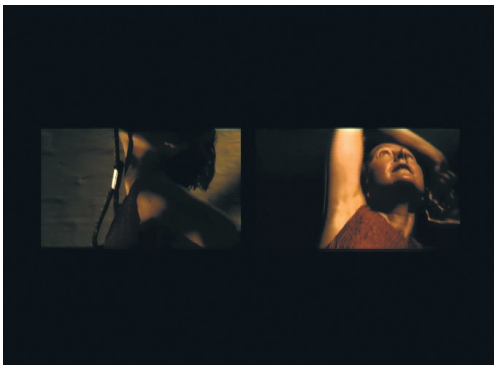
Otherness in writing as well as otherness in dancing means that there is much I do not know; there will be distance in between the movements and that of my ego with its desires, needs. To admit that brings the dimension of lightness into being; I am in contact with something that escapes the certainties; it will not be revealed in daylight. Nothing is taken for granted. My ego retreats in dancing; my thoughts are transformed in writing into something I am not aware of beforehand.

Spaces, holes and airy knots have started to emerge in my writing as well in my dancing: my ego fades; its sharp-edged outlines will smoothen. Other findings and other discoveries will be made when my ego disperses. The otherness in me transforms. It grows and I learn; I am not stuck on the things I thought of myself before. The outlines have opened out from the darkness.

Still-Acts

Silence has the utmost importance. Behind and between the words and movements there is silence. It does not mean soundlessness. Movements are grounded in silence; it is the basis of dancing. Silence opens the doors to listening. Sometimes it overwhelms

me; it hugs me and holds me; it keeps me still. It tames me, and shows the importance of keeping still, of keeping quiet. It will smooth down tension, and minor things; my being changes. At times it brings alertness; it brings sensitivity to the place and to the tiny movements that occur. I know better how I am in the world. Silence pushed its way to my being particularly in one solo, in “*the rope dance*”, a dance with a metal rope in the tiny place I discussed above.



Routes from here to here (2007), director, choreography and dance Kirsi Heimonen, cinematographer and editor Raimo Uunila

Stillness, a pause, can create a state where the layers of history become airy in the flesh. That kind of moment can stop the continuous flow of the present. Nadia Seremetakis, an anthropologist, has written about “still-act”. In that kind of moment, there in stillness “the buried, discarded, and the forgotten escape to the social surface of awareness like life-supporting oxygen. It is the moment of exit from historical dust.” (Seremetakis 1994, 12) That moment, the “still-act”, awakes the body of the forgotten; it reveals the stiff patterns inhabited in the movements. It offers the possibility to think and act differently than previously.

Seremetakis gives an example of a “still-act”. She looks at and touches various pieces and shapes of embroidery while her mother tells her about the origin of those pieces of handicraft. The maker, the embroiderer elaborates and changes the designs. Women made them for her, women who were her close or distant relatives. They had made those embroideries for her to celebrate the milestones, the various occasions in her life, even though those women did not meet her. While making the embroidery, the maker transfers herself into the substance that disseminates a history of the person, in this case of Seremetakis, who had left her country of origin, Greece, long ago. In that moment of touching those pieces of embroidery she was taken to a journey of her past as those women had narrated it and transferred it into the embroidery. (Seremetakis 1994, 15–16) Seremetakis writes essays of her childhood, “still-acts”, where memory, sensory and experiential fragments assemble; they form sensory history that goes through a re-enactment of

perceptual difference (Seremetakis 1994, 23–43). Writing differently means letting the sensory material be alive in the text.

What has the stillness to do with dancing, writing and film making? I had a similar moment, a “still-act”, when I sat in the editing studio and watched myself dance in the film. Perhaps the chance to rewind the piece over and over again changed my awareness; perhaps it was due to the different shooting angles and the frozen images that opened up the old ways of seeing. Something stays hidden. My writing cannot reveal all that is there, images, sensation and memories gathered together in other kinds of combinations of words. In a still moment, in a moment of contemplation, unexpected thoughts occur; I could sense in another way, through this different media, the moving image.

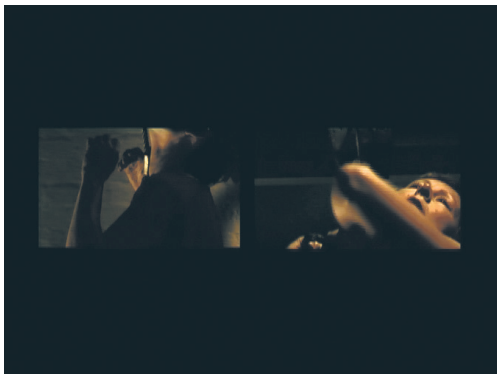
The Ultimate Otherness

The sounds were recorded afterwards when the images had been edited. I searched with the sound designer for hours for the sounds that would feel and sound right to the images of hands touching the metal rope. The illusion was found; there is hardly any audible sound but the effect hits the bones, it resonates deep under the skin while one is watching the film.

Images can be dangerous left like that. The solo with the metal rope has raised many questions from those who have seen the film. The film will be part of the doctoral thesis and the need for some written guidelines for watching the film became obvious. The rope near the dancer’s neck easily brings along with images of death. The scene becomes dramatic and scary according to some spectators. I was sinking into the unknown powers in my dance there; my intuition led me somewhere. The cultural meanings of death are easily read in the images; the hanging rope is a clear image of that kind.

After I realised that the scene easily evoked images of death for the spectator, I was stunned. The image there is easy to grasp, but I was also looking for something else. I sensed it through it; something stopped there. Discussion about death is rare. I encourage spectators to leave the images concerning death unnamed, to let them be powerful as such. The images ask one to think beyond the obvious cultural readings. If the spectator thinks of his/her own life and the otherness in himself/herself, much is gained. Death is the big mystery, available to all, and eventually no information is transportable to the living. To respect something, we have to stop

completely and to acknowledge the limit of knowledge. One cannot control or possess death. There is a similar border between writing and dancing: something from another reality cannot be transported as such to another one; interpretations happen and something escapes in between. Death is the ultimate border; it cannot be named as knowledge; it is beyond that. To leave something unnamed means to acknowledge and respect its particular nature – it is an ethical act.



Routes from here to here (2007), director choreography and dance Kirsi Heimonen, film director and photo Raimo Uunila

According to Levinas, the approach of death indicates that we are in a relationship with something that is absolutely other; we are no longer able to be able, the subject loses its very mastery as a subject. Death means something absolutely unknowable that appears. It is ungraspable; it marks the end of the subject's virility and heroism. (Levinas 1987(1947), 74, 71–72) Death comes to us as the other, mysterious. The subject is no longer master of itself. The image of death, of the hanging rope in the film, presents the not-knowing; it brings otherness into a discussion that is totally beyond knowing, controlling or grasping. My journey in research has led to a place where control fades away; my outlines are suddenly being changed; all the certainties disappear. There exists a thread of mystery that blinks every now and then; the subjectivity has become blurred. The things I have discovered are in motion in me; words, sentences, dances and films are important as they are to question, to discuss. They are not solely of me, of my will or power; there is always something that I do not know. I need not control – unexpected things may happen in writing and in dancing. Allowing the element of mystery to exist in everyday life has brought wind; it has taken me to the whirls of dark waters. It is joyful, scary, fascinating. To give up the former certainties has pushed me off the ground. Dancing and writing have brought me to a state of wonder; there are discoveries to be made by attuning myself to the realities around. Eventually, there is the one that is beyond all knowing and grasping: death, the ultimate otherness.

Endnotes:

¹ Laurel Richardson has thoroughly introduced writing as a method of knowing in her article (Richardson 2000).

² Helene Cixous has also written about the physicality of writing. For her the initial position in writing is to leave oneself at the bottom of the now. There is an unconscious belief in something, a force, a materiality that will come and manifest itself, an ocean, a current. (Cixous & Calle–Gruber 1997, 41)

³ I have been working as a dance artist at the Helsinki Deaconess Institute; there are many languages and practises behind the words and theology is one of them; I am influenced by that vocabulary. I am also using flesh in the phenomenological sense, flesh of the body intertwined with that of the world. Flesh has several echoes, several layers in the body.

⁴ Raimo Uunila worked as the cinematographer and editor of the film. We have collaborated previously. Therefore, our communication already had a shared basis; a mutual acknowledgement and a respect of our work in its state of becoming. Jorma Tapio composed the music, Jari Ravaska recorded the sounds, Jouni Lähteenaho lit the scenes, Marko Kataja acted as a sound designer, Mari Bisi designed and made the costumes, and Michaela Bränn produced the film as a production of The Theatre Academy of Finland. I choreographed, danced and directed the film.

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A Mono-Trilogy on a Spatial and Performative Process

Leena Rouhiainen

Previously visited by our faces, hands and bodies, a table corner at a dimly lit cafeteria is alive again. It is endless; words keep pouring out of our mouths in turns as excitement moves in ebbs and flows from person to person. Our limbs hardly keeping still, we drop names, concepts, images and experiences on the table. A cluttered array of ideas, books, laptops, hands, lattes and ashtrays piles between us. And anticipation keeps figuring who you are, who I am with you and what we are doing together . . . Perhaps I'll know more next time.

The Frame

I am a dancer-choreographer¹ working together with the musician-sound designer Antti Nykyri and the architect-scenographer Toni Kauppila in an open-ended collaborative and performative process. While we construct our performance, we are attempting to overcome our more customary roles as artists and to allow our different viewpoints and practices to influence each other. The end results that we currently envision are improvisational performances that might be interactive with the audience. We aim to bring together material from our everyday lives and art forms and open them for a web of interpretations and dialogues ongoing in the performance itself. In our performances we will investigate the chosen themes and materials in different sites and contexts, and thus allow for new encounters as well as shifting meanings to emerge. (ref. Preston-Dunlop & Sanchez-Colberg 2002, 3-4; Sederholm 2002, 77, 81, 86; Rouhiainen 2007)

We have now collaborated for six months and have met each other several times to discuss diverse issues. We have introduced each other to who we are, what we think about our art forms, how we work and what we imagine our collaboration to be like. In between, we have withdrawn to mull over our conversations, individually refine mutual themes and take care of our other professional tasks. After several meetings and playing around with a host of imagined end results, we set on a mutual task to start exploring our shared interest on *space*. It involved observing urban sites and their social choreography² as well as our personal experience of commuting

between our workplaces and homes as well as rest or stillness. In this article, I will write about the task we gave ourselves and describe the first steps we took to create an in-between space³ through which we could finally share our exploration with the audience.

In paving through our process I will implicitly deal with the emergence of that sensual, perceptive, imaginary, intellectual, bodily, material, practical and technological space we enacted and collaborated in from my perspective.⁴ Drawing on notions from phenomenology and cultural theory, Kirsi Saarikangas discusses a dynamic understanding of space and argues that it becomes meaningful through the actions of subjects and their interplay with symbols, materials, buildings and cultural conventions. She opines that human space is never simply neutral space. (Saarikangas 1996, 308, 310) One of the philosophers that she quotes is the French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty, whose work I am quite familiar with, too. In Merleau-Ponty's view our existence is primordially spatial already because it is oriented and mobile. We are directed towards different modes of consciousness and different kinds of relations to others and the world through our habits and actions. In its lived nature space carries the meanings of the manner in which we inhabit the world. According to Merleau-Ponty, lived space is a situation, the spatiality of a lived event. In this sense he considers the experience of space to be "interwoven with all the other modes of experience and all the other psychic data" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 286–287). He also claims that "there are as many spaces as there are distinct spatial experiences" and that "the description of human space could be developed indefinitely" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 286–287, 291).⁵ De Certeau (1988, 93, 117–118) takes Merleau-Ponty to discuss a space that is not a theoretical construction, but a space of practice, operations, mobility and a poetic space of mythical experience. Space could, then, be considered a process involving non-physical and physical, pre-reflective and reflective as well as subjective and intersubjective dimensions.

The above describes something of the kind of space that I am attempting to address in this paper. I will look into my experiences, actions and thoughts that were instigated by our collaboration. In doing so, in this paper, I will also deal with the realms of research and writing as well as artistic practice. They began to trouble me as I was attempting to construct a view on the in-between space that Antti, Toni and I enacted. These realms then, for me, became part of our space. They also frame the manner in

which this paper addresses our process and the first weeks of actual rehearsals.

In our planning sessions we decided to work, on the one hand, by meeting and brainstorming as well as making observations and gathering materials independently of each other. On the other hand, we decided to collaborate face-to-face during three more intense workshop periods. The next sections of this paper contain my reflections on our daily process from the first two-week long workshop as well as some literary or theoretical quotations that inspired our work. My aim is to offer an account of some moments of the everyday⁶ process we lived through and the problems we dealt with from my perspective as a dancer-choreographer-researcher. Alongside of the mutual process some of my inspirational sources have been phenomenological conceptions of space, notions on dance improvisation as well as Rudolf Laban's Choreutic theory.⁷ I also found support for my reflections and writing from conceptions of artistic research as well as narrative methodology.

On Writing as a Part of Artistic Research

As one explores the terrain of these practices, something is constantly slipping away, something that can neither be said nor "taught" but must be "practiced". (De Certeau 1988, 77)

As the subsequent sections will contain ruminations on an artistic process as well as some notions of the more embodied, tacit and practical knowledge it relied upon, this paper could be understood to belong to the realm of artistic research. Henk Borgdorff (2004) suggests that research *in* and *through* the arts in contrast to *on* the arts is a form of practice-based, processual and performative research with a contextualizing point of view. While aiming at expanding our knowledge and understanding of artworks and artistic processes more generally, such research allows experimentation in practice and interpretation of this practice to be its component parts and attempts to reveal and articulate tacit knowledge involved in artistic undertakings (Borgdorff 2005, 12; 2004, 6). In this instance the contextualizing view is related to my particular interest in exploring the nature of embodied spatiality or emplacement through dance. However, as I began our rehearsals together with Antti and Toni, we needed to explore the practical grounds of our collaboration. How we work together, what we actually do, what we think of

what we did and how we continue further, became important concerns. This need to construct a means to share our practice and interact with each other by doing and talking initially swallowed our explicit concern on space. But it was a necessary process to allow for a communal space of interaction as well as a practical approach to emerge between us.

Even if Borgdorff (2005, 7; 2004, 6, 7) emphasizes that the art-making process is an important feature of artistic research, he continues to determine this kind of research by arguing that artistic outcomes are an indispensable part of it. With our first workshop we hardly came to a place that allowed us to have clear insights into the component parts of our artistic process and we certainly did not come up with any final materials or the structure of our performance. In this sense, this paper addresses the initial stages of our collaboration previous to the end product. I think this underlines the process-orientedness of our approach. Even if we had an improvisational performance in our mind, we approached our work along similar lines to the devising methods used in the theatre. Following Alison Oddey, Ikonen (2006) describes devising as a mode of constructing a performance without relying on a chosen script. Rather, the performance is built upon the experiences and materials gathered from improvising that are combined in relation to a mutually designed frame. The process and collaboration is important for devising-methods (Oddey 2005, 1–4 as reported by Ikonen 2006, 53).

But I still have to sharpen the focus of what I will subsequently present. Laurel Richardson suggests that writing is a method of inquiry: a way to discover and learn to understand an issue of interest. She claims: “I write because I want to find something out, I write in order to learn something that I didn’t know before I wrote it” (Richardson 1994, 517). This is how I felt about my writing, especially when constructing the paper at hand. In it I am attempting to understand the process of artistic research that I am immersed in. In addition, like many others, Richardson argues that writing does not reflect social reality. As it produces meaning, it simultaneously constructs social reality (Richardson 1994, 516, 518). While Antti, Toni and I were working together, and as I made notes during and after each day with them, I noticed that my writing and additional reading became part of the artistic process we were dealing with. I made comments on what I had written and between us they opened conversations about our collaboration. And for some reason, different texts attracted my attention during the days we worked.

They formed a reflective mirror against which I contemplated our process. They gave me insights into what we were dealing with and how to continue working with some issues. In fact, Hannula, Suoranta and Vaden (2003, 32) argue that artistic or practice-based research becomes part of what is researched, the object of investigation, and changes the latter.

On the other hand, being aware of the fact that I was planning to write an article about our collaboration, made working on my diary somewhat special. I wrote some anecdotes about my experiences or simply jotted down words, which a few hours or days later I filled out in order to present more complete descriptions and thoughts. I noticed that it was impossible to document much of anything of the freely flowing and lively conversations we had or much of the actual dancing. I was so engaged with them both. They seemed to need my full attention to be enlivened. Thus, I was faced with the challenge of being an artist-researcher doing two things simultaneously: exploring our artistic practice in and through art-making itself as well as reflecting upon this creative undertaking not for the ends of art-making itself but for telling about it to others in writing. This challenge was heightened by the fact that this paper is almost a form of immediate reporting. As the two first workshop weeks came to end I also had to have a completed text in my hands. I could not make the deadline and extended it by a few weeks, during which I wrote about the methodological issues and problems with writing that I am at this point addressing, and edited my notes. Thus I actually dealt with a double construction of reality in my writing: my notes on our daily work together and the text produced by my ruminations on writing about our process and the notes. I could not evade this latter task, since my writing was somehow troubled and I believed this had something to tell me about the nature of artistic practice and reflection upon it. Even if what I learnt is not unprecedented, it was an important passage in my work.

In general, it is most often understood in the human sciences that the researcher is part of the research with her interests, background and the skills, traditions, conventions, instruments as well as languages she operates with (Hannula, Suoranta, Vaden 2003, 35). In the process related to this paper, I keenly felt that as an artist-researcher I could not distinguish two separate worlds that I live in, that of art and that of research. They interweaved and informed each other in a manner that was difficult to distinguish. Co-relatively, Hannula, Suoranta and Vaden write: “artistic practice and scientific practice occur in one world, in one person, in one

being” (2003, 34). Juha Varto (2000), in turn, argues, that being part of, or in the middle of what one is researching makes knowing challenging. Because the object of knowledge is not distinguishable from the knower, one cannot see clearly. Knowing then turns out to be fragmentary, and a unified understanding or coherent conception of the object is not achievable (Varto 2000, 38–39).

Being immersed in the process I was investigating is one aspect of what made writing and reporting about the process challenging. But I also think that the fact that I was dealing with an unprecedented process, a new way of collaboration with two people I had not worked with before, at least in this manner, also had a lot to do with it. On top of this was the requirement of almost immediate reporting.⁸ Antti had designed and recorded the sound tracks for two of my previous solo works on the basis of materials that I had offered him. On the other hand, I first learned to know Toni when we began our collaboration. In writing my notes, there were many moments in which I felt mute, unable to grasp or articulate what had gone on between us – even if at the moment I was quite enthusiastic and felt productively engrossed in whatever we were working on. I was surprised about my inability to write more about the lived-experience of dancing and exploring motion in collaboration with Antti’s and Toni’s work. Some of my notes felt redundant. Those that felt interesting were revelations about new, possible themes that I could work upon or a few crystallized articulations about what we thought we were dealing with together and why we felt some things worked and some did not. Also, more poetic descriptions of shared moments seemed to evoke something of what I had experienced, even if I was not quite sure of what, as I wrote them.

I do not believe in a sharp opposition between language and experience. In short, following the Merleau-Pontyan and Gadamerian viewpoints, I understand that “To be expressed in language does not mean that a second being is acquired. The way in which a thing represents itself [in language] is part of its own being” (Gadamer 1988/1975, 432). Therefore, I consider language to be something in which being becomes realized. Language is not simply externally imposed upon our experiences. Rather, in contrast to conventional language, original or poetic language, especially, discloses and articulates what is implicitly contained in pre-reflective experience itself. In so doing, language has the possibility of portraying an infinite range of experiences. This occurs through time when language is renewed as it is applied to new situations, which in turn involves a delay, where pre-linguistic experiences

are yet not grasped in a linguistic mode. Furthermore, to fully express all possible experience in or rather appropriating them into language in the end proves impossible as historical movement pushes previous expression into oblivion and yields yet-to-be grasped experiences (Rouhiainen 2003, 63).

As I struggled with my approach to writing, the problem of time that is referred to in the above phenomenological understanding of language, was underlined, and I recalled Susan Foster's words on dance improvisation from the perspective of writing history:

The improvised is that which eludes history. . . History, however, keeps track almost exclusively of the known. It focuses on those human actions reiterated frequently enough to become patterns of behavior. . . Historical inquiry has neglected to question how certain actions slide easily across representational fields into the historical record and others are persistently unnoticed. It has tried to ignore actions resistant to written description. (2003, 4)

When one is retrieving understanding of lived processes and improvisation, it is imperative to allow oneself to be immersed in them and to take sufficient time to gain a sense of their nature. This notion actually describes a central aspect of the phenomenological method in the sense that Merleau-Ponty writes of it. For a philosopher to gain access to the pre-reflective or lived character of the world requires an opening towards the world through a state of wonder. The philosopher should leave her or his preconceptions and personal motives behind and allow the world to speak through her or him. The speaking that allows the philosopher to witness the interrelations and structures different modes of being come to exist through finally seizes the philosopher. Gaining sense of the lived nature of objects of observation is not attained through conscious effort. (Rouhiainen 2003, 95; Heinämaa 2000, 104–105; Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, xiii) Rather, it requires that the philosopher has perceptual faith, can endure the unclear and allows enough time for her or his wondering to bear fruit.

This made me understand that the novelty of our practical collaboration challenged my orientation to quite an extent. Probing on how we worked together, what my dance was about in relation to Antti's and Toni's work, thinking of making notes alongside of all the other practical issues we were solving, as well as considering

how to manage to write an article on the process, placed me in quite a deep sea of questioning. It is interesting that all of these tasks were oriented towards some kind of a future end. Francois Dastur (2000) describes, how, as we move towards the possible, we simultaneously move towards indeterminacy. The future is not revealed to us beforehand nor can it be totally controlled by our projections or acts. The future 'descends' upon us, surprises us, brings with it situations and features we did not expect. The struggle towards something, which entails a non-coincidence, an unfulfillment, is nevertheless what allows us to be open to new events. (Dastur 2000, 185, 186) I needed time to allow impetus to grow and to gain perspective on what we were dealing with. I still do.

A Story in the Making

Every story is a travel story – a spatial practice. (De Certeau 1988, 115)

As I wrestled with writing about our collaboration, I noticed that my thinking was influenced by our earlier encounters. Our previous meetings and the days we worked together began to determine the structure of my writing. I realized I was actually trying to tell a story about the time we spent together. The subsequent text follows a sequence of beginning, middle and end and could be understood to follow a narrative logic. Therefore, the account that I constructed on our collaboration could be considered a story, an artistic-scholarly tale. And indeed, I found some grounds for constructing the following text from notions related to narrative research.

As I have understood it, in the context of this kind of research, narratives are generally considered to display the goals and intentions of human actors: to make individuals, cultures, societies, and historical epochs comprehensible as wholes (Richardson 1990; Carr 1986). Narratives interpret the temporality or processes of life in human terms. The way in which narrative reasoning constructs reality is by being contextually embedded and looking for particular connections between events in a causal manner (Richardson 1990). Therefore, the ability to tie different spatial and temporal elements together through a causal plot is characteristic of narrative research. It does not attempt to determine an event by situating it in only one defining category; rather, it attempts to delineate the manner in which it is related to other spatially and geographically situated happenings (Saastamoinen 2005). Stories or tales are usually differentiated from narratives as a subcategory.

Stories are more straightforward accounts of actual events and experiences concerning human life.^{9 10}

In following the aim of creating a good story from chosen episodes that enable a logical plot to emerge, narrative research makes it possible for a piece of research to interlink a variety of textual or symbolic material related to a socio-cultural practice.¹¹ Even different research methods and writing styles can be combined to produce grounds for new and shared understanding of an issue. (Heikkinen 2001; Richardsson 1994) I am following this advice in combining my notes, some poetic images on our process, with a few more theoretical conceptions. Moreover, in this kind of an approach to narrative research, the origins of the source materials or orthodox methodology are considered less important than the experimental process of creating new understanding (Heikkinen 2001; Lincoln & Denzin 1994).¹²

One final thing I would like to bring into this discussion is that stories can also be considered to be spatial practices. They position, mark boundaries, map structures, open vistas, move ideas, interconnect agents etc. De Certeau writes: “Every day they [stories] traverse and organize places; they select and link them together; they make sentences and itineraries out of them. They are spatial trajectories” (1988, 115). In this paper, I am utilizing, what, after De Certeau, could be described as two different languages on space: notions tied to the human sciences and philosophy as a discursive series of operations, as well as maps of observations concerning the daily artistic process. In relation to space the latter often “tell us what one can do in it and make out of it. They are treatments of space” (De Certeau 1988, 122). So as I am constructing this somewhat scholarly tale on our artistic process, I am actually constructing a space. After all, “the story does not express a practice. It does not limit itself to telling about a movement. It *makes* it” (De Certeau 1988, 81). In some respects, my tale might, in fact, turn a dynamic, interactive, mobile and ambiguous space into a more organized, stable place, as it offers a view from my perspective only. Nonetheless, since “space is a practiced place” and “stories. . . carry out a labor that constantly transforms places into spaces or spaces into places” I hope that this paper involves at least an intermittent dynamism, movement (De Certeau 1988, 117, 118).

The First Task

Sit, stand, walk but do not talk.

Muffled noises with glassy paths of electronic and human motion.

Step after step a mixture of limbs in locomotion, upright directed elevators, diagonal escalators, TV screens with their mind-protruding commercial clips and a spherically ticking clock.

Here I am sunken into the heaviness of my joints, muscles and other organs – an onlooker on an ergonomically designed seat. I mere meat.

The passivity of observation: a peaceful distance in the proximity of goal and effort consuming busy bodies.

I wrote this poem about the site I took Toni and Antti to see. It was my urban site of rest in between commuting from my workplace, the Theatre Academy, to my home in Espoo – waiting for the bus at the central bus station in Helsinki. The poem was one of the materials I brought into our workshop. For me it functioned as an emblem of a lived experience. I take it to preserve the felt-sense I had of this urban space. In fact, it formed a kind of map of my emplacement at the bus station. According to Gaston Bachelard, a poetic image offers the opportunity to experience linguistic spaces. In his view, language as this sort of an image is not a means of expression but the surging forth of a living reality (Bachelard 2003/1957, 42, 50, 51). Merleau-Ponty argues, that, in poetic expression, the object of expression and the expression itself are inseparable. A poem is a string of living meanings that illuminate a situated attitude or approach towards the world (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 151; Heinämaa 1996, 97). I used my poetic emblem to extract movement themes for our workshop, such as walking and sitting or moving backwards and down as you do when you take a seat.

As we proceeded more closely to our first workshop period, we presented our first ideas and drafts on materials to each other. I showed my poem and physically demonstrated the related movement themes. Toni presented his idea of a spatial construction, a site for our performance. In his drawings, he had visualized a patch of rouged floor on which I would dance and onto which he could project video material. He also presented two video-clips he was working on. They were based on material he filmed at the bus station in which people walked as well as a moving map of an imaginary route from Helsinki to Espoo he had retrieved from Google Earth.

Antti, on the other hand, had created an instrument that could produce static sounds. He built a wooden box and glued three pieces of sandpaper of different roughness on top of it. Under the sandpaper he placed contact microphones. He also built reconstructed loudspeakers in which he separated the middle and high

frequency elements from each other, placing the first close to the ground and the latter some two meters higher. The sounds that Antti played with this instrument were mixed through a computer program.

I was impressed by the visualizations Toni had made of his ideas and plans. Antti's musical instrument, in turn, affected me even in my dreams. I dreamt that he had constructed a wall-size poster-kind-of-sandpaper-construction anybody could touch and create music with. However, I was a bit perplexed about the ways in which the three of us worked. Antti and Toni seemed to be able to present quite exact and concrete material already. I had simply written a poem and demonstrated some simple movement themes. For a moment I felt inadequate and considered the bodily medium excruciatingly vague, ungraspable, contingent. I also realized that much of the work that sound designers and scenographers do has gone on without my noticing in the dance pieces I have danced in.

Even if I acknowledged that we all began our work from thoughts and ideas that we found interesting and allowed them to push us into the concrete act of producing something tangible, visible and audible, I began thinking about our mediums and their technological nature. Don Ihde's line of reasoning helped me to gain some insight into my experience and even a slight envy of the tools Antti and Toni worked with. In relation to virtual reality and technology, he suggests that

we can "read" or "see" ourselves by means of, or through, or with our artifacts. We can – in technological culture – fantasize ways in which we get beyond our physical limitations . . . In this mode of technofantasy, our technologies become our idols and overcome our finitude. (Ihde 2002, xiii)

I guess I would have enjoyed getting out of my body and being able to construct something altogether new. Now I had to rely on what through my life my body and dancing had become, which at moments feels all too familiar. However, what Ihde further argues is that technical devices extend the polymorphism of bodily possibilities and that the ultimate goal of virtual embodiment is to become a multisensory bodily action. So far, historically monosensory, either visual or audio media, have dominated the scene. (Ihde 2002, 7–8, 9) In fact, Antti's and Toni's expressive mediums could be viewed as being monosensory ones. Their devices and medium offer restrictions to what they can present, just as my body with its habits restricts my performance. Obviously they do this while they also allow for

performative possibilities. And slight deviations from the familiar can offer paths for change and discovery.

In fact, in its habits the human body incorporates different kinds of techniques through which it operates in its daily activities. It likewise contains a virtual dimension. Ihde opines that the image-body is a virtual body through a non-technological projection. In his view, these projections can radically change our situation and our sense of our own bodies (Ihde 2002, 5, 7). With a similar line of thinking, Foster argues that dance-related practices utilize two dimensions of the body: dancers perceive their bodies through certain perspectives. The former is about understanding the lived and motional nature of bodily actions, while the latter relates to an imagined ideal (Foster 1997, 237–238). Merleau-Ponty, likewise, argues that, “the imaginary” is “in my body as a diagram of the life of the actual” (1996/1993, 126). The ideal body could be understood as an internalized standard against which we measure the present stance of our body and its memories in a way that focuses or integrates those aspects of the body that are of value to our projects and circumstances (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 100; Weiss 1999a 1, 21). Dancers imagine possible movement sequences, and focus upon their body to perceive how their bodies could accomplish them, and while the body does so they identify their projections in their bodily performance. However, a bodily act never fully achieves a body ideal, which is affiliated with completeness and leaves nothing to be desired. The ideal body and actual body are never quite synonymous. The body responds in its own way by producing unexpected and unimagined aspects, and the imagined projection remains incompletely realized (Weiss 1999b, 131). Perhaps this relates to the sense of vagueness I felt in front of Antti’s and Toni’s more technological approach. I imagined that they could achieve something more determinate through their work than I could – an illusion.

Nonetheless, I still felt I could not proceed any further with my work, unless I concretely improvised together with Antti and Toni. I had no preset ideas as to where I would like my dancing to end up. I was eager to explore with the few movement themes I had chosen and to allow more to emerge as I entered into a bodily dialogue with Antti’s and Toni’s work. This need had something to do with what Ann Cooper Albright discusses in the following manner:

Figured as the opposite of choreography, improvisation is often seen as free, spontaneous, nontechnical, wild, or childlike, as if one can simply erase years of physical and aesthetic training to become a blank slate onto which one’s imagination can project anything. Of

course, as seasoned improvisers know, improvisation requires training to open the body to new awareness and sensations, and the imagination to new narrative possibilities. (2003, 261)

I wanted to train together with Antti and Toni for new awareness, sensations and ideas to be born from our collaboration.

Let's See What Comes Out of This: The Two-Week Workshop

We worked daily for two weeks from approximately ten o'clock in the morning until three or four o'clock in the afternoon taking a proper lunch break in between. I started our workshop by working together with Antti. Toni was committed to his work at the University of Arts and Design and could join us only later in the week. What we did first was to clean the studio space that had been given for our use at the Theatre Academy. It was a recording studio approximately 50 square meters in size. We carried several sound screens from the middle of the room to the side and stacked chairs in a pile as well as cleaned the floor. Antti began setting up his sound equipment and I marked a space, which I imagined resembled the size of the platform Toni had planned, on the floor with white tape. Antti placed his equipment on the floor next to the "dance space" I had outlined. We came up with the idea of offering the audience a similarly low perspective to attend our performance. They could sit on pillows around us. We thought this might enhance an intimate connection with what we were doing. Antti played some music for me to gain a picture of how he modified the sounds he produced with his instrument through the computer. Then we improvised together for the first time.

I walked on the border of the dance space. I mimicked walking with different parts of my body, fingers on the floor, lying on my side and moving forward like an undulating amoeba. Antti's music made me move in a rather minimalist and fine-tuned manner, emphasizing each new movement by stopping in between, utilizing secluded body parts in movement. The dance and music together felt quite intimate and serious. Afterwards, Antti pointed out how the newly fashioned loudspeakers together with the sounds he played created an atmosphere of a large space. Space expanding outwards. I began to think about my rather inward focus. Should I perhaps try to use a mode of projecting, directing my motion more into outer space than I had?

During the week we continued our collaboration in the studio in a somewhat similar fashion: exploring our own practice, improvising together and talking about what we did and experienced. The second day Antti fine-tuned his instrument. I concentrated on thinking about and exploring my movement material on my own, influenced by the intermittent sounds emanating from Antti's testing. It felt good to work on our own tasks together in the same studio.

Moving body shapes, statues – stillness in shape, position. Remaining in one place in one stance.

I dance with my arms a lot – there is a lot of movement in my arms, fingers . . . Could I dance with my legs in a similar way, too?

At the end of the day we improvised together and wondered about how to make our very concentrated effort accessible to the audience. We questioned whether beginning the performance by arranging things and warming up in an everyday manner would help the audience to settle into a comfortable interaction with us. We also wondered whether talking would offer a relaxed or open atmosphere. But we also acknowledged the difficulty of talking while dancing or playing music. We felt it might have a quite dramatic and ponderous effect, if we entered into a spoken dialogue. So for the next day I took with me George Perec's book *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces* in Finnish. While I danced Antti both played his music and read a section of Perec's text aloud.

Text by George Perec, words by Antti, muffled human sounds including echoed walking and talk emanate from the loudspeakers. Me walking around . . . more and more awkwardly . . . jerky movement – means stillness in between, a chance to listen, become aware, searching, uncertain movement, carefulness, bound flow, demonstrating spatial distances and spatial relations – pointing outwards, projection, space between body parts . . . erasing, pointing, measuring, showing . . . Perec's words on parking a car have an effect on my doing, uncannily I demonstrate actions, shutting a door, walking away from the car . . . Then the words stop leaving a silent mumble intact . . . intensity amplifies . . . I find myself on my knees fiercely paddling my arms backwards . . .

In discussing our experience we both noticed how a new space of perception had opened as one of the performative elements was left behind. First, by allowing

different elements to happen simultaneously, some kind of relationship between them becomes established. Then, when one element is omitted and the others continue, a new relationship from amidst what had happened before emerges. When Antti stopped reading Perec's text and only his music and my dance remained, it felt as if a reorientation had occurred, a curious but intriguing questioning. It was interesting that we both noticed this shift. In fact, we wondered if we had hit upon some dramatic principle or convention of the performing arts more generally. For me something else happened, too.

I was interested by a new theme of movement that came about in the improvisation: measuring space with my movements and body parts. . .

'It is very difficult to conceive of time and space as distinct elements, because measuring space always involves measuring time and vice versa. Time is measured through movement that occurs in space. The ancient Persians measured distance by using the concept of *parsang*, by which was meant the journey a man travelled on foot within an hour' (Van Kerkhoven 1993, 25, trans. L.R.).

Measuring and walking do connect!

In addition to measuring space, in our improvisations, I kept to my basic movement theme – walking throughout our workshop. The actions of the different body parts as well as the rhythm involved in walking became themes I repeatedly explored.

I notice that walking truly inspires me: the rhythm, spatial design. Stopping into stillness, commencing again, how the soul of the foot touches the floor, in what possible ways and angles can it do so? What happens to my spine, rotating shoulders swinging or stiff arms? How do my fingers walk? What other area can I rotate other than my spine and shoulders and to what extent? What catches my eyes when I walk? Where is my focus and head directed to . . . inward, outward, up down, sideways, forward? Is my gaze open, receiving and communicative, or closed, thoughtful? Mostly the latter . . .

'Moreover, you must walk like a camel, which is said to be the only beast which ruminates when walking' (Thoreau 1992/1862, 11).

Stopping in between made me reflect, become aware of my stance and anticipate my next move.

'To walk is to lack a place. It is the indefinite process of being absent and in search of a proper' (De Certeau 1988, 103).

And we were undertaking our quest with some origins in urban space.

'The ordinary practitioners of the city live "down below", below the thresholds at which visibility begins. They walk – an elementary form of this experience of the city; they are walkers, *Wandersmänner*, whose bodies follow the thick and thin of urban "text" they write without being able to read it. These practitioners make use of spaces that cannot be seen; their knowledge of them is as blind as that of lovers in each other's arms. The paths that correspond in this intertwining, unrecognized poems in which each body is an element signed by many others, elude legibility' (De Certeau 1988, 93).

On the third day Toni began collaborating with us. First he roamed around the studio to familiarize himself with the room, and then we told him what we had done and even showed him a bit of improvisation. He began setting up his computer and video-equipment, building a location for himself in the front of the room. He built a high tower from unused loudspeaker stands so that the video could be projected from above onto the floor. When he was done, Antti and I suggested that we improvise with a structure that emanated from utilizing Perec's text. We tried it out. But afterwards we had an intense discussion about the manner in which we ought to be working. Antti and I were already trying out some structural ideas and Toni wanted a more experimental and open collaboration. He introduced ideas about the creative process that he utilized in his teaching. He suggested that the creative process could evolve by moving either from the top to the bottom or from the bottom up. The first relates to creating an image of an end-result and solving the necessary problems to reach it. The latter process, on the other hand, is about allowing the unfolding process itself to determine the end result. We had opted to work with the latter approach. But our eventual performances formed an ever-present background that influenced our exploration. Still, it was important to be reminded of an openness and to simultaneously acknowledge the shared goal we were working for – some kind of performances.

When Toni came in with the video-projector, we decided to cover the patch of

floor I was dancing on with white paper. In my dancing I became very concerned about how to relate to the projected video-images. I had trouble seeing them in our improvisations. After all, they were projected onto me or onto the floor, and I could not continuously keep looking at myself or the floor. I lost a sense of integrity in my dancing, as I tried to dance in dialogue with the images and the music. What was I doing? I felt I was outside of myself. And after talking with Antti and Toni, I decided to quit trying to consciously relate to what they were doing. I began searching for a more somatic orientation to my dancing again. A more spontaneous relation to Antti's and Toni's work seemed to emerge.

I lie on the floor on my back. My left arm hovers towards the ceiling. Fingers palpating the air. Then my fingers gather together and bend to form a loose fist. My wrist bends and my hand starts falling towards the ground as my elbow follows. My forearm drops heavily on the floor. Immediately my arm shoots back into the air again. An intense diagonal reach and tension in my arm pulls me into sitting. My body folds, my knees bend and I find myself sitting on the side of my right leg . . . How determined my arm was to pull my torso off the ground . . .

I am on my side and lift my head to look at the rest of my body; a shadow moves across it over my legs, there is a streak of white light on my waist. I turn to look backwards to see if my body makes a shadow on the floor. It does, and pushing with my arms I allow my head to draw me into a back extension . . .

I walk in a circle sideways, crossing and opening my legs alternately . . . Invited by the music my arms open to the side . . . The sounds call me further and I notice that I walk outside the actual performing space and after a few paces I sit down and start watching Antti play.

During the second week Toni decided to add in another video-projector and to use two computers. He had filmed a bit more material, which he edited while we met at the studio. Now the white ceiling above the paper floor had moving images running over it, too. Dancing with the ceiling projections made my sense of space fuller, truly three-dimensional or actually multidimensional. There were intensities to react to all around me, the video-projections above, below and on me, sound throughout the room, Toni in the front of the room, Antti on the side. I realized that the projections on the white floor and the ceiling created a highlighted performance arena as well as a kind of extended *kinesphere* for me. In our previous improvisations, on occasion,

I had roamed all around the studio. Now it felt imperative to do so. I had to surpass the arena, why I am not quite sure.

The fact that Toni's video-projections triggered the idea of a kinesphere, an intimate near space for my dancing, was illuminating. In his dance or movement theory, Rudolf Laban introduced the term *kinesphere* to denote that human motional space that transcends the surface of the body and is delimited by the extensions of the limbs. The kinesphere or, as it is also called, personal space, is defined by the areas we can reach without locomoting in space. (Laban 1966, 17; Moore & Yamamoto 2000, 193)¹³ For us personally, it could therefore be viewed to have something to do with some kind of familiarity or at least accessibility (Casey 1998, 224). In sticking to the projected spatial areas in my dancing, was I sticking to a comfort zone? Or was I trying to construct a versatile spatial way of relating to Antti's and Toni's work and to the world that was enacted between us? After all, I did explore walking through different body parts, starting from different positions, working on the floor and in upright position, moving in one place and moving all around the studio. Following some of Edmund Husserl's thoughts on movement and kinesthesia, Casey suggests that

What walking introduces is the fact that I must first of all unify myself before I unify my environs. I cannot walk at all if I am utterly disjointed; to walk is to draw my body together, at least provisionally; and to do so is to constitute myself as one coherent organism. (1998, 224)

Observations and questions continue, but for now this partial and fragmentary story is coming to an end. Carrying Antti and Toni with me, in it I have tried to offer an account of what our collaboration generated in me. Much is still incubating and not quite relatable as yet. Nonetheless, I do feel that our workshop period opened a space of exploration and practical collaboration between us. I think we learned to endure the incompleteness of our process as well as to offer room for and to listen to each other. Simultaneously, we continued questioning and re-interpreting what emerged in and between us through our collaboration. I believe that a trustful and curious practical approach now supports and thrusts us forward.

I have stopped my motion in order to rest, and I sit on a white paper patched on the floor for projecting video material onto. I make my observations.

Toni has climbed to the top of a ladder and is fixing the video-apparatus – redirecting its focus. Antti kneels to my right and peers into a computer screen while testing his equipment and playing some soft echoey sounds every now and then. Quiet concentration. Our tiny and soundproof studio is a secluded world all of its own. Satisfied, I turn back to my motional rumination and continue exploring how differently I can walk with my fingers, arms, shoulders, hips, legs and feet and while standing, sitting, lying on my back, on my side . . .

Endnotes:

¹ Even if my early training was in ballet, I have mainly worked with different forms of contemporary or postmodern and new dance.

² Through the concept of "social choreography" Hewitt discusses how practices of everyday movement contain historical ideals of social order. He argues that choreography in this sense has shaped modern social organization and that ideology needs to be understood as embodied and practiced (Hewitt 2005). In this article I refer to social choreography as the socially conditioned movements that we enact in our everyday lives as we take care of our mundane (and why not profane) tasks.

³ Following De Certeau, I consider in-between spaces to be regions of interaction that allow the familiar and alien to move towards the possible – a realm of bewildering exteriority in interiority and interiority in exteriority, a disquieting familiarity (De Certeau 1988, 128).

⁴ In the future we plan to write about our process together in which we would be enacting an in-between space in writing as well. At this moment we did not have time to construct a joint paper.

⁵ I have written about Merleau-Ponty's conception of space more in-depth elsewhere. See Rouhiainen, 2007.

⁶ Here I am not referring to the everyday as routine life forms or processes of a certain social group, say of a distinct profession. Rather, in this instance, I am inclined to relate the term to a kind of micro-analysis dealing with, for example, the particular, agency, experiences and resistances, instead of general structures and institutions or discourses. (ref. Highmore 2002, 5) Obviously, our collaboration and my writing are tied to the latter, but what I want to bring forth are some more specific features of our work that moved it forward as well as influenced its overall nature.

⁷ I have written about the phenomenological grounds of my understanding of the embodied nature of space and briefly on Rudolf Laban's notions of space elsewhere. See Rouhiainen, 2007.

⁸ We managed to hold our first workshop together quite late in relation to this publication because of the difficulty in finding a period of time that suited all of our schedules.

⁹ Indeed, narrative research is a practice that allows, even calls, for the researcher's subjective voice to be present, while he or she is addressing social or cultural phenomena. This it does because human beings are considered to create knowledge on the basis of their previous experiences. Narrative research is always dependent on the temporal, spatial and socio-cultural circumstances from which an issue is observed by the researcher (Heikkinen 2001). The researcher's understanding is considered to be influenced by the socio-cultural practices and narratives she or he lives amongst as well as to influence their construction further (Ronkainen 1999; Carr, 1986). Even if, for this reason, narrative research

cannot provide any universal truth, it “does allow us to know something without claiming to know everything. Having a partial, local, historical knowledge is still knowing” (Richardson 1990, 518).

¹⁰ Still, it must be acknowledged that making sense in a particular way is privileging one ordering or construction of reality over others. Therefore reflection upon the manner in which the narrator narrates and a reflexive relation between the researcher, the issues she or he is observing as well as the construct she or his creating are appreciated. It is the sense of verisimilitude that a narrative conveys to its reader that is considered to create its trustworthiness. It is essential that the world the narrative depicts finds resonance in the reader and conveys a believable and understandable sense of the events it contains for her or him. Accomplishing this requires that the researcher reflects upon the choices she or he makes concerning the contents and representative form of the unfolding narrative as well as the interlinks it establishes between different events. (Heikkinen 2001)

¹¹ Socio-cultural phenomena, as well as individuals are considered to be subject to multiple and competing discourses in many realms. This means that neither cultural reality nor subjectivity is completely stable or fixed (Richardson 1990).

¹² The aim is to fashion or produce an inventive re-telling of events. In these instances the researcher might be called a bricoleur, for whom creative thinking is imperative and who inventively combines different research methods and styles of writing (Heikkinen 2001; Lincoln & Denzin 1994; De Certau 1988, 122). In fact, I have not committed myself to only one theoretical or methodological framework. Rather, throughout this paper I have brought together ideas from different styles of thought and approaches to artistic practice and research that seemed helpful to me. This also means that I have not rigorously considered the interrelationships of different concepts and their possibly contradictory positions.

¹³ According to Laban, from the kinesphere there can emanate an infinite range of movement directions towards outer space (Laban 1966, 17; Moore & Yamamoto 2000, 193). As Laban charted the possible ways in which humans can move, he analyzed movements through the cardinal directions related to the upright position: up-down; forward-backward and side to side (Parviainen 2006, 240). These directions are viewed from the perspective of the moving body itself, and they pass through the structures of the body. In this respect, the center of the body lies around the pelvis, at which the three dimensions intersect. What the cardinal directions and their deviations do, is that they offer tools not only for analyzing movement but also images or movement schemes according to which a dancer can learn to move in a spatially complex manner. (Laban 1966, 7; Maletic 1987, 191; Moore 1999, 246) In fact, according to Patricia Baudoin and Heidi Gilpin, the choreographer William Forsythe has extended Laban’s concept of the possibilities the kinesphere has for movement. He explores them by considering the body to have several centers, and allows the opportunity for each point in the body and space to become the centers for a certain movement (Baudoin and Gilpin as reported by Kerkhoven 1993, 29).

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Becoming an Active Agent in Dance and Through Dancing

A Teacher's Approach

Heli Kauppila

Introduction

In this article I will focus on the opportunities for personal growth and subjectivity in the dance class. My aim is to develop approaches for dance teaching that enable the students to become active agents in dance and life. I will discuss how personal bodily knowledge can help the students in building a meaningful relationship with the subject of study as well as with their surroundings.

The framework for this article is my own practical work as a dance teacher. More specifically, I am referring to classes with my 16-year-old students that are a part of my doctoral study, which focuses on encountering one another in dance. In this study the events in the dance class and the theoretical basis are seen as strings in a spiral configuration, intertwined, constantly moving and influencing each other. In this article I will refer to Timo Klemola (2004, 1990), Jaana Parviainen (2006, 1998, 1997, 1995), Francisco J. Varela (1999) and Veli-Matti Värri (1997) to explore the influence that movement awareness, bodily knowledge and the integration of body and mind have in the search for the students growing towards the good in dance and life. In addition, the theoretical foundations are rooted in dialogical philosophy, especially in the writings of Martin Buber (1958/2000, 1947/2000, 1923/1999). I consider encounter and dialogue between the teacher and the student, and among the students, as fundamental aspects of classroom practice and as the basis for learning.

Inside and Outside the Dance Studio

For me it is important to acknowledge that the students are not mere empty vessels that can be filled with information and skills. The fact that the students come from somewhere, that they have a life outside the dance studio, is something that easily gets forgotten in dance teaching, according to my experience. Dance training can concentrate so intensively on achieving a certain skill level that the body is treated

as an object and little to no reference is made to the student's life situation (See Marques 1998, and Parviainen 1995, for example).¹

Each student who comes to the dance class has unique hopes and aims related to dance. Why do the students come? Why do they want to dance?

I have explored these questions by using ideas that the philosopher Timo Klemola (1990) introduces as different projects of moving. He distinguishes four key projects, which are the projects of winning, health, expression and self. These projects can be viewed as the meaning the mover gives to his/her activity. Through the exploration of these projects it is possible to illuminate how moving activities affect a human being. Klemola states: "A human being can examine himself/herself with the help of movement. He/she can explore his/her competence in different achievements, test his/her boundaries in expression, but also examine his/her potential in actual existence. Different forms of movement activities bring out different goals" (1990, 60).²

I begin with a brief introduction to the four projects: Competitive and professional sports are examples of the project of winning. The aim is to be better than the competitor. In some cases the motivation for moving comes from the wish to stay healthy or to become more fit. These are examples of the projects of health. The project of expression is, according to Klemola, a form of moving where the body is used as a means to express something. In this project one concentrates in different ways so that the body and its movements can convey something to the audience. Dance is Klemola's example of this. He states, though, that it is possible to go to the original roots of dance, and see that dance can also be a way to the authentic self. Klemola's project of the self refers to all forms of physical activities where the individual examines himself/herself in a deeper sense than his/her physical capability in that specific activity. In these kinds of activities the aim is to increase the mover's awareness of his/her possibilities as a human being. (Klemola 1990)

My experience is that in dance all the four projects can be present. Many times they are intertwined and simultaneous. All and all, it can be restricting to formulate such categories. Still, here, I think it provides an insight into the diversity of the aims and hopes each student in the dance class may have.

Good Living and Dancing

In dance teaching the technical and expressive elements are clearly visible. What else do we mediate as teachers? This question was probably the clearest impulse

for this study. Here are some of my considerations at the beginning of the practical part of my study:

What do I want to mediate from this dance form that I am teaching to my students? What else is mediated? Can I keep away from the responsibility I feel towards my students if I “only” stick to developing their technical dancing skills?

What do the students gain from my teaching: skills to execute the technical tasks, some other skills useful in other aspects of life, an attitude that might be enthusiasm, stagnation or something in between?

My interest lies in the project of the self. I will examine what happens to the traditional practices in dance teaching and to the teacher-student relationship when the focus is shifted towards the project of the self. I argue that it is possible to combine the development of specific, tightly codified dance skills and, at the same time, nurture the growing sense of one’s self. Furthermore, I suggest that paying attention to the latter will increase the mastery of the former. I see that the growing sense of the self is connected to the birth of a personal relationship to the discipline studied and therefore in the dance context it is connected to the roots of artistic excellence.

The educational philosopher Veli-Matti Värri (2000) states that a good life and becoming a self are ideals that give direction to our actions in encountering others. Klemola’s “project of self” and Värri’s “becoming a self” have different backgrounds and are not entirely identical concepts. However, I will refer to both because they have helped me in the search for the personal growth and active agency I wish to highlight in my study.

When one considers the ethical dimension of teaching, the ideas of the student’s personal growth and an overall “good” become visible. I will link this to the idea of the project of the self.

According to Värri, the paradox of knowing and not knowing is always present in education. We have to have an apprehension of what a good life includes even though we do not thoroughly know what it is. (Värri 2000, 26–27) The importance of these ideals is significant; they form the basis for our educational aims, methods and the means of evaluation.

Värri states that “becoming a self” is also an abstraction that is impossible to

define precisely. The core of the concept is that an individual can become the most that he/she is capable of becoming. This is not independent of ethical or social terms. (Värri 2000, 24–26) The project of the self might sound like an indication towards individuality and egoism. My purpose is the contrary. To accentuate the ethical and social dimensions of the events in the classroom is important to me as a teacher and researcher.

This closely resonates with the ideas that the dialogical philosopher Martin Buber raises. He writes: “Through the Thou a man becomes I” (Buber 1958/ 2000, 39). This means, according to Buber, that becoming a person happens through relating (1923/1999, 89).

Buber states, “to man the world is twofold in accordance with his twofold attitude” (1958/2000, 19). He uses two word combinations to describe this attitude: I-it and I-Thou. Both of the word-pairs are part of a man’s life. The I-Thou relation is an ethical ideal and a fleeting moment that we cannot predict, plan or control. (Buber 1923/1999, 1958/2000)³

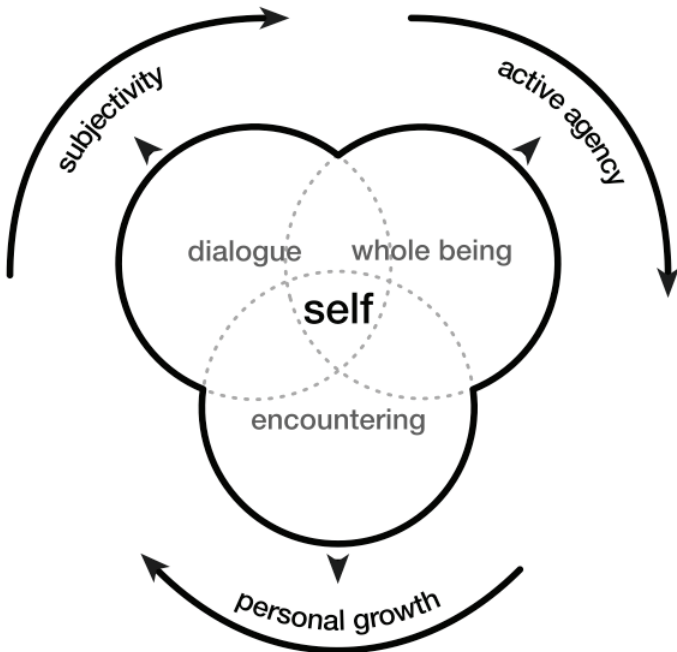
The approach I am developing in practice supplies me with the ethical basis for the act of teaching, based on the notion of encountering. Encountering requires us to consider the ethics behind our actions. I see that ethics can never be a ready-made scheme of values and norms; they only exist in our actions. The philosopher Francisco J. Varela states: “Ethics is closer to wisdom than to reason... A wise (or virtuous) person is one who knows what is good and spontaneously does it” (1999, 3–4). In becoming more aware of the underlying principles that guide our actions, we can better sense the responsibility we have.

Buber (1923/1999) considers the act of encountering as opening towards the other. Encountering should be considered in the light of the student’s growing towards a good life and being able to fulfil his/her potential. For me this means that we cannot master the other with the knowledge or skills we have. Being close to someone is an ethical act. Varela explains the importance of these concrete, everyday situations we react to:

Actions such as these do not spring from judgment and reasoning, but from an *immediate coping* with what is confronting us. We can only say we do such things because the situation brought forth the action from us. And yet these are true ethical actions; in fact, in our daily, normal life they represent the most common kind of ethical behavior. (Varela 1999, 5)

In the teacher-student relationship we exist to the other and for the other. I consider that the important activities in this relationship are these: to be present, to listen and to hear the other.

The training of technical skills is often an inseparable part of dance studies. But in the teaching and learning situations in the dance class we mediate much more than that. Personal growth, I think, should be an aim and a part of any pedagogical process we are involved in. To me the core of these processes is the self. Subjectivity and active agency are the visible outcomes of this developing sense of the self. By actively acknowledging this ongoing project of self and its importance, we can foster the agency the student is developing in his/her dancing. This active agency can stretch to other life's endeavours outside the dance class as well. I have grouped these core concepts in the following way in order to display their reciprocal relations:



Dance and the Dancing Subject

I think dance has great potential in offering the student ways in which to grow as a person. At its best, dance provides holistic experiences of being fully present in the moment. These experiences enable the individual to get in touch with his/her inner world. The act of dancing can provide opportunities to observe, examine and experience an individual's existence in relation to others. During these special moments it is possible to experience something very true and pure about oneself and the world.

In the practical part of my study the starting point is the student's own experience. In my teaching I am trying to create an atmosphere where the students feel that they have time to sense and examine their experiences. I wrote down a notion of the importance of this during my teaching period:

What makes me so conscious of the timetable? It is the demand of effectiveness that pierces everything, and also my own ingrained idea of what a good dance class contains. I notice that I have to start to breathe more deeply, more slowly. I am not going to get towards what I am after if I don't let go of this time-consciousness. I have to calm down, so that I can give my students a sense that these processes are not necessarily effective or fast.

My opinion is that the teacher's attitude towards the others (the students) greatly shapes the processes in the class. When I let go of some of the presumptions, it is easier for my students to do that as well. The teacher's experimental and enthusiastic attitude towards searching and discovering new ways of acting inside the discipline may help the students in building their subjectivity which develops in relation to others, with a responsibility for others. The teacher's caring presence and responsibility for encountering shows an example that supports the student's growth. It is important for the students to feel safe to start and develop these processes.

I have discovered that when the students feel that their experiences are appreciated, they learn to rely on them. This often seems to foster a positive attitude towards the subject of study. In this way, students seem to be able to build a personally meaningful relationship to what they are learning. One practical aspect of making the learning personally meaningful in dance is for me to shift the questions in the class from "how it looks" towards a reflection on "how it feels". This may open up opportunities for creative and innovative approaches inside the discipline as well.

Why do I see, then, that dance has such a potential in helping in this process of becoming a self and developing an active agency in one's life? I think the potential is based on the sensory experiences and increasing awareness of the body and its functions that we can achieve while dancing. The world, our surroundings, becomes examined and evaluated by our own sense perception and bodily processes.

Bodily Beings

Being a part of the world is a bodily process. This becomes clearly visible when one observes a baby who turns, first towards light and warmth, then towards voices, smells and familiar faces. He/she perceives the surroundings through his/her body and responds with the body. Varela says, "the world is not something that is given to us but something we engage in by moving, touching, breathing, and eating" (1999, 8).

The philosopher Jaana Parviainen (1997, 1998, 2006) clarifies the significance of the information we gain and process through our bodies. Experiencing our bodily movements opens up an important social, emotional and intellectual passage for us in the world (Parviainen 2006, 9). The dance researcher Maarit Ylönen (2004) writes that we have to place ourselves in a dialogue with another moving person and cross our own boundaries in order to be able to understand our own bodily experiences (Ylönen 2004, 32–35). And vice versa, the more we are aware of our own bodily experiences and the more we are attuned to listening to our unique way of being, the more capable we become in sensing the other person.

I see this as a similarity to Buber's definition of experiencing from the other side. He calls this experiencing from the other side inclusion (Buber 1947/2002, 115). Buber explains this term by stating, "Inclusiveness is the complete realization of the submissive person, the desired person, the "partner", not by the fancy but by the actuality of the being" (1947/2002, 114). An important acknowledgement in this is that it does not mean leaving one's own ground, but quite the opposite. Buber makes a clear differentiation between inclusion and the term empathy, where one is transposed to the other side and back. Inclusion is the extension of one's own concreteness (Buber 1947/2002, 114–115). The dance scholar Eeva Anttila (2003) discusses the concept of inclusion in detail in her dissertation and points out that according to Buber the relation in education is based on a one-sided experience of inclusion. But, as Anttila continues, "by practising inclusion in education, the teacher may be able to nurture and awaken capability for inclusion in students" (Anttila 2003, 91–92). This comes back to my notion of the teacher's caring

presence and responsibility as vehicles that may function as examples for the students. To clarify the two-way action that shapes our growing as persons I cite Buber: “The educator who practises the experience of the other side and stands firm in it, experiences two things together, first that he is limited by otherness, and second that he receives grace by being bound to the other” (1947/2002, 119).

The body gives us the basis that guides our being in the world. Parviainen (1998) writes that the body carries memories and skills and also reveals these to other people as marks of the lived life. The individual’s body opens up a horizon to his/her past and he/she also carries collective values and attitudes in his/her own body. The lived body is not only the individual’s own past but, instead, it is intertwined in the culture and society around. (Parviainen 1998, 138)

Parviainen (2006) uses the term kinesthetic knowledge as a landscape that is a dynamic and creative state. When we move, the world appears to us as an “If-Then” structure. While moving, we start to acknowledge the different states we have in different parts of the body. By practice it becomes easier to connect these notions to different situations and activities in which they appear. They are not the same each time we exercise a certain activity. We learn about the world and ourselves while we are moving and listening to the quality of our movements. (Parviainen 2006, 75–93)

While we are moving we are interacting with the world as we constantly get feedback from what we are doing. In other words, we are moving and being moved. While we are moving and practising certain skills our kinesthetic landscape is sharpened and we become more and more aware of the origin, meaning and quality of our movements. When we are “drawing a map” from our bodily experiences we increase our self-awareness and this opens up a new, complex and rich world to us. (Parviainen 2006, 75–94) I consider that the knowledge gained in this way becomes embodied in us. Klemola (2004) describes this two-way action as an opportunity to see the ethical and aesthetic dimensions that are affiliated to the foundations of human beings more clearly. He states that by practising movements and being aware of them we can learn to understand ourselves better and also change our way of seeing the world and ourselves (Klemola 2004, 10).

Dancing Dialogues

By focusing on the project of becoming a self we see that there can be many different dialogues happening in the dance class simultaneously: the dialogue between the dancer and the skill, the dialogue between the student and the teacher, and the dialogue between the student and his/her surroundings, for example. Overall, there is an ongoing dialogue between the self and the world. This way of looking at the dialogue includes the notion that the world is more than one person knows. My way of looking at this is that it influences the whole concept of knowing. The knowledge is formed through my own sense perception and by processes integrating the whole of the self. This is contrary to transferring the knowledge (or skills) mechanically. The knowledge becomes an active process, which is dependent on my personal experiences but which cannot be formulated if I am not actively engaged with my surroundings.

When we move our experiences of others, the world and we ourselves begin to change. Becoming aware of the body's sensations and processes can strengthen our experiences. We can become more sensitive in our interactions with the world and also notice how the world is influencing us.

I feel that we have an innate ability to be in dialogue. We are longing to turn towards another human being. According to Buber, the other, You, is a mystery of existence that exceeds the I. The affiliation between the You and the I is fundamental in human existence (Buber 1923/1999). I consider art and, in particular, dance, as an important passage for answering this need and providing ways for pre-verbal communication and encountering.

I have noticed that my students work with very personal projects while dancing. They write in their diaries about the joys and fears they experience in the dance class. The way in which they make meaning in dance and find connections with the life outside the class varies from one student to the next. The categories of the Klemola's projects that I introduced earlier, the projects of winning, health, expression and self, blur and even some new ones arise. The personal projects in the class are different from one another. To me, the interesting question that arises is this: who, then, sets aims for the class? The aims and criteria for evaluation differ from one person to the next. In a dance class, at the fundamental level, it is also a question of whether to emphasize the aesthetic form or existential understanding. In my teaching I consider the two principles as equally important. I admit it is a challenge to combine an approach that sets the growth of a person and skill-oriented training side by side.

Conclusion

A dance class is not an isolated island – the students come from somewhere and they bring something with them. We as teachers need to acknowledge and respect that. What happens in a dance class is always in connection to the life outside the class.

By means of this consideration and approach I am hoping to promote the student's good in all life's endeavours, inside and outside the dance studio. My personal experience is that the positive encounters in the dance class have a strong impact in other fields of life too. Dancing provides unique opportunities to dialogue with the world and with the individual himself/herself. The kinesthetic landscape that we define even further while practising dance is our strong home base in a rapidly changing world. It is the source of self-confidence and meaningfulness in life.

Endnotes:

¹ The dance scholar Isabel Marques, for example, crystallizes this by stating: "Dance education is typically isolated from our society..." (1998, 174). Parviainen (1995) claims that practicing dance takes so much of one's time that it often becomes the overall life substance of the dancer including its social relations. This restrains questions that would arise from the dancer's more holistic relationship with the world and life (Parviainen 1995, 3–4).

² "Liikkeen avulla ihminen voi tutkia itseään. Hän voi tutkia suorituskykynsä rajoja, ilmaisukykyä rajoja, mutta myös mahdollisuuttaan olla varsinaisesti. Eri liikunnan muodot tuovat esiin erilaisia päämääriä" (Klemola 1990, 60).

³ The translator of the English version "I and Thou", Ronald Gregor Smith, explains this twofold attitude in his preface: "... this twofoldness runs through the whole world, through each person, each human activity" (R. G. Smith 1958/2000, 8–9). As individuals we relate to the world through an I-it attitude. This is fundamental and necessary for us in order to be able to act in the world. There are moments when we can meet the other person at the deepest possible level. This happens in the I-Thou relationship. It is a meeting of that which resides in the core of one's being.

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My own research diary 08/2006–05/2007
 Students' diaries 09/2006–05/2007

I See a Kaleidoscope Dancing:

Understanding, Criticizing, and Recreating the World Around Us¹

Isabel Marques

Traveling to Australia, back in 1994, I realized I did not have a very typical “ID card”: I’m Brazilian, but not a *samba* or *capoeira* dancer. I’m a white woman, but not a ballerina. I’m middle class, but not a contact dancer. I’m married, but do not know many social dances. I live in a big city (São Paulo), but do not know how to dance hip-hop or funk. I’m Roman Catholic, but enjoy appreciating Afro-Brazilian religious dances (*candomblé*).

In 2007, starting to write this paper, I found out there are two things in which I might be quite “typical”: I have a daughter, and I am a dance teacher – I see, in educating children, one of the most rewarding things. And I have a special pleasure in reading, studying, and inquiring: I decided in 1987 I was going to become a researcher.

Not surprisingly, my research into dance and dance education also followed similar paths: asking, inquiring, dancing, and writing about the multiple crossing over identities in relation to the immense web of possibilities of dancing and being – not only the “typical” and/or expected ones.

The Kaleidoscope of Dance

My Master’s Thesis in the late ‘80s focused on a primary concern, which was very much related to my home country, Brazil. *Why* should dance be taught at schools in such a “dancing country”? I found many reasons for that, going back to educational theory and to the history of dance education, mainly in Britain and in the USA. My biggest challenge at that time was to relate those findings to Brazilian culture, needs, and history. I became the first “dance in schools advocate” in Brazil, and later succeeded in including dance as part of the regional and national school curriculum.

Years of teaching and dancing led me to a doctoral study (finished in 1996), which basically centred its investigation on curriculum planning. The main underlying question was no longer *why*, but *what* to teach in dance classes?

Influenced by the work of Paulo Freire (1982ab, 1983ab, 1996) I first questioned

the notion that dance lessons should be concerned only with dance-specific contents. At that time, it was a big step towards challenging the notion of knowledge in dance classes. It was/is clear to me, however, that if the main focus of dance lessons is only placed outside it (i.e. on society issues) we are no longer teaching dance, but rather teaching only *through* dance – which is extremely licit, but out of the scope of my research. My doctoral research called for and challenged the notion of dance knowledge to be taught at schools based on the idea that knowledge about/ in society should be a genuine part of dance classes – *insofar as dance itself as art is related to it*.

My doctoral study related the thoughts and practices of dance researchers (R. Laban, V. Preston-Dunlop, S. Banes among others) to critical education scholars (P. Freire, H. Giroux, and so on) and to contemporary philosophers (J. F. Lyotard, P. Lévy, D. Harvey etc.). The research and thoughts of Susan Stinson (1997, 1998; Green & Stinson 1999) on a critical and feminist pedagogy for dance was a gift to enlarge and to focus on my main task at that time: thinking dance education in contemporary society.

As a metaphor for the dance education curriculum I was working on I used the image of a kaleidoscope – mirror faces connected with multiple colourful pieces inside it. The most wonderful thing was its movement and the opportunity to make infinite shapes and designs with the same pieces. I saw the mirror faces as the multiple faces of contemporary society, the pieces inside it the dance/school contents. The shapes: the possibility of constructing curriculum, dance classes, and endless, beautiful, surprising interactions. As in a kaleidoscope, I suggested that a dance education proposal should contemplate the idea that the web of relations typical of contemporary life is also interwoven with specific dance contents in teaching situations.

In this paper I wish to revisit my initial research and to dialogue about a pedagogical approach to the teaching of dance I have been developing since the 1990s, “context-based dance education”. I see it as one way of understanding, thinking, and teaching dance in schools in connection with global issues (see also Marques 1996, 1997, 1998, 2007ab). Here I will take into account the relationships between dance-embodied knowledge and the call for more clear, conscious, and related ways of teaching dance in contemporary society.

Choosing the Kaleidoscope Pieces

In the past ten years so many responses and new questions came about in my teaching and professional dancing practices that I realized I was no longer directing my research towards *what* to teach but rather focusing on a third key question about dance knowledge and teaching: *how* should dance be taught?

The Tripod Dance-Education-Society

By the end of the year 2001, and mainly supported by my bodily and practical experiences, I got to a more systematized triangulation of my thinking practices as an artist and a teacher: the tripod dance-education-society. The main principle of this tripod is grounded on the non-hierarchical and inter-related web of multiple and mutable relations I believe desirable to be established in the classroom between dance, education, and society. I chose the tripod to be the grounding pieces to fill in the kaleidoscope of dance.

From a broad point of view, I suggest that teaching specific dance contents (body, dynamics, space, improvisation, composition, dance history etc.) should be based on the assumption that students and teachers are co-creators of dance and of the world (see Shapiro 1996). By sharing and experiencing bodily possibilities of construction and transformation in dance classes we can also feel empowered to interact with people in different ways. So, by dancing and in dancing we should be able to make a difference in the society we live in.

Time-wise, the organization of the curriculum based on the tripod dance-education-society intended to visit and to get to know the past so that we could live in and transform the present. Only by acting in the present should we be able to project and build the future. Space-wise, planning a contemporary dance curriculum called for knowing and living the body related to its place in different societies. The body – and the body in movement – became to me central to knowing dance and crucial to be understood in its time and space.

● *About Dance: The Social Body*

By the end of my doctoral studies I was very much engaged with somatic approaches to teach dance. I was triggered by Jill Green (1993, 1999) to think about body authority, body ownership, body perception, feelings, senses and its relationships to social issues. Valuing a student's own body and perceptual experiences in dance classes was

nothing exceptionally “new”, but the crossing over of it to matters of class, gender, age, and ethnicity as Green suggests became an intriguing pattern to work on. Connecting the perceptive body to a critical dance experience and to a transformative understanding of society was a new challenge that suited my initial inquiries.

It became clear to me that a more perceptive and society-oriented body education could indeed contribute to different ways of knowing and understanding dance in its relation to society.

● *About Education: The Social Individual*

In proposing a path to rethink and review dance teaching practices, I also needed to rethink the everyday dance experiences taken at schools (techniques, repertoires, and improvisation). My main concern was to relate them to the body in society and the needs of each individual. Not only did I have in mind the potential of dance to educate the individual alone, but also the need to relate that to his/her indissociable social being.

It is well known that dance as art has the potential to work on self-esteem and personality. Dancing and watching dances can enhance our sense of pleasure, happiness, fun, power, and belonging (see Stinson 1997). In itself, dance as art in the school curriculum embodies values and meanings already relevant to individual daily life and to the larger sense of being educated. If taught purposefully, dance can be a key to understanding and transforming individual attitudes, actions, and ideas.

● *About Society: Dancing and Being*

It is clear to me today that the matter with a proposal for teaching dance does not only concern dance modalities or styles. It is necessary to work on how the dance-individual partnership should interact with the outside world. We cannot forget that dance is also a powerful tool for understanding, criticizing, and recreating the world around us.

By suggesting the work of dance based on the tripod dance-education-society I understand that a more direct relationship between the dance-individual and the world is needed. I believe our students can learn about dance as they learn about themselves – and *at the same time* they can critically dialogue and engage with the fast technological, social and political changes the world is going through. In summary, in my proposal *moving* the kaleidoscope is what counts the most.

By having defined the initial grounds to work on (the tripod) I was ready to work on my main concern: *how* to go about, *how* to move the kaleidoscope. I realized that moving the kaleidoscope was a matter of choosing paths, combining and recombining images, forming and changing designs. I wondered when the kaleidoscope pieces would start connecting and making endless shapes. Paraphrasing Isadora Duncan, “I saw a kaleidoscope dancing”.

Moving the Kaleidoscope

In order to approach the curriculum organization based on the context I suggest four main principles. These principles, when interwoven in a non-hierarchical way, have, in my opinion, the potential to lead to the understanding, the problematization and the transformation of the articulated tripod art-education-society – and therefore of dance education.

The principles suggested here intend to open roads that enable the dance teacher to a) create his/her own procedures to teach; b) to organize his/her dance lessons according to his/her own group of students; c) to make up his/her own way of teaching. The idea is that these principles, when connected by the teacher in constant dialogue with the students, will make the kaleidoscope move – and dance.

When a kaleidoscope is moved, so many diverse, different, unusual, unique, and surprising shapes take place. It depends on *what* is in it, *when* and *how* it is moved. Most of all, *the person* who builds and moves the kaleidoscope makes the biggest difference. The pedagogical approach suggested here sustains the idea that every teacher has his/her role in moving the kaleidoscope when in dialogue with students. I understand that the true dialogue (as in Freire 1983a) between teachers and students is the “fuel” that keeps the kaleidoscope moving. And only if the kaleidoscope moves will dance lessons be meaningful to all.

First Move: Problematizing

I like to think that one of the first standpoints to generate movement in a dance lesson should be the opportunity – by teacher and students - to *problematize* dance contents, relationships, and the educational process. To do so, it does not mean one should be “problematic”, make or raise insoluble problems all the time. On the contrary, a problematizing pedagogical approach to dance as suggested here is based on questioning and answering. Questioning enhances our understanding

of the multiple choices we have to make in our lives and therefore expands the concepts and possibilities of art in education.

Basing my approach on the work of Paulo Freire I understand the process of problematization as a way of looking at things from different perspectives and in different ways. Problematizing from the Freirian approach means allowing and opening room for dialogue, for the exchange of ideas, principles, and attitudes towards what is important to us (Freire 1982b, 1983a). Therefore, problematizing can be a path to follow if we wish to open spaces to encounters, to build other webs of knowledge. Problematization as a “move” is interesting if we wish to weave nets of multiple relationships and combinations in the world we live in.

By questioning “who, how, what, when” dance takes place in our lives, and in the world we should be able to seek and find other answers, to work on other assumptions, to get rid of universal pre-determined set of responses about dance knowledge. I suggest that problematizing in a dance class refers to “mapping” old paths and drawing new roads to think, do, and make dance. By mapping and re-mapping we should also be able to “reshape” ourselves in relation to others.

Freire – among other critical educators – has been criticized for focusing too much on the rational approach to knowledge in his work. Some researchers have claimed (see Ellsworth 1992) that critical pedagogy does not consider the right for silencing. Nor does it take into account bodily responses as a way to get to know and interact in society. If we follow this argument, problematization is then to be understood only as an intellectual exercise far from the dancing body.

However, to problematize – even if initially “mental” - is not a verbal and intellectual end in itself. Rather, problematizing in its roots is seen as a path, a transition, a way to acting, making and doing. The process of problematization, as Freire often argued, is supposed to be understood in its relationship to action. “Reflection-action-reflection” has been one of Freire’s mostly developed concepts, in which thinking is never dissociated from doing and vice-versa. Therefore, thinking, inquiring, posing questions and asking about things are part of a process in which reflection should always interact with action (see Freire 1983ab).

Taking that to the field of dance teaching, I also suggest that problematization does not imply only a process of rational discussion. Verbalizing should enable the dancing body to learn differently in as much as dance practices (action) will enrich and transform our ways of thinking.

Furthermore, I think current pedagogical challenges lie ahead in expanding the

idea of problematization by including in it the calls and possibilities of the dancing body. We should also be able to consider, propose, and establish body dialogues in dance lessons – dialogues that do not need verbal interference and/or mediation.

I understand the process of problematizing also as a pedagogical practice in and through our dancing bodies. I do believe the problematizing process can enable bodily dialogues between teachers and students and among students themselves. In my understanding, it is possible and desirable that the body is also engaged in the dialogue between dancing and knowing. The extensive work of Eeva Anttila (2003) about the dialogical nature of the body in dance classes builds bridges to a better understanding of the role of problematization in the body and among dancing bodies.

In dance and in life there are questions that can only make sense in and through the body; there are answers that can only be found if the body is listened to and perceived. Our bodies are often questioning, answering, and informing us about what to do and how to react. For instance, touching, looking, sharing spaces, walking together are dance ways of stimulating bodily dialogue in the classrooms. These practices can raise questions and inquiries in the body about being with others and being alone; leading, sharing, and conducting; those questions are both part of the dance-specific knowledge and of society, they share the same support: the dancing body (oneself).

Dance classes can surely be enriched and transformed by the process of problematization. It can contribute towards awakening the individual and the collective body. Constant questioning and “mapping” leaves less room for immobility. Asking questions continually (verbally and bodily) does not allow for sitting still and waiting – it shakes us up by stimulating new constructions, combinations, and even new answers and results. Problematizing has the potential to keep the whole being moving – and dancing – together.

Second Move: Articulating and Connecting

The second standpoint for dance teaching based on the context-based dance education proposal is articulation: creating a web of relations that enables students to think and dance in “connection to” as opposed to “in isolation”. Back to the kaleidoscope metaphor, articulating is also a path to be followed if one believes that forming new shapes and designs is a way to focus on the various layers of relationships and connections inherent in dance teaching (see also Stinson 1998).

● *Connecting to the Body*

Traditional dance teaching tends to ignore relations between dancers and their own bodies. The body is commonly seen as a tool (or an instrument) for dance as opposed to the dancer's self. The dancer's body is often asked to copy, to reproduce and to follow external models and sequences without inner understanding and/or self/social-consciousness (see Green 2001; Marques 1996).

As opposed to that, understanding, feeling, sensing, and thinking about the body are ways of connecting to oneself. Somatic Education in its various forms (Feldenkrais, Alexander, Body Mind Centering, Bartenieff etc.) can be tremendously effective in establishing bodily connections and self-relations. If applied to dance, Somatic Education can bring personal and social meaning to it. However, the somatic teacher must provide incentives for self-narratives, critical thinking, and the establishment of clear and direct relations between the self and the social body in order to enlarge and strengthen the links between the body, the self, and dance (see the work of Green 1999; Anttila 2003).

Nevertheless, connecting oneself to the body alone does not mean art-making is necessarily taking place. Although dance practices in their various ways can certainly gain from somatic approaches, the connection between the conscious body and dance as art cannot be taken for granted.

● *Connecting to Dance as Art*

In the history of dance education it is common to hear that dance in schools should focus on and enhance opportunities for knowing the self, for self-expression, and self-development (see Kraus and Chapman 1981; Laban 1985; Marques 2007a). That is to say, in many schools dance has become mainly an educational resource, a psychological support, an easy way to socialize rather than an artistic and aesthetic language. Although this topic has been extensively discussed by the literature (Barbosa 1991; Reid 1986; Redfern 1982 among others) I think it is necessary I take the subject once more so that we are able to connect this topic to the following ones.

Many contemporary authors (see Preston-Dunlop 1998; Marques 1989 etc.) have emphasized in the past decade the need and importance of treating dance as art in the school curriculum. In other words, dance can and should be learned and understood as an aesthetic and artistic language. That means that although dance can indeed contribute towards solving personal problems and favouring social justice

(i.e. shyness, indiscipline, relationships, the violence rate etc.) it is important to emphasize that this is only possible *because* dance is art, a way of knowing.

From that we need not go further to understand and incorporate the idea that dance as art to be taught at schools should also involve a broader concept of dance knowledge – and not only making and doing. The larger context of dance itself should also be taken into account if we expect our students to connect to dance as an art form (see Barbosa 1995, 2002). In short, appreciation, history, criticism, kinesiology, music etc. should also relate to the dancing body in order to enrich and enlarge the basis of relevant contents for dance in education. That is to say – once more – that dance does not need to be just physical exercise and recuperation from academic work; dance as a body of knowledge interacts practical and theoretical ways of knowing.

● *Connecting Dance Contents*

The first basic connection we can think of concerning dance contents is the need to link theory and practice *in the same lesson*. Student's readings, talks, and discussions about dance should be closely connected to what they are doing, making, and appreciating in dance. In this line of thought, practical dance contents chosen by the teachers should provide elements for building a web of theoretical assumptions in as much as theory should enlighten and be part of dance practices. It is possible to relate what students have been doing in composition classes to dance history and criticism, for instance. It is also desirable that technique lessons are backed up by a more thorough view on anatomy and kinesiology.

In other words, theory should not be taught apart but, on the contrary, as part of practical dance lessons. At this point we can call and argue for an embodied theory – knowing history, anatomy, criticism etc. in and through the dancing body.

● *Connecting with One Another*

Relating to people is part of life and dance classes are without a doubt a privileged place for encounters, for getting to know one another, and establishing relationships. Actually, connecting with other people is already part of the dance body of knowledge (i.e. dancing in duos, trios, groups; performing to someone; sharing improvisation exercises etc.).

Notwithstanding, we should consider that students' body proximity and/or body contact by themselves do not necessarily ensure a significant encounter with the other. Much the opposite, direct body contact at times may generate fear, repugnance, and lack of interest; being close to people can provoke so many feelings and sensations that it may even keep one person away from another. Also, dancing together (e.g. group formations) for the sake of a set piece of choreography does not imply knowing one another either, because it is very possible that one is dancing by himself/herself even if in a group formation.

I think that the teacher aiming at connecting to other people in a significant way in a dance lesson needs to carefully consider articulation. Working, dialoguing, and talking about dance works based on individual and collective similarities and differences can be an explicit aim to be achieved in dance lessons.

Thus focusing on looking at one another, encouraging talking to each other, and emphasizing the creation of dances together can avoid the so common competition, exhibition, selfishness, and individualism in dance classes. Dancing with – and not only for, as usual – is a way to also acknowledge and appreciate the presence of others in our lives (see also Stinson 1998). Recognizing and appreciating the other's movement and exchanging feedback and ideas are also ways of coming to know oneself *and* one's social environment. This is crucial to dance, as well as to society.

● *Connecting to Society*

Ignoring or denying world issues in the classroom is always possible (i.e. pre-set technique lessons) but not necessarily desirable. Choosing to dialogue with students' day-to-day lives and experiences and modes of seeing and acting in a dance class is certainly a matter of choice that reveals beliefs about the role of dance in our lives.

However, taking dance as a bodily art, it is difficult not to acknowledge that our bodies, as well as our dances, are not isolated from the world in which they exist. The dancing body is also a social body that is attentive and receptive to and selective about what happens in our ordinary everyday lives. If we consider that both bodies and dances are culture-bound and socially constructed (see Foucault 1987; Johnson 1983; Sant'Anna 1995; Bruhns and Gutierrez 2000 etc.), they need to be understood as such in dance classes. Connecting to society becomes a major claim of dance lessons that pretend to be meaningful and critical.

Third Move: Criticizing

When I argue for a critical attitude as a pedagogical “move” to teaching dance I am mainly concerned with enabling teachers and students to make conscious and responsible choices – either in dance or in life – because to be critical is overcoming common sense, crossing the frontiers of the obvious and going beyond unawareness.

To be critical – or radical – indicates in its etymology “getting to the roots”. I understand this posture as the possibility to go more deeply into ways of knowing who we are, what we are here for and what roles dance can play in this process. Thus, contrary to common sense, to be critical does not mean always saying “no”. Nor does it mean finding defects or imprecision in everything we see or do.

Terezinha Rios (1985) states that in order to be critical we should be able to take a clear, deep and broad-sweeping look at what is happening around us. She implies, therefore, two other main things: a) in order to be critical it is necessary to keep a little distance from what we are looking at; b) to be critical calls for a more objective attitude towards life. We can take from that assumption the fact that in order to be critical in dance, we should be willing to step out of our moving bodies and, afterwards, have reflections upon what happened in the process of dancing and/or watching dances. A critical attitude, according to Rios, calls for a more rational approach to knowledge.

It seems to me this is an interesting proposal to be taken into account, as it allows for not being blindly involved in teaching situations, creative processes, and classroom relationships. By keeping our distance we can also partially avoid our biases, tastes, too personal affects or airy sensations when teaching, dancing, and being a dance spectator.

On the other hand, in the field of dance it is very complicated to adopt a distant and rational attitude and point of view by itself without being critical of it! If being critical in the process of teaching and learning dance implies not paying attention and/or giving importance to feeling, perceiving, sensing, and getting in touch with emotions it also implies despising the body as a way of knowing...

I prefer to consider the critical attitude towards dancing and teaching dance as a move in the kaleidoscope of dance that potentially allows for a closer dialogue between the body subjectivities and the mental objectivities always present in dance practices and classes².

What interests me most in this study is the relationship José Carlos Libâneo

(2002) establishes between a critical reflection and a transformative attitude. He suggests that to be critical one should be able to describe, to inform, to confront and to reconstruct the practices one is reflecting about. In doing so, he argues, critical reflection implies committing oneself to emancipation and transformation.

Fourth Move: Transforming

I am always afraid readers will understand my call for transformation as a call and a petition for a bloody social revolution. I often try to assure my readers that transforming is indeed a political act but it does not necessarily mean political alignment and/or manifestations and riots.

Transforming as a standpoint to keep the kaleidoscope of dance moving implies a sincere need to make something better (i.e. a world with justice, ethics, human values and so on); it implies we are not completely satisfied with the global choices that are being taken; it also implies a will to contribute towards different ways of (re)organizing society.

In this sense, adopting a transforming pedagogical approach to dance also means not being afraid of the new. We should be able to work with the willingness to appreciate the unknown, the unforeseeable. Transformation is the possibility of making something new out of the already known. But, isn't it what art is all about?

Dance as art brings with it the assumption that it has been created by someone/some people at a certain time and in a certain space. Issues of gender, age, class, religion, and ethnicity are embodied and closely related to the ways dances have been constructed. Therefore, deconstructing dance practices and repertoires in the classroom can be an aspect of transformative education. Deconstructing should not be taken as “destroying”, but rather as understanding, revisiting, and dialoguing with the underlying principles and ideas already embodied in the dance medium, techniques and repertoires. For this reason, reconstructing and transforming requires sensitivity, intention and in-depth knowledge.

Alongside with this thought, dance classes should offer opportunities to re-create and to “re-read” established works of art, either by interpreting them in different ways or by recreating what has been seen and experienced in the body. Teachers should also be expected to encourage students to experience and create their own dances. Allowing and encouraging the inventive process to happen in the classroom builds direct bridges to a more creative, responsible and active way of living our everyday lives.

In dance, the way in which bodies transform and are transformed gives individuals the chance to communicate, convey and express meaning; this is vital for students to discover their own ways of speaking, dancing, and living in society.

To Keep it Moving

In order to keep the kaleidoscope of dance moving – and therefore to keep re-creating the combinations of dance in society – one should also be able to link the “moves” of problematization, articulation, criticizing and transformation by understanding them as *interconnected* standpoints.

Problematizing in dance lessons only makes sense when we are able to articulate knowledge about the dance, the dancers and society. Articulation as a move in the kaleidoscope of dance is only interesting if teacher and students are able to go deeper and to distance themselves from what is being done and discussed. Transforming as a pedagogical route is necessary if we are not happy with what we have understood, known and discovered in the interwoven processes of problematizing, articulating and criticizing the relationships between dance and education and society.

Endnotes:

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² See further discussion on the topic - rationality, subjectivity, and dance knowledge - in *Mind the Body* by Eeva Anttila and *The Meaning of Bodily Knowledge in a Dance-Making Process* by Soili Hämäläinen in this anthology.

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The Ways of Knowing and the School

Reality

Leena Hyvönen

Background 1: Personal Starting Points

My ten-year-long discussion with phenomenological literature focussing on the essence of experience has brought forth in me a new kind of relationship between me and myself, others, and the world, in other words, existence. Maurice Merleau-Ponty was the phenomenologist whose writings lit in me from the very first reading an intriguing sense of significance. I have often since wondered how that was at all possible, as *Phenomenology of Perception* (Merleau-Ponty 1945/1962) does not easily yield itself to the reader, especially not as an initial contact with phenomenology. I, however, caught the contagion and slowly began to familiarise myself with Merleau-Ponty's production, supported in this endeavour by commentary literature and a reading circle. Now that my world view has changed into a Merleau-Pontyan perspective, I play with the thought that I caught the contagion through pre-reflective understanding that was formed in my childhood piano playing practices. My teacher, a village cantor, did not introduce me to any theoretical information that would have disturbed the formation of an unaffected relationship with music, which made playing the instrument a comprehensive – with my present learning I would say – mind-bodily enjoyment. I did not learn music theory and other associated skills (so called Satz topics) until studying at the Sibelius-Academy, but even there the most important thing was the comprehensive experience brought to me by making music.

I first came across scientific thinking during the course of my studies in education required to qualify as a teacher. I got into contact with the discourses and history of Western thinking – first and foremost from the point of view of educationalists, but also on a more general level. Later, when working in teacher training, I carried out an investigation in my own field of study, music education, on the basis of cognitive and empiricist paradigms which, at the time, reigned within education and educational psychology¹. However, my sense of that the instruments and subjects of study were at odds increased. The feeling grew even stronger when the teachers in arts and crafts education within teacher training initiated close co-

operation. I began to doubt the applicability of paradigms that form the foundation of education to arts education and, consequently, first found the narrative method of study and then phenomenological philosophy. Having started from the Merleau-Pontyan thinking, I have since ventured on expeditions to different directions on the phenomenological-existentialist-hermeneutic field and found that, at least to this point, it has lived up to my high expectations.

My own experiences have formed my way of experiencing, thinking about and studying the world. In the present paper I chose to investigate only a limited section of Finnish education, training and arts education that is connected with comprehensive school and teacher training. I will first explain how the position of arts and, in a wider sense, arts and crafts has changed beginning from the 1970s great school reform². This will provide a context for my first question: Why have arts been and continue to be at the margin of education? I will search for the answer in the generally dominant scientific paradigms and their effects on general opinion, education, teacher training and education-related decision-making. I will also consider what arts education has gained and what lost when adapting into the dominating paradigm atmosphere. Another question will address the possibilities of phenomenological-existentialist thinking to provide a theoretical basis respecting the essence of arts for arts education in schools.

Background 2: Reforms of Education and Arts and Crafts Education

When the Finnish national primary school curriculum was being developed in the latter part of the 19th century, art and craft subjects³ were given a prominent position on the basis of their practical and ideological applications. This position was, however, increasingly weakened after the wars when structural, political and cultural issues forced many changes in the society. Changes in values and attitudes became blatantly obvious when the comprehensive school system was developed at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s. Art and craft subjects no longer possessed a similar intrinsic value in the school system as theoretical subjects. While theoretical subjects represented disciplines that existed on a continuum extending up to the university and the highest academic degrees, the educational status of art and craft subjects was left on a lower level. The name “practical subject”⁴ is, perhaps, an apt description of the public opinion of the nature of these subjects at the time when

their concrete usefulness was questioned in educational policy decision-making. Those who defended the arts replied with protests on the necessity of arts education. The Finnish music magazine *Rondo* participated in the discussion on national core curriculum for comprehensive school by publishing the following, at the time new and fashionable arguments, in its editorial:

. . . arts education has both other aims and other contents than the "singing lessons" of the past. At present it is more about developing one's creativity, about freeing one's personality into expressing oneself – even about therapy. (Anon 1971)⁵

The defences were understood within arts education but were left unnoticed there where decisions were made. Discussion concerning the distribution of hours in comprehensive school was concretised into curricula used in the experimental phase in 1967–70 and, finally, the national core curriculum. The report of the committee for the national core curriculum includes a close description of the experiment phase during which there was a heated discussion on how the art and craft subjects and a second foreign language could be fitted in the distribution of hours (Komiteanmietintö 1970, 19–28). Art and craft subjects lost the battle, which marked the start of their resources being cut and their position weakened, which has hence continued in different phases of school curriculum reforms (see Kouluhallitus 1985, Opetushallitus 1994 and Finnish National Board of Education 2004), causing at times raging public protests by arts educators. The protests were answered by organising possibilities for focused arts and crafts practise outside the comprehensive school. The first to emerge was the music school system, which became quite extensive on a regional level and had systematic aims, and later came a number of different kinds of art schools. This is how the problems of compulsory school arts education have remained hidden from the public eye. All education in arts and crafts provided outside the school was unified into extracurricular basic education in the law reform concerning all fields of schooling at the end of 20th century (Laki/Act 633/1998; Asetus/Decree 813/1998; see also Education and research... 2004, 36).

Another significant change also took place in the early stages of basic education as class teacher education was first transferred from seminars into universities (Laki/Act 844/1971) and, later, at the end of the same decade, raised onto Master's level to equal the degree earned by subject teachers (Asetus/Decree 530/1978). This also marked the start for difficulties to art and craft subjects in teacher training.

There were increasing reductions in art and craft subjects both with regard to student admission and compulsory courses in the curriculum in multidisciplinary universities' faculties of education. This is, even at present, the trend in most faculties. Nevertheless, students can gain quite good knowledge of these subjects provided that they have talent and/or previous studies in the subjects and have selected art and craft subjects as minors. A student will, however, be qualified to teach these subjects in the first six grades of basic education after having passed the compulsory courses that have shrunk in extent to 2–6 credit units per subject with some variation between different faculties.⁶

The above goes to show the neglect of arts in education in Finland from the 1970s onwards when two significant and progressive reforms, that is, basic education realising the idea of social equality and raising the education of primary school teachers onto a Master's level, were realised. Another reform taking place at the same time must also be mentioned in this context: Finnish art universities were placed on an equal level with multidisciplinary universities and their degree structures made identical. Acts pertaining to the Sibelius Academy and the University of Art and Design Helsinki (Asetus/Decree 948/1978; Laki/Act 1068/1979; Asetus/Decree 561/1980) made subject teachers in arts equal with subject teachers in scientific subjects.⁷ The reform also had an effect on the quality of teacher training in arts. It is noteworthy that as the new position now required art universities to conduct research, discussion on arts education begun to consider grounds for actions, background theories and philosophical frameworks.

I have above provided a presentation of the status and changes in it of art and craft subjects in Finnish basic education and teacher training and pointed out some differences compared with scientific subjects in educational policy decision-making. The following discussion on reasons for this will employ the term 'art subjects' instead of the above 'art and craft subjects'. As the Finnish national core curriculum and school practices traditionally combine the two, it was convenient to use the term when discussing the administration of education. However, I will use the term 'arts' or 'art subjects' in the following discussion when considering the role of arts in the field of sciences. This does by no means reduce my subject of study but rather extends it to cover arts in general in the school curriculum. Music, visual arts and literature are forms of art appearing in the names of school subjects, and the curricula of different subjects allow for the following forms of art: word art, drama/theatre, dance, film, media arts, design and architecture.

Arts in the Field of Sciences

When I in this chapter attempt to chart the field of sciences and find where arts are placed on the chart I think of arts in general, that is, as a very wide and varied cultural phenomenon. While in the above I pointed out the marginal role of arts in education, I now seek to answer whether the arts are in the marginal also in the field of science. There is an epistemological trait to this question: is art understood as a form of knowledge and if so, what kind of knowledge? When considering epistemological questions within the philosophy of science it must be borne in mind that there are many possible starting points to this study. According to the Kuhnian way the frameworks of studying different phenomena could be called paradigms (Kuhn 1970, see also Kuhn 1991). I understand Ludwig Wittgenstein to mean much the same with his concept of 'system' in the following quote from his posthumous work *On Certainty* (1972):

All testing, all confirmation and disconfirmation of a hypothesis already takes place within a system. And this system is not a more or less arbitrary and doubtful point of departure for all our arguments: no, it belongs to the essence of what we call an argument. The system is not so much the point of departure, as the element in which arguments have their life. (Wittgenstein 1972, §105)

I revealed in the beginning of this article that the paradigm I am committed to in my art educational thinking is phenomenology by Merleau-Ponty. I have acquired the view because it preserves the experiential nature of art as an essential basis of arts education and research. At this point I will only include a short description of Merleau-Ponty's ideas. In the core there is the perceiving body as a central source of meaning and the core of the formation of meaning and, in this sense, as the basis of all knowledge. While familiarising myself with phenomenology and the scientific discussion it has launched, I have also come across an excellent example of argumentation between paradigms, first in the beginning stages of different movements of phenomenology, but especially during the last fifteen years when it has continued to draw participants from new areas of science. The said discussion will be described in more detail later in the article. The following will briefly chart the mainstreams of Western scientific thinking.

Georg Henrik von Wright (1968) creates in the first chapter of his work *Logiikka*,

filosofia ja kieli (Logic, Philosophy and Language)⁸ a general view of the history of philosophy. When presenting the mainstreams of science I will start with von Wright's distinction concerning art and science by following his definition of art as existentialism and science as a connection of logic and philosophy. After that I will discuss natural sciences and human sciences. The frame enables the consideration of school subjects in relation to the ways of knowing.

Art and Existentialism

In terms of art, von Wright's account was a disappointment. Art, something which was expected to be one of the great cultural factors shaping history, is in von Wright's thinking identified with existentialism:

Existentialism is likely to reflect its time better than any other present philosophical movement. It represents the intellectual lifelines of European people at a time that has suffered two World Wars and endured the horrors and humiliations of the holocaust, concentration camps and periods of occupation. It is foolish and narrow thinking to deny the seriousness and significance of the problems that existentialists fight with. Labeling existentialism as unscientific does not say anything about its worth. It is, however, possible to ask whether its problems and ideas can at all be presented in the form of philosophical learning. If the answer is negative, there is a reason to cast a doubting look at the existentialists' attempts to create a system. In my mind the correct idea would be to see existentialism as something between philosophy and art. (von Wright 1968, 17)

After stating the above von Wright (*ibid.* 17–19) charts the different movements of existentialism, starting from the subjectivism by Søren Kierkegaard and ending in Karl Jaspers. In between there is a chain of teacher-student relationships with Brentano, Husserl and Heidegger and finally Sartre who was not a student of Heidegger's but "stands on his shoulders". Where, however, is art, when the only reference to it lies at the end of the quote above? Is a movement deemed art if it will not take shape as a clean, well-defined system? Is it a question of differences in paradigm, the confusion of an analytic-logical philosopher when confronted with a school of thought that feels inaccurate to him? The study is controlled by existentialism where Sartre is given much attention: he is credited with making existentialism a "fashionable" philosophical doctrine, has developed Heidegger's ideas into an "atheistic and moral nihilistic direction" and emphasised freedom

for “realising one’s existence” (ibid. 19). Those descriptions are related to existentialism as a cultural-literary movement led by Sartre in the post-war Europe and also to the actual existential philosophy that is used to refer to the philosophical works by Sartre and often also Heidegger. (see Crowell 2006). Both gentlemen are also included among exemplars of phenomenological philosophy begun by Husserl (see Smith 2005).

Existentialism as a philosophical approach is generally considered as a branch of the phenomenological philosophy begun by Husserl with roots in Brentano’s descriptive psychology. Existential phenomenology refers to the French representatives of the movement, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty. The different movements of phenomenology generally study our experience: how objects present themselves to us through experience, how we experience them. The points of study are experiences as experienced from the subjective or first person point of view, what is of essence if we seek a philosophical framework for the arts and arts education: art is, after all, very intimate both when creating and experiencing it. The essence of phenomenology appears as indefinable as art when Merleau-Ponty (1962) at the beginning of his chief work describes poetically it as forever unfinished and always changing, making us to start from the scratch. The aim of phenomenology is “re-achieving a direct and primitive contact with the world, and endowing that contact philosophical status”, and it attempts “to give a direct description of our experience as it is, without taking account of its psychological origin and causal explanations which the scientist --- may be able to provide” (Merleau-Ponty 1962, vii). A slogan of a kind for phenomenology is the requisition posed by Husserl “to return to things themselves” as they exist in immediate experience before everyday thinking or scientific reflection has affected them (Merleau-Ponty 1962, vii). That experience realises the connection between the mind, body and world – we are attached to the world as bodies (See e.g. ibid. 106). Would it be possible for art to create the connection to that pre-reflective comprehensive experience that is impossible to exhaustively describe in words?

(Actual) Science: Logic and Analytical Philosophy

Von Wright presents logical-analytic philosophy as actual science that “has succeeded better than other movements [of science] in enlightening the methods and aims of science” (von Wright 1968, 10–11). A central starting point for analytical philosophy to develop into its present high-level and widely influential discipline

was the emergence of mathematical logic at the end of the 19th century. However, its earliest roots stretch back to formal logic created by Aristotle which – similarly to all works by Aristotle – were of increasing interest to philosophers at the end of the classical period and in the Middle Ages. It was no sooner than in the middle of the 13th century that the interest was fully satisfied when Aristotle’s entire production had finally been translated to Latin (Spade 2000). Scholasticism was a method of learning that attempted to reconcile Christian theology and ancient (pagan) classical philosophy by shaping the doctrine of the Catholic Church into such an entity that would easily accommodate also the rational thinking of Aristotle⁹.

Coinciding with a growing interest with natural sciences, the Aristotelian tradition gradually began to be questioned at the end of the 14th century. Scientific knowledge was distinguished from religion, the relationship between conceptual and physical realities was problematised and logic was left outside the development of science and the philosophy of science for more than three centuries. This development led into the emergence of mathematical physics and empiricist ambitions (von Wright 1968, 27).

From the point of view of the later development of logic, improvements within mathematics during those three decades have, according to von Wright, been analytical geometry developed by Descartes at the beginning of the 17th century that marked a transition from axiomatic geometrical thinking into algebraic thinking and the idea of calculus presented by Leibniz at the end of the same century that revealed the connections between geometry, algebra and logic. (ibid. 39–45, see also Niiniluoto 1981a) However, the new rise of logic that has lasted to this day did not begin until the mid-19th century along and within analytical philosophy. In the field of sciences, formal logic that studies the syntax and semantics of formal languages is located on the border of mathematics and philosophy, whereas dialectical logic seeks regularities within thinking, i.e. considers both formal factors but also the contents of information (Niiniluoto 1980, 107–108). Logic has many subcategories and it stretches not only to analytical philosophy and the philosophy of science, but also to linguistics and computer sciences.

Analytical philosophy also includes a strong streak of art research that attempts to study the concepts used when discussing art and create a comprehensive set of concepts for art and its cultural connections. Questions of interest within art philosophy (aesthetics) include, for instance, the concept of aesthetic, defining a work of art and considering the meaning and value of a work of art. (Lammenranta

1991, 7–9) While the philosophical choices are not necessarily present in the everyday teaching practices of the comprehensive school where art subjects have a distinctly practice-based emphasis, they nevertheless have an effect on the pedagogical choices made by the teacher. For instance, in the field of music education the last ten years have seen a lively international debate launched by David Elliott's work *Music matters. A New philosophy of music education (1995)* which attacks "aesthetic" music education with "praxial" pedagogy with emphasis on making music as its weapon^o.

Analytical philosophy operates in both its mathematical-formalistic and linguistic forms on the highest scientific level of abstraction and the farthest from subjective experiences and sentient embodiment. While studying the experience of existing in the world the Merleau-Pontyan phenomenology of the body represents in this sense another extremity on the field of philosophy – something which does not, however, imply that it would deny the value of objective scientific research. The phenomenology of the body explores the origins of thinking and the essential prerequisites for scientific thinking through bodily existence in the world. As stated by Merleau-Ponty:

The whole universe of science is built upon the world as directly experienced, and if we want to subject science itself to rigorous scrutiny and arrive at a precise assessment of its meaning and scope, we must begin by reawakening the basic experience of the world of which science is the second-order expression. (1962, viii)

Natural Sciences

As the scholastics of the Middle Ages withered when the natural sciences began to bloom, the new philosophy that emerged in the 17th century "sorted out the fossilised remnants of medieval thinking" (von Wright 1968, 20). With his expression von Wright apparently means the Aristotelian-Christian scholastics that had first been superseded by the Renaissance humanism that had hope in man and then the entirely new world view and thinking shaped by the great discoveries within physics. This reform is seen to mark the birth of the mainstreams of the Western thought that reach up to the present time, continental rationalism¹¹ initiated by René Descartes and British empiricism founded by Francis Bacon. Descartes attempted to provide a comprehensive explanation of the world using the methodological models of mathematics. The method was to proceed to secure knowledge through

long deduction chains as in geometry.¹² Later he added doubt to his set of methods: one must reject any idea that cannot fully be proved true so that finally only *cogito*, the doubting and reasoning me, remains. Meanwhile, the body is left outside the definition of existence as a mechanical machine that is subordinate to the mind.¹³ The making of a drastic distinction between the mind/soul and body – also known as Cartesian dualism – and the mechanistic view of the body have been argued against by phenomenologists. O’Donovan-Anderson (1996, 1) reminds us that Descartes is possibly too absolutely connected with the mathematical-mechanistic world view, since there is clearly room in his thinking for the empiricist view stating that we get information of the world also through the senses (see also Alanen 2001). However, Descartes and the father of modern physics, Galileo Galilei, are within the history of science considered the early developers of natural sciences and representatives of mathematical realism that shapes the world in a mathematical way (Niiniluoto 1980, 188).

After Bacon, the British empiricism considered that observations through the senses were of primary importance within science and that all knowledge “except for revelation from God on divine mysteries” is based on sense perception. The accuracy of observations increased and the systematic nature of their collection improved along with the development of new technical equipment and experimental methods. Empiricism was freed from metaphysics and religion by Auguste Comte, who at the beginning of the 19th century developed positivism that attempted to study regularity in observed phenomena and that later became an established method of study for the natural sciences. (Niiniluoto 1980, 45) Merleau-Ponty criticised both intellectualism (rationalism) and empiricism for objectivity, i.e. for attempting to exactly define scientific objects when they are also stripped from all the roughness and obscurity inherent in their natural observation. Obscurity is characteristic to the world. (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 6) Here the phenomenological attitude resembles art of which obscurity, inexplicability and multi-layeredness are essential characteristics.

The Finnish national school curriculum has secured a steady position for natural sciences. This is evidenced also in the distribution of hours where the number of classroom hours for each subject is explicitly stated. Meanwhile, with art and craft subjects the distribution of hours allows for the party that arranges education to decide the allocation of teaching resources per subject. (Finnish National Board of Education 2004, 302) Mathematics is often considered as one of the natural sciences and public discussion uses the term ‘mathematics and natural science’ or

'science subjects' and considers them essential for technological and economical development and general well-being. While the ontological question on the mutual relationship of body and mind has been considered in Western philosophy from Descartes onwards, the discussion has hardly reached the school reality.

Human sciences

Humanism is a school of thought that has connections to different phases of the history of Europe. Possibly the most often it is used to denote the Renaissance movement that emerged in the wealthy North Italian city states and idealised the classical period "that enabled the spectacular outburst of intellectual and artistic creativity" (von Wright 1983, 162). Humanism was more interested in concrete issues that were connected with human life than the hereafter and had trust in the possibilities of man, which marked the start of secularisation that has lasted to this day. Humanism had an effect on the displacement of scholastics and prepared the ground for modern time which, within the history of ideas, is located at the turn of the medieval and early modern periods when new physics and natural science created the basis of modern thinking. The arts flourished, protected by both secular and religious parties, and the sciences thrived in universities. Humanism spread northwards over the Alps from Italy, generating atheism and various reform movements by criticising the church and its teachings. The 18th century enlightenment carried the ideas of humanism: belief in reason and the worth and equality of all people.

German idealism is a philosophical movement close to humanism. The major contributors of the movement are the last great thinker of enlightenment, critical idealist Immanuel Kant at the end of the 18th century and, half a century later, G.W.F. Hegel that represented Radical historicism within German idealism. When adding to the group the Neo-Hegelian founder of hermeneutics, Wilhelm Dilthey, of the late 19th and early 20th century, we are able to reveal the philosophical line of thought that starts from Descartes and, ending up in the phenomenological-hermeneutic field,¹⁴ runs into a different direction than the natural scientific line. From that line of thought sprung a number of human sciences and educational theories and practices.

What, then, are the human sciences? Historical and linguistic subjects, answers von Wright (1983, 151). History, folkloristics, linguistics and theology, lists Niiniluoto (1981c). Sciences are classified in a number of different ways. When

thinking about human sciences in relation to subjects taught at the comprehensive school, we find linguistics as a basis for the large number of language subjects¹⁵ literature as another basis for Finnish, the discipline of history as a basis for history and, possibly more so than theology, comparative religion as a basis for religion. Each of the above-mentioned fields of science has emerged in the 19th century and is thus relatively young when compared with philosophy, mathematics and natural sciences.

Remaining are art and craft subjects that have a cultural age equal to that of mankind when thinking about artistic creations but are quite recent as objects of scientific research. Where are their scientific backbones? Do they belong to humanistic subjects? Do aesthetics/philosophy of art form a common scientific background for all arts? Is the history of art part of aesthetics or history? What is the relationship between musical science and ethnomusicology? Is the background of craft subjects in technology or folkloristics? Is sport science a field of science? Or has education embraced all these subjects when there is discussion on physical education, craft education, music education and arts education? This is certainly not the practice with other subjects taught at school!

Could the unorganised position of art and craft subjects be the reason for the treatment they receive in decision-making at schools and in teacher training? On the other hand, seen from the post-modern framework the said multidisciplinary could be an asset rather than a drawback. Art remains art only when capable of being multi-edged and multi-layered, continuously changing and renewing itself. Furthermore, it can be propped up by a number of scientific backbones. As a music teacher and teacher trainer I have made use of scientific literature on the history of music, theory of music, ethnomusicology, aesthetics of music, acoustics, sonic environment and its protection – only to mention a few fields. Moreover, there has been no lack of material on the pedagogical approach to making and listening to music: there is an endless amount of sheet music and recordings available. What, then, have I wanted? I have longed for a way to open the significance of arts to all people: to researchers and decision-makers as well as the mothers and fathers of schoolchildren. A way to arrange more room for arts in the school curricula to fit all arts – or at least enough to take care of the sensitisation of the human being at school.

There is a dualism prevailing between the art and craft subjects and scientific subjects at today's school that is analogical to the Cartesian dualism. Scientific

subjects are subjects of the head where cognitive abilities are central to the mastery of the subject. I write this knowing that professionally planned teaching takes into account also many other skills besides the cognitive ones. Art and craft subjects are subjects of the mind and body. In the best case they can unify and enable the return to the pre-reflective state of comprehensive experience even when practising objectifying and analysing thinking. The smaller the child, the more the teaching of art and craft subjects ought to focus on sensitising the sight, hearing, touch, kinaesthesia, smell and taste, because these form the connection to oneself, the others and the world. Merleau-Ponty (1962, 180–181) goes as far as to state that language has formed on the basis of body language – gestures, movements and expressions. Nowadays these issues are an object of interest also among neuroscience and neurobiology.¹⁶

The Two Directions of Education

Educational science has a predominant role within teacher training. As a field of science it is made up of different components and resides in close contact with neighbouring sciences, which has somewhat obscured its position on the field of sciences. When the age of enlightenment saw education and teaching as the prerequisites for the advance of the society, there was a need to develop a science for studying education. Johann Friedrich Herbart did a groundbreaking job in creating a set of concepts for modern educationalists on the basis of classical theories of education. Other important names were Friedrich Schleiermacher and, especially in Finland, Hegel. This tradition branched out at the end of the 19th century into two: the humanistic and empiricist veins. Both have their roots in the German idealism. The most important theoretician of the humanistic movement that was more faithful to the tradition of idealism was Wilhelm Dilthey. There are three different names used to denote the movement. ‘Cultural science’ emphasises the distinction between itself and the natural sciences and that “those cultural contents that in pedagogical activity are transferred to another individual are especially significant from the point of view of the education process” (Siljander 2002, 58). ‘Humanistic pedagogy’ refers to the name used by Dilthey of human sciences (Geisteswissenschaft), meaning science that studies human life and the historical-social reality created by human activity. The third name, hermeneutic pedagogy, emphasises the interpretative and understanding nature of education. This name has been in use in Finland from the 1960s.

The development of the empirical tradition of education begun when the research methods applied within natural sciences gradually became generally accepted models for scientific study. They were easily acquired into experimental psychology that emerged from Wilhelm Wundt's studies at the end of the 19th century and quickly spread especially in Europe and the USA. Education was also affected. The next to develop was a vast, global wave of empirical educational science. It became the predominant movement in the Anglo-Saxon countries and displaced the previously dominant speculative-philosophical educational thinking also on the Continent. The empirical movement was acquired in Finland by the mid-20th century and it was able to keep its position despite branching out to two directions: within the empirical-analytical education it was merged with the requirement of an exact theoretical-conceptual analysis adopted from analytical philosophy, whereas the realistic turn introduced the empirical methods with hermeneutical interpretability. When seeking a philosophical background the favourites were from the 1960s onwards Karl Popper, Thomas S. Kuhn and Jean Piaget. (Siljander 2002, 100–104, 107–114.) The methods of empiricist educational science were applied especially to studying the teaching-learning interaction by creating models with the aim to include all the possible factors affecting the interaction. In the worst case these compulsive attempts to fit the research practices of education into the model of natural sciences restricted the choice of research topics or produced questionable results. At its best, when used flexibly, it was able to produce both practical and conceptual understanding of the phenomena connected with learning and teaching.¹⁷ The positivistic tradition of research is alive and well and even gaining in position.

The predominant philosophy within education is, according to Siljander (2002, 204), constructivism, which in his opinion is rather a conception of knowledge than a movement of education. In its background there is the cognitive turn that took place in the 1950s that had a significant effect on different fields of science and, in the form of cognitive psychology, also on education. Siljander passes the widespread cognitive movement, which e.g. Howard Gardner respects enough to call it a revolution,¹⁸ surprisingly lightly with only one reference to it in connection with constructivism. As a theoretical framework it is quite commonly used in studies on learning. It was also an important opener for multidisciplinary points of view. Gardner lists the cognitive sciences at the end of the 1980s as follows: philosophy, psychology, linguistics, artificial intelligence, neuroscience and

anthropology. What interests me in the light of my research question is that almost the same fields of science – with the addition of biology and phenomenology – are part of the discussion on the essence of knowledge that has been going on from the beginning of the 1990s. The discussion focuses on the thinking of both Descartes and Merleau-Ponty and enables us to more widely embrace the idea that “not just that the thinking self is embodied, but that the embodied self is mindful” (O’Donovan-Anderson 1996, 6).¹⁹ The late production of Merleau-Ponty gives increasing attention to the bodily existence in the world. I, the others and the world live together in a texture of sense in which different sense modalities wrap around each other and the experience of existence becomes indivisible in nature.²⁰ The Western scientific thinking places a lot of emphasis on analysis, reflection and conceptualisation when attempting to create reliable information. This is further reflected in school practices. Arts and crafts education has both the ability and possibility to produce unifying experiences of the bodily existence in the world that change knowledge into understanding.

Conclusions

The starting point of this paper was, on one hand, the powerless wonder I have felt throughout my professional career about the role of the art and craft subjects at school and, on the other hand, the realisation opened by the Merleau-Pontyan phenomenology of the body about the importance of those subjects. I have here studied the trends of the Western thought in the light of the above-mentioned starting points. When now writing the conclusions I am well aware of the fragmented and, in part, inadequate nature of my study of Western thinking: even though it is quite well structured, many phases that are important from the point of view of arts have only been mentioned in passing and many issues would require a more detailed study. I have focused more on the mainstreams of thinking than aesthetic movements, which has been a conscious choice in my attempt to locate the factors that have made school what it is today. The arts have throughout history been the most important expressers of the specialties of different cultures. Contrary to the speculations of aesthetic philosophy, they reveal the spirit of their time in an experiential way. While great scholars and great artists are equally admired, the requirements for success provided by schools cater a lot better for science than the arts.

The school supports the ways of knowledge that realise the ideals of the modern era, which is seen to have begun the great inventions in physics: attempts to make clear definitions create concepts and generally systematically describe the world. Even though postmodernism has long questioned the ideals of modernism, the effects of this discussion have not really reached the school. The arts have not been seen as forms of knowledge, and thus they have been restricted to their marginal position. As the concept of embodiment became a point of multidisciplinary interest during the last few decades of the 20th century, also the arts benefited. Art is such an essential part of the sentient body that discussion on knowledge of the body and the human as a mindbodily being created a new possibility for researchers studying either art in general or dance to reflect on their field of art and their own part in it.

I feel that the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty has much to offer to arts education and education in general. His views on the pre-reflective phase of human development and the involved comprehensive experience of bodily existence in the world is a starting point for both scientific and artistic understanding. The role of arts education is to maintain fresh the connection with the area of pre-reflective experience. In practice it means not only providing children with the possibility to deepen their experience of the world through play and creating art before the start of reflection and conceptualisation, but also preserving the sensitivity to move on different levels of experience and knowledge throughout the life.

Endnotes:

¹ See Hyvönen 1988 and 1995.

² At the time Finland saw a transition from the previous parallel school system into a comprehensive school system. As a result, the Finnish basic education involves a state-funded 9-year compulsory primary school. Class teacher training, a Master's-level university degree qualifies the graduate to teach all subjects at the first six grades of primary school. Class teachers are also qualified to teach the students at the highest grades of primary school in subjects that they have studied for 60 study credits' worth at the university.

³ The art and craft subjects in the Finnish curriculum are visual arts, handicraft, physical education, music and domestic science.

⁴ *Kasvatustieteen käsitteistö* (The concepts of pedagogics. Hirsjärvi 1983), published in 1983, includes key words *practical subjects* and *theoretical subjects*. As a synonym for practical subjects it proposes the term *practice subjects*. The terms have not, however, been used in curricula or in connection with the distribution of classroom hours after the adoption of the primary school system. Also the list of subjects included in practical subjects (gym, sports, drawing and singing) were no longer used as such in the

documents from the planning phase of the comprehensive school and the national core curriculum (see Komiteanmietintö 1970: A5). Hirsjärvi (1983) is not familiar with the name 'art subjects', but the most recent national core curriculum (Finnish National ... 2004) uses the term 'art and craft subjects' in a figure displaying the distribution of classroom hours (ibid. 302). This is a much-needed decision, as part of the resources are allocated to the group of subjects as a whole to be later distributed to each subject by the municipalities who arrange education. It appears that the art and craft subjects still have not been able to get rid of their label as practice subjects.

⁵ A quote from the editorial of Finnish music magazine *Rondo* (1971/1) when the primary school was being introduced.

⁶ This allows us to assume great variation in the quality of arts and crafts education in primary schools. Meanwhile, secondary school teachers can be considered rather well educated as they are required to hold a subject teacher's degree in the subject in question or, alternatively, have the minimum of 60 credit units' worth of subject studies in the subject in question included in their primary teacher degree.

⁷ The Theatre Academy received at the time University status (Act/Laki 87/1978, Decree/Asetus 631/1979).

⁸ According to Ilkka Niiniluoto (1981b), the work that was originally published in Swedish in 1957 by the name *Logik, filosofi och språk* provides an excellent view on the development and basic problems of logic and analytical philosophy.

⁹ Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) was one of the major scholars and interpreters of Aristotle. He was also the founder of the Scholastic tradition where the human reason and supernatural revelation exist in harmony. (See e.g. McInerny & O'Callaghan 2005)

¹⁰ Elliott (1995) especially attacked Bennett Reimer's work *A Philosophy of Music Education* (1970), which he perceived as the most distinct representative of aesthetic music education. Aesthetic means here music education with emphasis on musical works and listening where the musical experience is created through studying the formal qualities of music (see Elliott 1995, 28)

¹¹ Instead of 'realism', Merleau-Ponty uses the name 'intellectualism' to denote the philosophical movement represented by Descartes. To him, intellectualism and empiricism are the forms of objectivism that he argues against while emphasizing the importance of subjective experience in his work *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962).

¹² In his early work *Rules for the direction of the mind*, Descartes (1975) sees experience and deduction as ways of gathering information. Knowledge through experience may be erroneous, but "deduction, or the pure illation of one thing from other, --- cannot be erroneous when performed by an understanding that is in the least degree rational" and on this basis he is convinced "of the great superiority in certitude of Arithmetic and Geometry to other sciences" (ibid. 4–5).

¹³ In *Discourse on the method*, Descartes presents his idea of the relationship between the body and soul/reason. He strives to reach the truth by abandoning absolutely everything that could be subject to doubt and ends up with the following thought: "--- it was absolutely essential that the 'I' who thought this should be somewhat" and then decides the following: "I think, therefore I am" which becomes the first principle of his entire philosophy (Descartes 1975, 100). His discussion continues with considering the way of existence of the thinking I, arriving at the conclusion that a thinking substance will not need a place for existence, i.e. "this 'me', that is to say, the soul by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from body---" (ibid. 1975, 100–101, see also Reuter 2001, 219–220).

¹⁴ Ilkka Niiniluoto has compiled an illustrative chart of the different traditions in the philosophy of science (Niiniluoto 1980, 40–41) which at least I have benefited greatly in my study of the streams of Western science.

¹⁵ The language program of the Finnish comprehensive school requires a lot of time resources owing to the limited area where Finnish is spoken and the fact that there is another official language, Swedish, in Finland that must also be taught at schools and the mastery of which is required for certain offices.

¹⁶ See Anttila's article in this volume on the relationship between embodied experiences and conceptual thinking.

¹⁷ Matti Koskenniemi's work *Opetuksen teoriaa kohti* (Towards the Theory of Teaching, 1978) provides a comprehensive view on the empirical research on education carried out in Finland during the heydays of the movement.

¹⁸ Gardner (1985) provides a comprehensive picture of the cognitive movement as a multidisciplinary phenomenon that has had widely affected the scientific community.

¹⁹ The multidisciplinary discussion resulted in a view where an individual was seen as an essentially bodily being whose thinking is inevitably linked with the body. The discussion begun in the late 1980s and still continues. The following are but a few central works: Varela et al. 1991, Lakoff & Johnson 1999, Weiss & Haber (Eds.) 1999. The Finnish philosophers worth a mention in this connection include Sara Heinämaa (e.g. 1996, 1999) and Jaana Parviainen (e.g. 2006). For more references related to the body discussion see Anttila's and Hämäläinen's texts in this volume.

²⁰ In his unfinished *Le Visible et l'invisible*, Merleau-Ponty (1968, 130–155) draws a picture of the experienced world as a web of chiasmatic relationships that is difficult to discuss with words. The most distinctive property of the living body is ambiguity, which spreads from the experiencing body to also become a feature of the experienced world.

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