

# Living Transformative Lives

Finnish Freelance Dance Artists Brought into Dialogue  
with Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology

Leena Rouhiainen

Doctoral Dissertation

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addition to the support they gave me in everyday life while I was immersed in work. I dedicate this work to all the dance artists I know and especially to those who contributed to the investigation.

This book, once begun, is not a certain set of ideas; it constitutes for me an open situation, for which I could not possibly provide any complex formula, and in which I struggle blindly on until, miraculously thoughts and words become organized by themselves.  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1995/1962, 369)

## Preamble

The subject of this research is phenomenology and being a contemporary freelance dance artist. More particularly it analyzes and interprets interview material produced by four Finnish freelance dance artists mainly on the premise of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. However, the research also enters into dialogue with previous phenomenological studies of dance while considering them an additional source of interpretation. In addressing the interview material through this phenomenological framework, the dissertation attempts to illuminate the life-world of freelance dance artists and to delineate some of those constitutive structures through which being a freelance dance artist, in recent years, has been realized in Finland. It, thus, both searches for the premises according to which being a freelance dance artist has become possible, as well as sheds light on the experiences and practices of the lives of freelance dance artists.

Even if much of the analysis found in this dissertation attempts to generalize issues, relies on transnational concepts of phenomenology, and relates to international studies of western theatrical dance, the point of departure is still the local experiences and opinions of Finnish dance artists. Therefore, to some degree, this dissertation offers a situation- or context-specific account of the meanings and values related to the practices of contemporary dance. So far no other doctoral level research contemplating the lives or works of Finnish dance artists has been compiled. Consequently, in addition to supplementing the emergent tradition of phenomenological research on dance, this dissertation also fills a gap in research into Finnish dance art and dance artists.

The perspective the research takes on being a freelance dance artist not only relates to the theoretical framework it addresses nor to the empirical material it is comprised of. The position I hold in relation to these matters as the researcher conducting the investigation also influences the manner in which they are understood and presented in this report. Even if this issue is partly discussed when the methodological and methodical principles of the investigation are addressed, a few words on my background are called for here in order to clarify the basic perspective that this research has taken on its subject matter.

I have been a professional freelance dance artist ever since I completed my practical MA studies at the Department of Dance of the Theatre Academy in 1990. When beginning this investigation, being a freelance dance artist, in my experience, was a demanding occupation. My everyday life then consisted of, for example, enduring the insecurity of

having no work and earning a living, applying for grants, planning for artistic projects, taking care of my own dance training, learning to teach dance in various situations for various kinds of people, and a readiness to perform whenever there was a chance to do so or a choreographer asked me to join her or his piece. All these concerns made me often question how I should proceed with my career as a dance artist.

I had many dancer friends with whom I discussed these issues. We all seemed to be of the opinion that being a freelance dance artist was somewhat different from being a dance artist working with a contract in a more or less steady company. Despite their yearly-renewed contracts, I saw dance artists working with such dance companies or groups often remaining in the same positions for many successive years at a time. It was evident that freelance dance artists did not share such security. Rather, their careers became constructed through a variety of positions and ways of working. Talking during the pauses of rehearsals and occasionally on the phone with my colleagues, nonetheless, was not sufficient to help me understand, as profoundly as I wished to understand, what being a freelance dance artists in the end was all about.

The consequences of this is the dissertation at hand in which, initially as a rather young female freelance dance artist, I explore what it means to be such a dance artist through the interviews of four Finnish freelance dance artists and a phenomenological viewpoint. This, however, does not mean that the study is concerned with a feminist or gender-conscious approach. With this research my interest mainly lies in the meanings and conventions shared by freelance dance artists irrespective of sexual identity. The interview material itself provided very few and indirect gender- or sex-specific comments, and the theoretical framework itself does not hold gender-issues to be a direct theme of interest.<sup>1</sup> What it does mean, however, is that initially I was a beginner in the fields of both research in general and phenomenology in particular. The repercussions of this scholarly ignorance are evident in this report. I felt obliged to thoroughly scrutinize the methodological principles and the theoretical framework utilized in the investigation in order to construct at least a somewhat consistent piece of academic research. This sense of obligation was further enhanced by the location in which this research was constructed as well as the emergent tradition of research on dance it is affiliated with.

In Finland the so-called arts universities, of which the Theatre Academy is one, have during the past few decades begun providing post-graduate education in the field of the arts. The objective of these study programs is to produce new knowledge and experience of the concrete artistic practices of a given form of art. They lead to scholarly research often designed by artists themselves. This kind of an education became possible at the Theatre Academy by the late 1980's. However, the Academy is still in the midst of questioning the objectives and theoretical approaches best suited for the more or less artistic investigations

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1. Even if a feminist approach is not central to this research, it should be mentioned that it is no longer unfamiliar to dance research in general. The political impact of socio-cultural differences in embodiment and more particularly the difference in sexual identity is recognized by many scholars in dance (cf. e.g. Dempster 1998; Albright 1997; 1991; Manning 1997; Wolff 1997; Foster 1996; Burt 1995; Adair 1994/1992; Daly 1992b).

conducted under its guidance. It is still searching for its identity as a doctoral dissertation-producing institution. This has left its post-graduate students open to search for their own approach to research, and it has also made the journey of investigation one of rather intense questioning since there are no pre-established customs to adhere to. In this situation I turned to explore the premises and goals of phenomenological human science research. However, in my view the emergent tradition of phenomenological research on dance itself, likewise, required a detailed observation of the premise and purpose of the investigation I conducted. In this tradition it has not been common to combine interview material (discussing particular experiences and life situations) which is viewed through a third person perspective with thorough philosophical analysis. In order to clarify and justify the approach taken by this research I present a rather comprehensive exposition of the methodological, methodical, and theoretical issues guiding the construction of the investigation. In the end, however, I must also admit that my passion for dance art and my desire to understand dancers and dancing have also influenced the somewhat lengthy form of the dissertation. At points its overall structure and the coherency of the interrelations of its separate sections might even suffer from my interest in understanding things in detail. Still I believe that this book offers clear- and valuable-enough insights on the subject matter it explores in relation to its purpose of being a dissertation for a doctoral degree. (The objectives, goals, and the process of the research are discussed in more detail in the main body of the research beginning on page 16.)

This book is composed of three different sections, each of which addresses a central theme related to the investigation. The sections present their objectives and subject matter rather comprehensively, so readers with different interests might also examine them separately. *Part One – Methodology, Methods, and Procedures* presents the basic research questions and the purpose of the research, paves the way to understanding the principles and premises directing the procedures through which the investigation was constructed, as well as introduces the interviewees and the interview material. Its overall concern is qualitative phenomenological research. *Part Two – The Phenomenological Framework* introduces Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and the selected phenomenological studies of dance that guide the interpretation of the interview material. Furthermore it presents a rudimentary conception of the relationship between the bodily and linguistic practices of dance art that the research adheres to. *Part Three – The Interviews in Dialogue with Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology and Other Theoretical Sources* is concerned with an interpretation of the interview material through the phenomenological framework. The presentation of this section is ordered in line with the main constitutive elements that the research argues to belong to the life-worlds of freelance dance artists and which the interview material points towards. Here the tradition of the art form contemporary freelance dance artists in Finland deal with is addressed. The field of dance in which the interviewed dance artists are engaged is described while especially observing those of its features that they found to be influential to their lives as dance artists. The nature of the artistic roles through which freelance dance artists follow their profession are observed as is their relation to dance work more generally. Moreover, the ways in which freelance dance artists embody dance and create their art is

discussed in some detail. Finally, the manner in which freelance dance artists relate to their profession and themselves as artists is discussed before drawing some conclusions on the manner in which being a freelance dance artist is realized according to the interpretation provided by this research. In addition to this outline, each part of the study begins by introducing the purpose of the section and outlining the contents of each respective chapter.

# PART ONE

– METHODOLOGY, METHODS,  
AND PROCEDURES



The following chapters of Part I, on the one hand, are concerned with the methodological principles informing this research. On the other hand, they aim to clarify the methods and procedures, through which the empirical research material, that this study is comprised of, was gained, in addition to showing how it was analyzed and interpreted. Consequently, they also deal with the manner in which the findings and conclusions of the research were arrived at. **Chapter 1** describes the basic features of the research design this study followed. It sets out the main research questions which guided the construction of the dissertation, establishes the purpose of the research, and delineates the steps by which the process of investigation was carried out. **Chapter 2** gives an overview of the methodological context the research relates to and thus introduces the general field of investigation in which it is located. While doing so this chapter also describes the more specific nature of the research and addresses its validity. **Chapter 3** firstly considers the overall character of the interviews carried out for this research. Then it turns to introducing the interviewees and to describing the procedures through which the interviews were acquired and transformed into research material. **Chapter 4** is concerned with outlining the methodological principles that shaped the analysis and interpretation of the interview material. Here notions related to a more descriptive and interpretative analysis, as well as a hermeneutic conception of interpretation and language, are addressed. **Chapter 5**, in turn, clarifies the methods used and procedures undertaken while concretely analyzing and interpreting the interview material.

# 1 On the Process, Purpose, and Objectives of the Investigation

This research was begun due to an interest in understanding what it means to be a contemporary freelance dance artist and elucidating those issues that come to structure the lives of such dance artists through analyzing and interpreting the meanings they themselves give to their lives and experiences as dance artists. In the sphere of western theatrical dance there are a plethora of biographies and interviews with dance artists available but very little detailed exploration of the dance artists' experiences of their everyday lives and the dancer's experience of the choreographic process with rehearsals and performing (cf. Risner 2000). This is the case even more so in the context of Finnish dance art and in relation to Finnish dance artists dealing with contemporary dance. Here modern and contemporary dance have only found a strong footing during the last few decades<sup>2</sup> and scholarly writing on dance has only truly begun to emerge even more recently.<sup>3</sup>

However, as a performing contemporary freelance dance artist working in the capital city of Finland, I strongly believed that dance artists themselves could offer valuable insight into understanding the contemporaneous nature of being a dance artist in the North European context. The course and purpose of this research, then, is influenced by my personal experience and curiosity. Nevertheless, despite the fact that my initial interest was spurred by being a freelance dance artist myself, I was not merely concerned with my subjective experience. I wanted to broaden my understanding of what being a freelance dance artist means by discussing it with other such dance artists. Through my experience I had come to know dance artists as communicative beings, who attempt to illuminate and understand their lives as dance artists not only through the concrete practices of dance but also through describing and contemplating them while conversing with each other. Moreover, I believed that by talking with other dance artists I would have a chance to view "the world through someone else's eyes" and thus to possibly "see a different world, expanding [my] our cognitive structures or lenses of [my] our perception" (Stinson & Anijar 1993, 57). Consequently, I chose to interview some Finnish contemporary freelance dance artists for the purposes of this study and to view the interviews as a central source of knowledge,

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2. For a short description of the evolution of modern and contemporary dance in Finland see pages 188–193.

3. There are only a few biographies or autobiographies of Finnish dance artists most of whom were classical dancers. In addition a few photograph books featuring outstanding Finnish contemporary dance choreographers have been published (e.g. Kvanström n.d.; Uotinen 1985). If Ph.D. dissertations are a barometer of the state of scholarly writing, it might be mentioned that in Finland the first dissertation concerning dance was completed in 1994. After this 8 doctoral studies, concerning e.g. teaching choreographic skills, folk-dance, the makeup of the contemporary dance artist, the nature of the artworld of dance in Finland, and the choreographic process were submitted (Fisher 2002; Hoppu 1999; Hämäläinen 1999; Nieminen 1998; Parviainen 1998; Pasanen-Willberg 2000; Salosaari 2001; Sarje 1999; 1994).

while attempting to gain a deeper understanding of the values, meanings, and practices related to being a contemporary freelance dance artist.

During the initial phases of the investigation I conducted semistructured, thematically-directed but still open-ended, interviews addressing the life-worlds of a few Finnish freelance dance artists. I found these kinds of interviews to be an efficient means of initiating and facilitating conversation with the freelance dance artists interviewed. To interpret the video-recorded interview material I chose as the study's theoretical framework the phenomenological philosophy<sup>4</sup> of Maurice Merleau-Ponty<sup>5</sup> and those phenomenological dance studies, which I found to be concerned with phenomenology in a clearly philosophical sense. They mostly take as the starting point of their discussion the concrete experiences humans have of the world and dancers have of dancing and being dance artists. Hence, I found them to be an appropriate theoretical source with which to address the meanings the interviewees gave to their experiences as freelance dance artists. In fact, to me the utilization of phenomenology in dance studies has proven to be the most consistent perspective through which the dancers' or dance artists' experiences and life-world have been investigated. In my view, the descriptions Merleau-Ponty gives to the motility of the body and its significance for human life also are central to the issues discussed by the interviewed freelance dance artists.<sup>6</sup>

In the end, analyzing the source material and creating a phenomenological conception of what it is like to be a contemporary freelance dance artist involved many layers of investigation and went through the following phases, in chronological order. 1) Relying on my background as a freelance dance artist I first set the basic research question: *What does it mean to be a freelance dancer<sup>7</sup> when viewed through interview material gathered from Finnish contemporary*

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4. In philosophical discourse phenomenology is seldom referred to as phenomenological philosophy. It is simply phenomenology. However, as this part of the research refers to two disparate phenomenological practices, i.e. a mode of philosophizing and a mode of conducting qualitative empirical research in the domain of the human sciences, I shall at times use the term phenomenological philosophy in contrast to phenomenological qualitative research.

5. Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961) is considered one of the foremost French post-Husserlian phenomenologists (e.g. Moran 2000).

6. For example, Elizabeth Grosz praises the applicability of Merleau-Ponty's theories to research connected with the body and experience by arguing that he presents lived experiences as something to be taken seriously. She believes his philosophy, unlike much of western philosophy, to have immediate relevance to everyday life and to be bold enough to apply theoretical rigor to experience. In her view, he also does not regard experience as something simply given to an individual. He shows that experience is both active and passive: it plays a role in both instilling and subverting sociopolitical values. And finally she points to the fact that Merleau-Ponty demonstrates experience to always be embodied. It is located in the incarnation of the subject and is still entwined with the socio-cultural world. (Grosz 1999, 148–150)

7. What was tacitly assumed with the use of the term 'freelance dancer' in the beginning of this research was what Jaana Parviainen (1998) also points towards, namely that, "Historically in the modern dance tradition the distinction between the dancer and the choreographer has never been clear, since most choreographers begin their career as dancers while they may also both dance and make choreographies . . . Thus, the use of the term 'dancer' almost invariably refers also both to choreographers and so-called dancer-choreographers, although choreography and dancing differ from each other as artistic and social positions" (Parviainen 1998, 11 ft.). The use of the term also had to do with my own position in the field of freelance dance in Helsinki. While working in it I had not found it necessary to distinguish between the

*freelance dancers?* 2) After gaining an understanding of both phenomenological and hermeneutic qualitative research methodology<sup>8</sup> and respective interview methods, I conducted and transcribed the interviews. 3) Subsequently I chose to regard the interviews through a more philosophical phenomenological perspective and re-articulated the research question. Now the question was: *What does it mean to be a contemporary freelance dance artist when viewed through interview material gathered from Finnish freelance dance artists which is interpreted through Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology together with selected phenomenological dance studies?* After this choice was made and I familiarized myself with these theories, 4) I analyzed the interview material by firstly creating meaning condensations<sup>9</sup> of the interview material gathered from the individual dance artists and secondly by categorizing the meanings found in all of the material. 5) Then I returned to study and understand the phenomenological framework of the study in more detail. 6) Finally I turned to interpreting the categorized interview material on the premise of the phenomenological framework.

These phases show that during the course of the investigation the main intent of the research became a phenomenological interpretation of the interview material through Merleau-Ponty's philosophy and those phenomenological dance studies that were concerned with phenomenological philosophy. In order to move towards an appropriate interpretation of the interview material through the phenomenological framework, nevertheless, I first had to understand the contents of the material itself as well as those of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and the phenomenological dance studies somewhat independently of each other. Despite being acquainted with the phenomenological perspective before analyzing the interview material, this material was first addressed without directly relating it to the theoretical framework. Then the phenomenological literature was investigated in more detail. To date, phenomenological dance studies have presented various, albeit not thorough,

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different roles I played as a dance artist. However, distinguishing the different artistic roles they pursued was something the interviewed dance artists were particular about. As my investigation proceeded I turned to refer to them as freelance dance artists to imply that they worked not only as dancers, but did choreography and taught dance as well (cf. pp. 224–231 in chapter 11).

8. The term 'methodology' is used in a variety of ways in human science research. In some cases it refers to the intertwining of what I have called separately methodology, methods, and procedures. What I imply by the term 'methodology' in this research are those philosophical considerations that clarify how research is believed to answer questions it poses and through the means it utilizes when doing so. These considerations are, on the one hand, influenced by the researcher's understanding of the nature of human beings and reality in general and, on the other hand, by how she or he considers humans to be capable of gaining knowledge. What I generally refer to by the term 'method' in this first part of the study are those approaches of interviewing, analysis, and interpretation that were attributed to phenomenological and hermeneutical qualitative research and applied in this study. The procedures themselves cite how these approaches were actually utilized throughout the process of investigation.

In phenomenological qualitative research the methodological principles rely mostly on those of phenomenological philosophy. I have distinguished between the terms 'methodology', 'method' and 'procedures' from each other to help keep in mind the different concerns of phenomenology as a philosophical practice and phenomenology as a strand of qualitative research. These concerns will be discussed in chapter 4.

9. This means that the text transcribed from the interview material gathered from each dance artist was condensed. The methods and aims of this procedure are discussed in chapter 5 section 5.1.

interpretations of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. In fact, so far only two phenomenological dance studies (Kozel 1998/1994<sup>10</sup>; Parviainen 1998) have made a concentrated reading of some of the basic aspects of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. Therefore, aside from studying these sources, it was necessary to attain an in-depth understanding of Merleau-Ponty's project through his own work to be able to make a valid interpretation of the interview material while relying on his thinking. The interview material itself contained a multiplicity of themes and topics which required a rather thorough overview of his work in order to be interpreted through this philosopher's phenomenological perspective. Nonetheless, I turned to the actual phenomenological interpretation of the interview material only after analyzing the interview material and gaining a sense of the contents of the above-mentioned phenomenological sources more or less independently of each other.

The interview material also highlighted ideas that were not directly related to the chosen phenomenological literature. In parts, consequently, the interpretation of the interviews deals with an analysis that demonstrates how culturally-, socially-, and historically-relevant themes, enlarged upon by other theories and studies, relate to the topics addressed by the interviewees. While applying some sociological, aesthetic, and historical theories of western theatrical dance and related issues to illuminate the themes of discussion that characterize some more particular meanings belonging to the life-worlds of the dance artists, I have attempted, to an extent, to show how they stand in relation to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. In other parts the interpretation of the contents of the interviews deals with an analysis which is directly concerned with phenomenological philosophy as it tries to discern the more general structures of the experiences and modes of life recounted by the dance artists. Thus, even if some of this interpretation deals with a non-phenomenological reading of the interview material, this reading was influenced by Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. The interpretation became partly constructed through contemplating how Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology relates to the other theoretical perspectives used and it attempts to follow his general phenomenological aim by creating an account of the constituents of the life-world of a freelance dance artist. With the aid of the other theories and studies mentioned above I have aimed at a more detailed understanding of nature of the constitutive elements related to being a freelance dance artist.

The main focus of this research, then, is not a description of lived experiences from a first person perspective which is commonly the very first level of phenomenological inquiry. This investigation relies on the manner in which I as the researcher understand the accounts that several interviewees offer of their experiences. In addition it has the intention of delineating the more general constitutive elements framing the life-world of freelance dance artists by utilizing and extending Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological conceptions. This requires an interpretative or hermeneutical phenomenological-theoretical analysis. Nevertheless, in the end, *the purpose of the research is to create a pheno-*

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10. The references at times show two years of publication. The first year refers to the publication used in this research report. The second year, separated by a slash from the first, refers to the year when the publication was first published.

*menological exposition of being a contemporary freelance dance artist and thus to enrich our understanding of such a dance artists as well as to develop dance phenomenology along these lines.*

## 2 The Methodological Context

Even if this study is concerned with phenomenological philosophy, the gathering, analysis, and some parts of the interpretation of the empirical material could generally be understood to belong to the domain of qualitative research. The methods used in the different phases of investigation were firstly concerned with procedures advocated by qualitative research and only secondly with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological method of philosophizing, which will be discussed in more detail in Part II. In this chapter I will give a short introduction to qualitative research and emphasize those features of it that are influential in this investigation on freelance dance artists in order to contextualize its position in the more general discussion of human science research.

Qualitative research is often considered to be a realm of inquiry in its own right. It is commonly understood to relate to empirical research that is concerned with human beings, which uses so-called 'soft' or interpretative methods of inquiry. These methods tend to deal with a rather descriptive analysis of texts in contrast to numerical research material. Qualitative research is, in fact, often explained by contrasting it with quantitative research, which in its statistical and formal nature has sprung from an ideology built on the premises of the so-called 'hard' sciences. Traditionally such sciences have regarded research and knowledge along the lines of positivism<sup>11</sup> and related concepts of causality, predictability, and value-free objectivity. (cf. Denzin & Lincoln 1998, 2, 7–9; Eskola & Suoranta 1996, 9–11; Guba & Lincoln 1994, 105–117)

Qualitative research is considered to rest on different paradigmatic beliefs from positivism. However, qualitative research is an interdisciplinary mode of inquiry crosscutting various disciplines, fields of research,<sup>12</sup> and subject matter as well as relying on multiple methodologies

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11. Egon G. Guba and Yvonna S. Lincoln (1994) describe the essential qualities of the ontology, epistemology, and methodology that correspond with the positivist paradigm. According to them positivism is based on a notion of reality, which is ruled by immutable natural laws and mechanisms. Consequently, positivistic scientific facts are reductionist and deterministic by their nature. In positivistic research the investigated phenomena and the investigator are regarded as separate entities, which do not influence each other. The rigorous procedures of inquiry prevent values and biases from affecting research findings. Methods of research rely on experimental testing, where propositional hypotheses are verified. Testing is carefully controlled or manipulated to avoid improper influence. The aim of positivist inquiry is explanation which ultimately enables the prediction and control of phenomena. (Guba & Lincoln 1994, 110–113)

However, Jill Green and Susan W. Stinson (1999), in their article on post-positivistic research, acknowledge the currently problematic nature of the terms 'positivism' or 'positivistic'. To use these terms to describe a certain strand or style of scientific study is problematic since the ontology, epistemology, and consequent methodology directing most sciences have outgrown the idea of uncovering, as it were, stable factual truths about an unchanging reality with objective and rigorous enough research methods. Yet Green and Stinson continue to use the term to describe the limitations of traditional scientific research in the domain of the human sciences as no other term has yet emerged. (Green & Stinson 1999, 114 ft.2) Here I have followed their example.

12. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln assert that qualitative research "has separate and distinguished

and methods. This makes it difficult to give any comprehensive definition of qualitative research and single-handedly determine the nature of these paradigmatic beliefs.<sup>13</sup> (Denzin & Lincoln 1998, 2, 3, 5) Jill Green and Susan W. Stinson following Lawrence F. Locke even state that qualitative research is in a state of “zesty disarray” (Locke 1989 as reported by Green & Stinson 1999, 92). Green and Stinson further argue that the methodologies constructed under qualitative research have emerged through diverse and continuously revised assumptions about reality and knowledge.<sup>14</sup> They point towards the result of this by listing some of the various strands of current applied qualitative research. The list includes, among others, phenomenological, hermeneutic, interpretative, naturalistic, autobiographical, narrative, ethnographic, and postmodern research. However, the ways these approaches are interrelated is open to question and there are also no general or set rules governing the procedures of qualitative research. (Green & Stinson 1999, 92–93)

Despite the heterogeneity of qualitative research, while regarding it in a general manner some common features are discernible. Qualitative research is most often concerned with the meanings and meaning relations through which humans operate in their environment and understand themselves as well as the surrounding world. This objective derives from the fact that qualitative research regards rich descriptions of the social world as a valuable means of accessing and understanding social and cultural concerns of everyday life. The manner in which individuals relate to the world is, moreover, often considered to be influenced by those commonsense constructs and categories that are prevalent in a local social sphere of life and which to a large extent are taken for granted or only tacitly assumed. (cf. Denzin & Lincoln 1998, 3, 10–11; Holstein & Gubrium 1994, 263–268; Varto 1992, 56)<sup>15</sup>

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histories in education, social work, communications, psychology, history, organizational studies, medical science, anthropology, and sociology” (Denzin & Lincoln 1998, 31).

13. Cf. Footnote (hereafter abbreviated to ft.) 17.

14. Denzin and Lincoln (1998, 2), while analyzing the complex history of qualitative research, define the current phase of qualitative research as the post-modern moment, which began in the 1990’s. They describe it by writing that: “First, each of the earlier historical moments [the traditional (1900–1950), the modernist (1950–1970), blurred genres (1970–1986), and the crisis of representation (1986–1990)] is still operating in the present, either as legacy or as a set of practices that researchers still follow or argue against. The multiple, and fractured, histories of qualitative research now make it possible for any given researcher to attach a project to a canonical text from any of the above-described historical moments. Multiple criteria of evaluation now compete for attention in this field. Second, an embarrassment of choices now characterizes the field of qualitative research. There have never been so many paradigms, strategies of inquiry, or methods of analysis to draw upon and utilize. Third we are in a moment of discovery and rediscovery, as new ways of looking, interpreting, arguing, and writing are debated and discussed. Fourth, the qualitative research act can no longer be viewed from within a neutral, or objective, positivist perspective. Class, race, gender and ethnicity shape the process of inquiry, making research a multicultural process” (Denzin & Lincoln 1998, 22).

15. Indeed Clark Moustakas (1994) and Max Van Manen (1994/1990) argue that both the more descriptively-oriented as well as the hermeneutic or more interpretative phenomenological research conducted in the domain of the human sciences seeks to determine meanings. The questions posed are questions of meaning that ask for the meaning and significance of certain empirical phenomena (Moustakas 1994, 49; Van Manen 1994/1990, 23). As will soon become evident, the method I have followed is in parts influenced by both descriptive and more interpretative phenomenological qualitative research.

It is also often the case that qualitative research is not constructed on the basis of a hypothesis. Instead researchers typically have no fixed preconceptions of the researched phenomena or of the result of the research. They thus remain open to emergent meanings and questions while conducting the investigation. However, the researchers' choices on how to carry out a piece of research and the nature of their involvement with the possible research participants or the field of interest are important factors contributing to the findings of a qualitative research. Since the methods of qualitative research are not univocal, these procedures and relations are also reported on as they show how the steps and actions of investigation reach the aims of and answer the questions set for the research. Hence they likewise establish grounds for the validity of the findings as through them others can discern if the procedures and methods were used in a plausible and logically consistent manner. (cf. Green & Stinson 1999, 94–95, 96–97; Eskola & Suoranta 1996; 11–16; Lincoln & Guba 1985, 208–209; Guba 1981, 76–79)

In the case of empirical material involving respondents, the respondents are able to create research material without the researcher's strictly limiting or directing influence. In these instances qualitative research is concerned with the research participants' own views, even if the research material is considered to be gained through a collaborative process involving the actions of the researcher. Moreover, qualitative research is often concerned with a small number of cases researched for them to be analyzed as thoroughly as possible. The method could, then, be said to be inductive: moving from particular understanding towards a more general conception of the empirical phenomena investigated. (cf. Green & Stinson 1999, 94–95; Eskola & Suoranta 1996, 11–16; Guba 1981, 76–79)

What is basically understood to direct the approach and methods used in qualitative research is the research interest the researcher has and the consequent nature of knowledge the researcher seeks.<sup>16</sup> The nature of the knowledge sought depends on the type of investigated empirical phenomenon and the ontological, epistemological, as well as methodological standpoints the research relies on. These direct the methods and procedures through which findings are made.<sup>17</sup> Yet, in the end, the knowledge qualitative research supplies is considered

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16. Juha Varto (1992, 27–28) defines research interest as the attitude researchers have towards their research, its topic, its object or the studied phenomena, and its methodology.

17. The nature of the knowledge sought by research has been used, in turn, to place the different strands of qualitative research under a variety of paradigms which indicate the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator while conducting an investigation (Guba & Lincoln 1994, 105). Guba and Lincoln write: "A paradigm may be viewed as a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimates or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the "world", the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts . . ." (Guba & Lincoln 1994, 107). Guba and Lincoln refer to those categorized paradigms that are often presented and discussed by qualitative research methodology as inquiry paradigms, since they help researchers discern what paradigms mean and what sort of knowledge they seek in their research. These paradigms are defined through their ontological position; their stance on the question of the nature of reality, their epistemological position; their understanding of the relation of the knower and the known, and finally their methodological position, which is concerned with how the inquirer is understood to be able to achieve knowledge of the phenomena investigated. (Guba & Lincoln 1994, 108)

to be contextual in its nature. As Green and Stinson note, "there is greater emphasis on finding consensus within a particular setting than on generalizing data to all situations" (Green & Stinson 1999, 96).

In research the particular qualitative nature of an empirical phenomenon is first conceptualized and then brought into dialogue with more general conceptions, theories, and academic practices relevant to the research.<sup>18</sup> The research findings are also generalized,

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Following Patti Lather, Jill Green and Susan W. Stinson present a chart of the research interests of alternative inquiry paradigms. In it positivism falls under the category of predicting, phenomenological and hermeneutic research is considered to aim at understanding, whilst feminist as well as action research are instead categorized under the aim of emancipation. (Lather 1991, 7, 108 as reported by Green & Stinson 1999, 93) Following the recent tendency of the methodology of human science inquiry to be eclectic, they nevertheless point out that paradigms should not be understood as rigid conceptualizations that pose one against the other. They consider each post-positive study to be unique which makes categorizing methodologies and the related ontological and epistemological standpoints problematic. Furthermore, a single piece of research might utilize means and create knowledge that could be understood to belong to several paradigms simultaneously. Indeed they suggest that we are entering a post-paradigmatic phase in qualitative research, in which not only the philosophical beliefs of reality and knowledge, but also personal preferences, aims, and purposes as partly more aesthetic concerns of how a researcher finds the different aspects of a research to "fit" together, direct the research. (Green & Stinson 1999, 93, 98, 113) How these features crosscut various paradigms is not clear. John Smith and Louis Heshusius as well as Pauli Siljander are rather critical of such a stance, since it tends to leave unattended the logic of justification of the methods and procedures used in a research in relation to epistemological and even theoretical concerns. They find that in post-paradigmatic research the questions and methods – the technical procedures – that work towards bringing about conceptualizations as well as conclusions are then taken to be enough to justify the relevance of a study. However, methods relying on different paradigmatic beliefs constitute the object of their investigation differently and furnish different kinds of knowledge concerning it. This they might do in mutually incompatible ways. To avoid contradictory and arbitrary research, the above-mentioned scholars advocate that researchers continue to clarify the methodological premises according to which research is conducted in a logically consistent manner and that there should be continued discussion of the problems and possibilities of multi-methodological research. (Smith & Heshusius 1986; Siljander 1992) Guba and Lincoln find that different paradigmatic beliefs "have significant implications at the practical level. Paradigm issues are crucial; no inquirer, we maintain, ought to go about the business of inquiry without being clear about just what paradigm informs and guides his or her approach" (Guba & Lincoln 1994, 116). In working through a clearly phenomenological approach my work attempts to avoid the possible discrepancies that occur in post-paradigmatic research.

18. Juha Perttula (1996b) agrees that qualitative research does not usually aim to extrapolate its research findings to the population at large as its empirical material is often gleaned from a small number of research participants. While contemplating the question of how the knowledge a qualitative research provides can be generalized, he finds that the answer to the question is in theory/theorizing. But he distinguishes between two different kinds of theorizing. First of all he finds that conceptualizing is a preparatory phase leading to theorizing. In the case of empirical research, empirical material is first organized and conceptualized for the purposes of the research. Only then is the first sort of theorizing possible. Here theorizing means discerning the interrelationships of the conceptualized material. In the second sort of theorizing, a researcher views the conceptualized empirical material through the lens of a particular theory. In Perttula's view, this means that the tenability of the theoretical construction is tested and so this second kind of theorizing, for him, ultimately deals with the testing of a hypothesis. (Perttula 1996b, 88–89)

As will become evident later in this chapter, this dissertation deals with all three of these analytical concerns. However, taking Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological philosophy as the primary framework through which the final interpretation of the interview material of this study was carried out, in Perttula's view, points towards an approach concerned with the testing of a hypothesis. The aim of this interpretation

when readers of the report find them to correspond with their understanding or experiences (cf. Perttula 1996b, 90). The nature of the knowledge a qualitative research provides about the empirical phenomena it investigates, nevertheless, remains partial. There is always more to be known about phenomena than any one piece of research can illuminate. The findings are limited by the scope and nature of the research and ultimately by the views of its readers.

## 2.1 The Nature and Research Interest of the Investigation

The considerations presented in the previous section directed the organization of this study. First of all, the subsequent sections and chapters of Part I are particularly concerned with illuminating the means through which the interview material was produced, analyzed, and interpreted as well as the way in which this research report was constructed. Consequently, they aim to give a detailed picture of the methods and procedures applied in this research while constructing findings.

The research is additionally not grounded on any explicit pre-assigned hypothesis.<sup>19</sup> Initially, when beginning this research alongside of my pre-understanding of the studied issue I had no clearly formulated expectations concerning the outcome of the research. The objective was simply to come to know more about what it means to be a contemporary freelance dance artist in Helsinki (the capital city of Finland). To gain a perspective on this issue other than my personal experience could supply and to move towards a better understanding, I wanted first to hear what the interviewed freelance dance artists themselves had to say on the subject and then to contemplate the nature of their views.

I initially chose to limit my research sample to the interviews of nine freelance dance artists. I believed that this would allow me to have better insight into their thoughts and experiences than I would have had with a larger amount of interviews. In the end I even limited the interview analysis to dealing with the material provided by only four of these nine dance artists.<sup>20</sup> Studying such a narrow sample is reasonable since I was investigating the qualitative nature of the meanings related to being a freelance dance artist instead of any quantifiable features. Qualitatively divergent aspects of meaning are often already abundantly evident in a

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was not a strict propositional testing of the relevance of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, though. Rather the interest in interpreting the material in such a way was to see what sort of meanings would result from it. If this sort of a theoretical interpretation is considered to clearly mean that a research has a hypothesis, one could understand that simply believing in the possibility of finding out more about being a freelance dance artist through interviews, would be a hypothesis tested in this research. I think Perttula should be more detailed in how he defines a hypothesis in order for his position to be clear and helpful in understanding the role theory plays in qualitative research. My position, nevertheless, is that my work was not concerned with any strict hypotheses per se as it did not strive for any premeditated outcomes or findings which would have directed the investigation nor did it directly involve investigating the validity of a particular theory through research.

19. Cf. ft. 18 in this chapter.

20. For details on the choices made concerning the limits of the interview material used in the study and the manner in which the interviewees were chosen see pages 34–36 in chapter 3.

small sampling acquired through more or less open-ended interviews.

In considering this study's affinities to the various strands of qualitative research it is evident that it is most directly concerned with what are in general taken to be phenomenological and interpretative<sup>21</sup> or hermeneutic methods of analysis as well as the affiliated research interest. What these strands of qualitative research share with each other is that they both are concerned with meanings and aim primarily to *understand* the investigated empirical phenomena in contrast to, for example, predicting consequences, criticizing cultural facts, or disrupting and demystifying generally-shared conceptions of reality. Correspondingly, the main paradigmatic interest of this research is to understand the interview material and the literature the study refers to.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, the ontological, epistemological, and methodological concerns are, whilst they do not all directly refer to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, nevertheless influenced by his hermeneutic conception of human beings. Also the phases the investigation proceeded through and which were presented on pages 17 and 18 demonstrate that this research was based on a hermeneutic mode of inquiry. Following such a methodology, the researcher is not required to restrict her- or himself to static research design, but rather has the freedom to make new choices and follow new questions emerging in the process of investigation while attempting to construct an understanding of the implications the research explores. (cf. McNamara 1999, 171, 172–173) Thus, I believe that this research has followed what Egon Guba has described as an "emergent design" (Guba 1981, 79). It is formed out of the continuously revised relations and interactions the researcher has with the researched phenomenon and the material illuminating it in addition to the changing situations and contexts in which these become possible. These relations come to define the design of the research throughout the process of investigation. (cf. Green & Stinson 1999, 95; Aaltonen 1989, 151; Lincoln & Guba 1985, 208–209; Guba 1981, 79, 89)

What this study, most directly, shares with a phenomenological mode of understanding qualitative research is the objective of description. The first phase of analyzing the interview material dealt with an approach that, on an empirical level, aimed to describe it as it is. Through it what was contained in the interviews was described in a manner that attempted to grasp the meanings and the interrelations of the meanings inherent in the interview material itself without purposefully relating them to considerations or theoretical concerns outside of this material. These descriptions are found in the appendices where I give a general description of the total contents of the interview material gathered from each dance artist interviewed for the study.

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21. According to Thomas Schwandt, an interpretative approach to human inquiry refers to a general and loosely-coupled family of methodological and philosophical persuasions. He singles out some of its different strands and points out that interpretivist thinking might be understood to consist of methodologies based on philosophical anthropology, phenomenological interpretation influenced especially by Alfred Schutz's thinking, and hermeneutical interpretation in turn influenced by Martin Heidegger's, Hans-Georg Gadamer's, and Charles Taylor's philosophical hermeneutics. (Schwandt 1994, 118–123) When this study refers to an interpretative approach, it mainly refers to the latter approach of hermeneutical interpretation.

22. Cf. ft.17 in this chapter.

The more interpretative or hermeneutic analysis of the interview material aimed to gain a more general understanding of the issues discussed by the interviewees. The hermeneutic approach of this study is in fact most evident in the thematic interpretation presented in Part III, where the contents of the interviews are discussed alongside Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, phenomenological dance studies, and the like. This interpretation is an example of a hermeneutic dialogue that aims to find a consensus of possible meanings inherent in the interview material and the literature it was discussed with. Furthermore, my preconceptions and stance as the interpreter, which form one aspect of a hermeneutic dialogue, are addressed in the preface while discussing my background in dance. Throughout the research report I also describe how I understood what the interviewed dance artists said, the circumstances they lived in, as well as the literature referred to.

In the end, the general mode in which this research answers the basic questions it poses is by moving from more particular understanding contributed by the interviews towards a more generalized interpretation of what it is to be a freelance dance artist. The more particular meanings related to this issue were derived from the conversations I had with the interviewees and in which they discussed their views and lives as dance artists. These accounts became partly generalized through 1) the methods and procedures I used when transcribing the recorded interviews, 2) the manner in which I conceptualized and analyzed the interview material for the purposes of this dissertation,<sup>23</sup> 3) the way in which I understood or interpreted the interviews while carrying out the above tasks, and 4) through the ways I took the contents of the material to relate to the theories and literature applied in the interpretation. The methods followed, in addition to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and the phenomenological dance studies (that form the basic framework of the interpretative analysis of the interview material), were chosen because I considered them to facilitate an understanding-interpretation of the nature of the experiences recounted by the interviewed dance artists as well as to allow me to grasp the composition of their life-worlds.

In a sense what the dance artists may have tried to get across in the interviews became intertwined with the interpretations I made and the methods I used. But the significance of the interview material also became extended through the contents of the literature I discussed with them. The findings of this research are then of a contextual nature as they relate to the intertwining of the features mentioned above. Consequently, this research is concerned with an analysis of the interview material and the phenomenological framework, which does not aim to provide a complete picture or final understanding of what it means to be a freelance dance artist. The scope of the interview material produced by only a few Finnish contemporary freelance dance artists, my own finite understanding, the methods capable of rendering only a certain kind of reading, and the fact that both being a freelance

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23. This is especially evident in chapter 3.3 where I consider the process of transcription and chapter 5 where I discuss the re-conceptualization and re-organization of the transcriptions of the interviews to create a descriptive condensation of the interview material from each dance artist. Also the thematic interpretation presented in Part III of the study gives examples of quotations from the interview material that I understood to represent some more general themes all of the interviewees spoke about.

dance artist and phenomenological philosophy are living phenomena in the process of becoming, make that impossible. Thus the goals of describing the experiential dimensions of being a freelance dance artist, delineating the concrete practices freelance dance artists follow, and clarifying the constituents of the life-world of a freelance dance artist that this dissertation aims for, are concerned with an analysis that is made possible through the context of the research as described above.

More generally stated, one could say that what my work aims to do is to present a possible and phenomenologically-oriented as well as socio-culturally influenced interpretation of the contemporaneous nature of being a freelance dance artist. Here socio-cultural influences relate both to the tradition of dance (contemporary dance) that the interviewees were involved in as well as the local setting (the freelance field of dance in Helsinki) in which the interviewees worked. In this research the meanings, practices, and social structures these two contexts entail are understood to influence the way the interviewees relate to the world they live in and thus the manner in which they give meaning to their experiences and operate in their everyday lives. (cf. Gubrium & Holstein 2002, 58; Sulkunen 1990, 265)<sup>24</sup>

## 2.2 The Validity of the Research

In the domain of the human sciences the validity and reliability, that is, the truth-value of the findings of a study and the repeatability of a conducted research respectively, have been debated quite intensively in the past few decades (Kvale 1989, 79). The goal of this discussion has mainly been to discern the nature of the trustworthiness of the knowledge claims of qualitative research in its own terms instead of indirectly borrowing categories from quantitative research and related paradigms. Rather than finding that knowledge statements correspond to an objective world, qualitative research is mostly predicated on an understanding that reality is socially constructed, linguistically constituted, and emergent in its nature. This means that qualitative research does not attempt to uncover a pre-existing reality and that it is interested in investigating the meanings, values, and practices according to which humans operate in the world in a situation-oriented and context-bound manner. The interpretations constructed by such research are also acknowledged to be influenced by the language used. They aim at mutual consensus and an illuminative or pragmatic use-value for the social setting of the research being conducted. (cf. Green & Stinson 1999; Altheide & Johnson 1994; Wolcott 1990; Kvale 1989; Polkinghorne 1989; Smith & Heshusius 1986; Reason & Rowan 1981)

Polkinghorne describes the recent understanding of truth criteria in the following manner:

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24. This position will become clearer in sections 4.1 and 4.2 where I discuss the hermeneutical dialogue and the manner in which language conveys meaning. Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the manner in which we are intertwined with the socio-cultural world we live in (discussed in chapter 6) clarifies this position further. In addition, Part III, where the interview material is interpreted through the phenomenological framework, addresses this issue on several occasions.

The present situation in the epistemological conversation is that there is no foundation which can assure that knowledge claims are accurate representations of the real. Knowledge claims are historically and linguistically dependent attempts to provide a guide to the responses the environment will give to various human efforts. The claims are not absolute descriptions of invariant laws defining the movements of an objectified reality. (Polkinghorne 1989, 27)

Kvale qualifies the foregoing by arguing that in qualitative research validation is about making *defensible* knowledge claims. This means choosing between possible interpretations, arguing for the relative credibility of these choices and the consequent knowledge or understandings produced, and a shift from observation to conversation as well as interaction with the social world. Qualitative research validation, thus, becomes a concept related to reflexive, communicative, and pragmatic practices. (Kvale 1989, 77) Validity then also comes to lie in the skills and sensitivities of the researcher, "in how he or she uses herself as a knower, as an inquirer. Validity is more personal and interpersonal, rather than methodological" (Reason & Rowan 1981, 244).

In relation to the methodology, methods, and procedures followed by research an important question of validity is: "whether one is in fact investigating what one wished to investigate" (Kvale 1983, 91).<sup>25</sup> Indeed according to Kvale in qualitative research validation is an ongoing process occurring *throughout* an investigation by continuous "questioning", "checking", and "theoretical interpretations of the findings" as well as critical discussion with the research participants and the community of scholars (Kvale 1996, 235; 1989, 77). It is also about making responsible decisions and justifying the choices made through good reasoning during the process of investigation itself and in relation to the presentation of the emergent knowledge (cf. Schwandt 1994, 122).

The trustworthiness of a piece of qualitative research following phenomenological and hermeneutic guidelines could be generally described as a matter of the relationship between the knower and what is to be known. This orientation considers the observer and the observed to form a mutual and reciprocal relationship, in which neither can be determined without each other (Salner 1989, 50). Creating trustworthy understanding is then a question of relationship (Reason & Rowan 1981). Therefore, alongside of the method constructed for research, the way a method is used by a researcher, how she or he is related to the object of investigation, the potential research participants as well as the particular setting in which the research is conducted, and how all of these influence the researched phenomena are part and parcel of the process of creating findings.

Consequently, the researcher of a phenomenological or hermeneutic qualitative research becomes, as it were, a research instrument. This does not mean to say that a researcher is reduced to a determinate tool. Rather this notion underlines that a researcher's conceptions,

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25. Perttula (1996b) argues that the shift from the positivistic to the so-called post-positivistic paradigm in the human sciences means that a meticulous explanation of all the causal relations affecting the findings of research is no longer required. It has been replaced by explanations which, with a relative degree of certainty, correspond to the validity of the methods and procedures followed in a piece of research. (Perttula 1996b, 85)

values, morals, and aesthetic preferences are an important part of the research process. Moreover, it emphasizes that researchers are always tied to their life history, their life circumstances, and are able to view the object of their research only from a limited perspective. These features have an important influence on the questions posed by the research, the choices made in relation to the procedures followed, and the manner in which the research becomes constructed. (cf. Lehtovaara 1993, 27) My life and experiences of working as a dance artist in the freelance field of dance in Helsinki make me a certain kind of researcher then. At some points I may have direct insight into what the dance artists interviewed for this study touch upon in the interviews and at other points I might be blinded by my immersion in the field and thus insensitive to issues that someone else would find important.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, the approach of phenomenological and hermeneutic investigation that this study relies on underlines that we can never gain a comprehensive interpretation of the objects we investigate and neither of the subjective perspective from which we so do. In the end the particular perspective I hold in relation to the issue studied by this research means that another person with a different kind of pre-understanding would not make exactly the same choices and interpretations this research presents.

The manner in which I understand the subjective premises, the pre-understanding, of the researcher to direct the construction of this study is addressed in chapter 4, where the hermeneutic dialogue is discussed. Nevertheless, the fact that the subjectivity of the researcher cannot be avoided in the research orientation under discussion places heightened ethical and practical demands on the researcher. Wolcott suggests that qualitative researchers should be sensitive towards their respondents, record findings and procedures accurately and fully, offer direct evidence of empirical material, and be candid in their reporting (Wolcott 1990, 127–131). The ideal would be that the researcher would conduct her or his research so responsibly, convincingly, and openly, that it would not require any further support from external sources. These are the procedures I attempted to follow while progressing with the investigation and reporting. I also attempted to be particularly discerning while posing questions, addressing research participants, and dealing with theoretical as well as linguistic issues of the research, all of which are crucial concerns of phenomenologically- and hermeneutically-oriented research (cf. Lehtovaara 1993, 28; Salner 1989, 66–68).

As in qualitative research, validation turns into a communicative concern, the medium

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26. In anthropological studies, for example, the researcher is advised to become profoundly immersed in the field they study in order to comprehend its significance in its natural setting. This kind of experience is something I could be understood to have in relation to the field of freelance dance in Helsinki and being a freelance dance artist, too. However, David Carr suggests a negative aspect to such an immersion. He writes: "While the cognitive life of the individual owes its birth to the social context, and depends on the same context for its success, there is a negative side to this dependence. For the concepts and the methods taken over from the tradition can equally function as prejudices which skew the individual's perspective on his subject matter, leading him to grasp it and understand it in a one-sided way and overlook other aspects which make up the phenomenon in its fullness" (Carr 1986, 105). Thus there are both some positive and negative aspects to researching one's own field of practice.

of communication and knowledge construction becomes important. In phenomenological and hermeneutic research it is mainly through writing and reading that we sustain our conversational relationships and express our thoughtfulness and understanding to others (Van Manen 1994/1990, 111). The trustworthiness of research or lack thereof is also affiliated with the concept of how language communicates meaning as well as influences the manner in which we construct experience and give meaning to it. Even if I shall address the question of language separately in chapter 4, I would like to mention here that according to phenomenological thinking the text is meant to show or reveal something. Written text comes to convey meaning not only through what is said but also through the structure of saying, the rhetorical means of a text (Van Manen 1994/1990, 130). In this study I have pursued clarity in my descriptions, interpretations, and explanations in order for a logical succession of thoughts to be followed by the reader. Clarity of expression is something that especially Amedeo Giorgi and Juha Perttula underline in relation to the methods of phenomenological qualitative research (Giorgi 1985a; Perttula 1998). Nevertheless, I have also attempted to display the hermeneutic structure, the emergent nature of the investigation and the process of unfolding understanding, through the structure of this report and the sequences according to which issues relevant to the investigation are presented. In my research the hermeneutic dialogue between the researcher and the researched phenomenon is illuminated through the intermittent and reflective accounts on my position in relation to the studied issues, direct quotations from the theories and interviews addressed by the study, and my interpretative understanding concerning these.

To address the interrogative and communicative aspects related to the construction of this study further, it is important to again note it followed an emergent design. It was not stable or pre-determined. Each phase of inquiry evolved through exploring new issues that had arisen through previous actions and contemplation. These issues were examined through theoretical reading in order to better understand phenomenological and hermeneutic modes of inquiry and the nature of the objects of investigation. The interview material was similarly interpreted through a theoretical framework. Furthermore the procedures and results of the investigation were discussed with what Kvale (1989, 85) calls a "community of scholars" of the location, where the research was conducted, as well as with the interviewees themselves. The account of the research process, which is given in this part of the study, likewise subjects its validity to scrutiny and aims to provide evidence and arguments of the plausibility of the course of actions taken during the investigation. Additionally, the subsequent parts of the study where the phenomenological framework is introduced and the interpretation of the interview material is presented are evidence for validation. They continue to take a stand on some of the epistemological and theoretical issues related to the credibility of the study.

To summarize: while, for example, Reason and Rowan (1981, 243) continue to point out that in hermeneutic research the criteria of right interpretation are founded on a shared or intersubjective consensus of understanding, Schwandt (1994, 122) finds that some of the qualities that enhance an appropriate interpretation are its thoroughness, coherence, comprehensiveness, and usefulness for further application. I consider both the theoretical

considerations influencing the interpretation of the interview material and the community of scholars, who commented on the construction of this report, as well as the comments the interviewees made on some of the analysis I conducted with the interviews, to have enhanced such an intersubjective consensus. But in the final analysis it is also the public reception the completed study receives that determines its trustworthiness.

### 3 Interviews as Research Material

Interviews are often used as a method of gaining empirical material for qualitative research. As an outgrowth of a basic human interaction, namely conversation, interviewing is “one of the most common and most powerful ways we use to try to understand our fellow human beings” (Fontana & Frey 1994, 361). As is the case for qualitative research in general, the methods or procedures of interviewing vary greatly from one type of research and discipline to next. There are individual and group interviews. Some interviews are done on the phone, others at interviewee’s homes or working places. There are interviews where conversation is totally structured by readymade questions and multiple-choice answers. In other cases open-ended interviews concerned with only one theme of discussion are used. Interviews are also categorized according to the research subject matter. Examples of these are psychological interviews and life-history interviews. Kvale (1996, 9) writes about the problem of a variety of approaches in the following manner: “Until recently, the field of qualitative inquiry was fragmented into different disciplines with communication gaps across interpretative communities. With an absence of common literature, procedures, and criteria, interviewers have to a large extent had to rely on their individual creativity”. Since there is currently no single methodology or method for interviewing, each researcher relies on divergent directing principles and procedures when conducting their interviews.

Kvale (1996, 5) finds that research interviews, although generally based on conversations of daily life, nevertheless, are professional in their nature. In contrast to much of our everyday discussion their direct intent is to gain information on a certain subject matter, which affects the manner of discussion. Kvale himself is concerned with what he calls *semistructured life world<sup>27</sup> interviews* and defines them as interviews “whose purpose is to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the

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27. “Life world”, “life-world” or “lifeworld” are all translations used for the German term ‘Lebenswelt’ (Haapala 1996, 97–98). The term ‘life-world’ will be used in this dissertation. Lebenswelt or life-world is a term, which Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenological philosophy, used to describe what he often referred to as the world of everyday or immediate experiences or the world of the natural attitude. But paradoxically in his works Husserl also referred to the life-world as the realm of scientific knowledge alongside of the self-evident realm filled with human meanings that individuals live in. (Carr 1980/1974, 162–172) In fact, in reading through David Carr’s meticulous analysis of Husserl’s theories of the world in general and the life-world in particular one can distinguish three different layers belonging to the life-world. Firstly, it relates to the scientific concepts and practices effective in human life. Secondly, it deals with the distinctions and concepts effective in everyday life. Finally, it also refers to a pre-given horizon of self-evident and originary experience not influenced by the concerns of the previous layers but operating as an ultimate base for them. (Carr 1980/1974, 136–142, 162–172; cf. Satulehto 1992, 35)

Even if Husserl himself never meticulously explained what he meant by the term ‘Lebenswelt’, the concepts he related to it continued to influence future phenomenological philosophy as well as some sociological theories and through all of them the domain of qualitative research. This research, while referring to the life-world of the interviewees, deals with the second layer of everyday concepts, understandings, and experiences that operate in the lives of the interviewed dance artists.

meaning of described phenomena" (Kvale 1996, 6). This definition corresponds to the nature of the interviews conducted for this research. These interviews were examples of perhaps the most popular type of interviewing. They were face-to-face verbal interchanges with individual freelance dance artists. They aimed to gain descriptions and interpretations of the life-worlds the interviewed dance artists lived in through given themes of discussion that I, with my experience of being a freelance dance artist, thought to be germane to the subject of discussion.

In describing a phenomenological and hermeneutic mode of understanding interview procedures, Kvale writes that, "Technically the qualitative research interview is "semi-structured", it is neither a free conversation nor a highly structured questionnaire. It is carried through following an interview guide, which rather than containing exact questions focuses on certain themes" (Kvale 1983, 174). Semistructured interviews then do not rely on discrete questions presented in a distinct order even if the themes or issues to be discussed are known by the researcher beforehand. It is a rather open method since the interviewees are firstly able to speak about issues in a manner that interests them and secondly they can, through the ideas they contribute, influence the direction the discussion takes.

What can be discerned from the previous paragraphs is that alongside of the methods applied and the interviewing skills a researcher possesses, qualitative research interviewing also relies on the knowledge of the research subject the researcher has. Furthermore, what is often underlined is that the sensitivity of the interviewer towards the interviewees, decisions made by the interviewer on the spot, and the nature and purpose of the research affect interviewing to such an extent that no ready-made models or methods can account for all the factors that in the end create the interviews. The following sections of this chapter are concerned with giving a detailed account of how these and other issues presented in the above paragraphs were addressed in this research. In so doing they also describe how the interviewees were chosen, present some general characteristics portraying the interviewees, as well as illustrate how the interviews themselves were conducted, recorded, and transcribed.

### 3.1 The Interviewees

I gathered material from more dance artists than are actually considered in the final analysis and interpretation given in this study. When beginning this research I contacted all the dance artists I interviewed by first sending out a questionnaire to ten dance artists out of twenty I had chosen relying on my personal knowledge of them as representing quite diverse ways of being freelance dance artists. This resulted in nine dance artists, most of whom I was already well acquainted with, and who were willing to be interviewed in-depth for the research. However, after conducting the interviews and familiarizing myself with the transcripts, I decided to concentrate on analyzing only the material I created with four of the dance artists. I found this material to be especially rich in such meaning that illustrates what being a freelance dance artist is like.<sup>28</sup> Retaining such a small number of interview subjects also made it possible to make a more in-depth analysis of the interview material.

The following paragraphs present some general characteristics that depict the freelance dance artists, whose interview material is analyzed and interpreted in this study.

Two of the four interviewed dance artists were female and two were male. At the time when the interviews took place, during the fall of 1995 and the spring of 1996, the interviewees ranged from 27 to 38 years of age. This means that the study is concerned with the speech and thoughts of rather young, yet not extremely young, dance artists. All of the four interviewees had had a formal education in dance, while in their early or late twenties. Two of them had studied in Finland and the other two had studied abroad. Furthermore, through their descriptions of their education it is evident that they studied a variety of techniques and that at least two of them were taught choreographic skills during their schooling. Added to this most of them had periods of training or working abroad. Therefore one can view these dance artists as having a deep understanding of dance and to have acquired adequate skills to perform as professional artists. They also had not quite reached the average age, when

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28. What I here mean by the term 'rich' is that the interview material of the four interviewees, which is discussed in this research report, contains a large variety of meaningful descriptions of their life circumstances and experiences. The other five interviews did not contain such elaborate qualitative descriptions and accounts which may have been due to my lack of experience in interviewing and working with the technical apparatus related to it.

I conducted the first two interviews with a dance artist who was leaving to work abroad and they were planned in a rush. In the very first interview I was rather nervous and felt I did not really follow what the interviewee had to say. I felt I did not have enough time to change my attitude and manner of discussion for the second interview either. In the interview discussion I abruptly turned from one theme to next. Furthermore within the time limit I had set for interviewing, I had no chance to conduct a third interview with this dance artist, which I later decided to do with the rest of the dance artists.

In the case of two of the other interviewees I sensed there was cautiousness about being exposed. One was rather reserved in her/his speech and the other, although speaking spontaneously, seemed irritated about some things s/he found her/himself talking about. The former might be an example of a dance artist, who does not do a lot of verbalizing and concentrates on dancing and thus felt intimidated about having to find words for her/his experiences. I chose to study the verbal descriptions and interpretations that the interviewees gave of their lives as freelance dance artists and not to speculate on what is not evident in the interview material itself or on the subjective premises through which the interviewees spoke, so this interview material did not correspond to the purpose of the research as well as some of the others. The second, however, caused some more direct ethical concerns. I knew this dancer rather well and wondered if s/he fell into the manner of speaking that s/he had become used to while conversing with me in dance rehearsals, although s/he would have liked to speak in a different fashion in the interviews. I was concerned that the circumstances surrounding the interview and thus the actual interview situation itself might not have done justice to the interviewee. Due to our past history together s/he might have felt unable to speak freely. In the case of the other interviewees I did not sense any such a problems. The four interviewees whose material is analyzed here mostly spoke freely and eagerly.

Finally, I also experienced some technical problems. In one interview the sound was not recorded. When re-interviewing this dance artist, s/he told me that s/he was very tired and seemed frustrated about speaking about the same themes s/he had spoken of before. S/he answered rather curtly and abruptly and continued to discuss the new themes I introduced in a similar manner. This interviewee's schedule was tight and s/he was glad when the interview was finished. So I did not dare to ask for a new interview in addition to the third one that would have taken place approximately six months later. In the case of the material from another interview, after having made a rudimentary transcription, the video recorder damaged the original tape irreparably. The sound of the tape became so distorted that it was incomprehensible.

After reflecting on the above issues, I came to agree with Susan Stinson. She finds it legitimate for a

most Finnish dancers turn away from dancing.<sup>29</sup> As a result, it would seem that at the time when the interviews took place, they were living through an active phase of their career.

Although the interviewees had had links with dance abroad, they all primarily worked in the area of the city of Helsinki during the time when the interviews were conducted. The dance scene of Helsinki, then, is the basic context these dance artists were involved in. In agreeing to participate in my study of freelance dancers they implicitly showed that they considered themselves to be such. The interviews themselves reveal an acknowledged understanding of being and even a desire to be freelance artists.

In the Helsinki area freelance dance artists are typically involved with contemporary dance. These dance artists were doing so as well. They lived in a situation where their dancing is referred to as contemporary dance<sup>30</sup> and they often themselves referred to it by

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researcher to restrict her/his research to a select portion of the gathered empirical material. This is legitimate as qualitative research does not aim to generalize its findings to the wider population. (cf. Green & Stinson 1999, 94; Stinson 1994, 8) Its concern is the qualitative and even unique nature of the meanings found in the life-world of individuals. One of the premises an emergent research plan relies on is similar to the manner in which Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology regards knowledge, that is by considering it something that comes into being in situational events. There is no pre-existing knowledge that is simply uncovered during the course of investigation: rather, the investigative procedures employed create it to a large extent. Thus, as Green and Stinson argue, "the researcher cannot know what constructions will be introduced during the investigation and cannot predict before hand what claims, concerns, and issues will arise" (Green & Stinson 1999, 95).

In discarding some of the interview material I made selections on the grounds of suitability, that is, whether it suited the purpose and aims of this research which were related to illustrating what it meant to be a freelance dance artist. At some point in the investigation I considered the selection I made to be based on the most consistent and ethical conclusions I could arrive at. During the final months of completing the manuscript I nevertheless began to have doubts and found that had I re-interviewed and consulted the interviewed dance artists more intensely during the course of the investigation I might have come to a different kind of conclusion and worked with them in a manner that encouraged more dialogue and was more ethical. However, due to the richness of the material I chose to continue with and the thorough analysis I made of it, I believe this research continues to be reliable and informative.

29. According to a recent report on the state of dance art in Finland, this usually happens around the 40th year of a dance artist's life. This statistic however was concerned with all Finnish dance artists including the dancers from the Finnish National Ballet, whose retirement age at the time when the report was constructed was 42. The report acknowledges that individual dance artists work in quite diverse ways and that the length of their active careers can vary greatly. (Suhonen 1999, 11)

30. Contemporary dance has its roots in the styles of the so-called free and expressionist dance, which refer to some trends of early modern dance effective in general in Europe and Germany respectively and which were influential in Finland until the beginning of the 1960's. Contemporary dance also bears traces of the American genre of modern dance, which permeated Europe from the 1940's on. American modern dance was first introduced in Finland in the 1950's.

Now contemporary dance is generally considered to be synonymous with current western theatrical dance which has been influenced by all of the above-mentioned styles as well as the postmodern styles of dance that first developed in the United States in the beginning of the 1960's. The term, however, has been predominantly used in a European context, where it was also coined. It first emerged in Britain in the mid 1960's to distinguish between American, an often a Graham-technique based, modern dance or dance which was influenced by American jazz-dance, from the modern dance done in Europe (Jordan 1992, 1). Nowadays in Britain, 'contemporary' is a catch-all term for dance that is influenced by the techniques of both the early American and German modern dancers as well as postmodern dance, avant-garde dance, and new dance.

that term. Furthermore their education had been concerned with modern and contemporary dance. Even if all of the interviewees in their conversation did not directly describe their education to be concerned with this form of dance, the institutes they studied in are generally known to offer an education in contemporary dance. Accordingly, in a general sense contemporary dance is one of the perspectives or lenses through which the interviewees provided their descriptions and interpretations about being a dance artist.

The question of who is a professional dance artist is generally not one that can be answered univocally.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, my position in regard to the interviewed dance artists is quite simple. I take the four dance artists, whose interviews this study is concerned with, to be professional dance artists, because, firstly, they have had a formal education in dance and secondly, because after their education they have actively continued to work with dance in diverse artistic projects. At the time of the interviews they also were members of the Finnish Dance Artist's Union.

The qualifications for being a freelance dance artist, on the other hand, are not very clear. The majority of Finnish contemporary dance artists regard themselves as freelance artists.<sup>32</sup> According to a recent report from 1999, there are less than 20 steady positions for contemporary dancers in Finland and only 6–8 choreographers are able to maintain a regular position by being artistic directors of small dance companies. In practice

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The latter are extensions of earlier modern dance (Preston-Dunlop 1995, 18).

In Finland the term 'contemporary dance' (nykytanssi) started to be used in the 1980's to describe both the early European and American modern dance and its later derivatives (Hämäläinen 1999, 28). However, in Finland, apart from the influences of the earlier forms of modern, postmodern, and new dance what needs mentioning in this context is that the term 'contemporary dance' is also used for theatrical dance that is influenced by dance theatre from Germany and Butoh dance from Japan.

Despite the effort to clarify the nature and differences of dance styles within current western concert dance, in everyday use there is no consistent distinction between modern, postmodern, or contemporary dance. The terms are simply used interchangeably depending on the way in which dance is observed. (cf. Parviainen 1994, 43; Hämäläinen 1999, 28) In fact, during the first decades of the 20th century the term 'modern dance' was not used in a uniform manner. Then it was taken to simply be the dance of its time including ballet and limited to the national boundaries of Germany and the United States. It was also alternatively considered a transatlantic phenomenon in which ballet was not included. (Huxley 1994/1983, 151–152)

31. Paula Karhunen and Annikki Smolander (1995) relying on the work of Thorsby and Thompson (1994) and Frey and Pommerehne (1989) in their study on the social and economic position of Finnish dance artists list definitions on the basis of which artists have been acknowledged as artists. In different contexts artists are, for example, taken to be people whose artistic work has been publicly presented and reviewed in the media, who have an education in the field of the arts, who belong to an artist's union, whose name is found in some professional register, whose profession in the population census or by taxation is that of artist, who derive their main income through the arts, who use most of their working time doing art, who have received a grant or an award for artistic work, who have entered an art competition successfully or who are known by an art institution or the art world to be an artist. (Karhunen & Smolander 1995, 6; cf. Thorsby & Thompson 1994, 6–7; Frey & Pommerehne 1989, 146–147)

32. According to a statistic from 1993, there then were 531 unionized dance artists in Finland. This number includes ballet and contemporary dancers as well as those dance artists who also worked as choreographers and dance teachers. It also includes dance artists who held a regular position in a dance company as well as those artists who worked as freelancers. (Karhunen & Smolander 1995)

contemporary dancers and choreographers in Finland mostly employ each other. This they do through independent working associations or through the activities of individual artists. (Suhonen 2000, 21; 1999, 13, 26, 30–31)

The nature of freelance work that dance artists do differs from that of many other professions, where professionals work as independent entrepreneurs readily being able to choose and build on a number of possible assignments employers offer (Suhonen 1999, 14). In freelance dance projects it is often the case that there is no clear distinction between the employer and the employed. Furthermore, this distinction is not eagerly made by dance artists working together, since becoming an employer would mean the loss of unemployment money many of the artists from time to time depend on. Yet, if there is no employer and there is work being done, the taxation system regards the dance artists as private entrepreneurs, who again are unable to claim unemployment benefit. (Jännes 1998, 36–37)

Even if it is possible for freelance dance artists in Finland to apply for a national artist's award, which offers a monthly salary for one, three, five, or fifteen years at a time, this support is given to only some eight dance artists at a time (Suhonen 1999, 8).<sup>33</sup> In fact, it is typical for freelance dance artists not to have continuous funding or work throughout the year. Thus, they turn to other means to earn their living. Often they teach dance and do choreography alongside of dancing. This however is not done for economic reasons alone. Artistic interest also motivates them to assume different artistic roles. The history of modern and contemporary dance is full of examples of such dance artists who in teaching and by creating their own dance pieces simultaneously have created their own movement vocabulary and dance style. Finnish freelance dance artists alike have maintained an interest in searching for original dancing and individual movement vocabulary, as well as creating idiosyncratic dance pieces.

The interviewed dance artists were all engaged in doing choreography as well as dancing. Three had experience in teaching. One of them held a regular position, though restricted to a few years, in teaching. Nevertheless, all of them still regarded themselves as freelancers. In the end, through my experiences of working as a freelance dance artist and reading the interview material, what I take to be characteristic of freelance dance artists is that they perform their profession in a variety of ways and do this within limited time frames and narrowly defined goals.

As the dance artists interviewed for this study practiced their profession in a variety of different occupations and roles, I will mostly use the term 'freelance dance artists' when referring to them. However, when beginning my research I was interested in what it is like to be a freelance dancer. Being a dancer was my primary focus when actively engaged in dance, despite the fact that I did teach dance and did some choreography as well. Furthermore, in my experience the terms 'freelance dancer' and 'dance artist' were used interchangeably without any clear distinction between the two. But in the previous discussion it has already become very evident that freelance dance artists do not only dance. They work more generally in the domain of dance by teaching dance, doing choreography, and even producing

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33. The annual awards may also be split and granted for a six-month term. For example, in 1998 103 dance artists applied for awards and they were granted to eleven (Suhonen 1999, 8).

dance pieces. The interviewed dance artists were also quite aware of their different artistic roles. Consequently, they regarded themselves only to some extent as dancers but also found that all the work they did in the area of dance was interrelated. As an example, one of the interviewees stated that she could not really regard herself as a dancer:

.../I have this problem; I am not so much of a freelance dancer as I teach a lot especially now... My problem is that I haven't danced so much... I have not been able to dance as a dancer should be able to do, that is by being engaged in dancing all the time. There have been very long spells of time when I haven't danced at all. I have, nevertheless, trained and taught dance, done my own choreography and been tied to the dance world./.../I simply cannot say that I experience myself only as a dancer, since simultaneously I experience my teaching and other [dance] activities. For me they all belong to the same package./... (2F)<sup>34</sup>

The diverse ways the interviewed dance artists dealt with dance in their work will be further discussed in chapter 11.

## 3.2 Conducting and Recording the Interviews

I interviewed the four dance artists three times each. The interview-sessions lasted from approximately 45 minutes to an hour and a half and they were documented on videotape. Initially I turned to use videos as a documentary device because I wanted to make sure that I would be able to observe possible gestures the dance artists might describe things with in the interviews. Indeed, there were a few moments where a visual image of the interviewees was helpful. In these cases the gestures were described in parentheses in the transcripts. While describing some features of the performing body one of the dance artists speaks and gesticulates, for example, in the following way:

.../But then this (points to her head) has no connection with this (points to the thigh of her right leg). They are two totally different things. One could cut them apart here (places her hand sideways on her throat)/... (4F)<sup>35</sup>

However, the dance artists might have expressed themselves differently if only their voice had been recorded. After all nowadays dance artists are quite used to working with videos to document their own work. Although we were using speech to arrive at the meanings the

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34. .../Niin, minulla on tietysti tämä ongelma; freelancetanssija, kun minä en niin hirveästi ole freelancetanssija. Minä teen sitä opetustehtävää niin paljon varsinkin tällä hetkellä. Minun ongelma on se, että minä en ole niin hirveästi tanssinut./.../Minä en ole saanut tanssia sillä tavalla niin kuin tanssijan pitäisi saada tanssia, että hän tanssii niin, että hän menee siinä jutussaan koko aika. Minullahan on siis ollut aivan älyttömän pitkiä aikoja, jolloin minä en ole tanssinut ollenkaan. Minä olen kyllä treenannut, ja minä olen opettanut, ja minä olen ollut tanssimaailmassa kiinni ja koreografioinut itse... Minä en niin kuin voi sanoa, että minä koen vain olevani tanssija. Samanaikaisesti minä koen tämän opetushomman ja sitten tämän muun. Ne ovat kyllä minulle samaa pakettia./... (2N)

dance artists gave to their lives as artists, I think the interviewees were implicitly aware of being capable of turning to describe what they meant with bodily gestures, too. Yet in the end the use of gestured expression as found in the above extract remained minimal. Due to this and the methods used for analyzing the interview material the visual images of the speaking dance artists were not addressed or analyzed in detail in this research.

The interviews were held in a classroom of the Department of Dance of the Theatre Academy in Helsinki. I chose this setting because for all of the dance artists the department was a somewhat familiar place. Apart from being a place where the students of the Academy study and perform dance during vacation or non-semester time it was a facility where dance courses were held as well. At these times it was moreover a setting where both professional artists directly related to the department as faculty members or former students as well as where those who worked with them rehearsed dance pieces. Consequently, it was a location all of the four interviewed dance artists were acquainted with. I felt it was a dance-friendly surrounding and a place where I was not intruding into the private lives of the dance artists.

When beginning the interviews I had come up with some themes that I found through my experience to be meaningful in the life-world of dancers in general and freelance dancers in particular. These themes I abbreviated as dance, dance field, work, dancer, body, skills, and personal artistry. Already they imply that the interviews were not person-oriented in the sense of being directly or solely interested in the personality of the dance artists. The interviews were concerned with issues that make up the life-world of a freelance dance artist. Despite aiming for thematic or semistructured interviews whilst having the above themes in mind, I constructed a set of open-ended questions for each interview to start the interviewees speaking about the different issues. This I did to keep the themes of discussion in mind and to have a way of introducing them.

Most of the questions were posed to all the dance artists.<sup>36</sup> I asked such questions as: why they danced, what dance meant for them, and what it meant for them to work with their own body. I also asked them to describe what the freelance field they worked in was like, what being a freelance dancer was like, and to describe their body and personal dance style (cf. Appendix I). The questions included both direct questions concerned with what the dance artists themselves had experienced or thought about the issues discussed. However, I also included a few indirect questions about what they believed other people to experience or think. The questions directed the dance artists to speak about their experiences and life-world in both a descriptive and a more interpretative or analytic mode.<sup>37</sup> Along the way I

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35. . . /Mutta tällä (osoittaa päätään) silloin ei ole mitään yhteyttä tähän (osoittaa oikean jalkansa reittä). Ne ovat kaksi ihan eri asiaa. Ne voisi pistää tuosta poikki (asettaa kätensä sivuttain kaulalleen)./ . . (4N)

36. There were a couple of moments after the final interview when I realized that I had inadvertently skipped a particular question because I was so engrossed in the discussion. There also were occasions where the interviewees discussed their experiences and thoughts in a way that they answered some questions before I had asked them. Then I asked if they had anything more to say on the subject, if not we proceeded into the next question.

37. Dillon asserts that: "It is historically and critically evident that empiricism tends to adopt a rather narrow interpretation of experience, confining it to perceptual (or, when this frequent distinction is made, to sensory) experience and excluding from considerations such (non-perceptual) forms of

continued to freely ask specific questions on issues the interviewees discussed, which were not touched upon by the interview questions, and to better understand what in general they meant to say. Furthermore, before the second and third interviews I ran through the recordings to make additional questions concerned with what each individual dance artist had spoken of in the previous interviews. Hence, the set of questions that is presented in the appendices does not list all the questions used when conversing with the interviewees.<sup>38</sup>

While conducting the interviews I found that a few of the questions I first prepared were

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intuition associated with pure intellection as those which Descartes described as the “natural light of reason” (Dillon 1988, 20). Perhaps this philosophical standpoint still continues to influence empirical human sciences and the manner in which Husserl’s understanding of the aim of phenomenology, to return to things themselves, has been conceived of in phenomenological modes of doing qualitative research. Phenomenological qualitative research is often concerned with what could be called ‘naïve’ descriptions after Amedeo Giorgi (1985b, 6) and Clark Moustakas (1994, 13) or descriptions of ‘lived-experience’ after Max van Manen (1994/1990, 63–65). These are considered to be descriptions of lived-through events without attempting, for example, to explain the reasons behind them or the consequences of these events. Amedeo Giorgi also points out that phenomenological qualitative research deals with descriptions of experiences as precisely experienced (Giorgi 1992, 122). Perttula (1995) takes this descriptive attitude to mean that phenomenologically-oriented qualitative research does not advocate that participants should consider their lived life through a self-reflective mode of understanding. It is interested, instead, in the immediate experiences of its research subjects. Yet he finds that qualitative interviews aim to receive information about the life-world of the interviewee through as many qualitatively divergent perspectives as possible. (Perttula 1995, 65, 67)

It is my belief, that there is no one mode of consciousness that accords with the nature of the life-world of an individual, and that the interviewees’ self-reflection can be descriptive of the structures of their life-world. The interview material garnered in this research, I believe, possesses qualitatively divergent perspectives as advocated by Perttula. Furthermore, I even regard it to be phenomenologically-oriented. While pointing out the way in which phenomenological philosophy is concerned with descriptions of phenomena as they appear to consciousness, Hammond, Howarth, and Keat (1992/1991) also give a list of the subject matter of such phenomenological descriptions. They state that the experiences of consciousness phenomenological philosophy has reflected upon have traditionally included the following: “One important class of such experiences of things is perception – seeing, hearing, touching, and so on. But it is by no means the only one. There are also phenomena such as believing, remembering, wishing, deciding and imagining things; feeling apprehensive, excited, or angry at things; judging and evaluating things; the experiences involved in one’s bodily actions, such as lifting or pulling things; and many others” (Hammond, Howarth & Keat 1992/1991, 2). If this is what phenomenological philosophy is concerned with why would qualitative phenomenological research, whose methodology is based on the philosophical postulates of the former to a large extent, omit, for example, self-reflective, evaluative, and speculative descriptions?

In his most recent formulation of a qualitative method associated with interview material, which draws on both descriptive as well as existential and hermeneutical phenomenological philosophy, Perttula, too, comes to the conclusion that self-reflective or reflective speech as a spontaneous process is a legitimate manner of describing one’s life-world. He finds that even in phenomenologically-influenced hermeneutic research, there is no criterion according to which some empirical experiences could be viewed as more central than others. (Perttula 1998, 74)

38. Clark Moustakas (1994) suggests that ready-made open-ended questions are not a problem while conducting interviews for phenomenologically-oriented research. He argues that they are something that should not limit questioning. The interviewer should also be able to discard them and follow issues the interviewee brings up as well as spontaneously come up with questions addressing them. Therefore, the interviewer can facilitate an informal and interactive mode of interviewing. (Moustakas 1994, 114) This describes the manner in which I conducted the interviews.

too long to create an easy flow of discussion. The dance artists had to ask me to repeat such questions and it took them a while to grasp them and to start addressing the perspective they opened. Moreover, the awareness that the interviewees had of participating in research as well as the classroom surroundings, the video-camera, and the nature of the above-described questions seemed to create some sense of formality, which in the beginning pushed a few of the dancers to ask me if what they said was what I wanted to know. This they did despite the fact that I started the interviews by prompting them to speak about different subjects in ways they found personally meaningful. These are concerns addressed in the following paragraphs.

As is evident by now the purpose of the interviews was to gain material in order to understand what being a freelance dance artist in Helsinki is like. The pre-conceptions directing this inquiry were to an extent formed by my earlier experiences of being a freelance dance artist. The inquiry was directed by my study of thematic interviews (Kvale 1983; Hirsjärvi & Hurme 1991) and phenomenological and hermeneutic qualitative research methodology (Varto 1992; Rauhala 1993; Perttula 1996a; 1995) as well. Nevertheless, the material that emerged through the interviews I conducted was influenced by other factors. Vappu Lepistö in an analysis of the interviews she conducted with artists points out that it is important to acknowledge that what the interviewees say is from the very outset directed by what she calls the institutional nature of research interviews as well as the assumptions that are related to it (Lepistö 1991, 68). What this means is that in a different situation the interviewed dance artists would have spoken about their experiences and thoughts in a somewhat different manner.

Now, however, the interviewed dance artists were well aware of the fact that they were being interviewed for the purposes of research into what it means to be a freelance dancer and thus were involved in a particular research setting. This was explicitly mentioned in the questionnaire I sent when searching for interview subjects. In it I explained what I considered the purpose of the research to be at the time as well as pointed out that the interviews would be concerned with the experiences freelance dancers have of being a dancer.<sup>39</sup> Before the interviews took place the dance artists also agreed that the material they contributed in the interviews could be used for the purpose of the research as long as they remained anonymous. Furthermore, the nature of the research was something discussed after several interviews had been completed. The interviewed dance artists were curious to know more about what I was doing and what I had learned. During an interview one of the dance artists even said the following:

.../It is interesting to think what matters are related to dancerhood. Is this something that becomes clear for you through these interviews? I find your research rather interesting./... (3M)<sup>40</sup>

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39. When beginning this research and at the time when I contacted the interviewees I was interested in discerning the nature of a freelance dancer's artistic identity through analyzing how the freelance dance artists experienced and gave meaning to their lives as dance artists. While reading through phenomenological studies of dance and before conducting the interviews I became more interested in what being a freelance dance artist is like in general.

40. .../Se on siis kiinnostavaa, mitä siihen tanssijuuteen liittyy. Selviääkö se sinulle näissä haastatteluissa? Minusta tämä sinun tutkimustyösi on ihan kiinnostava./... (3M)

Apart from my previous knowledge of and experience with the studied issue as well as the institutional setting, also naturally my questions and the interaction between the interviewees and I affected the material. Kvale (1996, 2) in his turn emphasizes that an interview is an *inter view*, that is “an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest”. However, interviews involve a power structure in which the interviewer initiates the interviews and directs the discussion. Thus, as Kvale writes: “The research interview is not a conversation between equal partners, because the researcher defines and controls the situation. The topic of the interview is introduced by the researcher who also critically follows up on the subject’s answers to his or her questions” (Kvale 1996, 6). This quotation accurately illustrates how I felt about interviewing. Although there were moments when I forgot my role as a researcher-interviewer and was immersed in a spontaneous dialogue with the interviewees, I did concentrate on understanding what they said and going through all the themes I had planned for each interview in a manner that differs from everyday conversation. Although the dance artists took me into unexpected areas of discussion, I directed the conversation more than they did by posing new questions and consciously directing the themes discussed.

Indeed, one of the problems of conducting interviews is to make the interviewees feel truly comfortable so that they speak from their own perspective, are not distracted by the aims of the research, and do not answer questions in a way they might think the researcher expects. This is related to the fact that the questions set in an interview are implicit views of the nature of the questioned issue. Kvale in fact writes that, “The decisive issue – for interview questions and research questions – is not whether to lead or not to lead, but where the questions do lead, whether they lead in important directions that yield new and worthwhile knowledge” (Kvale 1996, 287). It is my opinion that the four interviews described here succeeded in this. Even if there were moments when the interviewees asked if this is what I wanted to know or could not understand the question or in a few cases did not feel they had any way of answering a question, the interviewees often spoke at length and descriptively about their views. This was due, I believe, to the rapport created after mutual adjustment to the situation.

As the interviews proceeded I was glad to see that the dance artists grew more relaxed in conversing with me and I also became more sensitive to what they said. I dared to follow up what they were speaking about in a more intimate way. I felt that as the interviews progressed the interviewees grew to trust the fact that they could speak with confidentiality and by addressing questions in a way they themselves found meaningful. One factor that might have enhanced this trust is that I promised the interviewees that they would be able to read the transcripts of their interviews as well as the descriptive condensations I created out of them. The latter they could also comment on if they so desired. As I mentioned earlier, the dance artists were curious about the research and its possible results. They seemed to appreciate the fact that research in the area of dance is called for. Hence, I think that the mutual rapport might also be a result of the dance artists desire to speak and bring forward their experiences and thoughts to the public. In the end I find that the conducted interviews correspond to Kvale’s understanding of qualitative interviews in the sense that it was possible for the

interview subjects to describe things in a manner that was meaningful to them, to emphasize things they found interesting, and to come up with ideas the interview questions did not address (Kvale 1983; 173).<sup>41</sup>

Although I found that there was a mutual rapport between the interviewees and myself, during the interviews, initially I felt a need to come to terms with the style of speech each interviewee had. This I felt even though I knew these dance artists previously and we, as it were, belonged to a mutual social group, that of freelance dance artists. Hirsjärvi and Hurme (1991) point out that besides the fact that the style of linguistic communication differs from one social group and situation to the next so too does each individual's manner of speaking. Each word an individual says has particular connotations and significance. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 1991, 85)<sup>42</sup> Throughout the interviews there were moments when I had to ask what the interviewees meant by what they said. Yet, in the end the meanings the interviewees conveyed in the interviews were something, which I mostly came to grasp relying on an intuitive understanding. As a result, both in the interview discussions and while reading through the transcripts, I have necessarily only understood things according to my own perspective, without grasping all of the connotations or significance the interviewees' speech had for themselves.

For example, Vappu Lepistö (1991, 72) points out that we often understand the speech of another only in an implicit manner and that it is most likely that we do not really understand what the other means to say as often as we care to acknowledge. Juha Perttula, while following Lauri Rauhala's line of thinking, addresses this question and infers that every individual is uniquely situated and thus has a unique pre-understanding as well as conscious understanding. This explains why he considers that no one can ever come to understand another person exactly in the way the other person understands her- or himself. (Perttula 1998, 57; cf.

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41. According to Perttula (1998, 72) in descriptively-oriented hermeneutic research, which this dissertation in certain sections is, the researcher aims to minimize intervention when addressing research participants, although such a situation always involves intervention to some extent. He also finds that the researcher ideally is a "mirror against which the interviewee can organize her or his experiences" (Perttula 1998, 72). I think the interviews reached these goals successfully after a stage of initial familiarization that any new situation and encounter requires.

42. Nick Crossley addresses this same problem, while presenting Alfred Schutz's phenomenological social theory. He writes: "A listener picks up the way in which a word is being used from what they understand of its context. As Schutz notes, however, this context is never crystal clear to the listener and their understanding of it is itself based on unexplicated forms of life. Indeed the context may involve the imaginary life of the speaker, some aspects of their culture (which may be different to that of the listener) or their personal biography, none of which is necessarily available to the listener. . . . Not only are accents and local dialects hard to grasp, but communities (ranging from families and peer groups to societies) have particular ways of saying things, including jargon and technical terms, which take form around and acquire significance from group activities and particularly literature, traditions and belief systems. To fully understand the language one would have to have lived the life that emerges out of it. This is even more so the case, Schutz maintains, in relation to the 'halo of emotional values and irrational implications' that manifest in all languages" (Crossley 1996, 83). Even if I have lived the life of a freelance dance artist and been immersed in its language, still each interviewee's individual life "context" and the institutional nature of the interview situation made me pay close attention to the meaning of their speech.

Rauhala 1993) Giorgi (1986) in writing of the methodology of phenomenological qualitative research, notes that the meaning of a situation and its description to an interviewee does not correspond to the meaning the researcher derives from them. He also says, however, that they need not be identical because in verbal descriptions or accounts the meaning a discussed event or situation has to a subject necessarily transcends the subject. Linguistic expressions are open to other people and new interpretations. (Giorgi 1986, 21) This concept will become clearer in the subsequent chapter where language and the meaning language mediates is discussed in more detail.

### 3.3 Transcribing the Recordings

The transcriptions of the interviews totaled from 48 to 89 pages of written text per interviewed dance artist. In sum there were 284 pages of word-for-word transcripts of the recorded interviews. Phenomenological and hermeneutic interview analysis relies on the spoken words the interviewees utter. They are not directly concerned with interpreting, for example, the tone of voice, pauses, stutters, or facial expressions present in concrete speech. With some help I created transcriptions where the usual sounds of digression and repetitions of words, when groping for speech typical to everyday oral expression, were either written down only once or, if seemingly irrelevant to the meaning of what was said, were not acknowledged at all. I also articulated the speech as it was said or pronounced. That is, the transcripts are of spoken language and are not transcribed into fluent written language. To facilitate comprehension in this final report, quotations from the interviews are rendered in a more readable form. Furthermore, the main text of the study at hand presents my translation into English of the original Finnish passages from the transcripts. Their Finnish equivalents are found in the footnotes.

Having said only this much about the process of transcribing it is evident that it involved making choices and interpretations. In fact, as previously mentioned, the interviews themselves already depended on interpretation. Both the interviewer and the interviewee interpret, what the other means by their speech, and continue conversing based on this premise. Furthermore the videotaped recordings of the interviews contain only a diluted version of the original lived event. The transcripts involve deviations from the recordings as I chose only to observe the words the dance artists said. And the process of transcription was a questioning search for a new expression: "Should that prolonged pronunciation be deciphered by writing one or two vowels or not? Did she really say what I think I heard her say?" Thus, as Kvale writes: "The transcribed interview text renders an incomplete account of the wealth of meanings expressed in the lived interview situation" (Kvale 1996, 50). Added to this making the statements found in the interviews more readable for the reporting and translating them into English added yet more to the layers of interpretation. Consequently, the practical means, described above, through which the recorded interviews were turned into research material came to affect the manner in which it is meaningful.

## 4 The Methodological Principles Directing the Analysis of the Interview Material

The methods and procedures of interview and transcription were only some of the concerns when dealing with the empirical research material of this study. Another concern was analyzing the material so that an interpretation of it could be furnished. The analysis and interpretation carried out in this research proceeded through three distinct stages: 1) the first stage was concerned with creating a descriptive condensation of the interview material from the individual dance artists, 2) the second stage dealt with categorizing all of the interview material according to the topics discussed, and 3) the last stage was that of delineating the themes discussed in each category and interpreting them through the phenomenological framework concerned with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and the chosen phenomenological dance studies. The methods directing the first and second phase of analysis were based on both phenomenological and hermeneutic qualitative research methodology. The third phase, that of thematic interpretation, while following the lines of hermeneutic principles was in parts only motivated by considerations found in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and in others directly influenced by his phenomenological method.

The following sections of this chapter discuss the methodological issues central to the methods used in all the different phases of analyzing, conceptualizing, and interpreting the interview material. This discussion starts by addressing some concerns related to phenomenological philosophy that support the first phase of descriptive analysis and moves on to deal with those concerns of both existential and hermeneutical phenomenological philosophy as well as philosophical hermeneutics that, although influencing the first phase of descriptive analysis, most directly underlie the second and third phases of the categorical analysis and thematic interpretation of the interview material. These methodological issues are considered mainly to reveal the presuppositions directing the procedures through which the interview material was analyzed and interpreted. But this is done also since my understanding of the methodological premises are slightly different from those presented in relation to the methods of analysis applied when approaching the interview material through a descriptive mode. Despite the fact that this clarification involves discussing some concepts unique to a few philosophers, it does not aim to be a profound analysis of their thinking. Instead some conceptions they have developed are presented in order to clarify some methodological concerns of qualitative research. This is done also to reveal how I have understood the basic nature of the two differing strands of the more descriptive (phenomenological) and more interpretative (hermeneutic) qualitative research applied in this study.

Before proceeding further, it should be made clear that there is a difference between phenomenological qualitative research<sup>43</sup> and phenomenological philosophy.<sup>44</sup> The first applies some notions presented especially by Edmund Husserl's<sup>45</sup> phenomenology and his method of philosophizing in its methodology to clarify a phenomenological approach to qualitative

research. This qualitative method deals with the procedures according to which it is possible to describe the evident qualities or the nature of empirical phenomena as they in themselves are. This means that qualitative phenomenological research aims at such a description of the empirical phenomena it investigates in which earlier assumptions, pre-conceptions, or practical aims do not influence the way they are understood or presented.<sup>46</sup> Phenomenological philosophy in its turn could in general be viewed as a tradition of thought, which aims to describe how these empirical phenomena come to appear or exist for us again without adhering to former theoretical understanding of how this occurs. Phenomenological philosophy then deals with the basic structures and premises according to

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43. Both Moustakas (1994) and Kvale (1996) maintain that phenomenological qualitative research influenced by phenomenological philosophy was initiated by van Kaam's study called *Phenomenal Analysis: Exemplified by a study of the experience of "really feeling understood"* and published by the Journal of Individual Psychology 15 in 1959. This approach was also addressed in a series of other articles published in several volumes of the Duquesne Studies in Phenomenological Psychology in the 1970's. These publications include the works of, amongst others, C. Fisher, A. Giorgi, and E. Murray. (Kvale 1996, 55, 306; Moustakas 1994, 11–12)

44. According to Lauri Rauhala philosophy that deals with the problem of the human being, for example phenomenology, creates a conception of what man is. The goal of these analyses is to reveal what the basic nature of human beings is. Empirical research, on the other hand generates knowledge on its own grounds. It portrays humans based on those conceptions of human beings its knowledge is built on. This portrayal is often a more detailed description of persons or people contributed by the concepts that the specific science used to conduct the investigation is built on. (Rauhala 1993, 68–69) He writes: "Philosophical analysis thematizes a structure of the observed object's circumstantial factors or in other words those general premises and prerequisites in the framework of which the concrete factual contents of the object present themselves from the problematic entanglement it first focuses upon. It is also said that in these instances philosophy analyzes the foundations of the concerned empirical sciences and thus makes their existence and the manner in which they approach their problems comprehensible and philosophically justified" (Rauhala 1993, 121–122).

[ "Filosofisessa analysissa ongelmavyyhdestä tematisoidaan tarkastelun kohteeksi asiayhteyksien struktuuri eli sen yleiset ehdot ja edellytykset, joiden puitteissa reaaliset asiasisällöt esiintyvät. Sanotaan myös, että filosofia analysoi näissä yhteyksissä ko. empiiristen tieteiden perusteita ja tekee siten niiden olemassaolon sekä niissä kyseessä olevat lähestymistavat probleemoihin käsitettäväksi ja filosofisesti oikeuttaa ne" (Rauhala 1993, 121–122). ] (See also Varto 1992, 31–32)

45. Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) is considered to be the founder of an explicit phenomenological tradition in philosophy.

46. There are phenomenological qualitative methods and methodologies that rely on the theories of, for example, Martin Heidegger's and Gadamer's philosophies. An example of these is Van Manen's (1994/1990) hermeneutic phenomenology that discusses a method of inquiry for the human sciences. Another example is the Finnish scholar Lauri Rauhala's (1993) methodology for the human sciences, which builds on what he most often refers to as Heidegger's existential phenomenology, although he acknowledges that Heidegger's phenomenology has also been called hermeneutic phenomenology. In contrast to what might be referred to as "pure" phenomenological description, Rauhala agrees with Heidegger that experience like description is always interpretative due to the perspectival or situational and historical nature through which we perceive and understand things. We never quite perceive and understand things as others do. Instead our circumstances and experiences come to profoundly affect the manner in which they appear to us. So, according to existential phenomenology, the aim of achieving an understanding of the universal essence of phenomena, the subject matter of consciousness phenomenology deals with, through a purely descriptive attitude is untenable. (cf. Rauhala 1993) Juha Perttula worked on this premise in his phenomenological psychology which he later came to call hermeneutic psychology. Perttula's approach will be discussed later in this chapter.

which the evidence of phenomena is discernible through our consciousness of them.<sup>47</sup> Only part of the third phase, in which the interview material was interpreted, deals with a phenomenological analysis in the methodical sense of phenomenological philosophy. Although the general methodology directing the interpretation of the interview material as well as the methods this interpretation followed will be discussed in this chapter and the following chapter respectively, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological method of philosophizing, which guides parts of the interpretation, is presented in more detail in chapter 6 of Part II. This portion of the study is most directly concerned with his phenomenological project.

Throughout the previous chapters I have used the terms 'phenomenological qualitative research' while referring to a strand of qualitative research and 'phenomenological philosophy' while referring to a certain mode of philosophizing. To avoid misunderstanding in the subsequent sections of this chapter I will continue to point out when I am discussing phenomenological philosophy by using these exact words or in some cases by writing of a distinct philosopher's phenomenology and its philosophical applications through the use of their name, that is, as in the case of Husserl's or Husserlian phenomenology respectively.<sup>48</sup>

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47. Sara Heinämaa (2000) points out that when phenomenology is defined in the above manner it is often criticized for being introspective. However, as Moran (2000) states, Husserl himself already discussed this problem. He was not interested in empirical and psychic facts. With his reductive method, he wanted to analyze the premises, the structures of an intentional consciousness, through which the factuality of our life arises and by which the world exists for us. As will become evident in the next parts of this dissertation Merleau-Ponty, in turn, delves into experience as an opening to being and the world. (Heinämaa 2000, 73–74; Moran 2000, 135–136) Therefore neither of their theories are solipsistic.

48. Moran (2000), relying on Eugene Fink's analysis, suggests that Husserl's phenomenological project consists of three distinct phases: the stage in which Husserl struggles with psychologism (1887–1901), the stage of descriptive phenomenology (1901–1913), and the stage of transcendental phenomenology (1913–1938). It was during the second phase of descriptive phenomenology that Husserl introduced his understanding of the phenomenological method, which is often referred to and even modified by phenomenological qualitative research. During the later years of this phase he became interested in a transcendental idealism, which continued to be ever more influential until the year of his retirement in 1928. (Moran 2000, 66)

The influence of a transcendental idealism is discernible in Husserl's phenomenology at least in two basic ways. He firstly was opposed to philosophical realism, which believes in the existence of an external world apart from our knowledge of it. In contrast, Husserl understood human consciousness to be constitutive of the world. Therefore, he took consciousness to presuppose the existence of the world. Secondly, Husserl found that a phenomenological investigation of the structures of consciousness, whose ultimate foundation he came to call the transcendental ego, could reveal to us the essential principles according to which our experience and consequently the world become structured. (Hammond, Howarth & Keat 1992/1991, 4–5) After 1928, Husserl nevertheless continued to investigate the historical and finite nature of human understanding and began to re-think the manner in which human beings are related to their life-worlds (Moran 2000, 66–67).

For example, such scholars as Amedeo Giorgi, Juha Perttula, and Lauri Rauhala, arguing for the validity of Husserl's phenomenological method for qualitative research, have relied on Husserl's notions that were influenced by both his descriptive and transcendental thinking. In fact, in these discussions Amedeo Giorgi refers to Husserl's philosophy as transcendental phenomenology (Giorgi 1992, 121). Perttula instead uses the term descriptive phenomenology as he finds his main concern to be Husserl's descriptive phase, even if he does refer to writings Husserl completed during the phase of transcendental phenomenology (cf. Perttula 1998, 50).

In some cases I will also speak of hermeneutical and existential phenomenology. The first is a term sometimes used to describe Martin Heidegger's phenomenological philosophy (cf. Gadamer 1988/1975; Moran 2000). The second instead is mostly used to describe the phenomenology of Jean Paul-Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (cf. Hammond, Howarth & Keat 1992/1991).<sup>49</sup> However, in the next sections of the study, that is Part II and Part III, I will no longer deal with the problem of qualitative research methodology or methods and thus will then use the term 'phenomenology' to refer to its philosophical significance as it was conceived of mainly by Merleau-Ponty.

## 4.1 A Hermeneutical and Existential Phenomenological Approach

The descriptive part of the analysis, concerned with creating a condensation of the interview material from the individual dance artists, followed a modified version of a phenomenological method of qualitative research first introduced by Amedeo Giorgi (1985a; 1994) and then taken further by, amongst others, the Finnish scholar Juha Perttula (1995; 1996a; 1998). Giorgi advocates a method of phenomenological psychology that is strictly concerned with describing instead of interpreting the experiences of the research participants. He bases his methodology on the Husserlian tradition of phenomenology, which especially in its early phases adhered to the ideal of ahistorical and apodictic knowledge. (Giorgi 1992, 121; Perttula 1998, 49; cf. Spiegelberg 1978/1960) This means to say that Husserlian pheno-

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However, while clarifying some methodological concerns, I will simply write of Husserl's phenomenology by which I mostly refer to the understanding Giorgi and Perttula have arrived at through studying the phenomenology of Husserl's descriptive and transcendental phases.

49. Heidegger's phenomenology is also at times referred to as existential phenomenology, due to his analysis of the structural premises according to which human beings exist in the world. Here I designate him nonetheless a hermeneutical phenomenologist because it was he who first and most clearly tied phenomenology to hermeneutic considerations. In so doing I follow the example of some scholars like Moran, Gadamer, and Dreyfus, who in general or at different times, call Heidegger's philosophy hermeneutical phenomenology (Gadamer 1988/1975; Dreyfus 1991; Moran 2000). By calling Heidegger a hermeneutical phenomenologist they show that Heidegger understood human beings to be primordially entwined with the world and that their existence always involves interpretation.

Even if those phenomenologists, who have been influenced by Heidegger's thought, mostly follow his hermeneutic conception of human understanding, early French phenomenologists, like Sartre and Merleau-Ponty have been called existential phenomenologists. Their work was strongly influenced by Heidegger's existential analysis (Moran 2000). In terming early French phenomenology an existential phenomenology, scholars have stressed that they did not take a standpoint outside of a natural attitude while philosophizing. Rather they emphasized and problematized their actual relations to the world. They were interested in the concrete and "ordinary experience of human beings living in the world" (Hammond, Howarth & Keat 1992/1991, 96). In calling Merleau-Ponty an existential phenomenologist in this research I want to emphasize this latter feature of his philosophy. This I do, even if Merleau-Ponty in his late philosophy moved closer to Heidegger's unwavering interest: the question and meaning of Being, in general, rather than the peculiarities of human experience (Moran 2000).

menology believed in the possibility of uncovering a universal and unchallengeable understanding of phenomena.<sup>50</sup> Giorgi, however, does not go this far with his postulations. He acknowledges that empirical situations and consequently research materials change and shift. What he does is that he utilizes some notions presented in what he calls Husserlian transcendental phenomenology<sup>51</sup> to argue that in the domain of human sciences description can be a legitimate scientific method, while holding on to the evidence of empirical material and describing an adequate range of meanings that correspond with it. In short, he ascribes a method that aims to investigate empirical phenomena by appreciating the manner in which they present themselves and are in themselves. (Giorgi 1992, 121, 124–130)

In taking some features of the methodology and the structure of the method of analysis presented by Giorgi further, Perttula, nevertheless, demonstrates that through a method that he first referred to as phenomenological psychology and then as hermeneutic psychology he aims to describe the life-world of his research participants (cf. Perttula 1995; 1998). Unlike Giorgi, Perttula meticulously investigates the possibility of keeping to pure description while doing empirical research through contemplating Husserlian phenomenology as well as considerations presented by hermeneutical and existential phenomenological philosophy and philosophical hermeneutics. Thus, Perttula also considers the postulations of Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and some of those presented by Hans-Georg Gadamer. In the following portion of the study I will not address the interrelations and differences between the latter three philosophers. I only note that all of them are indebted to Husserl's thinking and that both Merleau-Ponty's and Gadamer's thinking is explicitly influenced by Heidegger's philosophy. In this and the next two sections of this chapter I shall utilize their understanding both through direct and indirect references to point out some methodological issues that directed the methods of analysis used in this study.

Even if Husserl himself would not have spoken of interpretation, Perttula, while taking

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50. In an article on Husserl and his relation to psychology, Jerry L. Jennings (1986) discusses Husserl's searching for a rigorous philosophy that could discern durable and certain knowledge. In his time Husserl was concerned with the growing authority of *Weltanschauung* (worldview) philosophy, which held that all knowledge is relative and even radically distinct to its historical age. In Husserl's view this created a real threat to philosophy's position among and relevance to the other sciences. Husserl wanted to save philosophy from being undermined and even usurped by the other sciences. He believed that philosophy should be concerned with a clear comprehension of the essential nature of reality and thus be the foundation of all sciences. Husserl then became concerned with essences that by definition are entities unchanging over time and, consequently, not restricted to historical or cultural age, or personal opinion and logical arguments. Husserl was also concerned with the naturalistic character of the psychology of his time, which treated consciousness as if it obeyed the same laws as physical nature. Husserl thought that psychology would benefit from a rigorous phenomenological analysis of consciousness. Such an analysis would reveal the essential nature of consciousness and show what sort of an entity psychology could expect to encounter in practice. Husserl believed phenomenology could give psychology a clear epistemological foundation. This he thought since he found that a profound account of reality must include both what is knowable as well as how things come to be known. (Jennings 1986, 1232–1234)

51. Giorgi writes that, alongside of Husserl's phenomenology, his notion of a descriptive scientific method is inspired, for example, by more recent thinkers such as J.N. Mohanty, Thomas Sheebom, and David Carr (Giorgi 1992, 121).

Heidegger as the paradigmatic example of the difference between the two modes of phenomenological philosophy, states that, "Husserl sees interpretation as description, while Heidegger regards description as interpretation" (Perttula 1998, 57). Although acknowledging that Heidegger's understanding of meaning is a tenable one, Giorgi finds it not to be the only one nor to even be a transparently obvious one (Giorgi 1992, 129). In fact, as Perttula points out, what is recognizable in Giorgi's writings is a valuing of description as a more authentic way to grasp reality. Perttula himself does not take this stance nor does he view the differing phenomenological views he investigates as hostile towards each other.<sup>52</sup> While appreciating the descriptive aims of Husserlian phenomenology or more precisely of Husserl's phenomenological method, in contemplating later hermeneutical and existential phenomenology, he comes to the conclusion that description always includes an element of interpretation no matter how rigorous it may be. (Perttula 1998, 56; 1996a, 11–15; 1995, 36)

One of the central postulates of Husserl's phenomenology is generally understood to be that through an ultimately reflective procedure (that is referred to as the phenomenological reduction) philosophers or researchers can free themselves from their preconceptions and come to grasp the essence<sup>53</sup> of the phenomenon investigated. In Husserl's own project the phenomena investigated were experiences, as he wanted to understand the basic structure of consciousness upon which our relation to and understanding of the world depend. Perttula (1998, 53) gives a very general description of this reduction by writing that "the phenomenological reduction is a method by means of which the researcher tries to perceive phenomena unmediatedly and directly. It requires him to abandon the natural and ordinary ways of thinking, constructing, thematizing, and talking about the external world, and to try to grasp the experiential givenness" of the phenomena it investigates. Additionally, through a direct description and a process of imaginary variation involved in the reduction the researcher comes to discern what features are necessary or essential to the existence of the phenomena.<sup>54</sup> This method was taken to allow for the possibility of pure description and to

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52. Perttula mentions that if Giorgi considers immediate or pre-reflective experiences to be more authentic than self-reflective experiences there is no reason to agree with Giorgi. In Perttula's view both kinds of experiences are fundamental to human existence. If, however, Giorgi means to say that there is no practical necessity pushing researchers to consider their empirical material through a consciously interpretative mode, Perttula agrees with Giorgi. (Perttula 1995, 34)

53. According to Jennings, Husserl based his understanding of essence on mathematical conceptions. Jennings writes: "Essences such as these [for example,  $2 + 2 = 4$ ] are neither perceivable through the senses (i.e., "touched" by the hand, or "seen" with eyes), nor revealed by induction or abstraction (i.e., educational experiences). Yet, an essence, such as a mathematical axiom, is a real form of being that has a definite reality" (Jennings 1986, 1232). Jennings argues that in the Husserlian sense essences are something that exist only in relation to conscious experience. They are immanent, which means to say that they are grasped only in an act of reflective consciousness. (Jennings 1986, 1232)

54. Husserl himself discussed the phenomenological reduction in a variety of ways and at some point even writes of phenomenological reductions in the plural. Thus, one finds no univocal conception of it in his writings nor any clear examination of the relation of the different forms of reductions he introduced. (Moran 2000, 147) However, to generally describe the phenomenological reduction one could say that through it a person aims to shift his or her attention from a natural or everyday awareness of reality and objects to the processes of consciousness itself. Here the structures of the acts of consciousness and their intentional

reveal the essence of a phenomenon not as an empirical feature but as a new entity, that is, as a sort of an ultimate principle grounding the existence of the phenomenon and its empirical appearances (cf. Perttula 1998, 54).

However, the subsequent phenomenological philosophy that followed Husserl's first formulations underlined the idea that human beings are already attuned to the world on a pre-conscious level of awareness.<sup>55</sup> This attunement was considered something reflective understanding could not completely or finally come to terms with. Human beings came to be understood as finite beings, who are a composite of their ever-accumulating personal experiences as well as historical and socio-cultural situations. This personal and more cultural situatedness, furthermore, was presented as something that at all times influences

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correlates are attended to in order to gain an understanding of the essence of the phenomena evident in consciousness without thinking of them in the terms of the existent world (Moran 2000, 149). Everyday awareness or the natural attitude refers to those attitudes through which we relate to the world in both scientific practice and everyday life as a self-evident existing reality and through which we assume as well as perceive the self-evident existence of things, practices, meanings, and values (Heinämaa 1996, 19). While describing the nature of the phenomenological reduction advocated by Husserl, Jennings writes: "In the reduction there is only a shift of focus from studying the specific objects of a given conscious experience to studying the essential character of the acts of consciousness which "intend" or "give meanings to" various events or objects" (Jennings 1986, 1237).

Even if Husserl continuously re-articulated the nature of the phenomenological reduction and never systematically presented a complete description of the procedures through which it occurred, it is often considered to consist of two phases. These phases could be roughly described in the following way: the first phase is concerned with bracketing the natural attitude. This procedure means that we no longer consider a perceived phenomenon as a particular and familiar thing. Preconceptions are suspended and both the act of consciousness and its intentional object, what consciousness is conscious of and is evident in consciousness itself, become the focal attention of awareness. Then the actual object of awareness is no longer a concern. Rather the act of consciousness and the sense of the intentional object are evidence of a yet-to-be-known phenomenon. At this stage, one arrives at a transcendental subjectivity, the true subject of phenomenological reflection. The second phase of the reduction is concerned with identifying and describing the features that make up the ideal phenomenon now conceived of as well as searching for its essence through a method of imaginative variation. Then the secondary components of the perceived phenomenon are discerned from the core phenomenon by questioning, through intuition, what necessary or invariable constituents the phenomenon requires to be that particular phenomenon. Through this questioning process the essence of the particular phenomenon becomes delineated. (Moran 2000, 148–151, 154–155; Perttula 1998, 53–54; Jennings 1986, 1237; Satulehto 1992, 25–46)

Husserl mostly considered the transcendental subjectivity or ego to be that faculty which constructs reality for us. The essential constituents of this subjectivity were what he attempted to delineate during his transcendental phase. However, in his very late thinking he came to stress that, "the reduction consists in leading the self back to considering the original pre-givenness of the world in all our acts" (Moran 2000, 152). Thus, he seems to have shifted his position from considering consciousness as the entity, which constitutes the world, to believing in the pre-givenness of the world. It was this late conception of the purpose of the reduction that Merleau-Ponty embraced and built his phenomenology upon. (Moran 2000, 160–161, 166, 169)

55. This attunement came to be understood as the most basic form of understanding that human life functions through. It is the premise, which offers us an existential facticity in which we can become aware of something. This becoming aware of something Heidegger regards as the initial stage of interpretation. It is only subsequently that we understand this something as something, which brings interpretation to a close. (cf. Heidegger 1995/1962, 182–195)

our (reflective) awareness even if we are not explicitly aware of it. Consequently, the later hermeneutical and existential phenomenological philosophers created analyses, which showed that our understanding is always influenced by our life history and situation even if we try to set them aside.

This sort of an understanding is expressed, for example, by Merleau-Ponty when he writes that, "The most important lesson, which the reduction teaches us is the impossibility of a complete reduction" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, xiv). In his view the quest of essences is a means through which we can come to understand our effective involvement with the world and how this involvement always polarizes our experiences and conceptualizations. Although regarding the task of phenomenological philosophy to be that of describing and not of causal explaining or analysis depending on theoretical constructions, he finds that as a reflective practice phenomenology cannot reproduce or reflect a pre-existing reality. He considers reality to be something that continually comes into being through the embodied subject's shifting relations to others and the world. Due to our bodily, situational, and historical nature, all experiences are not transparent to consciousness. Our conscious experiences and reflective conceptions depend upon a pre-existing and tacit dimension. Hence, no complete or determinate descriptions of the lived world, or the experientially evident world that phenomenology is concerned with, are possible. Through the shift in time and situations in which phenomena are revealed they acquire differing appearances. Even philosophizing is a certain manner of being in a situation, that is, regarding phenomena, which affects our grasp of them. Merleau-Ponty, then, understands phenomenological philosophy, though aiming to be true to the phenomena it investigates, to influence and even construe them while illuminating them, since it cannot avoid doing so. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, viii, xiv, xx)<sup>56</sup>

If we follow Merleau-Ponty's thinking we understand why phenomenology can never provide any universal structures of experience or of the world. Instead, phenomenology is a continually recurring attempt to disclose the nature of human life. Nevertheless, like Merleau-Ponty, Perttula does not totally reject the postulates of Husserlian phenomenology. Although acknowledging that we are profoundly interpretative beings he finds that we can still aim at description. In fact, he concludes that the conflict between the phenomenological positions disperses when description is taken as the ultimate goal of descriptive qualitative research in a way that acknowledges that a completely descriptive analysis is impossible. (Perttula 1998, 60; 1996, 9–18; 1995, 32–36)<sup>57</sup> What comes, in Perttula's view, to mark the

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56. In the next part of this dissertation it will become evident, nevertheless, that the manner in which Merleau-Ponty takes phenomenology to scrutinize and portray the phenomenon it observes and contemplates is an original one. It attends to being in a manner that attempts to illuminate what being itself asks of us. In other words, it relates to phenomena in a way that phenomena themselves ask to be related to in order to be realized or to become what they are. (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 197)

57. Perttula still agrees that Giorgi's position, which prioritizes description, is a phenomenologically tenable one. He points out that existential or hermeneutical phenomenology does not exist apart from the earlier phenomenology of Husserl. It is an outgrowth of the Husserlian phenomenology and so its foundation is likewise to be found in its transcendental form. However, transcendental phenomenology does not involve an analysis of the existential grounds of the nature of human consciousness. Consequently hermeneutical and existential phenomenology does not fit into the domain of the former. (Perttula 1995, 35)

difference between a phenomenological and hermeneutical approach of qualitative analysis is, then, the *intention* of the analysis. In a descriptive analysis the described empirical experiences presented, for example, in interviews are re-described by the researcher in a manner that imparts the necessary meanings of the interviews in an organized way. Necessary meanings refer to such meaning constructions that correspond to the significance of the contents of the interview material in a manner which does not change or leave out meanings relevant to the described experiences and life situations. They are concerned with meanings without which the description of the empirical phenomenon no longer coincides with the original one. The descriptive researcher believes that a unified meaning network, accounting for the original empirical material, can be discerned and described. In the case of interpretation, however, the empirical material is approached from a starting point not found in the particular empirical material itself. (Giorgi 1992, 123; Perttula 1998, 54–57)

While relying on an existential and hermeneutical understanding of phenomenology in his descriptive aims, Perttula distinguishes between two sorts of interpretative stances. One he calls *non-purposeful* interpretation, which refers to the unrecognizable and unavoidable interpretative nature of any researcher's understanding. This is an active component of both descriptive and interpretative analysis. The other he labels *purposeful* interpretation, which takes as its starting point a theoretical approach. (Perttula 1998, 57) This, in turn, is concerned with a pre-meditated practical motive or concern through which the empirical material is viewed and understood. In the descriptive approach no such motive should influence the analysis, rather the researcher has a responsibility to stay within the constraints of the evidence found in the empirical material itself. (Giorgi 1992, 130–131)

In this study the first phase of analyzing the interview material was to an extent concerned with the above-described descriptive aim. The second and third phases dealt with a more purposeful interpretative stance. Yet, both of these phases involved interpretation in the sense of non-purposeful interpretation. What this means is discussed in the next section, which provides a rough description of the structure of understanding according to the lines of hermeneutical and existential phenomenology in addition to philosophical hermeneutics.

## 4.2 The Hermeneutical Dialogue

Perttula's view of non-purposeful interpretation refers to our pre-understanding. This is the structural component of our pre-conscious entanglement with the world, which according to hermeneutical and existential phenomenology, as well as Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, is the premise from which all more explicit understanding evolves. To have such a pre-understanding of the world we live in, which is operant before a reflective awareness of the facticity<sup>58</sup> of our life situation, implies that researchers are already pre-reflectively

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58. 'Facticity' is a term that refers to human beings' inborn tendency to take over social interpretations of the nature of their being which are tacitly assumed to be self-evident facts of life. Facticity then refers to the kind of world we find and understand ourselves to live in. (Dreyfus 1991, 24)

attuned to their objects of investigation. And, indeed, according to the philosophical positions discussed in this section a piece of research begins from a particular issue that belongs to the researcher's life situation, which becomes something focused upon, and which continues being a part of the researcher's life throughout the investigation. It is exactly the pre-understanding of the researcher that allows the researcher to be in touch with and come to understand the researched phenomena. In Perttula's view this means that researchers are intertwined with their research. They are not external observers but affect the manner in which the investigated object is perceived as well as the mode in which the research becomes constructed and are involved in the creation of its findings. (Perttula 1998, 55)

Heidegger (1995/1962) analyzes the above subject-bound hermeneutical understanding of interpretation through the concepts of fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception. Of these fore-structures allowing for a more purposeful interpretation, fore-having bespeaks the primordial involvement of human beings with the world. Fore-having comes to mean the totality of those past and present relations through which our existence at any moment is realized and in which some particular entity might become the focal point of our attention. One could say that fore-having refers to our pre-conception of having a general and familiar world we habitually live in. Fore-sight in its turn deals exactly with the orientation of awareness towards a particular entity encompassed in the generality just described. Here this entity comes to disclose itself through the perspective, historical as well as situational, and practical intention of its perceiver. (Heidegger 1995/1962, 189–192; Bleicher 1990/1980, 102) Accordingly, while intending to sit at my desk and grasping my chair by pulling it back to have space to sit on it, I tacitly understand-interpret it as something existent in my current environment and something that I can place myself on in order to be at my desk to work. This tacit understanding is formed out of my former experiences with chairs and sitting by a table, but also through my current intention of settling myself into a position and space of work.

Finally fore-conception deals with an interpretation through which the regarded entity becomes explicitly conceptualized as something. Here the conceptualization might arise through the nature of the entity itself or by forcing the entity into pre-existing categories. (Heidegger 1995/1962, 192; Bleicher 1990/1980, 102) In the case of my chair, while writing of it here I have already conceptualized it through the pre-existing category of chairs. Yet I could also be more precise in my conceptualization and acknowledge the particular characteristic this chair has in my life by conceptualizing it, for example, as my work-chair.

But to return to Heidegger and to summarize his considerations on interpretation: He writes that in interpretation:

Understanding appropriates understandingly that which is understood by it. In interpretation, understanding does not become something different. It becomes itself. Such interpretation is grounded existentially in understanding; the latter does not arise from the former. Nor is interpretation the acquiring of information about what is understood; it is rather the working-out of possibilities in understanding. (Heidegger 1995/1962, 189)

Heidegger's way of illuminating the nature of human understanding was something that Gadamer based his hermeneutics on, and he devoted much of his major work, *Truth and*

*Method*, to exploring and defending it (cf. Gadamer 1988/1975, 225–267). Therefore, Weinsheimer (1985), while commenting on Gadamer’s hermeneutics, shows that Gadamer shares a similar view with Heidegger. They both agree that interpreters project what they already pre-reflectively understand and to an extent explicitly know on the object of investigation. This projected meaning is something interpreters are able to comprehend, and which they take as a possible meaning of the object. (Weinsheimer 1985, 166; Heidegger 1995/1962, 182–188)

However, such anticipation is not a fault on the part of the interpreter. Rather as Weinsheimer writes:

The meaning so projected is also projected as the text’s possibility, something the text could mean; and if it does, he [the interpreter] will have understood it . . . Objectivity in interpretation consists not in the avoidance of preconceptions but its confirmation; and arbitrary, inappropriate preconceptions are characterized not by the fact that they are preconceptions but only the fact that they do not work out. (Weinsheimer 1985, 166)

As the previous paragraphs already suggest, Heidegger’s fore-structures of interpretation point to the fact that what is projected on an object of investigation is a general or whole understanding of the possible meaning of the object that derives from our situatedness and consequent pre-understanding. Hence, the projection is not something we personally construct. It springs forth from a pre-reflective layer of our being. (Weinsheimer 1985, 176)

The above conception of projection establishes that understanding-interpretation is a mediation between the knower and what is initially only preliminarily “known” and that interpretation takes place when this mediation brings forth an explicitly understood communion between these two. Merleau-Ponty writes that,

To say that there exists rationality is to say that perspectives blend, perceptions confirm each other, a meaning emerges. But it should not be set in a realm apart, transposed into absolute Spirit, or into a world in the realist sense. The phenomenological world is not pure being, but the sense which is revealed where the paths of my various experiences intersect, and also where my own and other people’s intersect and engage each others like gears. It is thus inseparable from subjectivity and intersubjectivity, which find their unity when I either take up my past experiences in those of the present, or other people’s in my own. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, xx)

He also acknowledges that knowing understanding is a continually recurring event. Uncovering the nature of the world is a tentative affair, due to the continually changing nature of human life. What is once presently understood falls into the past and becomes a part of our historically formed pre-understanding. Consequent appearances of entities spring forth through the perspective of this transposed pre-understanding and a renewed grasp of them is called for.

In fact, according to my understanding of them, the truth claims of Heidegger’s, (Merleau-Ponty’s<sup>59</sup>,) and Gadamer’s philosophy relate to a disclosure of a communion that is ultimately not arrived at through reflective conclusions. On the contrary, truth occurs as an event of disclosure, where something becomes self-evidently understood as a relational whole. The

paradigmatic example both Heidegger and Gadamer consider while discussing their understanding of truth is an original work of art that in a sense touches us or speaks to us in an immediate manner. Yet not everything we encounter becomes disclosed to us in this way. Heidegger writes of insufficient (pre-)understanding and the hidden-ness of entities and Gadamer writes of arbitrary prejudices<sup>60</sup> that do not allow an object to speak to us in an understandable manner. (cf. Weinsheimer 1985, 166; Gadamer 1988/1975, 73–90; Heidegger 1995/1962, 182–195; Heidegger 1996/1971, 17–87) In individual life, truth and consequent understanding are not stable. Although general schemes of understanding come to habitually direct the course of our lives new situations and particularities still need to be encountered and assessed to arrive at a communion with them. In this sense one could then say that disclosure emerges from hidden-ness and falls back into it until new disclosure arises.

From the above one comes to see why one has to enter into a dialogue with an observed phenomenon, while working out a projection and moving towards a closer understanding of it. Through this dialogue one can come to know the phenomenon better and no longer to take it to correspond with arbitrary and naive prejudices. This dialogue involves the researchers understanding of themselves. Gadamer writes that,

The consciousness of the interpreter is no more pure, transparent to itself, than is the artwork. We too are historical and in need of interpretation. We, too, need to understand ourselves. Just as art is more than art, so also is the experience of art more than pure aesthetics experience; it is a mode of self-understanding. (Gadamer 1988/1975, 270)

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59. Even if the question of truth is a more obscure theme in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology entwined with his more explicit ones, the following quotes show that he related to the question of truth in a somewhat similar fashion to Heidegger and Gadamer. Merleau-Ponty writes: "To say that there is a truth is to say that when my renewal meets the old or alien project, and successful expression frees what has always been held captive in being, an inner communication is established in the density of personal and interpersonal time through which our present becomes the *truth* of all the other knowing events. It is like a wedge we drive into the present, a milestone bearing witness that in this moment something has taken place which being was always waiting for or "intending to say" [*voulait dire*], and which will never stop if not being true at least signifying and stimulating our thinking apparatus, if need be by drawing from it truths more comprehensive than the present one. At this moment something has been founded in signification; an experience has been transformed into its meaning, has become truth. Truth is another name for sedimentation, which is itself the presence of all presents in our own. That is to say that even and especially for the ultimate philosophical subject, there is no objectivity which accounts for our super-objective relationship to all times, no light that shines more brightly than the living present's light" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964b, 96). Another passage speaks of truth in the following way: "Our experience of the true, when it is not immediately reducible to that of the thing we see, is at first not distinct from our tensions that arise between the others and ourselves, and from their resolution. As the thing, as the other, the true dawns through an emotional and almost carnal experience, where the "ideas" – the other's and our own – are rather traits of his physiognomy and of our own, are less understood than welcomed or spurned in love or hatred. To be sure, there are motifs, quite abstract categories, that function very precociously in this wild thought, as the extraordinary anticipations of adult life in childhood show sufficiently; and one can say that the whole of man is already there in his infancy. The child understands well beyond what he knows how to say, responds well beyond what he could define, and this after all is true of the adult" (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 12–13).

60. 'Prejudice' was the term that Gadamer began using to refer to our pre-understanding; the fore-structures of understanding described by Heidegger (Bleicher 1990/1980, 108).

Explicit self-understanding or the grasping of one's prejudice is also regarded as something that becomes possible only in relation to a particular observed phenomenon. In the general and self-evident stance of fore-having and habitual behavior this is not necessary. The questioning hermeneutic dialogue, then, involves the researcher her- or himself, the researched phenomena but also a conversation with social, cultural, and historical ways of knowing relevant to the researcher's understanding and the nature of the researched phenomena (McNamara 1999, 166).

Social and cultural modes of comprehension are taken to be relevant for a hermeneutic dialogue because hermeneutical and existential phenomenology consider the objects of investigation to spring forth from the pre-understanding of the interpreter, which is culturally molded. In Gadamerian thinking this context or historical tradition is exactly what the prejudice of any individual is. Consequently, all explicit understanding is directed by this historical and intersubjective realm effective in an interpreter's life, and interpretation becomes possible through grasping these cultural features. Nonetheless, the investigated phenomenon itself also relates to the world in manifold ways. To achieve a communion between the cultural pre-understanding of the interpreter and the relational nature of the interpreted phenomenon these two contexts need to be addressed and drawn together.

Gadamer writes: "Understanding is not to be thought of so much as an action of one's subjectivity, but as the placing of oneself within a tradition, in which past and present are constantly fused" (Gadamer 1988/1975, 258). Entering a shared realm where the investigated object is a part of the situatedness of the researcher, yet understood to contain more possible meanings that the researcher might come to understand, is the basis for learning more about the object. This is possible because "The historic movement that is human Dasein<sup>61</sup> is characterized by the fact that it is not determined by any definite situation, and therefore does not possess a truly closed horizon. An horizon is, rather, something into which we wander and that moves with us" (Gadamer 1988/1975, 288). Human beings are capable of transcending their current situations towards circumstances in which investigated phenomena become more articulately known.

The dialogue that takes place, while we aim to conceive of explicit interpretations of the phenomena we experience, is often referred to as the hermeneutic circle. Following Packer, Perttula roughly describes this as a circular route of understanding, as a chain of interpretations in which what is understood arises from what already prevailed before new understanding was arrived at (Packer 1989 as reported by Perttula 1998, 58). Kvale describes the circular route of understanding in the following manner:

The understanding of a text takes place through a process in which the meaning of separate parts is determined by the global meaning of the text, as it is anticipated. The closer determination of the meaning of the separate parts may eventually change the original anticipated meaning of the totality, which again influences the meaning of the separate parts. In principle, such a hermeneutical explication of the text is an infinite process, while it ends in practice when one has reached a sensible meaning, a valid unitary meaning, free of inner contradictions. (Kvale 1996, 47)

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61. 'Dasein' is the term Heidegger uses to refer to human beings.

In the chain of these interpretations each subsequent phase forms the context through which the next phase of interpretation takes place. While the hermeneutic spiral proceeds it reveals more and more of the investigated object or subject matter and simultaneously moves the researcher towards new understanding. During the course of interpretation, the pre-understanding of the researcher as well as the position she or he holds in relation to the investigated object changes. And what is considered to be the end product of an interpretative inquiry is actually an explication of the pre-understanding the researcher has on a considered subject.

What perhaps is worth calling attention to here is that in this dissertation there are no separate sections which explicitly scrutinize my understanding of and experiences with the issues under examination that I had before beginning and while dealing with the different phases of investigation. The conception of interpretation presented above (that interpretation is an explication of the pre-understanding of the interpreter) defends this position. Moreover, in this research my intention was not to understand the experiences and life situations of the interviewees in the manner in which they found them to be meaningful themselves. I have aimed at building a commonsensical understanding of the more general structures and issues that frame their life-worlds through viewing the interviews through a phenomenological framework. This goal is supported by the fact that, as a freelance dance artist, I belong to the same tradition of dance and live in the same socio-cultural location as the interviewed dance artists do. Therefore we share a common ground upon which I could to continue to work out further interpretations of the issues discussed by the interviewees and to present a clarification of the pre-understanding I had concerning these and the phenomenological framework they were discussed with. It could be said that in this research my understanding and the meanings and conceptions the source materials (the interviews and the phenomenological framework) presented became qualified and extended by each other. Furthermore, as my intent has been to precisely understand the investigated phenomena there seems little point in presenting all of the arbitrary prejudice which in the different phases of this research forced me to reconsider matters. Instead, my pre-comprehension is implicitly present in the text of this report. I understand reconsidering matters to be natural in research and this report to be a presentation of the "findings", that is, the end result of a hermeneutic inquiry – as unitary a conception of the studied issues as I could arrive at.

To describe in more detail the process of interpretation on the lines of Gadamerian thinking one could say that as long as the anticipations of the interpreter are answered, for example, by the text read, there is a flow of understanding where the interpreters need not become aware of their prejudice. Here their prejudice is evident in the manner in which they come to agree with a text. However, as Perttula (1998, 59) points out, where this flow is interrupted, prejudice becomes questionable and the researcher has to search for different grounds for her or his interpretation. In this situation the inappropriate prejudice of the researcher also becomes evident. A new cycle of narrowing the distance between the investigated object and our understanding of it must begin.

This concept takes Perttula back to consider the nature of the descriptively-oriented analysis of empirical material, in which the preconceptions of the researcher should not change the nature of the original empirical object. He finds that, in aiming at a descriptive

analysis of an empirical material, researchers need not deny their preconceptions, rather they need to identify them and set them temporarily aside. He even tries to argue that the phenomenological reduction could be viewed as equivalent to the hermeneutic circle as it, too, layer by layer, comes to discern preconceptions. The difference between the phenomenological reduction and the hermeneutic dialogue or circle seems, in Perttula's view, to ultimately be found in the fact that in the former the researcher aims to stay or always to return to the same stance of setting preconceptions aside and regarding the investigated empirical phenomenon afresh. Instead in the latter, the circular process of understanding is allowed to change the researcher and so it is through continuously revised perspectives that the researcher comes to understand the investigated object. Notwithstanding, Perttula somewhat contradicting his understanding of the phenomenological reduction recognizes that more purposeful interpretations and the non-purposeful ones cannot ultimately be separated from each other. Everything we become reflectively conscious of is absorbed into our fore-understanding in time, where it tacitly directs how we regard things and understand life. (Perttula 1998, 58–59)

What I would like to underline is that what Heidegger and Gadamer present, while writing of understanding and interpretation, is not a method or procedure, which we only use at will or stumble upon by accident. They are describing a very basic stance of human beings. Humans are understanding-interpretative in the above-described sense independent of choice or consciously-willed acts. Furthermore, as Gadamer points out; "Heidegger describes the [hermeneutic] circle in such a way that the understanding of the text remains permanently determined by the anticipatory movement of fore-understanding" (Gadamer 1988/1975, 261). In regarding understanding-interpretation in this way, our prejudices are necessary for grasping any meaning. Besides, this conception accentuates the fact that even if we become aware of some unfitting prejudice while regarding an object or entity that we wish to understand, in such a situation we would continue to proceed towards a better understanding with new or differing anticipations or prejudices.<sup>62</sup> As a consequence, much of our prejudice remains implicit simply in the way we come to understand a phenomenon. According to this line of thought, grasping our prejudice and setting it, even if temporarily aside, is not in any strict sense possible. In addition, it seems that prejudice becomes evident in the aftermath of the onset of a particular phase of exploration. An understanding relation towards an observed phenomenon already exists when we become explicitly aware of arbitrary prejudice not corresponding to or even agreeing with the nature of the phenomenon.

This makes it difficult to comprehend what Perttula means by setting our preconceptions temporarily aside, especially when his method sometimes recommends that before beginning a textual analysis one should grasp one's preconceptions and set them aside (Perttula 1998, 78; 1995, 69–72). Here the preconceptions are discerned in relation to how researchers understand the subject-matter discussed in the text before familiarizing

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62. Gadamer, in fact, points out that the hermeneutic circle is not a formal circle. It rather describes the interplay of tradition and the interpreter moving them both into new dimensions (Gadamer 1988/1975, 293; cf. McNamara 1999, 167).

themselves in-depth with the text. But in my view this sort of a procedure is not sufficient to suspend preconceptions of particular notions and the general sense of a considered text itself. Therefore, I do not quite come to agree with Perttula's understanding of the relation between a phenomenological reduction and the hermeneutic circle. In my view we are always enmeshed with implicit pre-understanding directing our more explicit understanding of different objects and phenomena.

Nevertheless, this does not prove fatal to the practical aim and procedures used in the different stages of the method of analysis Perttula recommends. It emphasizes, instead, that his method of analysis is a practical means through which one kind of interpretative reading, which nonetheless could be considered more descriptive than most interpretive readings, of the interview material can be provided.<sup>63</sup> Nonetheless, the above discussion has made evident that non-purposeful interpretation is interpretation in a rather strong sense, since it cannot be avoided and only through it does a text become meaningful to us.

### 4.3 Language as a Source of Meaning

In research when one is confronted with an analysis of textual material such as transcribed interviews and concerned with the descriptions and interpretations they contain, an understanding of how language mediates meaning is necessary for an awareness of the nature of the knowledge a study deals with and of the findings one can expect to achieve. As Marcia Salner states: "The human science researcher is awash in language, and the more intimate and profound the knowledge of the language world in which he or she operates is, the more valid the research outcome is likely to be" (Salner 1989, 61). The lineage of phenomenology and hermeneutics discussed above considers language a central vehicle of meaning and interpretation. The following paragraphs, then, aim to describe how, while relying on Heidegger's, Merleau-Ponty's, and Gadamer's thinking, I have come to understand the nature of language and what can be known through it. In so doing the next paragraphs describe the manner in which the life-worlds of the interviewees are expressible in language as well as the manner in which the meaning of these life-worlds are graspable for me while focusing on the interview texts. Having said that, they likewise come to introduce some thinking, which will aid in the understanding of the conception of the relationship between bodily and linguistic practices related to dance this study relies on, which is presented in Part II chapter 8.

Perttula points out that Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Gadamer are all proponents of a universal conception of language. What this basically means is that all these philosophers view language as something belonging to existence and do not regard language an external tool necessary for existence. (Perttula 1998, 64) Gadamer describes this understanding further, while writing of what he calls the universal ontological significance of language and asserting that,

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63. I shall return to this concern in section 4.4.

. . . language is a central point where 'I' and world meet or, rather, manifest their original unity . . . What comes into language is something different from the spoken word itself. But the word is a word only because of what comes into language . . . that which comes into language is not something that is pre-given before language; rather it receives in the word its own definition" (Gadamer 1988/1975, 431, 432).

Here language, placed as a primordial movement in between the subject, the world, and another, is considered a mediator, which brings forth a graspable, and in the case of creative expression a previously hidden or only latent, reality. Pre-linguistic dimensions are considered an inarticulate realm of being or a phenomenal dimension of the world that call for linguistic expression in order to be fully realized. Linguistic expression yields the meaningful human world we inhabit. In fact, the universal conception affirms that language is both constitutive and expressive of the world (cf. Taylor 1992).

To explain this position further one could say that the above-mentioned philosophers consider language, as an already founded tradition, to be something pre-existent to us and something, which operates as a condition of all human behavior. It structures our perception and understanding. We are then never actually placed outside of language. Shaun Gallagher while commenting on Gadamer's notions on language writes that, "our interpretative access to our pre-linguistic experience, our possibility of understanding it and the possibility of it having an effect on our understanding, are through and through conditioned by language. Language remains "the medium of hermeneutic experience" " (Gallagher 1992, 73). But what must be underlined is not that "there exists only, language, but rather, . . . that language is the mode of manifestation of being. Things other than language come to be in language" (Moran 2000, 282). By these words Dermot Moran echoes Gadamer's understanding of language and illuminates the fact that language usurps or appropriates things and gives expression to them. This it does, furthermore, in a manner that a thing calls for. Things, as it were, ask of us to be presented in language in a manner that discloses them as certain entities. And this dimension in which language appropriates things is often referred to as the extra-referential characteristic of language.

Charles Taylor (1992) gives an example of himself trying to clarify an indistinct emotion he is experiencing. When he acknowledges it as envy, he states that this term works because it is the right term. It succeeds in articulating and hence bringing clarity to what he is feeling. The sense of his emotion calls for this expression and none other, and when expressed the term simultaneously accomplishes the presence of a distinct emotion. (Taylor 1992, 250) Consequently, as Gadamer writes, "To be expressed in language does not mean that a second being is acquired. The way in which a thing presents itself [in language] is, rather, part of its own being" (Gadamer 1988/1975, 432). Nonetheless, as Taylor's example shows, pre-linguistic experiences exist as a more or less ambiguous sense of a situation or an entity. However, according to my understanding, while apprehending or anticipating these experiences, as it were, we pre-understand them through a linguistically-influenced awareness. We understand them as possibly definable and distinctly graspable experiences. Taylor even points out that the way in which things or situations come to call for a lingual expression is a *telos* that language itself embodies. Language, as an existential dimension, dictates a mode of expression, in which

the 'thingly' qualities of entities are maintained. (Taylor 1992, 265–266)

From the above it is evident that one aspect of the universality of language is that it is the expression of being. It is something in which being becomes realized. But another aspect is that, in spite of the finiteness of human beings and their understanding, which is limited by their life-history and shifting situational perspectives, language is something that has the possibility of portraying an infinite range of experiences. This occurs through time when language is renewed while applied to new situations. This again obviously involves a delay, where pre-linguistic experiences are yet not grasped in a linguistic mode. Furthermore, to fully express all possible experience in the end proves impossible as historical movement pushes previous expression into oblivion and yields yet-to-be-grasped experiences. Nevertheless, what can be said of language is that it is something, which although engulfing individual life out-runs it (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 390).

Linguistic expression is influenced by various features. It is not only directed by the 'thingly' qualities of those entities referred to, it also involves the attitude through which the speaking subject regards these entities as well as the significance the words used in an act of expression themselves bear.<sup>64</sup> In speaking a language we come to utilize words, whose meaning is formed by their relation to the other words we utter but also the totality of the particular language

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64. Dillon points out that Merleau-Ponty argues that there are no conventional signs in a strict sense. Rather all language is grounded in the phenomenal world. It is only through time and the sedimentation of words that they start to distance themselves from this ground and become more abstract terms. Regardless, the coining of a term is an event of original speech where the world acquires a place in language. (Dillon 1988, 192–193) Taylor instead shows that Heidegger finds us to be capable of turning away from the lived phenomenal ground of language in scientific study and with a technological worldview. Then we misunderstand the sense we have of pre-linguistic experiences, which always present us with a relational whole instead of separate objects or a simple resource we can arbitrarily determine for our own purposes. (Taylor 1992, 265)

Even if Merleau-Ponty considers perception to be something which at its most basic level lets the world be instead of positing it, he too acknowledges that with our personal interests and motivations we can also regard the world in a manner that is not attuned to its various features (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 102). He writes: "The relation between things and the body is decidedly singular; it is what makes me sometimes remain in appearances, and it is also what sometimes brings me to the things themselves; it is what produces the buzzing of appearances, it is also what silences them and casts me fully into the world. Everything comes to pass as though my power to reach the world and my power to entrench myself in phantasms only came one with the other; even more; as though the access to the world were but the other face of a withdrawal and this retreat to the margins of the world a servitude and another expression of my natural power to enter into it" (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 8).

What happens when we distance ourselves from the world is that we start to perceive things as separate objects, without their interrelations to other entities and the world in general. Nevertheless original or authentic speech in Merleau-Ponty's view is a gesture, which "presents and frees the meaning captive in the thing" (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 82). He compares this sort of expression to empirical language, which is, "the opportune recollection of a pre-established sign" (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 82).

McNamara contends that such understanding that has been "obscured by ideology or false consciousness" is something that hermeneutic procedures might dissolve. Following Gadamerian thinking, she finds that hermeneutics allows what has been misunderstood to speak again. (McNamara 1999, 171) Finding adequate understanding in these situations is about re-considering them in a mode in which the current relational features of the phenomenon and the pre-understanding of the interpreter are once again drawn together.

we use. Consequently, the meaning of what we say has a relation to what we leave unsaid as well as to the ways a language has previously been used by others. What influences the meaning of words is then the significance they have acquired in use, how in a particular act of speech they are used, and how they relate to other words uttered in this act and to those left unsaid. (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 76; 1995/1964b, 88) This trait of language is in turn often referred to as its intra-referential characteristic.

In everyday speech-acts the above-described features of language and the meaning its components bear are only tacitly assumed. Speech, then, could be said to bear traces of a silent significance. James Edie (1987, 49) while discussing Merleau-Ponty's conceptions of language, points out that we use language without at any point having an explicit consciousness of the structures we bring to bear. And he concludes that,

We speak, in short, with a complex determinate and already articulated matrix of linguistic structures as a background, which at each instant enables our speech-acts to take place, and thus enables us to break the silence and to say something new . . . We may use the same words as the great thinkers and philosophers, the classical writers of our literary tradition have used, but the meaning of these words is never transmitted once and for all . . . (Edie 1987, 50)

The relation words have to each other and the connotations they have acquired and come to acquire through the different ways they are used are endless. Still, the meaning of an issue discussed is expressed or understood only when these structures of language remain silent. In use the content and form or structure and meaning of a language cannot be separated. In use language becomes filled with what it means (Weinsheimer 1985, 243). Weinsheimer writes that, "The perfect understanding of language is reached when the language is no longer thematized as such but allows something else to be expressed through it. To understand language means to understand what is said and not to understand the language per se at all" (Weinsheimer 1985, 218; cf. Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964a, 18; 1995/1962, 401).<sup>65</sup> This quote underlines the fact that the proponents of a universal conception of language consider it to be inherently meaningful. Language in it itself refers to something beyond itself. Merleau-Ponty finds that our "thought crawls along with language" and that "exactly to the extent that we abandon ourselves to it, it passes beyond the "signs" toward their meaning" (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 80).

What becomes evident from the foregoing is that expressing the meaning of our own experiences or thoughts in speech or writing involves meanings others have expressed. In speaking we enter an intersubjective realm. We use a shared language for self-expression. What is more is that this lingual expression also involves an appeal to others. We understand

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65. Merleau-Ponty expresses a similar view by writing that, "Of course the very system of language has its thinkable structure. But when we speak we do not think about it as the linguist does; we do not even think about it – we think about *what we are saying*. It is not just that we cannot think of two things at a time. It would seem that *in order* to have something signified before us (whether at emission or reception), we *must* stop picturing its code or even its message to ourselves, and make ourselves sheer operators of the spoken word" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964a, 18).

language from the very outset to be a medium of communication between individuals or people (Gallagher 1992, 76). Therefore, using language to illuminate our experiences involves a generalization that makes them graspable for others while they are being recounted. Though when we contemplate our own experience in thinking, language also affects our experiences similarly: we even understand ourselves in a de-centered way (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964b, 97). Moreover, as Bleicher states; "A text, consequently, should not be examined in respect of the author's intention but in view of the subject-matter contained within it which addresses itself at us and to which we respond with our words" (Bleicher 1990/1980, 115). Gadamer comments on the same issue by writing that, "To understand what a person says is, as we saw, to agree about the object, not to get inside another person and relive his experiences" (Gadamer 1988/1975, 345).

The intention of the author like that of any speaking subject becomes intermingled with the silent significance a used language always carries with it. Furthermore, what becomes signified by the words of the author or the speaking subject is itself an entity, which acquires its nature through a plenitude of relations to the world, which can never be fully grasped (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 390). So what an author writes or someone says always means more than they consciously intended. Likewise the reader of a text or the listener of a person speaking also comes to explicitly understand only some of the possible meanings and connotations of a text or an act of speech. No total meaning or understanding is expressed in speech or can be delineated from texts. Any particular linguistic meaning or sufficient linguistic structure "is never fully adequate to bring expression to completion" (Edie 1987, 50).

Despite the impossibility of complete expression, understanding is still possible. Merleau-Ponty writes that, "The process of expression, when it is successful . . . brings the meaning into existence as a thing at the very heart of the text, it brings it to life in an organism of words, establishing it in the writer or the reader as a new sense organ, opening a field or a new dimension to our experience" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 182). In a situation, where an expression is perceived, written and spoken language discloses, so to speak, an understandable manner of being. Here the meaning of the referent is comprised of the inter-relations of the values and positions the signifying features found in an expressive gesture bring forth. This situation shared by the speaker and the listener or the writer and the reader is, nevertheless, open to the expressive, the speaking or writing subject, and the perceiving, the listening or reading subject, from different perspectives. In fact, while commenting on Merleau-Ponty's conception of language Heinämaa writes that in communication listeners or readers are only given a certain structure they themselves did not think of before, but which nevertheless already exists in them as potential structures or ways of conceiving of things (Heinämaa 1996, 103).<sup>66</sup> This re-emphasizes that no direct or pure coincidence

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66. Merleau-Ponty writes of this in the following manner: "Speech does not seek to embody a significative intention which is only a *certain gap* simply in order to recreate the same lack or privation in others, but also to know *what* there is a lack or privation of. How does it succeed in doing so? The significative intention gives itself a body and knows itself by looking for an equivalent in the system of available significations represented by the language I speak and the whole of the writings and culture I inherit. For that speechless

between understanding the meaning of things said and heard or written and read is possible. Merleau-Ponty even writes that, "the idea of complete expression is nonsensical . . . The relation of meaning to the spoken word can no longer be a point for point correspondence that we always envisage" (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 80).

What, however, needs emphasizing is that, although the "inner" or subjective sense of an experience becomes influenced by and extended with the significance of language, spoken language does not totally abstract a lived experience. According to Merleau-Ponty, the origins of speech and thought alike are to be found in our expressive bodily gestures. He takes a spoken word to be a true gesture, which contains a meaning like any other gesture. He claims that in anger, the expressive gesture that goes along with it does not make one think of anger but instead is anger itself. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 183–184) To speech inheres a similar existential dimension. Sara Heinämaa (1996, 97) points out that Merleau-Ponty actually thinks that speech first and foremost expresses feelings and an attitude towards the world, rather than beliefs and a conception of the world. Merleau-Ponty writes that, "It would then be found that the words, the vowels and phonemes are so many ways of "singing" the world, and that their function is to represent things not, as naïve onomatopoeic theory had it, by reason of objective resemblance, but because they extract, and literally express, their emotional essence . . ." (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 178). Merleau-Ponty, then, considers that in speech, a subject expresses the sense of the position he or she has come to hold in a certain situation in relation to the world (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 193).

Merleau-Ponty says still more by writing that, "The word, far from being the mere sign of objects and meanings, inhabits things and is the vehicle of meanings. Thus, speech, in the speaker, does not translate ready-made thought, but accomplishes it" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 178). In his thinking speech is not the expression of a previously formulated thought. Instead, speech and thought are lingual expressions of our relation to the world through which this relation becomes graspable for us. They are constitutive of the world we inhabit. In the former, the expression of the world is transmitted to others. In the latter, it remains understandable only to the thinking subject her- or himself.

Still, as M.C. Dillon points out, in Merleau-Ponty's thought there is an interdependence of the extra- and intra-referentiality found in language. This means to say that the meaning a chain of signifiers (words) refers to is related to both the signified as well as the inter-relatedness of the elements of the chain of signifiers and vice versa. (Dillon 1988, 218)<sup>67</sup> In

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want, the significative intention, it is a matter of realizing a certain arrangement of already signifying instruments or already speaking significations (morphological, syntactical, and lexical instruments, literary *genres*, types of narrative, modes of presenting events, etc.) which arouses in the hearer the presentiment of a new and different signification, and which inversely (in the speaker or the writer) manages to anchor this original signification in the already available ones" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964b, 90).

67. Merleau-Ponty describes this idea by writing that, "Expression is a matter of reorganizing things-said, affecting them with a new index of curvature, and bending them to certain enhancement of meaning. There was that which is of itself comprehensible and sayable – notably that which more mysteriously summons all things from the depths of language beforehand as nameable. There is that which is to be said, and which is as yet no more than a precise uneasiness in the world of things-said. Expression is a matter of acting in such a way that the two gather one another in or cross one another" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964a, 19).

the case of Taylor's example of envy this term becomes the right term of expression, since the meaning of the term presents the felt emotion (extra-referentiality) and since in relation to the lexicon of language or all the rest of signifiers it is only this term that expresses what needs to be expressed (intra-referentiality).

To summarize: what the above ideas reveal is that speech arises from our embodied, historical, and social relations to the world. Yet they also show that it is not a mere repetition of earlier knowledge or a simple recollection of earlier experiences. Speech is a creative act the process of which produces a global meaning involving the significance of word-signs and the relation to the world the speaking subject has. Although the speech of the interviewed dance artists is partly, as it were, ordinary dance artist talk, the way shared and familiar views come alive and intertwine with their more individual opinions and beliefs is unique. The words they use are invested with a particular layer of significance or, if you wish, connotations, that no other person could furnish. Hence, the understanding the dance artists share in the interviews is something, which has not previously been expressed, at least not in exactly the same manner. What is more, even if the full sense of lived experience is not conveyed through language – since a large portion of pre-linguistic experience remain ambiguous, lingual expression is incomplete and influences the manner in which pre-linguistic experience is grasped, and the way one understands the speech of another involves interpretation – it still is reasonable to assume that speech (in addition to writing) is one the most efficient means through which we have access to another person's subjective experiences or experiential life.

In relation to this, Hugh Silverman comments on Julia Kristeva's and Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the speaking subject by writing that:

The text of the speaking subject is both its direct, symbolic modality and its edges, its borders, its margins in the indirect, semiotic dimensions of language. The alternative space of language is a revolutionary, abnormal, nondominant form of expression, in which the speaking subject takes place, but where the subject is already a displaced self, a marginalized mode of expression – as in that of women, poets, neurotics... and unconventional philosophers . . . (Silverman 1991, 193)

Here the alternative space of language refers to the style of speech that comes into existence within each individual speech-act and which is not exactly determined by the meanings the words have acquired through previous use or the coded lexicons of language, its grammatical concerns and so forth. It is what the expressive gesture of an individual subject accomplishes.<sup>68</sup>

In the end the above discussion of language, on the one hand, generates an understanding that language speaks through us. It structures our world in a way in which we are not in total control of. On the other hand, the discussion also shows us that we come to add to its significance

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68. The speech of the interviewed dance artists could also be added to the list of marginal speaking subjects enumerated by Silverman as in public they mostly present meaning by dancing instead of speaking. I nevertheless do not intend to ascribe an emancipatory aspect to my research with this assertion. Instead, I want to emphasize that some novel shared connotations concerning being a dance artist are certainly to be found in the interview material as well as the interpretation of it.

through the relation we have to the world, while speaking or writing. Language lives only through being used and transposed by speaking and writing subjects or rather in a broader sense language using subjects. Consequently, one can understand that the life-worlds the interviewed dance artists live with are transmitted through their speech, since they influence the way they give meaning to their lives as dance artists in the lingual expressions found in the interviews. Of course, the opposite is also true. Existing language with its modes of expression influences the manner in which the life-worlds of the interviewed dance artists are organized, understood, and illuminated in the interviews. This latter condition does not cancel out the first, though. It just accentuates that the more individualistic and general dimension of linguistic significance intertwine. What is more, this discussion also illustrates the fact that I as the researcher cannot gain any direct insight into the meanings intended by the interviewee's in their conversation. It shows that I can come to understand the contents of the interview material only in the manner in which it is meaningful to me. This in turn relies on my preconceptions of the spoken issues as well as the meaning of the words used. Finally, the situation in which the contents of the interviews are presented is the study at hand. It forms the context in relation to which the interview material gains significance. The language used and the concepts introduced in relation to it are also constitutive of the manner in which it becomes meaningful.

#### 4.4 Implications of the Methodological Principles for the Analysis

Through consideration of the above three sections which discuss hermeneutical and existential phenomenology, philosophical hermeneutics, the hermeneutic dialogue or circle, and the nature of language it is evident that no pure verbal description of original immediately lived experiences or of observed textual material is possible. As Perttula concludes, description is always interpretative. (In this research both senses of description; that of describing lived experience and the contents of a textual material are connected to language.) Lingual expressions are contextual and depend on the specific language used, the object referred to, plus the situation and stance of the speaking or writing subject. Therefore, both the way in which the language we use expresses meanings beyond our conscious intentions, and the interpretative nature of human understanding relying on our pre-understanding and the traditions we live with, means that we are enmeshed and sustained by the culture and language(s) in which we reside. However, this does not make the experiences described or notions presented in speech or writing untrustworthy, rather they underline the fact that "human understanding – including scientific work – is nothing but a dialogue in the form of discussion" (Perttula 1998, 64).

If all understanding is interpretative, though, and if linguistic meaning is such that no single verbal expression can grasp the total meaning of the issue being discussed, how can one ever be descriptive and through qualitative analysis describe the adequate range of meanings that correspond to the original text? Perttula earlier pointed towards the intention

of analysis, which in my view is the strongest argument supporting a descriptive analysis of the interview material. So, while I was paying attention to the interview material in order to describe it, this intent influenced the way it became interpreted alongside of my pre-understanding that related to it. In its turn the explicitly interpretative phases of analysis, which were concerned with an orientation that regarded all of the interview material through the perspective of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and phenomenological dance studies, was also influenced by these latter intentions. The two different approaches of analysis could, in fact, be described as two distinct ways of reading the interview material; namely a *descriptive reading*, which nevertheless was not concerned with description in a strong sense, and a *phenomenological-theoretical reading*, which was concerned with the philosophical phenomenological framework the interpretation was conducted within.<sup>69</sup>

What is clear by now is that in the first *descriptive reading* the aim was to understand the meaning of what the interviewed dance artists said by staying with the evidence, regarding the sense of the particular words uttered through all the rest of the thoughts, opinions, and descriptions that an individual dance artist provided. In this reading I acknowledged that I never came to completely grasp what the interviewees meant by what they said, even if my aim was to understand the meaning of the transcripts of their speech according to what these transcripts themselves expressed. Moreover, while studying and contemplating the possibility of a descriptive analysis, I found no explicit criterion according to which I could come to evaluate when a descriptive analysis arrives at an adequate range of meanings corresponding sufficiently to the contents of the original empirical material. Obviously staying with the evidence of the transcripts is the basic criterion of arriving at this goal, but even here I could endlessly ponder the possible choices of re-expressing the sense of the conversation the interview material contained. I trusted my intuition and a consequent sense of when I had arrived at an organized whole which represented the original material.

In fact, many phases of the analysis could not be carried forward without relying on the anticipations or apprehensions and intuitions this researcher had on the issues discussed in the interviews.<sup>70</sup> Also the steps of analysis recommended by Perttula, which I followed,

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69. McNamara suggests that, what she calls a phenomenological hermeneutic approach, "emphasizes both the internal and external contexts of the phenomenon so that the interpreter is free to work with and negotiate both realms of the phenomenon" (McNamara 1999, 172). Furthermore, today deconstructive qualitative research often presents multiple readings "in order to fragment univocal authority, de-center the writer, and interrupt totalizing claims to "know" reality" (Green & Stinson 1999, 111). Both these concerns are somewhat influential in the approaches used in this research. First of all, the descriptive reading of the interview material was conducted in order to understand the connotations and meanings the interview material in itself contained. But it was also done to reveal, as much as practically possible, this content itself. The phenomenological-theoretical reading utilized the interview material for the purposes of a phenomenological understanding. Here it became fragmented and gained significance through its connections to the phenomenological and theoretical issues it was discussed with. The two readings reveal that several interpretations of the contents of the interview material are possible.

70. Perttula writes of his understanding of intuition by referring to the immediate self-evident givenness of objects to consciousness and by understanding that these experiences occur in the sphere of the "prelinguistic or prepredicative" stance of consciousness. He furthermore considers them to be inherent

influenced the construction of the descriptive analysis. These procedures were meant to facilitate the handling of the material, while aiming at description. Yet I came to consider them as a practical considerations adding to the interpretative nature of the descriptive reading.

In the second *phenomenological-theoretical reading* or the purposefully more interpretative reading, the meaning of the transcribed speech was discerned through its relation to the understanding I myself had of the topics and themes of discussion as well as the phenomenological and other theoretical sources used in the study. Here the intent was to recontextualize the statements of the interviewees to arrive at a broader, more general and structural, understanding of the issues discussed by them. In the end, though, both of the readings produce only a possible descriptive interpretation and a possible theoretical interpretation of the interview material. Another person would create different descriptions and interpretations, and even I would do so at another time.

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features of the descriptive attitude. (Perttula 1998, 52) Thus, he implies that intuition is basically not interpretative. Perttula's use of the term 'intuition' derives from Husserl's ideas, with which he tried, in short, to argue that what shows itself to consciousness unquestionably is what "ultimately validates all other kinds of knowing" (Moran 2000, 188). Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty emphasized that such intuitions or pre-reflective experiences are given to us in situations with a certain orientation and anticipation. In their view the self-evident givenness of objects to consciousness became particularized through the view of the situational subject and could not represent a universal or apodictic and direct insight into an object (Moran 2000, 188, 223). My understanding of intuition follows Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty and, hence, takes it to be concerned with my situated and more interpretative experiences.

## 5 The Methods and Procedures of Analyzing the Interview Material

The method Perttula outlines consists of two phases. The first phase is concerned with a descriptive analysis of interview material. Here the material produced with individual interviewees is observed and re-described separately to achieve a condensed and comprehensive understanding of it. In the second phase the findings of the first phase are brought together and analyzed as whole. Here the recurring themes and topics in this new material are delineated. Again it is condensed, re-described, and subsequently discussed in relation to relevant literature and theories. (Perttula 1995, 91–95) <sup>71</sup> This study deals with only the first phase of Perttula's hermeneutic method, which has a mainly descriptive aim.

Even if I seemingly regard non-purposeful interpretation as being interpretation in a stronger sense than Perttula does, there were several reasons for adhering to this first phase advocated by Perttula. First of all, the interview material was concerned with how the interviewed freelance dance artists experienced their lives as dance artists and how they gave meaning to these experiences through their speech. Both Giorgi and Perttula underline that the qualitative research they are concerned with is not exactly interested in shared facts, but rather in the linguistic meanings that depict how empirical phenomenon appear to the research subjects (Giorgi 1986, 8, 16; Perttula 1998, 27). <sup>72</sup> In spite of a general or factual manner in which the things the interviewees discussed are regarded, how they experienced and gave meaning to them in the interviews, are given the status of reality, then. They are taken to be a legitimate point of departure for research. (Giorgi 1994, 192) When dealing with experiences and the meanings the interviewees ascribe to these experiences Perttula finds that a researcher must take these experiences and the description of them as true. He does this because he considers individuals to basically be the most competent persons to discern the nature of their experiences. (Perttula 1996b, 93) This understanding is to a large extent a premise of the interpretative analysis as well. There the truth-value or trustworthiness of the descriptions and interpretations provided by the interview material was

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71. Kvale describes the meaning of condensation in an illuminating fashion: "Meaning condensation entails an abridgement of the meanings expressed by the interviewees into shorter formulations. Long statements are compressed into briefer statements in which the main sense of what is said is rephrased in a few words. Meaning condensation thus involves a reduction of large interview texts into briefer, more succinct formulations" (Kvale 1996, 192).

72. Perttula (1998) points out that in the philosophical sense of phenomenology, phenomena do not appear to individuals in any direct manner. Rather they presuppose the use of certain phenomenological methods advocated by phenomenological philosophers. The concepts of phenomenon and experience, then, are not commensurate. Perttula uses the term phenomena only when referring to such meanings that are understood through a philosophical phenomenological method. He uses the terms experience, experiential meaning, and empirical phenomena when referring to individual consciousness that reveals itself directly to a person in everyday life. (Perttula 1998, 40)

mostly not speculated on either.

The concepts above show that the singularity of each individual's experiences is appreciated in the approach suggested by Perttula. The first phase of Perttula's method is in fact concerned with an idiographic analysis (Perttula 1998, 26; 1995, 30). This means that the interview material is dealt with in an individually-oriented way. Perttula contrasts this orientation with variable-oriented methods. In the latter the researcher is interested in the ways variables are intermingled in the whole sample. Idiographic methods refer to procedures through which the variables form individual configurations. (Perttula 1998, 26)

Following an idiographic orientation in the first phase of analysis nevertheless does not mean, in the case of this research, that the identity or the personality of the interviewees was an issue. The scope of the research is restricted to the transcripts of the interviews, which are limited textual material. Consequently, it is not exactly concerned with, who the interviewees are, even if the interview material inherently displays features of their personality or identity.<sup>73</sup> The idiographic approach means rather that the material from each interviewee is viewed separately to enable me to better understand the meanings it (the textual interview material) expresses. As previously noted the descriptions and interpretations contained by the interview material become what they are partly through the relations of the words of a specific act of speech. What I find the idiographic approach used in this study to be able to do to an extent, then, is to address the connotations inherent in the speech of each individual dance artist. I want to underline the fact that it can only do this to a certain extent, since the original speech-acts that took place during the actual event of interviewing are not the direct concern of this study. The recording and transcription altered the speech somewhat and so reduced the silent or tacit significance of the original interview speech. The transcripts furthermore only very rarely deal with the non-verbal or pre-linguistic aspects of the communication taking place during the interviews. Clearly the way I came to understand the contents of the interview material afforded only a possible reading of the meanings and connotations it contains. Therefore, here the idiographic approach neither means that this research is directly concerned with discerning what the different experiences and life situations discussed in the interviews meant for the interviewed dance artists themselves even if the interview material is considered to be depictive of their life-worlds. As stated before, in addition to the above reasons related to the procedures the investigation followed, this is the case also since lived experience is not fully expressible in language and since I as the researcher hold an interpretative stance in relation to the interview material.<sup>74</sup>

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73. Weinsheimer points out that hermeneutic interpretation is concerned precisely with the interpretation of texts (Weinsheimer 1985). Kvale also argues that in hermeneutic interpretation the text is regarded as an autonomous entity. This means that the interpretation of a text or a transcribed interview, "should stick to the content of the statements and try to understand what they express about the life-world of the subject. The biography of the individual and psychological theories about the theme are of subordinate importance here; what matters is to deepen and extend the autonomous meaning of the interview statements" (Kvale 1996, 49).

74. Both Van Manen (1994/1990) and Moustakas (1994) argue that phenomenological qualitative research is person-oriented. Moustakas describes this, for example, by writing that, "The aim is to determine what

The most important practical reason for creating condensed descriptions of the interview material from the individual artists was that they come to contextualize the second phase of analysis. As all of the interview material was too long to be presented in this report, these descriptive narratives represent the complete individual interviews and offer an overview of the context from which the quotations used in thematic interpretations are taken. This descriptive reading also made me familiarize myself in-depth with the interview material and supplied the topics of discussion through which the interpretative reading was conducted.

In the second phase of analysis I decided not to follow further the method suggested by Perttula as, in my view, in its later phases, while searching for those meaning relations that are shared in the whole material and creating meaning networks or narratives out of these meanings, it is rather rigid. The conceptualizations of this phase of analysis condense and theorize about the interview material through delineating the interrelations of the meanings to such an extent that it hinders a rich and fluent interpretation affiliated with a chosen theoretical framework. As I chose to have a phenomenological framework for the interpretation, following a different sort of analysis left more freedom to search for links between the interview material and the phenomenological framework. I acknowledge that in regarding the entire interview material and interpreting it through the phenomenological framework I moved beyond the manifest meanings of the interview text and even left some of the meanings it contained unexamined. Nevertheless, as the purpose of this research, alongside of understanding what the interviewees said, was to continue and enrich the domain of phenomenological dance studies, perhaps a more speculative interpretation of the interview material from the phenomenological perspective was called for.

## 5.1 The Descriptive Reading

The first part of Perttula's method follows seven distinctly described phases of analysis, which end in a possible descriptive meaning network of the material from each interviewee. These phases involve practical measures to facilitate the handling of the interview material while aiming at a descriptive interpretation of it. The following paragraphs describe the steps of the method and the corresponding steps taken in this study. Together with discussing the steps of analysis, examples of the material created during the course of this analysis are presented in the appendices to give evidence of monitoring of the analysis.

1) Perttula describes in the following manner what the first step involves: "After the research material is transcribed, the researcher becomes acquainted with the material as open-mindedly as possible. The researcher begins the psychological bracketing of the thematized empirical phenomenon under examination" (Perttula 1998, 78). The researchers set aside their preconceptions concerning the studied issue. Only then do they familiarize

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an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it" (Moustakas 1994, 13). As is evident by now my research does not share this assumption or purpose.

themselves with the material. As I did not quite believe that the measures advocated by Perttula<sup>75</sup> would help me set my preconceptions aside, I simply began reading the interview material as open-mindedly as possible. In my view this meant that I tried to grasp the sense and meanings categorically expressed in the interview material gathered from each dance artist. I tried to avoid relating what was said in the interviews to how I thought about the issues discussed. But sometimes the spoken language was so broken and allusive that I could not avoid speculating on what was said to achieve a meaningful sense of the transcripts. This does not mean, though, that I attempted to arrive at a unitary meaning of things said everywhere. The interviewees also spoke in contradictory terms. As an example, one of the dance artists speaks of his relation to dance as an occupation or profession first in the following manner:

.../I have in fact thought about dance as a profession. In a way I do not experience it as a profession for myself. I do not feel it is such a job that I do to earn money, perhaps because I do not get money when I do it. But this was not the point. Rather it is somehow a thing of the spiritual world in the sense that it is and probably always has been very characteristic of me to move. I've always been very sporty./... (1M)<sup>76</sup>

Then in another section of the interview he speaks of enjoying having dance as his occupation, his job. And even suggests that having such a profession is very motivating for him, since it gives him a social position and possibly a sense of belonging. Consequently he shows that in some respects he does indeed find that dance is a profession for him.

.../It is almost – very much that work is for a person./.../If a person does not have work, it is a rather tough thing at least in current society. So as such, the fact that one has acquired a profession for oneself, sometimes even jobs, but in principle a profession, that one has an occupation... somehow it just is... That you can address yourself, that I have an occupation and such, is also a very motivating thing. I do not know if it has to do with a sense of belonging or something./... (1M)<sup>77</sup>

What this example shows is that when considering matters at different moments and in different contexts the interviewed dance artists also gave different interpretations of the same issue they discussed. In addition, at times these views were such that they could not in any way be found to square with each other. In the final meaning networks these disparate

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75. See pages 59–61.

76. .../Minä olen itse asiassa miettinyt tätä tanssia ammattina. Niin, minä en jotenkin koe sitä tietyllä tavalla itselleni ammatiksi. Minä en koe, että se on asia, siis sellainen ammatti, mitä minä teen, mistä minä saan rahaa – johtuu ehkä siitä, että minä en saa siitä rahaa, kun minä teen sitä. Mutta se ei ollut nyt se pointti. Vaan se on jotenkin henkimaailman juttu siinä mielessä että mitä se on varmaan aina vaan ollut jotenkin niin hirveän luonteenomaista liikkoa. Minä olen aina ollut hirveän liikunnallinen./... (1M)

77. .../Se on melkein – hirveän paljon se on ihmiselle se työ./.../Jos ihmisellä ei ole työtä, se on kyllä aika rankka juttu ainakin nyky-yhteiskunnassa. Niin sinänsä se, että nyt on hankkinut itsellensä ammatin – joskus jopa työpaikkoja – mutta ammatin periaatteessa, että on työ... niin se on jotenkin vaan niin... Se että voi niin kuin tituleerata itsensä, että minulla on ammatti, ja tällaista, niin sekini on hirveän motivoiva juttu. Minä en tiedä onko se jotain yhteenkuulumisen tunnetta tai jotain./... (1M)

views are presented as such. Nonetheless, in familiarizing myself with the material I read it through a few times.

2) The second step deals with delineating and classifying the themes referring to the central issues of the research material. The purpose of classifying the themes was to discern the constituents of the life-world of the interviewed dance artists. These themes were topics or issues the contents of the interview material related to. (Perttula 1998, 78, 79) In this section of the analysis I re-read the interview material and tried to delineate the issues that seemed to be focal to the discussion. Through this reading I named them as: 1) life history in dance, 2) view of dance, 3) meaning of dance in life lived, 4) view of dancer, dance teacher, and choreographer, 5) development as dance artist, 6) self-image as dance artist, 7) relationship to the body, 8) training and technique, 9) teaching, rehearsing, and performing dance, 10) relation to choreographer and other dancers, 11) relation to audience and critics and 12) relation to dance society and the freelance field. Keeping to rather broad themes allowed me to consider the material in its entirety. These themes of discussion were found in all of the interviews.

Perttula (1998, 78) mentions that the classifying themes should not bear a direct relation to the interview questions. This I take to mean that the interview material should be allowed to speak for itself and not to be taken to simply or directly answer the interview questions and thus to hold on to the preconceptions of the researcher. Even if I did not have the original questions in mind while delineating the themes they overlapped with some of the questions. I asked the interviewees, for example, to speak about what their view of dance was. This became the basis, from which most of the accounts that relate to their view of dance, arose. I also asked what dance meant to them. This directed most of the discussion relating to the meaning of dance in life lived. Moreover, I asked what they perceived the freelance dance field to be like. This directed that part of the interview conversation through which I came to delineate the theme of the dance artists' relation to the dance society and freelance field of dance. These themes were, nonetheless, not only discussed while the questions I mentioned were addressed. They were spoken of when other questions were dealt with as well. In the end, while the classifying themes were outlined through reading the interview material, they were also influenced by the initial interview questions though not restricted by them.

3) In the third step the interview material is divided into meaning units or meaning relations. Unlike Giorgi, Perttula begins to use the term meaning relations at this point. By this he wants to emphasize that a sequence of uttered words expresses the meaning of something, as in the meaning an event has had for an interviewee (Perttula 1998, 79). Meaning units are constituents of the interview material which in themselves express an understandable meaning. These units are then, as it were, portions of the text that can be regarded as meaningful by themselves even if they are defined and seen in relation to the whole material (Perttula 1995, 72).

Here I analyzed the material from each dance artist separately by distinguishing meaning units and separating them by marking a slash (/) where each unit ended and the next began. The basic criterion of this procedure is that a change in the subject of discussion marks the end of one meaning unit and the beginning of the next. In spite of that, ultimately this

separation relies on the researcher's intuition. Perttula points out that this kind of intuition is related to the understanding the researcher has of the basic structure of the empirical phenomenon, but also with the views expressed in the material itself (Perttula 1998, 79). At this point I, similarly, chose to separate meanings units from the text according to the ideas found in the text itself but also according to what I knew through my experiences of being a freelance dance artist to be concerns of one subject of discussion and what belonged to another.

4) In the fourth step the analysis of the interview text of each meaning unit is transformed into the general language of the discipline under which the research is conducted. Here the researcher should avoid theory-laden words and use unambiguous and transparent verbalization. What is aimed at is to clearly and simply express the necessary and sufficient ideas contained in the original meaning unit. Perttula acknowledges that the researcher has to find a balance between being too careful or too bold in creating these transformations. In the case of the former the researcher will only repeat the verbal form of the meaning unit whilst in the case of the latter the researcher might move from a descriptive stance to an interpretative one. (Perttula 1998, 79, 80, 81; 1995, 74)

In Perttula's examples the transformations are very concise and matter of fact. I did not quite follow his example as I wanted this phase of analysis, without endangering the anonymity of the interviewees, to include the individual connotations of the meanings expressed as much as possible. Also my knowledge of the contents of the interview material influenced the manner in which I understood and re-described the contents of each meaning unit. So, in the case of this study the transformations are not as condensed as the ones presented by Perttula. They utilize some expressions specific to the speech of the dance artists and are in some cases influenced by the views found in all the material. Furthermore, the language the meaning units were translated into was everyday English. The Finnish transcripts of the interviews were then not transformed into the language of any specific discipline.

To be precise, I find that the analysis I conducted in this phase to an extent to modified Perttula's method. My analysis left the meaning transformation on a more empirical level than that advocated by Perttula. In creating more distinct and condensed transformations than I cared to do Perttula really aims to grasp and organize the constituents of the interview material to provide a more structural account of the life-world of the interviewees than this study at this point does. (cf. Appendix II Phase 4)

5) In the fifth step of analysis each transformed meaning unit is placed under a classifying theme. This is a technical step in which the transformed meaning units with similar referents, that is that the discussed issues are concerned with the same theme, are collected together. In the case of a meaning unit in which several issues are addressed simultaneously I placed them under several classifying themes. (cf. Appendix II Phase 5)

6) The sixth step was concerned with creating a meaning network of each classifying theme (Perttula 1998, 80). Here the themes were addressed successively to find out how the individual meaning units were related to each other. This is done as the views expressed in the interview material are understood to become meaningful in relation to each other. The attempt is again to create a condensed description of these intertwined meanings. I once

more re-articulated the original interview text in a more generally descriptive manner in this phase. Those original expressions used by the interviewees that still remained a part of the previous section were mostly transformed into a more structural description. That means to say, for example, that names of people, places, or dance pieces were replaced by common nouns. (cf. Appendix II Phase 6)

7) In the seventh step a complete meaning network of the material produced with each dance artist was constructed. The aim was to delineate the "core of the mosaic of intertwined meanings concerning the thematized empirical phenomenon" (Perttula 1998, 81). In this step the meaning networks of each classified theme are brought together and the researcher reflects on the connections of the meanings found in the transformed meaning units as well as on their centrality to the interview material. The meaning networks may then come to include such ideas that are both repeated in the interview material as well as individual ones. The individual ideas might be relevant to the final meaning network through their position in relation to the interview material itself or through their relation to the factuality of the investigated empirical phenomenon in general.

Still, what basically directs the delineation of the interrelations of the transformed meaning units, the thematic meaning networks, and the creations of the meaning networks concerned with the complete interview material of one interviewee is the intuition of the researcher. The end product is an intuitively-constituted and rationally-constructed description of the interview material produced with individual interviewees (Perttula 1998, 81–82). In stating that the end result of the descriptive interpretation following the above-described procedures is a rationally-constructed description, it seems to me that Perttula implicitly agrees that the procedures themselves are practical measures affecting the nature of the description. So, even if he does not do so very straightforwardly, I take him to acknowledge that alongside of the intuitive insights of the researcher these procedures add to the interpretative nature of the description.

In this phase of analysis the meaning networks found in each thematic narrative nevertheless became intermingled. Repetitions of similar meanings were presented only once and those singular views that seemed relevant were also taken into consideration. In my experience the themes under which the thematic meaning networks of the transformations had been constructed to a large extent influenced the construction of the complete meaning networks. I combined the thematic meaning networks with each other by addressing them one at a time in the previously-described and numbered order of the themes. In the end this order became slightly changed according to the views or meanings found in the transformations. In spite of this, they form the basic structuring means guiding the construction of the narratives.

As I chose to remain on a more empirical level while creating the meaning networks I felt they might disclose the identity of the interviewed dance artists, at least to those who are acquainted with them. Therefore, I sent the completed meaning networks to the interviewed dance artists to read and comment on. If they felt that the networks did not do justice to them they were asked first to turn to the transcripts of the interviews to see if the description really did not correspond to the interview material. Only if they found it not to do so did I

prompt them to turn to me so that we could find a mutual solution to the problematic descriptions. Three of the four interviewees found the meaning networks acceptable. They understood that the networks were my constructions, and even if they did not exactly express how they currently viewed things they found the completed networks plausible. Only one dance artist was so concerned with her/his anonymity and the personally revealing nature of the network culled from the original interview material that s/he wanted things to be changed. In the case of this dance artist we decided to shorten the narrative. That is, we omitted the sentences and sections of the meaning network that the dance artist found disturbing.

The four completed meaning networks are found in Appendix III. As was stated before they represent the contents of the interview material produced with each dance artist. In this research, as I am not aiming to typify or analyze the nature of each individual dance artist, these meaning networks are not interpreted any further. Following Perttula they are regarded as the completed findings of a certain phase of a descriptive reading. What needs mentioning, though, is that these meaning networks form the basis on which the next interpretative analysis proceeded. Through the descriptive reading I became profoundly acquainted with the interview material and also outlined the topics into to which the contents of the material were subsequently categorized.

## 5.2 The Interpretative Phenomenological – Theoretical Reading

The final thematic interpretation or, as it has also been referred to, the phenomenological-theoretical reading (the main concern of this research) was carried out only after all of the material from the interviews was re-organized according to what I came to consider the most relevant topics of discussion. The previously-described completed meaning networks allowed me to discern the common topics. They became evident to me while reading through the meaning networks and contemplating what seemed to be the most important issues that were addressed in them and to which the meanings inherent in the text in general seemed to refer. In my view the subjects of discussion referred to what I came to call 1) the nature of dance as art, 2) the working status and environment of a freelance dance artist, 3) the roles of a freelance dance artist, 4) conceptions of the body, 5) embodying dance, and 6) the self of a dance artist.

These subjects or issues were outlined through an intuitive process that concerned the nature of the meaning networks themselves. But it was also influenced by my understanding of what issues are central to being a freelance dance artist as well as my comprehension of those notions that were of interest in relation to the phenomenological framework of the study. In the end, the subjects of discussion presented above became the topics under which all of the material was categorized. The meaning units separated in the previous descriptive analysis were now organized under these new headings according to the issues they spoke about. Again here some of the meaning units related to issues belonging only to a single

topic. Others instead referred to several. In the latter case the meaning units were placed under more than one topic heading.

After this work was done I familiarized myself with the contents of each category. In reading through them and relating them to the phenomenological framework what I came to call *narrative themes* started to become evident to me. These narrative themes were basic structures of meanings according to which I began to construct the actual interpretation that is evident in Part III. The themes were concerned with how different quotations of the interview material related to each other and formed preliminary sketches of possible interpretations. The themes were demarcated according to the following kind of premises: they were subjects of discussion that were repeated in the quotations found under each category, and they were issues that in my view depicted some central concerns related to being a freelance dance artist or to the phenomenological framework. These latter issues were at times found only in some particular passages of the interview material. These passages were such that in my view they expressed some original insights related to being a freelance dance artist, the field of dance they were engaged in, or again the phenomenological framework of the study.

Consequently, although the phenomenological framework provided a context directing the manner in which the interviews became interpreted, my understanding of the contents of the interviews and of being a freelance dance artist as well as the relation of these two to the theoretical framework were central to the construction of the interpretations. The previous phase of analysis produced what could be called an experience-near reading of the interview material or a reading that concentrated on the internal relations and context of the material. That is to say it concentrated on what it expressed in itself in my view. This second phase of thematic interpretation, however, could be understood to deal with both experience-near and experience-distant reading or a reading that addresses an external context in relation to the interview material. While presenting quotations from the interview material I have mostly first contemplated what the passage itself refers to and only then have I moved on to place it in dialogue with more theoretical considerations. (cf. McNamara 1999, 172; Bernstein 1983, 90 as reported by Grumet 1990, 116)

Nevertheless, it was only in the act of concrete writing that the interpretations really began to crystallize and express an explicit presentation of the narrative themes. As Merleau-Ponty finds speech not to translate a ready-made thought but to bring it into being, I understand writing to do the same. I also agree with Laurel Richardson (Richardson 1994, 516), who considers writing a method of inquiry; a way to discover and to learn to understand an issue of interest. Developing the interpretations found in Part III, alongside of the narrative themes, to a large extent dealt with discovering what quotations of the interview material fit together, how they relate to the chosen literature of interpretation, and how to work out a logical succession of thoughts while dealing with the aforementioned. The quotes from the interview material used in this part of the report were also only portions of the meaning units. They expressed the central ideas that were drawn upon in the interpretation in as clear a manner as possible.

Kvale emphasizes that in a hermeneutic analysis a plurality of interpretation is legitimate.

This means that it is not necessary to seek for the only objectively valid interpretations of the studied issue. Rather “[w]hat matters is to formulate explicitly the evidence and arguments that enter into an interpretation, so that the interpretation can be tested by other readers” (Kvale 1996, 211). He writes, too, of the importance of the questions that are asked of the empirical material as they direct the nature of interpretation (Kvale 1996, 210). Initially I did not address the material through any particular explicit questions. Instead the topics of the categories as well as the narrative themes outlined what I was dealing with. Nevertheless, the final interpretation became constructed through a variety of focal perspectives. Following Kvale one could say that here the self-understanding of the interviewees, a critical common-sense understanding of dance artists and the dance world, as well as an understanding of the phenomenological and theoretical framework of the study became the lenses through which the interview text was regarded (Kvale 1996, 214–215). Each of these perspectives or all of them simultaneously became underlined and addressed according to their relevance to the theme of discussion.

The main sources of literature discussed in relation to the interview material, as stated before, were the phenomenological studies I chose. However, they did not help produce a rich interpretation of some of the issues discussed by the interviews. So, some sociological and aesthetic theories as well as studies mostly concerned with the history of western theatrical dance are applied in the interpretation. What sort of experiences and meanings were focal and which sort of phenomenological or theoretical perspective influenced each phase of interpretation will be made explicit when I present the interpretations in Part III. There also the concern of each thematic narrative is clarified by the titles of each section that deal directly with an interpretation of the interview material. I did not title a separate chapter in every case to deal with the topics of discussion according to which I categorized the interview material. In the final interpretation some of these topics interweave with one another, due to either the rather small amount of passages from the interview material that discuss them or to the way the passages relate to other issues brought forth by the material. All in all, it is worth noting that many of the sections of the final interpretation are closely related to each other and their contents include further clarification of issues already addressed in other sections. Even if lived life might be somewhat fragmented, issues and experiences that arise in it seldom reveal themselves according to distinct categories nor as simply separate and univocal events.<sup>78</sup> The contents of the interviews demonstrate this and have influenced the

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78. In his article *Life and the Narrator's Art*, David Carr writes about this issue. He states that “no more in “life” than in “art” do actions line up in a mere sequence of unrelated items. Just as there are no punctual, isolated instants in time – except in theory – so, at a higher level, there are no isolated actions in our conscious, active lives” (Carr 1985, 114). He continues by defining a good story: “in a good story, to use Barthe’s image, all the extraneous noise or static is cut out. . . . But life differs from stories just because such a selection is not made; all the static is there” (Carr 1985, 115). The interviews did not aim at nor provide any coherent, orderly stories about the lives of freelance dance artists. Thematically the conversation was intermittent, interrupted by my questions. It twisted and turned also according to the interviewees’ thoughts. The interpretation of this material that is given in Part III does not attempt to provide the traditional elements of what is considered to be a good story – a story with a coherent plot and a beginning, a middle, and an end. Instead it attempts to

interpretation in the above-described manner. However, in the end, the outcome of the phenomenological-theoretical reading is a persuasive argument for what, after Richardson (1990), could be called a phenomenologically-oriented, cultural-collective account of freelance dance artists. This sort of a portrayal involves a general understanding of the traditions, the cultural and social dimensions related to the object of investigation, in addition to the relation individuals, which in the case of this study are illuminated by the contents of the interview material as well as my own understanding, have to them (Richardson 1990, 24–25).

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address and analyze different themes and issues that influence the lives of freelance dance artists. This it does in an arbitrary manner since in lived life they are intertwined and are not necessarily related to in a reflective manner.



**PART TWO**  
– THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL  
FRAMEWORK



This part of the study is concerned with introducing Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and the phenomenological dance studies which form the main body of theory from which the thematic interpretation of the interview material was drawn. Alongside of reflecting my understanding of the contents of these phenomenological expositions, this introduction is meant to offer guidelines which enhance the reading of the subsequent thematic interpretation found in Part III. **Chapter 6** presents those concepts and conceptions of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology that are relevant to the later discussion of the interview material. The presentation begins with an examination of his philosophical aims and phenomenological method. Here the implications this method has for the interpretation of the interview material will also be addressed in more detail. Then an account of some central themes of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology relating to the contents of the interview material will be introduced. These themes are concerned with his conception of the body, intersubjectivity, historicity, and culture. **Chapter 7** gives an overview of those phenomenological dance studies which in my view are most closely concerned with the tradition of phenomenological philosophy. It likewise introduces some notions applied in the thematic interpretation. **Chapter 8** addresses how the practices of dance and language are interrelated. While drawing on ideas presented by Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and the phenomenological dance studies, the concept discussed in this section emphasizes features that correlate with the nature of this study as well as to the further discussion found in part III.

## 6 Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenological Project

In his work Merleau-Ponty had one clearly distinguishable and unfailing philosophical aspiration. Throughout his philosophical pursuits, he aimed at solving what he viewed as inconsistencies in the traditional subjectivist and objectivist strands of philosophy and science. He thought that the philosophy of his time was still all too engaged with a (Cartesian) subjectivism according to which the world was understood to be constructed by a reflective and constituting consciousness. The problem of the sciences lay in the idea of an objective reality functioning independently of the human subject. However, through re-considering the views of earlier phenomenologists Merleau-Ponty came to the conclusion that phenomenology was a philosophical practice that could overcome these opposing positions. He thought that it could unravel the true nature of reality. He even states that the purpose of phenomenology is to "reveal the mystery of the world and reason" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, xvi, xxi). Indeed, by thinking phenomenologically as well as through criticism of the above-mentioned positions, Merleau-Ponty managed to create a philosophy arguing for a de-centralized relation of subject and object and for a new foundation for intersubjectivity. Thus, he worked with a philosophy that to a large extent surpassed the traditional dichotomies of the subject and the object, the internal and the external, the self and the other, in addition to the natural and the cultural dimensions of the world.<sup>79</sup> This chapter looks into the mode in which Merleau-Ponty's philosophical project was carried out and discusses some of its central postulates.

### 6.1 The Basic Tenets and Approach of Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology

The manner in which Merleau-Ponty set out to accomplish his philosophical aim is something that he describes on the first page of the preface of his most acclaimed philosophical work

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79. Feminist writers such as Luce Irigaray and Judith Butler have, however, criticized Merleau-Ponty for not taking seriously sexual difference even if he otherwise looked in-depth into the problems of embodied existence (Irigaray 1993; Butler 1990/1989). However, as Elizabeth Grosz states, "Feminists have long found inspiration and support for at least some of their projects in utilizing Merleau-Ponty's particular brand of phenomenology, but it is significant that, of all the feminist literature on Merleau-Ponty's writings with which I am familiar, even those feminists who are strongly influenced remain, if not openly critical then at least suspicious of his avoidance of the question of sexual difference" (Grosz 1999, 154). So despite its lack of recognition of or strategic blindness to gender, Merleau-Ponty's thinking has been and continues to be influential to feminist thinking.

*Phenomenology of Perception* (1995/1962). There, while delineating the nature of phenomenology, he points towards the direction which his phenomenological approach developed. He writes:

It [phenomenology] is a transcendental<sup>80</sup> philosophy which places in abeyance the assertions arising out of the natural attitude, the better to understand them; but it is also a philosophy for which the world is always 'already there' before reflection begins – as an inalienable presence; and all its efforts are concentrated upon re-achieving a direct and primitive contact with the world, and endowing this contact with a philosophical status. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, vii)

What this passage implicitly reveals is that Merleau-Ponty was following in the footsteps of Edmund Husserl, who emphasized that phenomenology aimed to regard phenomena without holding on to any strict pre-existing categories or to prior scientific knowledge. But interpreting Husserl's aims through his late phenomenology and simultaneous conception of the *Lebenswelt*, the life-world,<sup>81</sup> Merleau-Ponty holds that the starting point for phenomenology is not a reflective process. Instead it is the presence of the lived world (*le monde vécu*)<sup>82</sup> in our experience. In fact, for him the phenomenological task as expressed by Husserl, that is to

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80. Merleau-Ponty writes about the epistemological question of transcendence and states his position in the following manner: "The very experience of transcendent things is possible only provided that their project is borne, and discovered, within myself. When I say that things are transcendent, this means that I do not possess them, that I do not circumambulate them; they are transcendent to the extent that I am ignorant of what they are, and blindly assert their bare existence" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 369). For Merleau-Ponty the "truly transcendental" is an outcome of the self-evident relation we have with the world which forms the origin of the different forms of transcendence we live through and become aware of in everyday life (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 364–365). Consequently, Michael B. Smith argues that in Merleau-Ponty's thinking transcendence became concerned with a mediation between the inarticulate grounds of understanding and its meaningful expression (Smith 1999, 36). Merleau-Ponty also finds that instead of turning towards an absolute consciousness, philosophy becomes a transcendental or radical philosophy when it "considers itself as a problem" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 63). This leads Sara Heinämaa to argue that the transcendentalism that Merleau-Ponty is concerned with, is thinking as a movement that turns to regard the forgotten premises of this movement. She considers this specific way of threading or moving in thinking to be the core of Merleau-Ponty's understanding of philosophy. (Heinämaa 2000, 102; 1999b, 61; cf. Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 90–91; 1995/1962, 63) In conclusion, it is possible to assert that in the above quotation the term 'transcendental' does not refer only to an immanent structure of consciousness, rather it also refers to the pre-reflective cultural, historical, and worldly situatedness that thinking is concerned with.

81. See ft. 27 on page 33.

82. M.C. Dillon argues that the sense of the life-world or lived world that Merleau-Ponty discusses is not commensurate with the one that Husserl presented. For Merleau-Ponty it never simply was the consequence of a constitutive act. Despite the various definitions Husserl gave to the life-world, Dillon finds that Husserl never actually abandoned the idealism his reductions led to. So, in his view Husserl's understanding of the life-world derives from a constitutive act. (Dillon 1988, 87) This issue is something this study will not consider in-depth. What I want to emphasize with this footnote, however, is that Merleau-Ponty used the term life-world, which he often even expressed as the lived world, differently from others. The following paragraphs illustrate some of the basic features of Merleau-Ponty's conception of the life-world.

return to things themselves, meant investigating our self-evident and pre-reflective contact with the world. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, vii–ix, 365ft.)

This general understanding that Merleau-Ponty had of phenomenology and his philosophical task was, nonetheless, not sufficient to prove that he was dealing with phenomenological philosophy. In Merleau-Ponty's view, phenomenology could best be characterized as a *manner of thinking*. It was not limited to following a pre-existent method or to investigating a certain subject matter. Still, to really address it he felt compelled to follow an explicit phenomenological approach of his own. In noting that Husserl had contemplated a genetic phenomenology (which was concerned with a historical genesis of cultural and scientific meanings and concepts), Merleau-Ponty understood that phenomenology was a question of concretely determining and expressing how each person who practices phenomenology understands phenomenology themselves. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, vii–viii; cf. Moran 2000, 61, 125)

By assuming this position Merleau-Ponty did not mean to imply that he rejected the tradition of phenomenology, which at the time of his early career was becoming an ever-more influential strand of philosophy in France. On the contrary, it meant that Merleau-Ponty followed a hermeneutic mode of thinking and understood human beings to be historical and cultural entities, who in their acts and reflections rely on pre-existent traditions and forms of life. Yet, he acknowledged that, because we comprehend things through our unique perspective, a pure consensus between our understanding and that of our predecessors is something that can never be achieved. Like Heidegger before him and Gadamer after him, he found that to understand and to become proficient at something means becoming engaged with it, but also that, while so doing, one comes to recognize what one has anticipated. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, viii, 61) Therefore, as Shaun Gallagher demonstrates, Merleau-Ponty's conception of historicity underlines that "in historical existence no easy transformations, nor total revolutions; no unambiguous appropriations of traditions, nor complete escapes from them" are possible (Gallagher 1992, 78). It is in relation to this hermeneutic understanding and to the task of exploring our basic relation to the world that Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology acquired its style. On the one hand, he believed that he could come to terms with what phenomenology is through grasping the nature of earlier philosophers' phenomenology, especially Husserl's. On the other hand, however, he recognized that he could do this only in a way that would deviate from their thinking. The tradition of phenomenology, then, formed the base from which his thinking proceeded. Partaking in and furthering the phenomenological discussion is one feature of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology.

What is more striking, though, is that in taking a keen interest in our self-evident contact with the world, which he considered the pre-reflective basis of any reflective understanding, Merleau-Ponty believed that philosophy should "relearn to look at the world" and advocated a "phenomenology of origins". In so doing, he was forced to examine the premises from which his thinking arose. He not only dwelt on the subject matter of his investigations or on earlier phenomenology. He also reflected on how he, through his phenomenological approach, construed philosophical insights. Accordingly, his conception of phenomenology was bi-partite. It made him define phenomenology as a radical path of reflection that, alongside of searching for the origins of existence and understanding, needed to continuously question

itself and hence clarify its own foundations. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, viii, x, xviii, xx, xxi, 62–63, 364–365; 1987/1968, 4, 6)

For Merleau-Ponty, then, philosophizing was a historical practice whose formulations rely on “our communication with the world as primary embodiment of rationality”. Because of his historical understanding, which emphasizes the temporal situatedness of our being, his phenomenology became “a dialogue or infinite mediation, and, in so far as it remains faithful to its intention, never knowing where it is going” (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, xxi). The shifting and unique position of the philosopher, the unfolding nature of her or his objects of interest, as well as the similarly unfolding tradition of philosophy and the surrounding cultural world, turned the phenomenologist into a “perpetual beginner”. Merleau-Ponty understood that a philosopher’s position and field as well as objects of interest were in a constant process of becoming. In the end, in Merleau-Ponty’s view, the philosopher’s task amounted to an endless questioning with no ultimate answers. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, xiv, xxi; 1987/1968, 103)

While presenting some characteristics of Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology, the above concepts were also more or less the reasons why he felt obliged to articulate the mode of questioning he followed and through which he acquired his phenomenological insights. In my case, determining and expressing my understanding of phenomenology means that I follow Merleau-Ponty’s thinking and interpret it in a manner that is useful for the aims of this study. In formulating his conception of phenomenology Merleau-Ponty felt more interest in the “movement” of Husserl’s thinking than any particular results or “theses” of his thinking (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964b, 84).<sup>83</sup> Hence, although he did address the question of the phenomenological reduction introduced by Husserl, I will not deal with Merleau-Ponty’s relation to it in a meticulous manner. Instead in this chapter, in a somewhat similar manner to Merleau-Ponty when delineating Husserl’s intentions, I will continue to describe my understanding of the general sense of Merleau-Ponty’s manner of philosophizing. In this way, I will also discuss some of the basic tenets his philosophy relied on and introduce notions that indicate the manner in which his philosophical method was partially applied in this study.

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83. Sara Heinämaa points out that in his late work Husserl describes phenomenology as a practice, something more akin to a movement instead of one which comes to rely on any stable conclusions or end results. This is one of the notions that Merleau-Ponty continued to pursue in his understanding of phenomenology. In Heinämaa’s view, Merleau-Ponty came to understand phenomenology by meditating on how Husserl’s “thinking and writing proceeded, broke off and was repeated” in his different works. From this he discerned a mode of philosophical questioning, which he responded to by continuing to philosophize in his own way. (Heinämaa 2000, 82–83; 1999b, 58; 1996, 57; cf. Dillon 1988, 27) Indeed, in clarifying his relation to his predecessors, Merleau-Ponty amongst other things writes that: “There is the truth of Descartes, but on the condition that one reads it between the lines; the atmosphere of Descartes’ thought, the Cartesian functioning and this is not the imposition of an exterior point of view upon Descartes, of a *question* that is not his own upon his philosophy . . . to comprehend is to apprehend by coexistence, laterally, *by the style*, and thereby to attain at once the far-off reaches of this style and of its cultural apparatus” (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 188).

### The source and method of philosophizing

As stated earlier in Part I, Merleau-Ponty followed Husserl's aim of description. Merleau-Ponty attempted to depict reality without judging, causally explaining, or taking common-sense beliefs and theoretical constructions for granted. What is unique about Merleau-Ponty, however, is that in his view approaching reality in this sense has to do with the appearance of a phenomenon in consciousness in an actual lived experience (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 57–61). Lived experiences, moreover, are experiences in which we are self-evidently attuned to the world. Merleau-Ponty considers, then, the ground from which a phenomenological description begins to be something where the facticity of the world is present. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, vii, viii, x) Even if Merleau-Ponty advocates suspending much of our everyday understanding that is influenced by theoretical and scientific preconceptions while practicing phenomenology, Heinämaa<sup>84</sup> also points out that he does not examine phenomena only immanent to consciousness. For Merleau-Ponty the investigated phenomena retain their worldly premise. Indeed, it is exactly the relation of experience to the world that Merleau-Ponty's investigations focus upon. (Heinämaa 1999a, 286; 1996, 59)

Along these lines, if I perceive a body in motion and approach this perception phenomenologically, the existence of this motional body and its relation to the world are not subject to speculation. Instead the manner in which this moving body becomes revealed to me and what sort of an entity it discloses itself as in this discovery are the phenomena of a phenomenological exploration. Initially, however, what I should not take into account when delineating the nature of these appearances is my previous knowledge, especially any theoretical knowledge, concerning moving bodies and perceiving such a body. Therefore it is only the thetic preconceptions entailed in a certain experience that become suspended. In other words, only the theoretical or knowledge-filled dimensions of our natural attitude concerning the particular investigated entity or phenomena are discounted. Our relation to the world is not questioned in its entirety. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964f, 162; cf. Heinämaa 2000, 96) In explaining this stance of phenomenological focusing, Merleau-Ponty further writes about suspending theoretical preconceptions in the following way: "to suspend them is not to deny them and even less to deny the link which binds us to the physical, social, and cultural world. It is on the contrary to see this link, to become conscious of it" (Merleau-Ponty 1985/1964c, 49). He, thus, deems that this is the approach through which we might be able to perceive and comprehend the manner in which an entity is originally related to the world.

What is then clear is that Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology does not speculate about or argue against the existence of the world. On the contrary, the world is one of the premises upon which the phenomenological investigation is founded. What must be underlined, though, is that through suspending theoretical understanding the *a priori* world, or the world we take for granted, becomes a world revealed in a certain sense. As has already become evident,

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84. The interpretation of Merleau-Ponty's mode of philosophizing this chapter provides is indebted in parts to the Finnish studies Sara Heinämaa has conducted on Merleau-Ponty's thinking. This it is as I have found no equivalent research in English, which considers the nature of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological method in as detailed and exegetical a manner.

Merleau-Ponty prioritizes the lived world. He writes that: "The world is not what I think, but what I live through. I am open to the world, I have no doubt that I am in communication with it, but I do not possess it; it is inexhaustible . . . the unity of the world, before being posited by knowledge in a specific act of identification, is 'lived' as ready-made or already there" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, xvii). With this passage Merleau-Ponty tries to convey that before our thetic, reflective, and personal awareness or understanding of the world we have a lived and pre-reflective relation to it. We trust its existence and consider it a self-evident environment for our own existence and operations.

This very basic relation we have with the world is something that Merleau-Ponty describes by writing of an operative intentionality, a form of intentionality Husserl had already discussed. Merleau-Ponty understands it as an existential dynamic, which ties the body and the world to each other and gives us a pre-objective sense of a general or unified world. It offers us the first sense of the world in which it is not yet possible to discern whether it consists of distinct parts or entities. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, xviii) Merleau-Ponty refers to this sort of an intentionality as one "beneath the intentionality of representations" and as "a deeper intentionality, which others have called existence" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 121 fn.).<sup>85</sup> Operative intentionality basically encompasses the fact that our awareness is continually opened to the presence of the world. We are always permeated by some sense of being. This we even take for granted as a self-evident truth. The trust we have in this truth Merleau-Ponty termed a 'perceptual faith', a faith "prior to science and any verification", which is not faith "in the sense of decision but in the sense of what is before any position" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 343; 1987/1968, 3 ft.).

These notions become clearer if we consider the manner in which we are pre-reflectively aware of the world. When we leave our reflective knowledge behind and simply live in the present moment we are without paying close attention to any distinct entities, we notice that we are confronted with a field, where the features of this experienced situation are so intertwined that we are only given a general sense of the totality of the situation. Here we do not yet gain a discrete understanding of things or, in Merleau-Ponty's words, have any "determinate being" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 47). As he considered this kind of a relation to the world to be something prior to our personal or reflective knowledge of the world, he infers that basically "existence is not a set of facts . . . but the ambiguous setting of their inter-communication, the point at which their boundaries run into each other, or again their woven fabric" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 166).

What Merleau-Ponty demonstrates, therefore, is that, while regarding phenomena pre-reflectively, we become aware that the entities of the world are entwined with each other.

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85. In analyzing Merleau-Ponty's conception of intentionality in more detail, Martina Reuter argues that he was firstly concerned with how individuals are *directed* to the lived world through the pre-reflective abilities of the body. Merleau-Ponty did not define intentional acts as necessarily having any distinguishable contents, that is, he was not single-handedly dealing with the sort of intentionality which has been described as being *of or about* something. Rather, he seems to claim that being directed towards the world and phenomena is a necessary condition for an intentional act, be it that this act contains a distinguishable intentional object or not. (Reuter 1999, 69, 75–76)

They are connected through an internal<sup>86</sup> relation (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 22). They come to form indeterminate living tissue. In Merleau-Ponty's view at its most primordial level this tissue is presented to us in an affective state. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 24, 93, 154; 1987/1968, 12)<sup>87</sup> This affectivity furthermore is something in which there actually is no pure perception, but rather an obscure "flow of experiences which imply each other both simultaneously and successively" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 281).<sup>88</sup> Nevertheless, the tissue so appearing not only exists in obscurity but also has a practical significance as it asks to be

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86. Merleau-Ponty argues that a perceived world exists through an intrinsic organization, which he contrasts with "the exigencies of a "side to side" causality". He also writes that he is attempting to show that "the being-object and the being-subject conceived by opposition to it [objective fact] and relative to it do not form the alternative, that the perceived world is beneath or beyond this antimony" (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 22). Heinämaa explains this position further by writing that the relation of two entities is an internal one if they cannot be identified or verified without each other. When having an internal relation, then, entities are what they are only through being joined to each other. (Heinämaa 1996, 74; cf. Madison 1992, 88)

87. Merleau-Ponty finds that "an object looks attractive or repulsive" before we come to distinguish its color, its size, or form (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 24). He also writes, however, that: "Our experience of the true, when it is not immediately reducible to that of the thing we see, is at first not distinct from the tensions that arise between the others, and from their resolutions. As the thing, as the other, the true dawns through an emotional and almost carnal experience, where the "ideas" – the other's and our own – are rather traits of his physiognomy and of our own, are less understood than welcomed or spurned in love or hatred. To be sure, there are motifs, quite abstract categories, that function very precociously in this wild thought . . ." (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 12–13). With this passage Merleau-Ponty describes what he also referred to as a "deeper life of consciousness" than the notion of traditional perception (see next footnote) could afford (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 282). Furthermore here he writes in a manner that shows that he finds that our pre-reflective stances, in addition to being affective, are filled with residues of our more reflective and personal experiences. It seems to me, then, that he shares a similar view with Eugene Gendlin who muses on the concept of *body-sense*, which is a mode of pre-reflective awareness where the emotional, kinesthetic, and reflective dimensions of our being become enmeshed and intertwined revealing to us a situation that we can depend upon without the dominance of reflective operations while orienting ourselves in our actions. (Gendlin 1992, 341–353)

88. G.B. Madison wants to clarify Merleau-Ponty's conception of perception, which obviously is not a traditional one, even if he himself never gave a direct definition of the sense in which he uses the concept. Madison argues that Merleau-Ponty never holds on to any "positive doctrinal content" in his philosophizing and that thus the term 'perception' as it is used in *Phenomenology of Perception* is a "non-concept" (Madison 1992, 86). The traditional sense of perception could be depicted as something where a separate external world existing in itself comes to be represented inside the consciousness of a perceiving subject. Still this sort of an understanding was exactly what Merleau-Ponty wanted to challenge. Madison finds that in Merleau-Ponty's thinking the perceptual happening is a "bizarre mixture of being-in-itself and being-for-itself" and that the perceiving subject and the perceived world exist only "in terms of each other" (Madison 1992, 88). Accordingly Merleau-Ponty's conception of perception does not hold on to the dichotomies the traditional conceptions of perception rely on. Instead it demonstrates an ambiguity inherent to perception. In the end what Merleau-Ponty attempts to do in *Phenomenology of Perception* is to describe how in real life we actually experience perception. His discussion of perception comes thus to include features unrecognizable in previous conceptions. Madison furthermore underlines that Merleau-Ponty's philosophy is a metaphorical one. To be able to discuss the sense of lived experience in philosophical language, which up until Merleau-Ponty's time had mostly been a neglected dimension of philosophy, he turned towards a metaphorical discourse "which achieves its proper effect only if, so to speak, the utterance cancels itself out, self-destructs, undercuts its own semantic positivity" (Madison 1992, 90). Consequently, the sense of perception Merleau-Ponty presents deviates from tradition.

perceived in a way that the observer becomes attuned to its rhythm and contiguity, and ultimately recognizes it despite its indeterminacy (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 17, 78, 67, 301, 317, 333).

As an example of perception finding communion with our self-evident relation to the world, Merleau-Ponty writes of perceiving redness in the following manner:

This red patch which I see on the carpet is red only by virtue of a shadow which lies across it, its quality is apparent only in relation to the play of light upon it, and hence as an element in a spatial configuration. Moreover the colour can be said to be there only if it occupies an area of a certain size, too small an area not being describable in these terms. Finally this red would not be the same if it were not the 'woolly red' of a carpet. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 4–5)

What Merleau-Ponty is attempting to reveal with this passage is that before any distinct perception, where we take up our experiences and understand them as something, there already exists an organized and meaningful phenomenal field. He shows that, on the one hand, the perceived red becomes what it is through the entwining of the environmental features of the situation it exists in. On the other hand, it relies on us as perceiving, perspectival, and historical subjects, with a certain position in the world and with earlier experiences, for example, with rugs and their texture. The very "woolly redness" of the carpet could be understood to speak of a warmth and softness the redness glows with and which we tacitly comprehend because of earlier experiences. We seldom come to reflectively discern the features of the phenomenal situations we encounter, however. Instead, they are something, which offer themselves to us as an immediate contact with the world and as a sort of an interrogation to be reconciled with. To become fully realized this field, as it were, needs our perception and understanding. It asks to be perceived *as something*. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 29, 54) Here the field described by Merleau-Ponty became perceived as a "red patch on a carpet".

The above discussion illustrates that Merleau-Ponty does not consider a strictly extraneous world to exist but neither does he find that the world is an entity single-handedly determined by a perceiving subject. Instead perception is tied to a phenomenal field, and only in the perceptual happening do the world, its entities, and even the perceiving subject itself come into being. Merleau-Ponty writes that perception is "the very appearance of the world and not the condition of its possibility; it is the birth of a norm and is not realized according to a norm; it is the identity of the external and the internal and not the projection of the internal in the external" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 61).

What the above discussion also exemplifies is that, in Merleau-Ponty's view, it is due to the phenomenal field of perception that things and the world in general are cryptic. Their indeterminacy is not totally wiped away even in clear perception as the background or outskirts of a distinctly perceived object as well as the perceiving organism, the perceiving subject, remain obscure. We can focus only on a certain number of details in a given moment and the indistinct background in which they appear affect their nature. Merleau-Ponty consequently argues that our perception of the world always reveals to us matter we do not clearly perceive or know of beforehand, since the entities of the world are "inexhaustible and our information limited" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, x; 1991/1964g, 179). In the end,

Merleau-Ponty considers the ambiguity of things, the obscurity clearly perceived entities spring forth from, to be a positive phenomenon. In his view it depicts the basic nature of the world (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 6; Heinämaa 1996, 73).<sup>89</sup> Merleau-Ponty in effect claims that the very first sense of the lived world and the things of the world are given to us as “opaque structures” whose “ultimate significance remains confused” (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 333). In explaining the sense of pre-reflective experience, Heinämaa points out that the essential features of lived experience are not stable structures. Instead, they are something she refers to as, while using Merleau-Ponty’s terminology, manners of being or original styles of becoming (Heinämaa 1996, 67; cf. Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 109).

Indeed, one could say that the world is a fluctuating phenomenal field filled with movement and change. There is a shifting occurring in the world where, for example, the wind blows, leaves move, birds fly, the seasons change, rivers dry up, cars move, streets erode, people come into our lives and leave them and so on. Experience or perception has an internal relation to this field; it is part of it, but it also adds to the movement of the phenomenal field as it is the mediation whereby things, including those previously listed, enter and recede from our field of focus. To explain Heinämaa’s interpretation one could add that Merleau-Ponty’s understands style as a dynamic scheme of entwined features which bring about a recognizable mode of being differing from all the rest (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 327, 450). Moreover, according to my understanding, it is exactly the movement of perception or experience through which obscure things involve relational features and appear as certain

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89. To clarify the nature of this ambiguity Heinämaa (2000; 1996) discerns five different ways in which Merleau-Ponty discusses the indeterminacy of the world. In so doing she writes of the nature of the world, relying on Merleau-Ponty’s conclusion that “the perceptual phenomenon . . . [is] the first access to the object”, that the “thing is inseparable from a person perceiving it” and that “perceptual being is not yet determinate being” (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 16, 49, 320). The features Heinämaa determines are as follows: 1) The affective contact with things, which is generally understood to be something amorphous, is the very first contact we have with them. They either draw us towards a more intimate contact or make us withdraw from it (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 24). 2) The entities or things of the world are intertwined, which comes to mean that their boundaries are indeterminate. 3) A perceived space becomes arranged into a space with different directional values. We perceive things as groupings. There is the small and the large. There is the near and the distant, the foreground and the background (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 16). Thus, the lived or perceived space is a situation where the embodied perceiving subject finds entities to be invested with self-evident directional and practical values. 4) In the lived world perceived and experienced entities are formed through a contiguity, in which they anticipate each other and “send us beyond their determinate manifestations . . . [and] promise us always ‘something else to see’” (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 333). Merleau-Ponty gives an example where he is walking in the forest towards the shore and sees the masts of a ship. Firstly they are nothing more than a part of the landscape filled with trees. And as he draws closer, without his anticipating it there is suddenly a moment when the trees turn from being a part of the forest to reveal themselves as being part of a ship. He writes that, “. . . the reasons for the correct perception were not given as reasons beforehand. The unity of the object is based on the foreshadowing of an imminent order which is about to spring upon us a reply to questions merely latent in the landscape” (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 17). 5) The lived world is furthermore not simply a world of presences or absences. Merleau-Ponty describes this with an example where there is a third modus of being, an in-between state – a presence in an absence. The person with a phantom limb who spontaneously continues to use his body as if he still had his leg intact and nevertheless can describe and speak of the stump of his leg lives in such an in-between state (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 81). (Heinämaa 1996, 73–74)

recognizable gestalts or modes of being that Merleau-Ponty wants to appreciate and bring into philosophical discussion.

However, the problem with philosophically analyzing the sense of the self-evident contact we have with the world in our lived experience (and the modes of being that emerge through it) is that, to a large extent as a reflective practice, philosophy distances itself from our pre-reflective grasp of the world. As a matter of fact, Merleau-Ponty thinks that the presence of our basic sense of the world is such that it cannot be explained or clarified any further. Philosophy can only point towards it and demonstrate the influence it has on our lives and on philosophical understanding by confronting and describing it (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, xviii). Still confronting it to describe it means that the philosopher needs to be in touch with the pre-reflective and self-evident contact she or he has with the world or more particularly with the phenomenon she or he is exploring. Merleau-Ponty shows how this occurs by stating that while practicing phenomenological philosophy

Reflection does not withdraw from the world towards the unity of consciousness as the world's basis; it steps back to watch the forms of transcendence fly up like sparks from a fire; it slackens the intentional threads which attach us to the world and thus brings them to our notice; it alone is consciousness of the world because it reveals that world as strange and paradoxical. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, xiii)

In Merleau-Ponty's view "slackening the intentional threads" and attaining a view of our basic relation to the world ultimately means that a philosopher falls into a state of wonder or astonishment, where the things perceived are not altered by the philosopher's personal motives – they continue their existence without the involvement of positing thinking. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, xiii; 1987/1968, 101–102) In this state the philosopher can witness the interrelations or the structures and forms different modes of being come to exist through.

When finding that phenomenological inquiry ultimately relies on a state of wonder, Merleau-Ponty followed Eugene Fink's understanding of the phenomenological reduction (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, xiii). In interpreting Merleau-Ponty's conceptions through this perspective, Heinämaa argues that this state of wonder cannot be attained by conscious effort. Rather, after a preparatory struggle to always regard things anew and leave habitual knowledge behind, it happens unexpectedly. It seizes the philosopher and breaks through her or his ordinary scientific thinking by making her or his conclusions and understanding about the world questionable. (Heinämaa 2000, 104–105; 1999a, 287; 1999b, 61–62)<sup>90</sup> Merleau-Ponty himself writes that:

Philosophy does not raise questions and does not provide answers that would little by little fill in the blanks. The questions are within our life, within our history: they are born there, they die

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90. Heinämaa traces the conceptual background of Merleau-Ponty's idea of wonder as an opening into the world which precedes evaluation to Descartes' understanding of wonder as the very first of the passions (cf. Heinämaa 1999a; 1999b).

there, if they have found a response, more often than not they are transformed there, in any case, it is a past of experience that one day ends up at this open wondering. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 105)

From my perspective Merleau-Ponty wants to convey here the very real sense in which the facts, conceptions, and conditions that we take for granted in our lives (in his case often previous philosophical and scientific positions) may at some moment seem paradoxical, contradictory, in a word questionable. When this moment arrives, one has a chance of re-perceiving and remembering them in a manner that allows one to acknowledge the wealth of their intertwined features and to grasp a significance or style of being that had gone unnoticed before.

When thinking of Merleau-Ponty's mode of philosophizing one has also to consider that, alongside of appreciating the state of wonder, the experiences it gives rise to still need to be brought into philosophical discourse. Merleau-Ponty is not naive enough to think that philosophy could express the totality of the phenomenal field through direct and simple description. On the contrary, in unraveling this field phenomenology brings forth a new and possible crystallization of it. He writes of this by stating that, "The phenomenological world is not the bringing to explicit expression of a pre-existent being, but the laying down of being. Philosophy is not the reflection of a pre-existent truth, but, like art the act of bringing them into being" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, xx). Hence he points out that phenomenology is a creative act where the origins of the unreflective experiences of the world are captured by the phenomenologist in a manner that ultimately "bring[s] back all the living relationships of experience, as the fisherman's net draws up from the depths of the ocean quivering fish and seaweed" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, xv). Merleau-Ponty implies, then, that the phenomenal field (the ocean) is still left with plenty of matter (other fish and more seaweed) to be explored. However, he also indicates that when the phenomenologist draws conclusion, her or his philosophy comes to illuminate richly described and coherent entities.

To grasp and to express the significance of an original lived experience, Merleau-Ponty writes that, "it is necessary for me to actively intervene" (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 111). On several occasions he writes of an imaginary variation through which that which is experienced is contemplated by questioning and imaginatively extending its features. This is done in order to find out what is not inherent to a questioned experience and what comes to persist as an invariable structure of its movement. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964c, 100; 1995/1962, 63; 1985/1964c, 70–71) What he suggests, in a sense, is that those features that are unfamiliar to us become understood through how they differ from the ones with which we are familiar. In imaginary variation one observes how these features and differences interweave, relate to a single thing, and form a pattern or structure. This process he further considers to be a somewhat similar phenomenon to the everyday mediation between an ambiguous perception of a thing to a more articulate understanding of it. Phenomenological exploration and imaginary variation differ from this only in that they do not take our perceptions and experiences for granted. Neither do they forge an understanding of them by placing them under ordinary and reductionist categories. Thus Merleau-Ponty basically understands the movement of consciousness both in everyday and philosophical exploration to be some-

thing by which we take up the “unfinished world in an effort to complete and conceive it” (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, xx). For him reflective understanding of an unreflective experience is a natural mediation between the two occurring in the world as a part of the world. He concedes, however, that in this event there is a shift in the mode of our being. He refers to this as a “violent act” through which we leave our innocent faith behind and become responsible for our conceptions and actions. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, x, xx)

### **Implications of the method for the research**

The paragraphs above illustrate Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological approach and its premises.<sup>91</sup> What is not yet clear is how these relate to the study at hand. This issue can be clarified, however, if we continue to investigate Merleau-Ponty’s understanding of the source of phenomenological inquiry and his conception of the relation of the human sciences and philosophy.<sup>92</sup>

In conceiving that we are intertwined with a world comprised of “physical, social and cultural” dimensions Merleau-Ponty recognizes that in our natural attitude, before any kind of philosophical inquiry, they have an effect on our lives. In his view they are not dimensions that philosophy should dismiss either. In fact, he writes that, “philosophy lives from everything which happens to the philosopher and his times” (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964e, 128). In writing of anthropology and sociology he additionally asserts that philosophy should not be seen as an opponent to these disciplines. Instead he considers them to be interrelated and to inform each other. He argues that when, for example, sociologists truly try to understand and interpret their findings they are already philosophizing. This is so since philosophical reflection, in the manner that he advocates it, is a mode of questioning through which we try to understand how we humans, as co-existing beings, are related to things and

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91. What could be also stated in this context is that while carrying out his philosophical project Merleau-Ponty came to modify philosophical language for the purpose of expressing a lived sense of the different existential phenomena he was concerned with. He came to use a metaphorical manner of expressing his conclusions. (cf. Crowther 1993; Madison 1992, 90; Gill 1991, xiii) Added to this the movement of his thinking proceeded in a circular manner. Once introduced, certain notions and concepts would be reconsidered in different contexts, which added to the layers of their significance. This was the manner in which he tried to express the ambiguity and intertwining of things as well as the fact that they never acquire a full presence or description and that the direction of their mode of being can only be indicated.

92. Even if the texts in *Signs* (1995/1964), in which Merleau-Ponty writes of these issues, do not make a distinction between phenomenology and philosophy, in them he is, in effect, clarifying the task of philosophy on phenomenological grounds. In addition to the fact that his thinking is thoroughly influenced by a phenomenological approach, in these instances one of the main references he uses in demonstrating his position is Husserl’s phenomenology. Therefore, I consider the following analysis to continue to illuminate how Merleau-Ponty relates to phenomenology as a philosophical practice. Actually this is how I find him to relate to the problems of philosophy throughout his work. Merleau-Ponty was concerned with a phenomenology of origins. Despite the fact that in his late work Merleau-Ponty claims to move towards an ontology, he remains interested in human embodiment, perception, as well as the relation humans have to the world, and continues to refer to Husserl’s and Jean-Paul Sartre’s phenomenological conclusions, all of which he began contemplating in his early, clearly phenomenological writings. In fact, Moran argues that for Merleau-Ponty, “philosophy as such is identical with phenomenology” (Moran 2002, 401).

the world. He maintains that if sociologists want to achieve a more profound comprehension of their findings, they also have to have a sense of how they have become evident to them and what interpreting their meaning means. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964c, 101, 103, 105) Hence, they too are invited to look at the foundation upon which their understanding is constructed, since this foundation is something that influences the manner in which they reach their conclusions.

Merleau-Ponty also holds that philosophy will cease to exist unless it takes a position in the present, that is, in relation to current personal, social, and cultural issues (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964c, 103). Along these lines he legitimizes philosophizing on the basis of empirical research material which relates to contemporary issues of interest. This is something the interview material discussed in this study could be considered an example of. He even offers guidelines for the interpretation of such material by elaborating on his conception of imaginary variation:

We can expand our experiences of social relationship and get a proper view of them only by analogy or contrast with those we have lived. We can do so, in short, only by subjecting the social relationships we have experienced to an *imaginary variation*. The lived relationships will no doubt take on a new meaning in comparison with this imaginary variation (as the fall of a body on an inclined plane is put in a new light by the ideal concept of free fall), but they will provide it all the sociological meaning it can have . . . the underlying dynamics of the social whole is certainly not given with our narrow experience of living among others, yet it is only by throwing this experience in and out of focus that we succeed in representing it to ourselves, just as the generalized number remains number for us only through the link which binds it to the whole number of elementary arithmetic. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964c, 100)

Here Merleau-Ponty could be understood, in one of his ways, to reveal his hermeneutic conception of understanding. I find this quotation on imaginary variation to relate to how my experience of the different research materials or sources used in this study weaved together in a manner that pointed towards a shared and coherent understanding of the issues explored. In a sense when I turned to them I forgot my own experiences and understandings at first. I placed myself in them and delved into them without gaining any clear or consistent understanding of the manner in which they related to each other. While I did so, however, an intuitive sense of the significance they had in relation to each other started to emerge. By trusting this sense to verify and produce a conception of it, I began contemplating how particular notions and themes found in the source material were related to others and how they might interlink with one another in a plausible manner. At some point a more explicit and consistent understanding emerged, which fulfilled my need to comprehend.

When thinking of this study's relation to Merleau-Ponty's aforementioned conception of wonder, it could be said that this research project was the result of a state of astonishment. My preconceptions were not sufficient to make me feel totally comfortable while living and performing as a freelance dance artist. I felt a need to re-think this questionable stance, which in the end led me into research. During the course of the investigation there were many moments of bewilderment as well. At these times I just read the source materials and let them have an effect on me without knowing where I was going. At some moments

this approach even produced the anxiety of not knowing how the different issues presented in these materials could be in dialogue with each other. While reading Merleau-Ponty's sense of wonder as something which turns the familiar world we know and understand into an unfamiliar and incomprehensible one, Heinämaa actually thinks that the core of philosophical practice involves encountering the unexpected and enduring the unsolved (Heinämaa 2000, 106). By giving space to the unsolved and the contradictory in a questioning mode without purposefully aiming at particular answers, I felt that at some points a sense of what I was dealing with emerged spontaneously. I was able to draw some conclusions from these moments and they became crystallized in the process of writing where I attempted to describe the interrelatedness of the issues discussed in the source material. This I did, moreover, in a manner that to a large extent avoided judging what the interviewees said which my understanding was built upon. However, not all of my 'passive' questioning dealt with the research materials in a way that is called for by phenomenology as a philosophical practice.

In the end Merleau-Ponty does not overlook the difference between philosophy and the human sciences. He believes that the primary task of a historian, a sociologist, and an anthropologist is to make observations and describe diverse forms of behavior and cultural conditions through their own experiences of them. Philosophy always dwells on how research and the behavior and conditions it throws light on become evident to the researcher as well as the potential research participants. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964c, 110–112) Therefore the task of the philosopher is still contemplating and analyzing the modes of being through which the world becomes evident to us (cf. Heinämaa 2000, 73). The philosopher scrutinizes the constitutive premises upon which our reality is built. This understanding then frames what follows: the subsequent interpretation of the interview material in Part III is partly concerned with a philosophical analysis that addresses the modes of being through which being a freelance dance artist is realized and partly is a hermeneutic discussion on a more empirical level simply presenting an analysis of experienced and observed features and conditions of life. Parts of the methodology and the current section of this chapter deal with the problem of how I, as the researcher, understood what was being investigated in a philosophical sense. This issue is no longer addressed in Part III which presents the interpretation of the interview material. There the understanding of the experiences, forms of behavior, and life conditions the interviewees expressed in the interviews are presented and discussed, partly on an empirical level and partly on a phenomenological one. This latter discussion relies on the premises of a philosophical mode of thinking as well as the conceptions Merleau-Ponty introduced in order to discern some of the constitutive structures of being a freelance dance artist.

## 6.2 The Body as Subject

Since Merleau-Ponty regarded the primordial nature of the world as an ambiguous phenomenal domain, he was dealing with a third modus of being which underlies the distinction between subject and object. Through investigating this area he also came to renew the

philosophical conception of the body and the consequent understanding of the meaning the body has in our lives.<sup>93</sup> It could no longer be viewed as a mere mechanistic object or thing, and neither could consciousness any longer be considered a disembodied faculty. (cf. Reuter 1997, 129; Dillon 1988, 131) Merleau-Ponty arrived at such understanding through discerning that the perceptive body was a phenomenal or lived body operating prior to our personal or reflective awareness and that the body had its own kind of reflexivity. This section discusses these issues further. While presenting the central themes related to Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the body, it discourses upon how the body opens before us and in us a sense of the world as well as how we ourselves come to have a sense of our own body.

As was pointed out in the previous section, perception takes place in a phenomenal field employing a perceptive faculty, an embodied subject, as it occurs. When I think of myself as a sensuous being, that can experience myself and the world, I readily concur that it is through the movements of my eyes and head that I can turn to look at the choreographer demonstrating a sequence of movements I should learn; through my ears that I hear the rhythm of the music accompanying her motion; and through the movements of my own body when trying out this same sequence that I feel what accomplishing this task myself is like. Without knowing exactly how and why the body seems to be the locus of my perceptions and my "point of view upon the world" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 70). In investigating the manner in which this sort of a position is possible, Merleau-Ponty turned to consider the lived experience of the body<sup>94</sup> and came to credit the lived body with being the general agent that allows us to experience the world and function in it. This perspective he took was not only a consequence of him adjusting to his phenomenological task of contemplating the first contact we have with the world but also because in his analyses he demonstrated that there is no other way to adequately describe the nature of the body.

In *Phenomenology of Perception*, where Merleau-Ponty focuses more on the functions of the body than in any other of his works, he begins explicitly considering the body by dealing with the problem of the phantom limb. He discusses two modes through which patients live with the lack of a bodily extremity. On the one hand, he points out that some patients with phantom limbs have an unconscious belief that a lost arm or leg is still intact. They continue to feel it and, when going through routine movements, they spontaneously try to use these lost limbs. On the other hand, he writes that there are also patients, who decide to ignore or refuse to accept the fact that they have lost an arm or leg or that one of their limbs has become para-

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93. In taking a keen interest in the relation we humans have with the world, Merleau-Ponty dwelt on perception as a function incarnated in the body to such an extent that his phenomenology in Finland has become known as the "phenomenology of the body" or more precisely "the body's phenomenology" (*ruumiifenomenologia*) (cf. Reuter 1997; Heinämaa 1996).

94. Merleau-Ponty writes of his task in the following manner, "In so far as I guess what it may be, it is by abandoning the body as an object, *partes extra partes*, and by going back to the body which I experience at this moment, in the manner, for example, in which my hands move around the object, anticipating the stimuli and itself tracing out the form which I am about to perceive. I cannot understand the function of a living body except by enacting it myself, and except in so far as I am a body which rises towards the world" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 75).

lyzed. When asked to show the dysfunctional body part they offer the other uninjured limb.

In his analysis Merleau-Ponty argues that objective psychology and physiology are incapable of giving a detailed explanation of the experiences and behavior of the patients. They consider the manner in which the patients are aware of the injuries and limbs mistaken representations. They conclude that, in the case of a lost but felt limb, there is a representation of an actual presence where there should be none. In the case of an inability to accept injury or dysfunction, there is a representation of an actual absence, which does not exist as such. Both conclusions do not correspond with the lived experience and behavior Merleau-Ponty depicts. Through these descriptions it is evident that the limbs are both present and absent. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 76–77, 80–82, 148; Heinämaa 1996, 77–79) Avoiding a paralyzed arm or using a phantom limb involves some sort of an experience of their presence even if they are both absent to different degrees. That is, they exist obscurely or ambivalently. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 81; Heinämaa 1996, 78)

What Merleau-Ponty's discussion of the phantom limb shows is that as opposed to a reductionist scientific explanation, in concrete reality the body continues to be directed towards the world and we continue to be involved with situations, perform movements, and confront objects that require the presence of its functions. He writes:

To have a phantom arm is to remain open to all the actions of which the arm alone is capable; it is to retain the practical field which one enjoyed before mutilation. The body is the vehicle of being in the world, and having a body, is for a living creature, to be involved in a definite environment, to identify oneself with certain projects and be continually committed to them. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 82)

This passage demonstrates that the capacities of the body are something that define the nature of the world we are involved with. It becomes qualified through the different bodily functions we are capable of. In relation to the limbs of our body the world could, for example, be described as a field where we can move towards or away from things by walking, where we can grasp things, lift them, and move them from one place to another with our hands and arms. But the body, while being a channel through which we inhabit the world, is simultaneously a channel through which the world inhabits us. The world, apart from being a field in which the body can perform its functions and realize our intentions, is also something that directs and molds the body. The world is thus also a world for a body adjusted to it. The things in the world reveal themselves to be entities that require certain sorts of bodily orientation in order to be encountered and dealt with. This orientation is something that the body interestingly enough accomplishes by itself. For example, when attempting to move to another place and beginning to walk the body of the patient with a lost leg spontaneously tries to use this body part.

Merleau-Ponty's reasoning regarding phantom limbs also shows that neither a third person objective view nor a narrow first person subjective view is adequate when we try to gain a sense of the body as it is experienced by us. Through focusing inwardly, for example, the person with a phantom leg could still experience having a leg. But when such a person would look down towards her or his legs or by glimpsing her or his body in a mirror she or he would realize it was missing. The body, then, exists in a between state and has an intentional

power of its own despite our personal decisions and evaluations. This body is given to us as a lived body, a body, which cuts through the distinction between subject and object or the psychic and physiological dimensions of our being.

With this opening discussion of the body and its lived nature, Merleau-Ponty related to various themes that he continued to study in more detail in *Phenomenology of Perception*. These themes are something that I will address in subsequent sections to show why the body became so important in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy. The following sections will first discuss the notions of a bodily reflexivity and bodily intentionality, by which Merleau-Ponty explains the basic features through which we are in contact with the world. Then they turn to address the motility of the body and the body schema, which in turn describe the manner in which the body functions in relation to the world through its habitual abilities. Finally I will examine the concept of the flesh, which Merleau-Ponty properly coined in his very late work *The Visible and Invisible*<sup>95</sup> as it is concerned with a general principle, which draws together the central features of the earlier discussion.

### **A bodily reflexivity and intentionality**

Merleau-Ponty's notions of a bodily intentionality are closely related to the concept of 'operative intentionality', which was briefly presented earlier. This latter term refers to the basic manner in which the body is tied to its world. What becomes emphasized is that the phenomenal or lived body is entwined with its environment prior to our personal or reflective awareness of its stance and positions. The body, moreover, often functions without depending on our help in carrying out chosen actions. When witnessing the actions of the body we notice, for example, that we breathe before we are personally conscious that we are indeed breathing, that we are awake before we think of ourselves as being awake, that we drink the liquid contained in a cup without having to direct our body to do so step-by-step. In fact, early in life our body spontaneously, for example, breathes, sucks, digests, grabs, sleeps, hears, feels, sees, and smells. Later in life the body also acquires various habits through which it spontaneously relates to the world without engaging our reflective faculties in any direct manner.

In Merleau-Ponty's view this pre-reflective functioning of the body was so descriptive of its abilities and our relation to the world that he considered it the first form of intentionality our existence relies upon. This intentionality concerns the practical and motor functions through which the body has the capacity to acquire a sense of the world by itself. Thus, it diverges from a more traditional view, which considers intentionality to be a reflective and prepositional aptitude. That is, that we come to have a sense of things through reflection. Merleau-

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95. There is, nevertheless, a passage in *Phenomenology of Perception* where he uses the term 'flesh'. He writes: "When we say that the life of the body, or the flesh, and the life of the psyche are involved in a relationship of reciprocal *expression*, these formulations need to be explained" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 160). And *Eye and Mind*, the last work he published during his lifetime, involves some more in-depth analysis of the flesh-ontology he continued to elaborate upon in his last unpublished manuscript *The Visible and Invisible* (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993c, 121–149).

Ponty, however, argues that the body's notion of "I can" precedes the mental notion of "I think" as the body exists and relates to the world before we have a personal or reflective sense of our existence. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 137; Heinämaa 1996, 80)

Consequently, alongside of writing of a phenomenal or lived body Merleau-Ponty also began referring to the body as an anonymous or impersonal subject and even a natural self. The anonymity of the body-subject demonstrates exactly that the body operates and perceives already before any sense of a personal or reflective "I" emerges. When we consider it, we realize that we ourselves do not, for example, produce perception, rather it is something that initially happens to us through the functions of the body. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 80, 171, 215, 254) Merleau-Ponty outlines how the body-subject expresses the first features of perception it brings to our personal awareness by writing that: "Each time I experience a sensation, I feel that it concerns not my own being, the one I am responsible for and for which I make decisions, but rather another self which has already sided with the world, which is already open to certain of its aspects and synchronized with them" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 216). This other self, synchronized with the world, is of course the body that is already attuned to the world, capable of functioning in relation to it without the interference of reflection or willful actions.

In the course of his thinking Merleau-Ponty came to stress that the anonymous subject, the pre-thematically functioning body, was not only an entity which we find to be *in* the world but pointed out that it is an entity directed *towards* the world and an entity *of* the world. The directedness of the body and the world towards each other, where the intertwining of perception and the phenomenal field brings them both into being, was discussed in the previous chapter. What was not mentioned is that the body is able to perceive and to be intertwined with things only because it and they are of the "same family". For the body to be in touch with the world there must be a common ground where they are in communion, where in a manner of speaking, they comprehend each other on the above-described functional level. If the body had nothing in common with the world it would be a solipsistic being, not capable of having any relation of its own with the world. However, it evidently does.<sup>96</sup> Yet the nature of the body is not limited to this common ground. If this were the case, the body would be identical with the world and there would be no essential distinction between a body-subject and the world. Merleau-Ponty writes: "For the body is a thing among things, it is so in a stronger and deeper sense than they: in the sense that, we said, it is *of them*, and this means that it detaches itself upon them, and, accordingly, detaches itself from them" (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 137). In detaching itself upon the world the body is directed towards the world with which it has an immediate contact. In detaching from the world the body takes its experiences of the world into a new dimension disclosing a human world of cultural meaning. The body described in this sense is, then, an experiential being opening to a world beyond its centrality, gaining a sense of this world it meets and simultaneously transposing the world, and still existing as a thing of the world. It is both an immanent and

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96. In his late writings Merleau-Ponty began referring to the "common ground" the body and the world share with the term 'flesh', which will be discussed later in this chapter.

transcendent entity. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 215; Langer 1989, 54–55)

While explaining the double directionality of our existence, Merleau-Ponty writes that, “The world is inseparable from the subject, but from a subject which is nothing but a project of the world, and the subject is inseparable from the world, but from a world which the subject itself projects” (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 430). The core features of how this sort of a double movement is an actual bodily reality are discussed in the following paragraphs. In effect, though, all of the later sections presenting Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology add to the layers of the dynamics of the embodied subject.

The basic nature of the lived body, the body-subject and its intentionality, are understood more precisely through clarifying the double sensation that belongs to perception. It is in this structural description that the double nature of immanence and transcendence and the tacit comprehension the body has of the world and itself have their foundations. We are commonly familiar with the fact that our body has two modes of awareness. It is simultaneously a sensuous body, which through its sentient nature perceives itself and the world, and a thing-like body, which is sensed or perceived as a tangible or visible object. Hence, the body possesses a dimension of proximity and distance in which it can feel itself touched as a subject and viewed by itself or others as an object. Nevertheless, while engaged in an act of perception the dual nature of the body is unified and it is through the interrelation of its dual aspects that we comprehend its experiences.

For example, in the case of our two hands clasping each other, while trying to discern where the sense of touching is located, we notice that the sense of touching and being touched alternate between the hands. We cannot pinpoint precisely which of the hands is responsible for the touching and which is touched unless we elect to consider the other hand the “toucher” and the other the touched. Without such a decision, our actual sense of the situation is simply two hands clasping or touching each other. Indeed, it is by bringing about an experience of a single significance that the body unifies its two dimensions. However, even within this unified experience there still belongs a difference. The roles of the sentient and sensible<sup>97</sup> body overlap and in this sense coincide but do not fully merge. Still it is in the ambiguous flux of this overlapping that things are brought into being. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 93; 1987/1968, 121, 136–137; Dillon 1988, 144) We understand that the significance of our two hands clasping is in the unified act and not in the alternation of the sensations of the hands.

Merleau-Ponty considers that the reversibility of the sentient-sensible characteristics of perception (at an unreflective level of experience) occurs through a sort of primordial reflexivity: a corporeal tacit cogito. He writes that in the double sensation of the hands clasping the following occurs: “As a physical thing, the hand remains unchanged. But “I touch myself touching”. Thus my body realizes *eine Art von Reflexion* [a kind of reflection], a grasp of itself by itself, a sort of *Cogito* or act of the subject” (Merleau-Ponty 1992, 164; cf. Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 93). As was shown above, the coincidence of the sentient and sensible is

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97. While using the term ‘sentient’ in this context I mean sensitive, or perceptive and while using the term ‘sensible’ I mean perceptible or perceivable. These terms are often used when writing in English about the sensuous features of human cognition that Merleau-Ponty discusses.

an identifiable act, namely that of the two hands touching. However, a difference remains, too, a non-coincidence, which Merleau-Ponty also calls among other things a dehiscence, divergence, or an *écart*. In the reversibility of an act of perceiving-perceived, touching-touched, a total coincidence is always only on the verge of being actualized; the body-subject tacitly acknowledges its separation from the phenomena it reveals. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 126, 135, 147–148)<sup>98</sup> The touched hands are, then, independent of, and more than, that which the touching reveals, and the phenomena disclosed remain something which we perceive in a way that we tacitly understand we are not perceiving the entirety of their being (Dillon 1988, 163–164).

The movement of perception enabling one to experience oneself as both the perceived object as well as the perceiving subject actually gives us the chance to be in touch with that which the world is made up of. We not only perceive ourselves through this dynamic but also perception in general functions through a doubling of itself. The body's ability to sense other things relies on its capacity to sense itself (Dillon 1988, 148). In perception we move towards things by not concentrating on our perceiving but reaching the object through perception. Yet, while so doing we have a tacit understanding that it is our body, which is perceiving the entity revealed by perception. The sentient-sensed relations are now just extended beyond the body through the intentional capacities of the body to be in touch with the world. The outlines of the body could be said to be porous allowing us to reach into the world. If instead of touching my other hand I place my palm on my desk, I feel its surface in a manner where at moments it seems as if the part of the desk I am touching were pressing towards my palm: while I touch the table it is as if the table touched me back. Again there is a double sensation where I withdraw from my body towards the perceived. Then I feel the smoothness and coolness of the surface of the table, and this occurs exactly through the sensations in my palm by which I sense myself perceiving. Every perception, thus, is doubled, involving both our perceiving an object and a tacit recognition of us simultaneously perceiving ourselves perceiving.

### **The body schema**

The foregoing clarifies the premises according to which Merleau-Ponty considers the intentional and lived body to manifest itself both as a subject and an object, a sensing and sensed or perceiving and perceived entity capable of gaining a sense of itself as well as of the things and surroundings it finds itself in touch with (cf. Dillon 1988, 143). The basic tenets of the reversibility thesis described above, furthermore, represent the seedbed from which a sense of our own body as a unique dynamic totality begins to grow. To gain insight into the body's intentional nature and how it functions in relation to our awareness of ourselves

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98. Dillon points out that this identity with a difference, where our perception coincides with the thing perceived yet tacitly recognizes its disjunction from the perceived object, is what separates Merleau-Ponty's ideas from a traditional solipsistic subject. For example, Jean-Paul Sartre considers that to be touched and to touch are radically distinct and incommunicable events. Hence, for him the body as subject and body as object are strictly separate. For Merleau-Ponty instead there exists a domain where these two ambiguously encompass each other. (Dillon 1988, 158–159)

Merleau-Ponty examines the manner in which we comprehend our own body as a single unit. Consequently, aside from the phenomenal or lived body, he discusses the basic sense we have of the body also through describing what he refers to as one's own body (*le corps propre*).<sup>99</sup>

When compared with the things of the world the body has a special spatial characteristic, that of placing us in a position of an ambiguous but perpetual "here". We can never escape our own body completely. It never exactly becomes a "there"; a full object we can place in front of us or simply leave behind. Rather our own body is something we always carry with us. In some experiences it has only a vague and latent existence in others it is focal. Nevertheless, it is through it that we are in contact with ourselves, things, and others. It is the point of departure that informs us if objects and phenomena are within grasp or not as well as imparting to us their qualitative nature.

So, the body offers us a spatiality where things are near or far, beneath us or above us, in front of or behind us, large or small. It also communicates to us the form of the entity we perceive as well as the sensuous qualities of taste, smell, and visual, its tactile as well as aural nature. Added to this, the body announces itself to us as both a sensing and a sensed organism in which affective and kinesthetic sensations are localized. A cramp in a muscle is felt as an aching and a tight sensation while it simultaneously is recognized to appear in some area or part of our body. In this way the body comprehends itself as both perceiving and perceived as well as reveals itself to be a spatial configuration all in one wave of experience. Furthermore, we often simply take for granted that it is a mobile entity. It is through the internal and mostly spontaneous arrangement of the body's movements that we function in the world. In effect, it is this movement which also allows us to perceive things from various positions and offers us an existential space integral to the body itself as well as expanding outwards into the environment we live in at any moment. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 90–94, 148, 203; 1987/1968, 148)

How do these existential features become evident to us? In Merleau-Ponty's view the most immediate awareness that we have of our own body is given to us by what he calls the corporeal or body schema (*le schéma corporel*)<sup>100</sup> (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 98). Merleau-Ponty borrowed this concept from gestalt psychology but did so by renewing its significance. In his

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99. One's own body is the translation Colin Smith and M.C. Dillon use for Merleau-Ponty's term *le corps propre*. (cf. Smith 1995/1962; Dillon 1988)

100. I shall continue to use the terms 'corporeal schema' or 'body schema' in order to underline the fact that Merleau-Ponty is creating an understanding of the condition of perception and our perceptual and cognitive relation to the world. This I do in spite of Colin Smith's translation. His English version of Merleau-Ponty's *Phénoménologie de la Perception* mainly uses the term 'body image' even if at points the term 'body schema' is used. Shaun Gallagher argues that Merleau-Ponty used both these terms in his original French text in a careful and consistent manner that Smith ignored (Gallagher 1995/1985, 232). This is perhaps due to the fact that Merleau-Ponty referred to Schilder, while clarifying his ideas. According to Gallagher and Cole, Schilder used the two terms "interchangeably to signify the image or conscious representation of one's own body" (Gallagher & Cole 1998, 132). Tiemersma asserts that 'body image' is a psychological term often used instead of 'body schema' to denote "the non-thematically functioning knowledge of the body" or sometimes even "the conscious representation or conception of the body" (Tiemersma 1989, 2). She argues, similarly, that 'body schema' is the term that philosophers in the

thinking the body schema came to stand for a sort of a norm, a basic structuring of experience, where our movements and perceptions interconnect and bring about an integral manner of being. The body schema is something that operates on a pre-reflective level and in its organization depends on the sequence of motions the body performs as well as its shifting positions. What is noteworthy, moreover, is that for Merleau-Ponty this integration, where the intentional attitude of the body-subject determines the stance of its totality, is inspired by a possible or actual task the body attempts to undertake. One could say that the body schema so understood is the tacit and internal organization of our body parts, motor capacities, habits, and perception engaging the whole body in relation to the projects it embarks upon in the world. To be exact, it is the mode by which we are intertwined with the world in any given situation. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 96, 98–100, 150; Heinämaa 1996, 81–82; Tiemersma 1989, 227) Consequently, Merleau-Ponty writes that: “The word “here” applied to my body does not refer to a determinate position in relation to other positions or to external co-ordinates, but the laying down of the first co-ordinates, the anchoring of the active body in an object, the situation of the body in face of its task” (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 100). What this passage suggests is that we come to know our own body, and even the situation we find ourselves in as well, by the modes of functioning it employs while engaged in divergent projects.

The body schema then is something that is responsible for the organization of our body and the world we meet at the level of lived experience. Through it the environment the body finds itself in and the body’s posture and movements intertwine making it possible for us to adjust and orient ourselves in this environment and attain our goals. Our awareness of the gestalt of the body itself, nonetheless, often remains in the background while we accomplish our aims even though the whole body is engaged in these endeavors. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 100–101) Merleau-Ponty gives an example of how the whole body is drawn towards the body parts that are focal to a certain action in the following manner:

If I stand in front of my desk and lean on it with both hands, only my hands are stressed and the whole of my body trails behind them like the tail of a comet. It is not that I am unaware of the whereabouts of my shoulders or back, but these are simply swallowed up in the position of my hands, and my whole posture can be read so to speak in the pressure they exert on the table. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 100)

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existential-phenomenological context have generally come to rely upon (Tiemersma 1989, 1). However, in practice the two terms have been and continue to be used in an unclear fashion (cf. Weiss 1999a; 1999b). To bring some consistency into the discussion Gallagher and Cole point out differences between the two concepts. They utilize the term ‘body schema’ when referring to pre-conscious and sub-personal processes that, to a large extent, direct the posture and motions of the body. When they speak of an intentional awareness, an idea or a mental representation that one has of one’s body, they employ the term ‘body image’. (Gallagher & Cole 1998, 131) As a matter of fact, this is a distinction that Gallagher reads Merleau-Ponty also to rely on while intermittently using the terms ‘body schema’ and ‘body image’, even if he did not differentiate between his use of the two terms in a detailed fashion. Though he found that on an existential level they intertwine as they are elements of one system, he contends that the body schema is neither simply a positional consciousness nor a representation. (Gallagher 1998/1995, 232; cf. Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 99–101)

Here Merleau-Ponty demonstrates how the body schema effects the linking together of sensation and posture as well as a comprehension of where the various body parts become tacitly recognized through their functional value. What also occurs in this process is that the body incorporates, so to speak, the spatiality external into itself as a correlative functional structure. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 142, 148, 150) The body becomes molded by its surroundings and the actions through which it is interacting with them.

In actual fact, Merleau-Ponty attempts to prove that the bodily movements and the object or environment the body deals with come into being reciprocally. The objects and environment shape the actions of the body by the practical movements and functions they necessitate in any given situation and, thus, call for a certain kind of bodily comportment. But the objects and the environment also acquire their meaning through the body's position in relation to them. Apart from the body's position in relation to certain entities, this meaning is influenced by the body's earlier experiences with similar objects and environments as well as the movements it has performed. This, however, does not mean that we are tied to only repetitive acts and behavior. The body can move beyond its habits and comprehend itself and its environment in new ways, too. (cf. Heinämaa 1996, 82–83) In arguing for the relevance of this sort of an understanding of the body's relation to the world, Merleau-Ponty describes and analyzes the so-called Schneider case.

Here Merleau-Ponty again uses his strategy of observing dysfunctional behavior to show where previous scientific reasoning failed and to argue for his own position. Nevertheless, by presenting only some examples of Schneider's symptoms I shall mostly discuss the conclusions Merleau-Ponty arrived at. Schneider was a patient who had been injured by a shell splinter which had injured the area of his brain in which neuroscience considers visual processes to occur. Through Merleau-Ponty's examples of his behavior, it is evident that he moved and functioned in an unconventional manner. Indeed, he could not perform bodily movements unless they had a practical purpose in a concrete and actual situation. Schneider could, for example, take out his handkerchief and blow his nose. But he could not point to his nose when asked to without grasping it. If blindfolded he could not point out a certain body part when it was touched even if he at other times could spontaneously scratch an itching area. When asked to place his hand on his forehead as in a military salute, Schneider was able to accomplish the movement only through assuming a posture of respect and through this context perform his task. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 103, 104, 108, 110, 126, 155; Dillon 1988, 132–133; Heinämaa 1996, 80) Therefore, Schneider could function in familiar practical contexts or by assuming such contexts in order to perform specific acts related to them. Without having a familiar context or a practical purpose (which had an end result aside from exploring the spatiality of the body or its movements), he could only produce movement in a haphazard and roundabout way.

As Merleau-Ponty thought that the actions and posture of our body become organized through a purpose or significance requiring of us a certain bodily orientation, he noted that Schneider was spontaneously capable of concrete movements but not abstract ones. He writes, "The patient is conscious of his bodily space as the matrix of habitual action, but not as an objective setting; his body is at his disposal as a means of ingress into familiar sur-

rounding, but not as the means of expression of gratuitous and free spatial thought" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 104). The examples of Schneider's behavior show that he performed familiar routines and reacted to concrete situations. He could not instinctively relate to the significance of particular movements in unfamiliar situations. It is as if Schneider's world had been reduced to the situations he found himself in and that he was unaware of his potential to influence their nature. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 105, 109, 112, 117; Heinämaa 1996, 82–83) It was impossible, then, for him "to build into the geographical setting a behavioural one, a system of meanings outwardly expressive of the subject's internal activity" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 112). Relating to the world is usually a two-way process. Firstly, a situation and the things in it offer us values that direct and frame our bodily responses and actions. Secondly, we direct and create our own life situations according to our personal interests and aims. Schneider was capable of operating on the first of these two levels. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 106, 112) In Merleau-Ponty's view, nevertheless, this was not the result of Schneider lacking some distinct skill or function belonging to normal persons. Instead, Merleau-Ponty described Schneider as possessing a "complete form of existence" which linked him with a *certain sort of world* (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 106–107; cf. Heinämaa 1996, 82).

Indeed with the Schneider case Merleau-Ponty wanted to illustrate that the scope of the dynamic field in which we live is organized through the behavior and acts we are capable of. The manner in which our body exists in relation to the world is the means by which we gain a sense of the world and have a familiar world at our disposal. While analyzing Schneider's behavior, then, Merleau-Ponty inferred that instead of it being a neurological problem which affected his vision, which in turn complicated movement, or, on the contrary, a similar problem creating motional incongruity, it was the whole of Schneider's intentional attitude to the world that had changed through his injury. It was especially the motor intentionality that deteriorated and created a narrowed sense of the spatiality and movements of the body. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 106, 110; cf. Reuter 1999)

So far it is evident that the functioning of the body schema relies on the motility of the body and, additionally, that it is not a reflective construction. Even perception itself relies on movement. We move our head and eyes to see an object better. We reach out our hand and move our fingers to feel the texture of a fabric. Even shifting our attention from seeing to hearing in some situations could itself be regarded as a mode of movement.<sup>101</sup> In analyzing the motility of the body Merleau-Ponty understood that when we move our body it is always a phenomenal, lived body we move (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 106). Even when moving by imitating others' moves or moving according to a set pattern, we do not first look for our different body parts to find them and then set each one of them in motion in turn. Rather the

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101. For example in the article *The Child's Relation with Others* Merleau-Ponty uses the term *cenestesia*, by which he refers to the mass of sensations that expresses to the subject the state of his different organs and bodily functions (Merleau-Ponty 1985/1964d, 114). Jaana Parviainen suggests that one could use the more familiar and relative term kinaesthetic to describe motility as a sense which is immanent in the actions of all the other senses (Parviainen 1998, 43).

body itself accomplishes the movement and devises an integral manner of functioning where the body parts that are focal for certain acts direct the stance of the whole body. Merleau-Ponty additionally understood that in movement there is simultaneously a consciousness of movement. To movement inheres an immediate comprehension of a significance that builds upon either the concrete or abstract background through which the motion is initiated. The spatiality of a situation pivots around what Merleau-Ponty calls certain “anchoring points”. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 110–111, 121, 279–281) The next paragraphs enlarge upon this further.

In concrete movement the background is the actual setting of the surrounding environment which calls for certain behavior or actions. For example, when the phone rings usually my body immediately moves towards it and its actions become organized accordingly. I lean over my desk, reach my hand out to pick up the receiver and place it by my ear. My body grasps the significance of the situation as it allows me to answer the phone before I am aware of doing so in any distinct way. Another example of a reaction to a situation where the body realizes what is occurring before I am personally cognizant of it can be taken from my life as a dancer. There have been several moments when I’ve been waiting to go on stage and after my musical cue have suddenly found myself already in front of the audience in the flow of motion.

In the case of abstract movement, it is our personal and imaginary aims that form the back-ground according to which the environment and the sense of the movements performed gain their significance. I might, for example, decide to climb a mountain. Before deciding to do so I might admire its height and solemn presence as beautiful features in a landscape while standing and facing it from a distance to gain a view of the whole mountain. When thinking of it as climbable, though, I see the mountain as a rough surface with which I come into close contact bending and stretching my body to fit its contours. In beginning my ascent and sometimes even grabbing it with my hands its height alternately becomes a challenge or an ordeal to me. So, my intention to climb provides me with a different kind of oriented space from the one I had before this intention. Moreover, when climbing my body bends forward, marches, or even crawls rather than stands. Whilst I am actually climbing up the mountain my body has done what I intended to do. In effect it has become this intention itself and the movements of my body have a direct relation to intended situation I find myself in. If I place my foot on a loose stone, my hands immediately grasp the rocks nearest to them tighter and my foot quickly searches for more stable support.

In abstract movements, then, our ability to project spreads a world out in front of us, a dynamic field of potentiality, which was not there before. We can change the circumstances merely by momentarily proceeding into the realm of the possible (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 135). This is the dimension in which we can turn towards our own being and mold it along with its situation, and enter into a dimension of play, experimentation, and even dance (Heinämaa 1996, 83).<sup>102</sup> Yet both abstract and concrete movements rely on the body’s pre-reflective motor reactions and habitual tendencies through which it accomplishes the best balance

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102. Merleau-Ponty writes of a “normal” subject making a similar salute as Schneider was asked to do in the following way: “The normal subject, on giving, to order, a military salute, sees in it no more than an experimental situation, and therefore restricts the movements to its most important elements and

between our being and the demands our intentions or our current reality impose on it.

Merleau-Ponty's refers to what he calls the habitual body (*le corps habituel*)<sup>103</sup> as that aspect of the body schema which determines our reactions and behavior in relation to the situations we find ourselves in. This he differentiates from the actual body (*le corps actuel*), which is the body working in the present situation and "utilizing" the habitual body to respond to a concrete or an imaginary and projected task. The habitual body refers to our bodily aptitude which allows us to perform familiar functions or to adjust ourselves to new situations. It corresponds to the abilities the body has acquired through previous experiences and which it has spontaneously at its disposal. While explaining this facticity Merleau-Ponty speaks of a sedimentation by which earlier experiences become ingrained in the body as a practical knowledge that result in action. The habitual body is a sort of a motor memory. However, it is not contained in any specific organ of memory but is linked to the functional competence the body has in relation to its tasks. To elucidate, Merleau-Ponty writes about typists, who cannot tell where the letters on the keyboard are if asked but who are still able to type easily. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 130, 143–144; Langer 1989, 32) He concludes, for that reason, that habit is "knowledge in the hands, which is forthcoming only when bodily effort is made, and cannot be formulated in detachment from that effort" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 144).

To Merleau-Ponty, bodily movements and acts become habitual when the body has achieved bodily significance. By this he means that the body acquires a habit when it finds a balance or a harmony between the intentions, given to it by the situation or our personal aims, and its performance. What is characteristic of habitual behavior is that it is melodious. It appears without us paying any special attention to it. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 105, 142–144) Simply stated bodily habits are spontaneous and automatic aptitudes acquired through time and repetition. In throwing itself into different situations and engaging itself in various actions the body comes to depend upon these habits.

However, the habitual body is activated also when new bodily significance is about to come into being, that is, when it adjusts itself to function in new situations. Merleau-Ponty writes of learning to dance a certain dance by being acquainted with it through an analysis of its sequences. He states:

[I]s it not the case that forming a habit of dancing is discovering, by analysis, the formula of the movement in question, and then reconstructing it on the basis of the ideal outline by the use of previously acquired movements, those of walking and running? But before the formula of the new dance can incorporate certain elements of general motility, it must first have had, as it were, the stamp of movement set upon it. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 142–143)

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does not throw himself into it. He is using his body as a means of play acting; he finds it entertaining to pretend to be a soldier; he escapes from reality in the rôle of the soldier just as the actor slips his real body into the 'great phantom' of the character to be played. The normal man and the actor do not mistake imaginary situations for reality, but extricate their real bodies from the living situation to make them breathe, speak and, if need be, weep in the realm of imagination" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 105).

103. Despite the fact that Colin Smith (1995/1962) in his translation turns to use the term 'habit-body' for *le corps habituel* I shall continue to use the term 'habitual body' to differentiate between single habits and the habitual body in general.

Here Merleau-Ponty firstly describes that we grasp a certain sense of the forms and rhythms of the movement a dance contains. This sense is what we project in front of us and which the body grasps by moving accordingly. It can do so only if it has a comprehension of and the ability to perform the rudimentary movements which the dance has been constructed from. These movements and indeed the notion of dancing itself need to be somewhat familiar to the body for it to grasp the significance of dancing this particular dance. When it does so, moreover, a new and initially non-automatic bodily performance becomes its mode of behaving for the length of the dance. The next projects the subject deals with ask for a new sort of bodily organization and orientation.

As a result the habitual body lends our life a measure of stability by offering a stepping stone from which we reach into potentiality and by giving us a chance to adapt to new situations even if only for a short time. Regardless of this it also allows these new modes of conduct to become habits through the body being exposed to such behavior for a sufficient length of time. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 75, 105, 142–144, 146)<sup>104</sup> With time and repetition bodily movement become bodily knowledge, which can be used in relevant situations.

Habits, then, are a part of the body's way of interacting with the world. Furthermore, acquiring a new habit is the acquiring of a specific style of being that enriches the body schema. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 144, 153) In this enrichment the surrounding concrete or projected space is also incorporated in the body schema.<sup>105</sup> The body's actions are answers to a situational spatiality where the things we move amongst become integral to it, too. Alongside of acquiring habits, the habitual body makes it possible for what we use to achieve our aims or goals to become extensions of the body. They become tools by which we come to grasp the significance of our being in a particular situation. Merleau-Ponty gives an example

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104. Drew Leder (1990) points out that the knowledge we have acquired of the world is not actively used in any actual situation. Instead it "disappears" into the background where it exerts a subliminal field of force. The acquisition of higher skills is characterized by this progressive experiential disappearance. Leder gives an example of learning how to swim during which the movements are first monitored in a way to make sure one is concretizing the understanding gained from examples or instructions given by others. This part of the learning provokes an explicit body awareness. When one has achieved proficiency in swimming, this monitoring and explicit bodily awareness fades and it comes to exist in one's corporeality as one swims in pursuit of different aims, such as for the pure enjoyment of sensing bodily motion and the resistance and softness of water pressing on the body or reaching maximum speed etc. (Leder 1990, 31–32)

105. Drew Leder (1990) calls the process of acquiring skills incorporation. In his view, this incorporation deals with two dimensions: a temporal dimension through the sedimentation of learned bodily functions and a spatial extension through the capacity of the body to encompass objects which retain their spatial discreteness in relation to body. The latter will be discussed next in the main text. What I want to demonstrate here is that Leder considers incorporation to be a rich dialectic in which the world transforms the body and the body transforms the world. It is a reciprocal exchange in which one first moves from a tacit embodiment to a thematically-present world. When considering my mountain excursion, it is through my body I get to know the mountain as a rough and graspable surface. The world one discovers leads one to redesign the body. My body becomes a climbing body. But just as the body in this redesigning incorporates the world it discovers the world itself is altered. The mountain becomes a climbable entity instead of only being a visual spectacle. The redesigned body gives a different significance to the world. In incorporation both the world and the body are transformed, then. (Leder 1990, 33–34)

of a blind man using a stick. He states, "The blind man's stick has ceased to be an object for him, and is no longer perceived for itself; its point has become an area of sensitivity, extending the scope and active radius of touch, and providing a parallel to sight" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 143). To the blind man the stick is a perceptual device integral to his motility. The presence of the world is mediated through a transcendence; the immanence of the body has extended and the primary focal point of perception is where the stick touches its surroundings.<sup>106</sup>

When thinking of our actual and personal lives through which we move towards novel ways of being in relation to our habitual modes of behavior through the above described-perspective, what seems to be the case is that our personal lives are momentary. Our habitual capacities take charge of our personal projections until we decide to redirect the manner in which are related to the world. Actually Merleau-Ponty points out that the movement between the personal and the purposeful as well as habit and spontaneity relates to the temporal nature of the body. This ensures that our life proceeds and is historical. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 88, 171) This is due to the fact that, "At each successive instant of a movement, the preceding instant is not lost sight of. It is, as it were, dovetailed into the present, and present perception generally speaking consists in drawing together, on the basis of one's present position, the succession of previous positions, which envelope each other" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 140). However, habitual being always shares a touch of novelty, since the organization of the body schema is affected by shifting situations and our ever-accumulating experience. From this it follows that habits are constantly, even if in some cases only slightly, transposed and the habitual body evolves as our actions lose their actuality when they are no longer a mode of behavior through which our present being is realized. Our deeds build on previous ones and provide subsequent ones with a base while our abilities grow in scope or in depth. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 88, 127, 130, 140)

To come back to the nature of our own body: Merleau-Ponty concludes that it is the unification of its parts and functioning based on a bodily history that our body is for us. Merleau-Ponty writes of an intentional arc, "which projects round about us our past, our future, our human setting, our physical, ideological and moral situation, or rather which results in our being situated in all these respects. It is this intentional arc which brings about the unity of the senses, of intelligence, of sensibility and motility" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 136). The intentional arc is a fundamental function underlying other separate functions and it

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106. Don Ihde (1979) describes the incorporation of a piece of chalk. When writing on the blackboard he states that he feels the smoothness or roughness of the board *at the end of the chalk through it*. He experiences the chalk only secondarily as an object. Primarily it is absorbed into his experience as an extension of himself. He finds that the chalk has a partially transparent relation between himself and the blackboard. The chalk is no longer the 'other' to him – it is the board that is other and not a part of his "equipment". The chalk, or bodily extension, affects the experience he has of the board. A bare hand touching the board has a greater richness to it. But a tool or an instrument might also amplify an experience. A dentist's drill gives the dentist a microscopic perception of the surfaces and crevices in teeth, which could never be felt or seen with the body's 'bare senses'. Ihde thus calls these extensions of the body through tools, instruments, and machines *sensory – extension – reduction relations*. (Ihde 1979, 7–9)

integrates the body into a synergetic totality (Reuter 1999, 74). This already starts occurring on the level of sensations. The different senses, retaining their distinctness, co-exist, overlap, and even substitute each other in forming what Merleau-Ponty refers to as the synaesthetic system. Sensations present themselves with a motor physiognomy opening upon, that is, influenced by, the same situational space. They inform us about the global significance of one and the same situation. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 209, 217, 225, 228–229) The significance of a situation or thing perceived, moreover, is accomplished through the envelopment of the senses.<sup>107</sup>

Aside from the senses, the body schema along with its intentionality mediates our perceptions, body, acts, and the situations we find ourselves in as they blend into each other, effecting a unified synthesis where one feature cannot be determined without the other or expressly distinguished from the other. Correlatively for us the body is a unity whose parts we comprehend only in relation to the rest, whose acts we grasp only in relation to earlier ones, and whose totality is formed only in relation to the world. Accordingly our being evolves out of an endless chaining where even the movements of others and the worlds others have brought into being affect its nature. The body expresses itself to us and to others as a style of being permeating its entirety. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 150, 157; Heinämaa 1996, 85) Merleau-Ponty even finds that the interrelatedness of the body's features is similar in nature to an artwork. In his view, the body is like "a novel, poem or musical work" in that they "are individuals, that is beings in which the expression is indistinguishable from the thing expressed, their meaning accessible only through direct contact . . . It is in this sense that our body is comparable to a work of art. It is a nexus of living meanings" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 151).

### **The flesh and its chiasms**

Before turning to discuss how we are related to other people in any detail, I want to address the notions of the flesh (*la chair*) and the chiasm (*le chiasme*).<sup>108</sup> Merleau-Ponty in his late philosophy reconsidered his understanding of the reversibility of perception with these novel philosophical concepts. While his formulations of the flesh and the chiasm build upon the dual nature of perception and the body's entwinement with the world, with them he moves

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107. Nevertheless, as Dillon writes, "The senses are united in one body and open onto a unitary world, but to lose one of them is to lose a quality of experience that the remaining senses cannot restore. Vision and touch are "are not superposable", but they are reversible: for the most part, I can touch what I see and see what I touch" (Dillon 1988, 160).

108. Both of these terms are something that Merleau-Ponty most explicitly dealt with in his last and unfinished manuscript *The Visible and the Invisible*. There especially his conception of the chiasm remains incomplete. The last completed chapter of the manuscript is entitled The Intertwining – The Chiasm. But in effect the chapter hardly mentions the chiasm itself at all. It concentrates more on the movement of the flesh. It is, still, somewhat debatable what Merleau-Ponty meant by the term 'chiasm'. Nonetheless, I shall clarify both of these terms by relying not only on Merleau-Ponty's own writing but also on a few secondary sources. The interpretation of Merleau-Ponty's flesh-ontology I present here is especially indebted to Sue Cataldi's (1993) and Gary Madison's (1990/1981) somewhat commensurate interpretations of Merleau-Ponty's late thinking.

towards a more ontological level in his philosophizing (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 183). In *The Visible and the Invisible* Merleau-Ponty leaves behind his intentional analysis and grounds the movement of being in his conception of a chiasmatic reversibility, which he also considered an ultimate truth. The chiasmatic functioning of the flesh deals with that basic principle according to which we come into being and in general are intertwined with the world, others, and things. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 141, 155, 183) The flesh itself refers to a nonhuman dimension, a single and inarticulate texture, which is prior to any distinct entities but still permeates them all. This texture is what becomes moved in the chiasmatic reversibility, and it is in this movement that beings themselves, as perceivable and possibly identifiable entities, come into existence. The flesh is a kind of a source because of this which becomes defined through the chiasm. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 140, 144, 147) The following paragraphs discuss the meaning of the above concepts in more detail in order to allow us to understand the concept of intersubjectivity and the conception of the manner in which dance and language are related that this study relies on. In order to present the character of Merleau-Ponty's re-conceptualization<sup>109</sup>, however, I will first back-track and discuss the synergism of perception a bit further.

In the *Phenomenology of Perception* Merleau-Ponty basically describes the world through two different concepts, namely those of the natural and cultural worlds. When writing of the natural world Merleau-Ponty is dealing with the perception of things and explains how the constancy of things and the world is possible for the transiently-perceiving subject. This account is, by the same token, a further clarification of the manner in which the phenomenal field engages our perceptual faculties. Therefore, the term 'natural world' is not exactly concerned with discussing our natural environment as an ontology of a pure nature (Dufrenne 1987, 15–16; Heinämaa 1996, 104).<sup>110</sup> In Merleau-Ponty's philosophy the existence of nature or a material reality resting in itself is an untenable position. This it is so since, as mentioned before, in his understanding perception is not only the faculty by which we are open to things and capable of embracing them, but also that faculty which is constitutive of them and ourselves. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 303) According to my understanding Merleau-Ponty uses the terms 'natural world' and 'cultural world' as rhetorical devices to discuss the *a priori* field of existence as the basis of our lives and that dimension in which we become self-

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109. I agree with Dillon, who argues that the novel terms Merleau-Ponty uses in his later work are the consequence of "a consistent development of a unitary standpoint" instead of "a turn or break in the continuity of Merleau-Ponty's thought" (Dillon 1988, 154). The notions he devises are already implicit in his earlier work. Overcoming the dualistic connotations and tendencies of the more traditional concepts he used to explain his philosophy in his earlier work made Merleau-Ponty search for novel expressions.

110. Mikel Dufrenne (1987, 15, 16, 25) while shadowing Merleau-Ponty's thinking, writes of Nature as an *a priori* affinity or connection between humans and the world. He finds that we can think of Nature expressly through this reciprocity and writes: "This implies not that we constitute the world, but that we are equipped to communicate with it, to live in it and to live. The world is Nature lived by man, naturalized by man, as its environment is naturalized by the animal; not that man is, we repeat, the naturalizing universal, but that he is "measuring" because he bears within him certain measures of Being and because through him Being arrives at consciousness. Thus world is then always a world for man" (Dufrenne 1987, 25).

reflectively aware of this basis as well as denominate it as something.<sup>111</sup> Additionally, in my view, Merleau-Ponty's early discussion of the natural world is something that underlies his later conception of the flesh. So to move towards an understanding of the flesh I will start with addressing Merleau-Ponty's conception of the natural world.

What is evident by now is that the body, through its sensuous and motor-like or functional nature, directs itself towards the world and approaches it as a sort of an interrogation. In perception the body through its senses explores the world, and the disclosure of a perceived thing is something that results from the organization of its sensate or sensible aspects that are revealed to the body in its exploration. The thing and its aspects become a constant, that is, illuminated as a unified and stable style of being, through the synergy of the body. The senses intercommunicate and allow for a perceptual synthesis in being supported by the pre-logical body schema. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 142, 233, 317, 323) Merleau-Ponty writes:

I perceive a thing because I have a field of existence and because each phenomenon, on its appearance attracts towards that field the whole of my body as a system of perceptual powers. I run through the appearances and reach the real colour or the real shape when my experience is at its maximum of clarity . . . these different appearances are for me appearances of a certain true spectacle, that in which the perceived configuration, for a sufficient degree of clarity, reaches its maximum richness. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 318)

Accordingly, perception involves the whole sensing body. The manner in which a thing exists is perceived when the body (as a comprehensive system of inter-sensory powers) discerns the thing as a unified inter-sensory object. The thing is therefore inseparable from the one who perceives it. Indeed, Merleau-Ponty concludes that a thing does not actually rest in-itself. It is rather in-itself-for-us. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 87, 319–320, 326)

Even if a thing partly exists through being for us, it never becomes totally absorbed in perception. It offers a resistance. It calls for the question perception poses upon it but simultaneously outruns both the question and perception.<sup>112</sup> Merleau-Ponty writes:

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111. As supporting evidence I offer the fact that in *The Visible and Invisible* Merleau-Ponty considers the world to be a unity consisting of different but inseparable existential dimensions. He writes of these different dimensions as "worlds" and describes them as mists of "pell-mell ensemble of bodies and minds, promiscuity of visages, words, actions, with, between them all, that cohesion which cannot be denied them since they are all differences, extreme divergencies of one same something" (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 84, 88). This same something is the flesh, which will be discussed further shortly. Furthermore, in *Phenomenology of Perception* Merleau-Ponty already finds that the body is likewise a being whose "psycho-physiological equipment leaves a great variety of possibilities open, and there is no more here than in the realm of instinct a human nature finally and immutably given. The use man is to make of his body is transcendent in relation to that body as a mere biological entity . . . It is impossible to superimpose on man a lower lever of behaviour which one chooses to call 'natural' followed by a manufactured cultural or spiritual world. Everything is both manufactured and natural in man, as it were, in the sense that there is not a word, not a form of behaviour which does not owe something to purely biological being – and which at the same time does not elude the simplicity of animal life, and cause forms of vital behaviour to deviate from their pre-ordained direction, through a sort of *leakage* " (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 189).

The thing and the world exist only in so far as they are experienced by me or by subjects like me, since they are both the concatenations of our perspectives, yet they transcend all perspectives because this chain is temporal and incomplete. I have the impression that the world itself lives outside me, just as the absent landscapes live beyond my visual field, and as my past was formerly lived on the earlier side of my present. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 333–334)

The thing existing in a phenomenal field offers perception the possibility of inexhaustible answers. In the movement of experience, perception itself confirms the answers it grasps through its spatio-temporal transcendence. We come to comprehend the nature of a thing through the movement of perception, and, furthermore, we notice that we have misperceived it only in the aftermath, when another perception reveals different qualities to the ones we had perceived before. It is in this fashion that perception could be said to constantly adjust its assessments. Merleau-Ponty calls the temporal movement of perception a transition-synthesis in which perspectives merge into one another. With this transition-synthesis our perceptual faculties are constantly permeated by some phenomenality. In Merleau-Ponty's view, the fact that we are continuously confronted with something from the very first sensory experience onwards indicates the manner in which we basically have access to the world. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 328, 329) It is this basic access, which first reveals the natural world.

In his discussion of the constancy of things and the world, Merleau-Ponty concludes that the natural world is a general mode of existence. It is the very basic manner of dealing with situations, where perceptual experiences hang together, and form a given unity underlying all personal life. It is the foundation of reality and exists in between localized or individual facts, tying them to a unified world. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 304, 327; 1987/1968, 262) In the final analysis, Merleau-Ponty depicts the natural world as "the horizon of all horizons, the style of all possible styles" whose "counterpart within me is the given, general and pre-personal existence of my sensory function in which we have discovered the definition of the body" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 330). Later in his philosophy Merleau-Ponty uses the term 'flesh' to signify this primordial mode of being which opens us to the facticity of our lives. He writes that the flesh is an "element" or an "incarnate principle" bringing "a style of being to wherever there is a fragment of being". (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 131, 139, 140, 267) The flesh and the natural world, as the horizon of all horizons, are concepts referring to an existential ground upholding and invisibly permeating the actuality of the world.

The flesh, consequently, is concerned with a unified dimension that underlies and gives rise to our actual experiences and to the distinct entities we perceive in the world. At its most primordial, it is a self-creating and transforming dimension which, from its imperceptible depth, produces a perceivable world. The flesh is, initially, an obscure and closed sub-phenomenal reality, which through its movement at some point distances itself from itself, and splits open as a percipient realm. The flesh could be understood as Being, which

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112. Alphonso Lingis (1991, 95–97) writes of this call as the imperative force by which things are tasks ordering perception. In his account he even goes on to show that thought is obedience, the following and taking up of things presented by perception.

through its chiasmatic functioning brings being(s) into existence. The chiasm, in turn, is a space of crossing-over. It acts as a hinge, through which the flesh at some moment coils over and differentiates itself firstly into a sensible and sentient realm. So, it moves the sub-phenomenal flesh and forms a phenomenal reality, since the sensible flesh simultaneously becomes disclosed through the sentient flesh. (Cataldi 1993, 60–61; Madison 1990/1981, 175) The chiasmatic functioning of the flesh, however, also occurs on a phenomenal level, in which evermore complex networks of the flesh are formed. In the end, the flesh could actually be described as desiring flesh. It is as if the flesh wanted to become aware of itself through splitting into a sensible and sentient dimension as well as emitting a sense of its differentiation for the body-subject. The body, nonetheless, is nothing else than a chiasmatic fold of the flesh, in which the sentient and the sensible pivot around each other.

On a phenomenal level the flesh actually relates to Merleau-Ponty's idea of the body being *of* the world. They are made of the same stuff and coincide in that they are both sensible entities. In Merleau-Ponty's thinking, this general sensible flesh (of both the world and the body) in fact seems to be more primordial than the sentient flesh (of the body). The sensible encompasses the sentient and the former provides the latter with its source and limits. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 134–135; Cataldi 1993, 63, 64) Nevertheless, to exist both of these dimensions require each other. They each are total parts of a single whole. What this single whole in turn refers to, is simply the movement, the coiling around itself, that the flesh in general is and through which the segregation of distinct realms and entities occurs. (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 137) Thus, what is evident is that, while the flesh distances itself from itself, the flesh does not become something else. The distinct realms belong to the flesh and simply are differentiations of the same primordial texture that the flesh is. They epitomize its transcendent nature; its capacity to forge a world of presence, even if the flesh in itself is never perceivable. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 84, 88; Madison 1990/1981, 172, 177)

The flesh, then, is a formative medium, and it gives rise to sensible flesh (the world) and sentient-sensible flesh (the body). With his flesh-ontology Merleau-Ponty comes to refer to the body as an 'exemplar sensible' since the body is aware of itself. The body, through its double-nature, its sentient-sensible nature, is the means of ingress to all the rest of the sensible. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 135, 140; cf. Cataldi 1993, 60–61) In discussing the relation of the flesh of the body and that of world Merleau-Ponty writes:

That means that my body is made of the same flesh as the world (it is perceived), and moreover that this flesh of my body is shared by the world, the world reflects it, encroaches upon it and it encroaches the world . . . they are in a relation of transgression or of overlapping – This also means: my body is not only one perceived among others, it is the mesurant (*mesurant*) of all, *Nullpunkt* of all the dimensions of the world. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1962, 248–249)

It is only by being sensible itself that the body has contact with the sensible in general and this contact is something that becomes disclosed in its sentient dimension. (Therefore, Merleau-Ponty still asserts that we could not sense unless we ourselves were not occupied in

the midst of a sensible realm. We could not possess it unless we were possessed by it.) Although the flesh of the world is not self-sensing as the body is, Merleau-Ponty, nevertheless, calls it flesh to show that it is a “pregnancy of possibilities”. Hence he also stresses the necessity of realizing that it is in relation to the flesh of the world, its gestalt as a multi-dimensional and undifferentiated phenomenal field, that the sensible-sentient flesh of the body exists. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 134–135, 137, 250; Madison 1990/1981, 175)

To clarify how the body overlaps with the world (following Jerry Gill), one could say that: “our flesh faces in two directions at once and thereby unites us with as well as separates us from the world of things and persons in which we are situated” (Gill 1991, 60). With this passage Gill contends that the flesh of the body moves into the flesh of the world and interweaves with it by becoming it. Yet it simultaneously distances itself from this interweaving. For example, in perception<sup>113</sup> the body applies itself to the rest of the perceived. It detaches itself upon the phenomenal world, in other words, the flesh of the world. This it finds in itself in perception by treating itself as perceived. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 250) As mentioned earlier, for every perception there is a counter-perception, which has the structure of the reversibility of double sensation. In perception there is, accordingly, a simultaneous movement in two directions. In Merleau-Ponty’s view

this can happen only if my hand while it is felt from within, is also accessible from without, itself tangible for my other hand, for example, if it takes its place among the things it touches, is in a sense one of them, opens finally upon a tangible being of which it is also a part. Through this crisscrossing within it of the touching and the tangible its own movements incorporate themselves into the universe they interrogate, are recorded on the same map as it: the two systems applied upon one another, as the two halves of an orange. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 133)

In this example, the touching hand coincides with the touched and tangible entity. Still a difference between the hand touching and that which is touched is sustained as well. Merleau-Ponty writes of a thickness of the flesh that underlies its surface appearance. The thickness or depth of the flesh refers to the fact that touch arises from the corporeality of the perceiver. The touched entity, in turn, is part of the general tangibility of the world. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 135) These dimensions are something that we are often only tacitly aware of. One the one hand, if I really feel the touched entity, I am less aware of the touching itself. On the other hand, if I turn my attention to the sensations of touching, I become less aware of the touched entity. In fact, in an act of perception there are always dimensions that are only

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113. Even if Merleau-Ponty himself rejected the notion of traditional perception in which the perceiver and the perceived are positioned as binary opposites, he continued to use the term. In so doing I think he is simply referring to the disclosure of a sensible-sentient realm. He often dealt with anonymous perception, and, for example according to Dillon, in such there is yet no representation of perceived things. Rather, it is something in which flesh meets flesh. (Dillon 1988, 164, 180) When considered in this manner one could say that the functioning of perception is something that characterizes the flesh. Perception is something where the movement of the flesh is actualized even if the flesh is not created by perception. (Cataldi 1993, 61) Thus, I shall continue to clarify the relation of the flesh of the world and that of the body through a general consideration of the movement of perception.

partially distinct or ambiguously present. Furthermore, in shifting attention from the touched to the touching, we notice that the realm between the touching and the touched is eclipsed: it is impossible to experience. What this indicates is that the opening in which perception occurs has a thickness, a depth, and it surges forth from an imperceptible source.

Moving towards a phenomenon in perception is about moving towards a proximity in which the disclosure of a phenomenon is engendered by a difference that arises from the above-described thickness and the ultimately imperceptible source. This is why Merleau-Ponty writes that, "The sensible order is being at a distance – the fulgurating attestation here and now to an inexhaustible richness – and that things are only half-opened before us, unveiled and hidden" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964f, 166). This simply means that they are blurred; they are both proximal and distant. Here Merleau-Ponty is actually also stating that the flesh is a depth (an inexhaustible richness), which discloses a percipient opening and generates a phenomenal "ray of light" (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 131, 142). This opening, nonetheless, depends upon its ambiguously illuminated dimensions and the hidden source from which it arises. Still the unhidden and the hidden are two sides of the same reality that the flesh is. This becomes clearer when we consider the functioning of the chiasm.

The coiling over of the flesh, in which its different aspects become intermingled, occurs at what Merleau-Ponty termed as chiasms. The chiasm is a space of crossing over, which makes reversals possible (Cataldi 1993, 75). It is the hinge, the turning point, which the proximity and distance of interweaving elements pivot around. Merleau-Ponty writes of the chiasm through comparing the manner in which different individuals perceive the world through our eyes.

Like the chiasm of the eyes, this one is also what makes us belong to the same world – a world which is not projective, but forms its unity across impossibilities such as that of *my* world and the world of the other – – By reason of this mediation through reversal, this chiasm, there is not simply a for-Oneself for-the-Other, antithesis, there is Being as containing all that. . . (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 215)

With this passage Merleau-Ponty demonstrates that even if two eyes are spatially separate they unite in vision. Their difference is something that is not perceived while vision discerns a visible entity. Amongst other things, he calls this unperceived difference a hiatus and a spread (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 148). It is something we take leave of in perceiving.

Consequently, the chiasm is something that creates spreads, which in principle are not perceived because they are the regions from which perception originates. These imperceptible blind areas perception relies on, prohibit a total co-incidence of the different aspects of the flesh while they interweave. The reversal, as it were, remains incomplete as it "hides or eclipses something that remains between the sides of the experience" (Cataldi 1993, 74). Merleau-Ponty writes that there is an "incessant escaping" which is like the "zero pressure between two solids making them adhere to one another" (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 148). For this reason, it is evident that Merleau-Ponty does not consider the flesh, and the dynamics of the chiasm inherent to it, obstacles between the sensible and the sentient or the perceiver and the perceived. They are constitutive of them and their means of communication. It is

only through distance that different aspects of the flesh can join each other. Nonetheless, this neither means that there is a non-identity nor that there is identity between the aspects that meet. As an alternative, there is an identity with a difference in the movement of the flesh. In revolving about one another the different aspects both intertwine and remain separate. Similarly, it is exactly in crisscrossing about the chiasmatic spread that their communication gains its significance. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 135, 138, 142, 215, 263, 264)

So far it is clear that for Merleau-Ponty the flesh and its chiasmatic relations on a phenomenal level refer to the double relation the body and the world have towards each other. They are like the obverse and reverse coiling over each other (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 139, 140, 146). Merleau-Ponty considered our place in this coiling over to be that of effecting the turning of the flesh. As early as the *Phenomenology of Perception* like in *The Visible and the Invisible* he calls human beings a fold. He even ends the working notes of the latter with a slogan “worked-over-matter-men=*chiasm*”. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 215; 1987/1968, 146, 275) Our body with its sentient and sensible realm is a continuous spread or fission about which aspects of the flesh pivot. In our experience this fission remaining between them is something we come aware of only after a shift of focus. The turning point remains hidden from us, since we are already experiencing a different mode of being when we become aware of the change. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 148, 248, 264) The fission or the difference is nonetheless never erased. It could be said to move on to work with different chiasmatic relations and to effect new experiences. It offers experience the direction or orientation around which the sense of our next experience is built. It organizes the thickness of the flesh, that is, the ambiguous and imperceptible background, upon which our experiences rely and through which they become structured.

Merleau-Ponty also refers to this thickness as the invisible. He writes of it as the counter-part of the visible, the latter which represents the concrete presence of a sensible world. He states:

No thing, no side of a thing, shows itself except by actively hiding the others, denouncing them. To see is as a matter of principle to see farther than one sees, to reach a latent existence. The invisible is the outline and the depth of the visible. The visible does not admit of pure positivity any more than the invisible does. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964a, 20–21)

The invisible not only refers to the sides of things outside the reach of perception when we view things from a certain perspective. As was mentioned, it also denotes the latent presence of the body in perception. For example, while I look at other persons and their bodies, I do not see my own body. At this moment, it offers the support from which vision extends outwards. Furthermore, if I consider the bodies of others I perceive as thing-like entities, I never quite witness these persons’ subjectivity. They remain an invisible source for the appearance of an object-like body.

What is interesting is that added to the invisibility related to perceiving from a particular perspective and the relation of one to another, the dimension of ideality is something Merleau-Ponty considers a “lining and depth” for the sensible or visible realm. To explain what he means he describes listening to a musical piece, the perception of which entails a

historically-formed understanding of previously heard music, related customs, as well as possible experiences of discussions concerning music. These features belong to the invisible permeating an actual musical experience and are something that draws it together. In relation to this argument he writes that, "There is a strict ideality in experiences that are experiences of the flesh: the moments of the sonata . . . adhere together with a cohesion without concept, which is of the same type as the cohesion of my body, or the cohesion of my body with the world" (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 152). In this passage he refers to the invisible as a "cohesion without a concept", seemingly to underline that the nature of the invisible affecting any concrete situation cannot be grasped through reflective or conceptual modes. It is more of an ambiguous and almost absent presence influencing the current situation.

Indeed, what Merleau-Ponty's conception of the divergence between dimensions of flesh coiling over each other illustrates is that this spread is not concerned with a void or a strict non-being, but rather that it is filled with an invisible being (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 148–151, 257). Among other things he writes:

In other words, the fabric of possibilities that closes the exterior visible in upon the seeing body maintains between them a certain *divergence* (*écart*). But this divergence is not a *void*, it is filled precisely by the flesh as the place of emergence of a vision, a passivity that bears activity – and so also the divergence between the exterior visible and the body which forms the upholstering (*capitonnage*) of the world. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 272)

The spreads are filled with what we might label the very first level of the flesh; the imperceptible and ambiguous texture from which a phenomenal reality with its significance springs. This flesh, itself, though, must be understood as something that contains all the divergencies that the flesh has previously undergone and which might become the passive starting point allowing for a transcendence towards another aspect of the flesh.

For this reason, what is important in Merleau-Ponty's conception of the flesh and its movement, is that through it we have divergent but interweaving dimensions and entities in our lives. The functioning of the flesh is what gives both cohesion and variety to our life and the world we live in. Merleau-Ponty concludes that:

. . . perhaps the self and the non-self are like the obverse and the reverse and . . . perhaps our own existence *is* this turning round that installs us far indeed from "ourselves", in the other, in the things. . . we situate ourselves in ourselves *and* in the things, in ourselves *and* in the other, at the point where, by a sort of a *chiasm* we become the others and we become the world. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 160)

Later in the working notes for *The Visible and the Invisible* he adds that:

The chiasm is not only a me other exchange (the messages he receives reach me, the messages I receive reach him), it is also an exchange between me and the world, between the phenomenal body and the "objective" body, between the perceiving and the perceived: what begins as a thing ends as consciousness of the thing, what begins as a "state of consciousness" ends as a thing. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 215)

Indeed, as the previous paragraphs on the invisible dimension reveal, in the *The Visible and the Invisible* Merleau-Ponty describes several different kinds of chiasmatic relations. When introducing his conception of the flesh, Merleau-Ponty begins by addressing the now paradigmatic reversibility of the double sensation of touching and touched. Nevertheless, he continues to show that the chiasmatic reversibility occurs between the senses themselves. He also writes that, “. . . every vision takes place somewhere in the tactile space. There is double and crossed situating of the visible in the tangible and the tangible in the visible; the two maps are complete, and yet they do not merge into one. The two parts are total parts and yet are not superposable” (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 134). Merleau-Ponty further points out that the chiasmatic coupling is something that takes place between both the subject and the other. Through it we share a common world, we ourselves become individual bodies and gain insight into the being of others. This is something that will be elaborated upon in the next section. What is worth mentioning in this regard is that, despite his untimely death, Merleau-Ponty had begun considering language itself as a chiasmatic relation in his late thinking. He discusses this reversibility by contemplating the manner in which speech and its referents are related to each other. He finds that in an act of speech it is the “signification [which] comes to seal, to close, to gather up the multiplicity of the physical, physiological, linguistic means of elocution, to contract them in one sole act” (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 154). The signification or meaning is what arises from and is sustained in the tension of the difference or gap between speech and its referents.

In the end, by designating diverse chiasmatic relations Merleau-Ponty emphasizes that the flesh and its chiasms, in effect, represent the general chaining of different modalities of being with each other in a continuous movement of them all. He argues:

This means that while each monocular vision, each touching with one sole hand has its own visible, its tactile, each is bound to every other vision, to every other touch; it is bound in such a way as to make up with them the experience of one sole body before one sole world, through a possibility for reversion, reconversion of its language into theirs, transfer, and reversal, according to which the little private world of each is not juxtaposed to the world of all the others, but surrounded by it, levied off from it, and all together are a Sentient in general before a Sensible in general. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 142)

In fact the chiasmatic structure making the flesh pivot around itself emphasizes the movement of our existence. The chiasmatic flesh is an element of transcendence. Consequently, we, who originate from it, exist only in a shifting or moving manner and similarly things themselves remain together only in movement (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964a, 22).

### 6.3 An Embodied Co-existence

In this section of chapter 6 I will examine Merleau-Ponty's understanding of our bodily relation to others. This embeds the transitivity of bodily behavior that is effective, for example, when teaching and learning dance sequences while embodying dance or between the

performer and the audiences in performance – which are both themes which the interviewed dance artists addressed. What is more the notions of an embodied intersubjectivity presented later in this thesis, will also help us understand the way we can more generally be regarded as social and cultural beings and more precisely both the products and producers of culture elaborated on in the next section. This is so since Merleau-Ponty's understanding of intersubjectivity and culture are closely tied to each other. In reality, they are so close that sometimes he hardly makes a distinction between the social, a society, and culture. However, let us first examine Merleau-Ponty's understanding of co-existence, the basis of cultural life and continue into cultural concerns in the next section:

What has not been mentioned so far is that Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology stresses that we are entwined with other people in an inalienable way. He asserts that in learning of the world and simultaneously of ourselves the other is of crucial importance, so much so that Merleau-Ponty considers our experiences to be formed through a structure that he sometimes refers to as the "self-others-things" – a system endowing us with intersubjective meaning (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 57). It is through the other that we gain a grasp of the shared human or cultural world and that our body schema evolves in a manner that makes us socially and culturally embodied subjects. Indeed, in his thinking we are situated subjects who co-exist with other people and find ourselves in the flux of an established culture. We are born in a world already inhabited by others and working through shared or social meanings. Thus, as Merleau-Ponty would say: we have before us a society or a cultural world to be known (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 348).

When regarding the mode in which the dimension of intersubjectivity exists for us, what is worth stressing is that in Merleau-Ponty's view the significance of others is firstly understood in a self-evident way without any thematic considerations. This self-evident understanding we have of others is an accomplishment of the body-subject which is primordially aligned to a general world of indistinct perspectives. For Merleau-Ponty, as newborn infants "the first cultural object" that we encounter is another person, who already carries social significance through her or his behavior (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 348). Initially, it is exactly the goal-oriented behavior, instead of the thing-like bodily presence of the other, which we are attuned to. Through her or his manner and actions, the other is the mediator through which we learn to distinguish between perspectives and adopt cultural behavior ourselves. Evidently Merleau-Ponty considers the other to be the first cultural object exactly because her or his body is involved with all the rest of cultural objects and is engaged in diverse cultural practices including language.

In encountering the other it could be said that the natural world (which Merleau-Ponty refers to as the undifferentiated phenomenal field of perception or the flesh) immediately gains a cultural aura. The other person supplies us with a world filled with human meaning which has been molded by its being passed down from person-to-person and one generation to the next. In fact, Merleau-Ponty shows that the transition and formation of cultural meanings is necessarily part of and requires the lives of individuals. This is already foreshadowed by the fact that it is by the behavior of the other in surroundings familiar to us, that we learn the significance of their gestures by relating their actions to ourselves and,

accordingly, to the situations we live through. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 348) The next few paragraphs attempt to describe how this sort of transmission occurs in more detail before turning to the formation and movement of traditions and cultures in section 6.4.

It is evident that we do not grasp the immediate experiences of other persons in any direct manner. We cannot, for example, feel the pain of another person, nor know the exact nature of what she or he is perceiving or thinking. (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 356) In Merleau-Ponty's view, instead we connect to each other elementally only through being in and of the same world (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 10). What the other person perceives or experiences becomes evident to us through us being able to share similar perspectives on the world and through the expressions the body gives to these lived perspectives. In seeing a dance performance with a friend the way she observes the performance tells me that we are having similar experiences in a shared environment. We are seated in adjacent seats in the same theatre in front of the same stage. Furthermore, her sighs, laughs and even changes of position while observing the dance indicate to me that she sometimes reacts similarly to me and at other moments differently. In discussing the performance afterwards, it becomes more evident to me that she has witnessed the same event as I have. Even if she interprets the dance scenes differently, her discussion of it involves elements that are akin to those I observed during the performance.

In fact, in Merleau-Ponty's view, our feelings and emotions are not formed by a solipsistic psychological entity. Instead, they are simply variations on our relations to others and the world. Consequently, they and other 'internal states' of an individual are disclosed in the attitudes or the ways of being the body assumes in the midst of the world. (Merleau-Ponty 1991/1964c, 52–54) In being at a performance with my friend, for example, her laughs and bodily positions revealed her feelings and emotions. To comprehend the pain another person experiences we likewise trust the way the body reacts in a particular situation. If we were to see a man suddenly grimace, while limping when walking on the street, we would most likely understand him to be in pain. Even persons who are thinking often reveal this through their bodily behavior. We notice that people are thinking, for example, when they pace back and forth with a glazed expression and do not notice things occurring around them. These illustrations show that the body has a capacity to reveal at least the rudimentary nature of our subjectively-experienced life.<sup>114</sup>

When we grasp the emotive stance or other sorts of actions of another person they enter into dialogue with our own being. According to Merleau-Ponty, when one perceives another person this person is firstly found to be placed inside the situational field of the perceiver and secondly received as an entity full of possibilities that one has latent in oneself (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964f, 169; 1986/1973, 139). In perceiving, the preconscious body is immediately aware that the perceived other is something familiar and reminiscent of what it itself is. Yet other persons always bring in their wake the circumstances through which they orient themselves in the same world as the perceiver.

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114. What must be noted, however, is that in different cultural traditions bodily gestures have different meanings.

Since every person at every moment has their own and particular way of relating to and perceiving the world, we not only connect with others through what we have in common with them but necessarily also through how they differ from us (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 356–357). Consequently, Merleau-Ponty thinks that the other always slips in to our pre-reflective awareness at the junction between the world and ourselves. In a sense, the other person who possesses a more immediate likeness to ourselves, is closer to us than the world is. Still, the unique way in which the other is involved in the world has the capacity to show us yet more of the world. It shows us ways of being which we have not been acquainted with before. (Merleau-Ponty 1986/1973, 138) Merleau-Ponty writes:

It happens that my gaze stumbles against certain sights (those of other human and, as an extension animal bodies) and is thwarted by them, I am invested by them just when I thought I was investing in them, and I see a form sketched out in space that arouses and convokes my own gestures the possibility of my own body as if it were a matter of my own gestures or behavior. Everything happens as if the functions of the intentionality and the intentional object were paradoxically changed. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964b, 94)<sup>115</sup>

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115. In his *Phenomenology of the Social World* Alfred Schutz (1972/1967) writes of the originality of what he calls the Face-to-Face situation or the We-Relationship and which he considers to be the foundation of all other social relations we are involved in. Compared with Merleau-Ponty, Schutz gives a more detailed account of these relations through which we are committed to intersubjectivity. Below I shall describe them briefly. However, in reading through the following lines one should keep in mind the different perspective from which Schutz writes. Schutz developed his thesis relying on such a concept of intentionality that necessarily involves the acts of a mental consciousness. As stated before, for Merleau-Ponty intentionality is originally tied to the body's capacity to relate to and act in the world. Therefore, Schutz's reflections might in a Merleau-Pontyan perspective be viewed as problematic since he seems to attest to the possibility of a direct connection between individuals without involving a transference through a praxis and a relation to a concrete world. (cf. Carr 1994)

The pre-reflective relationship of a Face-to-Face situation or a We-Relationship is defined by Schutz as having the following conditions: two persons engaged in this relationship must share a community of both space and time and immediately recognize each other as unique individuals. This situation is such that it embraces both the consciousness and the body of its participants. The other's state of mind is expressly apprehended through his bodily movements. In understanding one and another through the bodily mediation the two persons are transcending their own consciousness and actually live in the mutual stream of consciousnesses' their communication brings about. (Schutz 1972/1967, 166–170) Schutz writes of the characteristics of the We-Relationship in a manner that illuminates well the reciprocal nature of our encounters suggested by the above quotation of Merleau-Ponty's; therefore, I shall quote him at length: "And when I am face to face with someone, my knowledge of him is increasing from moment to moment. My ideas of him undergo continuous revision as the concrete experience unfolds. For no direct social relationship is one isolated intentional Act. Rather it consists of continuous series of Acts . . . Furthermore, as I watch you, I shall see that you are oriented to me, that you are seeking the subjective meaning of my words, my actions and what I have in mind insofar as you are concerned. And I will in turn take account of the fact that you are thus oriented to me, and this will influence both my intentions with respect to you and how I act toward you. This again I will see, I will see that you have seen it and so on. This interlocking of glances, this thousand-faceted mirroring of each other, is one of the unique features of the face-to-face situation . . . Instead of being observed it is lived through. The many different mirror images of Self within Self are not therefore caught sight of one by one but are experienced as a continuum within a single experience" (Schutz 1972/1967, 169–170).

When encountering others we grasp them through a relation in which they are both proximate and distant; familiar like ourselves and unfamiliar like something alien. As Martin Dillon (1988) points out, the unfamiliarity or the difference of the other is, already at the primordial or pre-personal level of our experience, a part of the significance of the otherness of the other. The other is understood to live her or his own situatedness, since she or he can be absent from our immediate environment and deal with things within it without us being directly involved. Nevertheless, the world this otherness is capable of showing us is also our world since the view of the other and that of ours are interchangeable – they are reversible to an extent. (Dillon 1988, 168–169)<sup>116</sup>

A person observing another can assume the space and perspective of the person she or he is observing or vice versa. If this change were actually to take place, however, it would obviously imply a shift in time, and the bodies of the two could never be swapped over into each other. Therefore, a person imitating another's behavior would again bring about a distinctive way of being involved with the world, since it would emerge from a singular, yet different, subject. Still, there is an efficiency in following the transcendence of innate understanding through which we reach others. Through it we ourselves are taken forward towards new dimensions and thus might be viewed to live a de-centered life – a life in which our understanding is enlarged by the other. Every time we see even a familiar emotion expressed or task performed by another, we learn that they might exist or be done in the way the perceived individual embodies them at the moment in question.

The possibility of exchanging roles with someone is explained further by the fact that the perceiving or comprehension of another is not merely a question of fleeting recognition. It leaves traces in our being. The perceptions of the behavior of another become ingrained in the body schema of the observer. The mirroring principle of reversibility or the chiasm working in the body schema through the motility-based 'I can' –intentionality, turns the inscription of perceptions of another human being into latent and possibly actualized actions of the observer. To express this in another way, the different ways the body of a perceived behaves while, for example, experiencing a feeling or carrying out a task become possible templates according to which we too might express a feeling or accomplish a task as well. Moreover, since the body schema becomes structured through these inscriptions and since it governs the total mode of our being, in the end, our way of perceiving is also affected. In repeatedly focusing our attention on what others observe and do, we learn to perceive in accordance with them. Hence perception does not only operate on a pre-cultural phenomenal level where it opens onto an indeterminately structured phenomenal field that it does not control and still assumes and further mediates. Perception is also a culturally-ingrained interpretation of being.<sup>117</sup>

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116. Dillon emphasizes the fact that the anonymity of the body is infected with the germ of 'mine-ness' already from the very start. This he does since, as Merleau-Ponty says, "I am always on this side of my body" (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 148). Dillon thus understands Merleau-Ponty to argue that our existential structuring already has an emphasis of mine-ness and otherness from birth. (Dillon 1988, 168–169)

117. In *The Visible and the Invisible* Merleau-Ponty writes: "I say that the Renaissance perspective is a

Although the 'I can' principle was described in chapter 6.2, what is relevant here is that in *The Visible and the Invisible* Merleau-Ponty equates this principle with the reversal mediations that the flesh produces, and again shows that the reversibility is an asymmetrical occurrence (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 255). Dillon (1988) writes that there is a limit to the 'I can'. The bridging that occurs in the transfer of the world open to one perceiver and this world perceived and experienced by another does not bring about an extension of sameness – the situation and the incorporation of the situation as identical phenomena. What is involved is an ambiguous estrangement as the perceptions of the way another is related to the world are induced by and become part of the body schema of the one perceiving the other. (Dillon 1988, 165; Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 215, 255) On this basis, it is easier to understand why Merleau-Ponty thinks that in grasping the communicative nature of the actions of others, they are incorporated in the body of the perceiver as 'ambiguous signs' of which elements can be taken up and followed through both in our habitual and personal engagements with the world. The ambiguity however is not only influenced by the life history of the person learning from another. An expressive gesture is always perceived and transmitted through the 'thickness' of the situation. This includes the environment we find ourselves in, the other and ourselves, as well as the endless diacritical relations they have with each other, and perception's capacity to comprehend such percepts that go beyond the previously experienced.<sup>118</sup> Thus, Merleau-Ponty also refers to perceiving and learning from another as a communication with a way of being. He writes:

... all knowledge of man by man, far from being pure contemplation is the taking up by each, as *best he can*, of the acts of others, reactivating from ambiguous signs an experience which is not his own, appropriating a structure of which he forms no distinct concept but which he puts together as an experienced pianist deciphers an unknown piece of music: without himself grasping the motives of each gesture or each operation, without being able to bring to the surface of consciousness all the sedimented knowledge which he is using at the moment. Here we no longer have the positing of an object, but rather we have a communication with a way of being. (Merleau-Ponty 1991/1964d, 93)<sup>119</sup>

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cultural fact, that perception itself is polymorphic and that if it became Euclidian, this is because it allows itself to be oriented by the system. What I maintain is that: there is an informing of perception by culture which enables us to say that culture is perceived" (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 212). Don Ihde (1986) argues that perception with Husserl was defined to be multidimensional: the perceived object regained a depth through perception involving both what is manifest and latent, that is, what is given and what is meant. Ihde, then, finds that Husserl's notion of perception was understood to be fundamentally interpretative. Nevertheless, Merleau-Ponty added another layer to this notion of perception. Although perception becomes culturally-directed by the forms of life we adopt, it enables us to learn to orient ourselves in unknown landscapes as well. Ihde takes as an example the Cubist paintings in which different points of view, that is perspectives, on an object are combined. Perception adjusting to such paintings is paradigmatic of the different possibilities inherent in embodied perception. So, he maintains that perception is *both* refractive *and* structural. (Ihde 1986, 49–67) One could also say that the meaning of a percept is not only over-determined because in each instant perception depends on a different situational conditions or, if we think in social terms, each individual is tied to a different life history, but also because perception itself makes use of habitual knowledge in complex ways. Perception itself figures unforeseen phenomena and, therefore, goes beyond cultural constraints.

118. Cf. ft. 117.

In this communication the disclosure of a way of being occurs through a person's corporeal and practical relation to her or his circumstances. Accordingly it is through the workings of the body that our individual hold on the world is an expressed relation which blends with that of others' holds on the world and generates shared significance. For Merleau-Ponty this is the dynamic upon which societies and cultures depend and from which they grow.

## 6.4 Historicity and the Structures of Culture

Merleau-Ponty did not explore culture as a separate phenomenon: rather, his understanding of it emerges through his concerns with the above-mentioned intersubjectivity as well as history, art, and politics. In writing of these themes he nevertheless formulated some crystallized opinions of culture, so much so that Nick Crossley asserts that Merleau-Ponty considers the cultural world to be a social reality, a site of shared, historically-formed, meanings in which individuals are "enmeshed and intertwined" (Crossley, 1994, 41, 72–82). It is in this manner that Crossley demonstrates that Merleau-Ponty's view of culture, sociality, or intersubjectivity and subjectivity permeate each other. While discussing Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the social formation of life further, he maintains that, "Merleau-Pontyian intersubjectivism is the correct philosophical position for social theory to begin from" (Crossley 1996, 76). He also argues, though, that because of Merleau-Ponty's interest in the macrocosmic level of social reality he "fails to consider the diversity in forms and intensities which different social relations involve" (ibid). Thus Crossley takes Merleau-Ponty to be unable to consider the microcosmic technicalities and conditions for the reproduction and transformation of the social world, their complexity and the affiliated problems of social integration. When necessary in Part III Merleau-Ponty's understanding of social and cultural life will be supplemented with other theories. This is done since dance artists in working with dance certainly deal with socio-culturally established forms of life, too. In the interviews the dance artists mentioned many related issues and showed, for example, that they were highly aware of the social recognition that their work requires.

The manner in which Merleau-Ponty considered co-existence and the nature of the human world could be considered a strategic one. Merleau-Ponty was, after all, the philosopher of ambiguity. By locating the individual inside culture and the social he describes us as individuals who cannot provide an explicit or complete picture of what culture and the society are without relying on non-thematic cultural or social stuff. What either of them are, then, cannot be

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119. Like Merleau-Ponty, Ted Polhemus (1993) argues from an anthropological point of view that our bodily behavior is cultural. He claims that, for example, bipedal locomotion is a cultural norm. It is revealed as such by our labeling some other types of movement as abnormal. He finds that this just often goes unnoticed and the movements of the body are taken to be "natural" because our body's congruence with "the social body" is so complete that we are blind to it. He provides proof of this by showing that various anthropological studies (dating as far back as the 1960's) demonstrate that physical behavior not only varies cross-culturally but that it is also a key component of human expressive and communicative systems. (Polhemus 1993, 4)

known in any exact manner without taking into consideration also the non-thematic ground on which earlier knowledge was built. In formulating an understanding of this non-thematic ground, however, we would again be relying on a neglected foundation and so the attempt to arrive at a complete understanding would continue endlessly. Furthermore, Merleau-Ponty regards the social and the cultural through an existential lens; that is, through understanding how concrete individuals relate to them and blend the various interpretations they have of them into their actions. He gives a paradigmatic example of the ambiguity or indeterminacy of such an analysis when describing the sexual nature of our being. He writes:

There is interfusion between sexuality and existence, which means that existence permeates sexuality and *vice versa*, so that it is impossible to determine in a given decision or action, the proportion of sexual to other motivations, impossible to label a decision or act 'sexual' or 'non-sexual'. Thus there is in human existence a principle of indeterminacy, and this indeterminacy is not only for us, it does not stem from some imperfection of our knowledge . . . Existence is indeterminate in itself, by reason of its fundamental structure. . . (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 169)

As stated above, relying on the fact that the processes of the embodied subject synthesize the various aspects of our existence, Merleau-Ponty takes us to be wholly "cultural" and wholly "natural" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 170, 189). The line between what a specific existential dimension is and what it is not is blurred.

Merleau-Ponty, nevertheless, admits to a practicality despite arguing against a fundamental reductionism of explanations given to our existence. He finds that in different situations or for different reasons certain of its aspects can be regarded more dominant. The understanding we have of them could be said to fit the factuality of our lives best. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 173) There is, consequently, a practical sense of speaking of more objective and subjective or cultural and individual factors that direct our lives. Moreover, he writes that in human life there emerge ways of relating to the world that are shared by people and continue to sustain their influence for future generations. In retaining their value and offering individuals a field of investigation or mode of dealing with situations and each other, these come to form and be understood as distinct practical realms of their own. (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 96, 105) In fact, these value and meaning-filled practical forms of life are something of which any cultural tradition is comprised and frame its nature. The following paragraphs attempt to bring together the essential themes Merleau-Ponty presented concerning the existence of culture. They will, however, not supply a thorough analysis of particular cultural spheres and features that make up such a cultural domain, since this was not the way Merleau-Ponty regarded the problem of culture. Nevertheless, I take the following rather general formulations to be sufficient to form a premise about the interpretations of the interview material, in which the socio-cultural aspects of contemporary dance and the field of freelance dance are further elaborated.

As should be evident by now, Merleau-Ponty underlines the fact that the body is the basic organizing principle of intersubjectivity and thus more generally of society. He even describes the body as the "systematization which is before what it shows is known" (Merleau-

Ponty 1995/1964c, 101). Regardless of this fact, social and cultural life transcends the immediacy of the body. Even if we are mostly aware of what culture is in a self-evident way by living in it, culture as the organization of social life does not evolve only out of our direct corporeal encounters with other people. Merleau-Ponty shows that it also involves a historicity and a co-existence of infinite numbers of people who are known in an indirect or general manner (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 349).

It is through the actions of this general mass of people and the ones we concretely deal with that our acts gain meaning and weight. In being cumulatively shared by people, actions, and the values and meanings they involve, become sedimented over several generations as inevitable ways of living that direct our lives. One could say that, the ambiguous intercorporeal signs intersubjectivity relies on become more established meanings through the social and, consequently, cultural realm. This they do as corporeal actions become deciphered according to historical schemes or patterns that we find pre-existing in the world and which become imprinted in us. Moreover, through these historical patterns cultural ideas, objects, practices, and institutions operating in the world around us are understood, used, and taken forward by us. Indeed, Merleau-Ponty considers individuals to be the true subjects of history. We are fundamentally historical and effect living history before any explicit historical interpretations are made of the events we live through. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 171, 450)

To accentuate his sense that a tacit understanding of history exists and to speak of an existential history tied to the situation and life of an individual subject, Merleau-Ponty began to use the term historicity (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 97).<sup>120</sup> David Carr describes Husserl's understanding of historicity by stating that:

Husserl, for his part, arrives at his conception of historicity by considering the individual consciousness engaged in a cognitive project such as science, mathematics or philosophy itself. Historicity consists in the fact that the undertaking already exists before any given individual takes up and takes over what is handed down by others. Engaged in such a cognitive or theoretical enterprise, the individual's accomplishments are conditioned by, and thus both limited by and made possible by, the accomplishments of others. (Carr 1986, 129)

This view of historicity is roughly equivalent to that of Merleau-Ponty's except that the latter emphasizes that traditions<sup>121</sup> and history are transmitted through tacit corporeal relations between people and artifacts alongside of cognitive practices and literary sources. Nevertheless, what the transmission of a tradition involves, is participation in meanings and practices formed and used by others. We live in a world where these meanings and practices both

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120. Randy Martin (1998, 44) explains historicity as "the collective work done by social actors that produces ensembles" and cites Alan Touraine, who defined historicity as the "production of historical situations by actors" (Touraine 1988, 11 as reported by Martin 1998, 44).

121. Interestingly enough cultural theorist Johan Fornäs (1995) has looked into the etymology of the term 'tradition'. He points out that it derives from the Latin verb *tradere* meaning transmission or delivering. *Tradere* is a combination of the words *trans* meaning across and *dare* meaning giving. Fornäs widens the meaning of tradition further by saying that it, either thematically or habitually, transmits something from one generation to next. (Fornäs 1995, 22)

condition and form endless possibilities of actions we ourselves can accomplish. The traditions, the meanings, and practices are first and foremost not part of an explicit awareness, rather they form a general field of actions we are pre-objectively attuned to. They belong to the phenomenal field or the flesh of the world we encounter in perception.

The dimension of traditions (or pre-established forms of life) is created by and opened to us by previous generations and those alive today that we do not directly encounter through the people we do as well as the cultural artifacts we deal with. Merleau-Ponty thinks we borrow so much from others that "it is impossible to have more than a rough idea of what is due to each individual" (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 111). However, the continuation of ways of life occurs through a *coherent deformation* because as Merleau-Ponty writes:

A man cannot receive a heritage without transforming it by the very fact that he comes to know it, without injecting his own and always different way of being into it . . . The movement of ideas comes to discover truth only by responding to some pulsation of interpersonal life, and every change in our understanding of man is related to a new way he has of carrying on his existence . . . every change in our representation of man translates a change in him (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964g, 224)

Clearly, with our individuality (the original life-history our behavior and understanding relies upon and the situational perspective we perceive things from) we never understand or do things exactly as others do. In taking heritage or customs forward, we transpose them to a certain extent through the particular way they become inscribed in and expressed by us. In the previous quotation Merleau-Ponty, however, seems to speak of being aware of tradition as a case of ideas and knowledge. In his view, though, there is both an implicit and an explicit awareness, which he at one point calls the *cumulative* and *cruel* history of sharing and knowing a tradition (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 97).

I shall start by analyzing the first of these, cumulative history, and by clarifying it with the following example. Living in the midst of the tradition of contemporary dance I am not given a "ready-made" or complete picture of the history of contemporary dance or what contemporary dance is and how it is practiced. Instead, I understand what it is through a process of accumulation, what Merleau-Ponty might term sedimentation, and it is by directly dancing, teaching dance, or speaking about it that I understand and sustain the tradition through my particular actions. These actions are obviously the outcome of my dealings with dance, my life history, and the concrete situation I find myself in, as well as the choices I've made about my dancing and dance work more generally. They are in some respect even affected by what I have explicitly learned about dance. However, my knowledge of it does not make dance a self-evident shared field of possible actions I and others can perform. My knowledge and ideas on dance can correspond to a possible future project that adds to the tradition of dance or in rare cases a new tradition. Still, what firstly makes my knowledge of dance and practice of it possible is the implicit and already established and existing general field or tradition of dance. It is what pre-exists and offers shared meanings and practices according to which I can become engaged in things other people are engaged in as well.

Correspondingly, one aspect of how the tradition of contemporary dance is continued

is through the works of all dance professionals by which they grasp and expand the tradition. Thus, the tradition is mediated through an endless amount of unique conditions, activities, and performances. In Merleau-Ponty's view, the unity of a tradition, in fact, relies on our power to forget origins and to re-create what others have already done or shown to be possible through our own endeavors (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 95–96). By this he means to say that we leave behind an explicit awareness of what others have accomplished and join this tradition through actions that rely on a pre-conscious awareness of it.

The above considerations show that Merleau-Ponty asserts that history lives through and is formed by individuals and, furthermore, that history is an open project, subject to indeterminacy. This is evident if we regard the way time passes. Although the present arises out of the past (the latter which directs the nature of the former) what remains, what increases in and loses value and how these intermingle and make up our world are not all together pre-determined. They in fact are not exactly definable even in the aftermath of a particular event. The past and the present are filled with invisible forces we do not acknowledge. If we tried to find all the components that formed a past life situation, the present would be the perspective through which the past would gain its meaning. Thus, there is no clear factual past or even a pure presence. An explicit history of the past must then always be "biased" by the perspective through which it is regarded and still has a partial grasp of the past. It cannot explicate the global and pre-objective realm of historicity in its entirety. Merleau-Ponty describes his existential analysis of history by saying that "there is a truth of history independent of our projects and evaluations" and that "there is no one meaning of history; what we do has always several meanings" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 173, 450). Nevertheless, an explicit history is another means through which traditions continue their existence. Alongside of the lived historicity of culture, historical accounts, opinions and conceptions of its various features retain the meaningfulness a tradition has in the cultures they are part of.

The above two considerations of the historical features of culture suggest that, for example, a tradition of dance does not simply exist in an explicit or linear fashion.<sup>122</sup> Rather, a dance tradition is formed out of an endless number of historicities. It moves and shifts – therefore exists – with every dance move we make and every word we utter or write about dance. Some of these movements or utterances might accomplish a very recognizable shift, that is a shift taken note of by an explicit history. This is only possible, though, if the invisible grounds (what might be termed the pre-objective significance a culture at some moment has) supports such changes. Merleau-Ponty in writing on the tradition of painting notes that we cannot speak of a "hierarchy of civilizations" or "progress" and also points to the fact the "soil beneath our feet is shifting" (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993c, 149).

What the previous discussion points to is that historical meanings and practices do not only become ingrained in us. They also create a somewhat stable and meaningful surrounding

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122. Even if Jaana Parviainen (1998) does not state so, the above considerations are probably why, in speaking of the continuation of a dance tradition, she asserts that we should not regard it as a simple and linear "development", "progress" or an "evolution". She advocates a discussion of an alteration when speaking of the continuation of a dance tradition. (Parviainen 1998, 79)

for our lives. It is through the dynamics of historicity, intersubjectivity, and sharing a common world that the cultural objects we find in the world, the artifacts we ourselves create and the ways in which we conduct ourselves, refer to a general or anonymous mass of other people. In seeing cars or airplanes we know they are for carrying people from one place to another, in hearing someone speak we know it is to communicate thoughts to others etc. This is why, as Hammond, Howarth and Keat (1992/1991, 229) tell us, in Merleau-Ponty's view, "the behavior patterns involved in using a cultural artefact are perceivable in the artefact itself". Merleau-Ponty himself writes: "Just as nature finds its way to the core of my personal life and becomes inextricably linked with it, so behaviour patterns settle into that nature, being deposited in the form of a cultural world" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 347).

As the previous paragraphs partly emphasized the change occurring in a tradition, it should also be noted that cultural artifacts, meanings, and practices belong to it and gain significance in accordance with it. Their meaning shifts according to the value they have in our lives. As an example, during the first decades of the last century ownership of a car was rare in western countries only the wealthy being able to afford them. Now they are ubiquitous cramming the highways of cities and countryside, alike, attainable for the majority of the populace. All of the above-mentioned three facilitators of culture, however, might also lose their value, too. They might become irrelevant to our lives and decline in popularity where they become forgotten history. Although, having said this, I think that this erosion mostly occurs by degree – a cultural commodity or practice does not vanish instantaneously and it takes time for it to become totally irrelevant to human life. However, what is noteworthy in the end is that historically-constructed ways of being are both invested in us and the world. They are responsible for the culture we have.

What is apparent by now is that Merleau-Ponty emphasizes a non-objective conception of culture by thinking that we live in the social realm before we are in any manner aware of it. Then it exists obscurely through our participation in common actions and sharing a world. Hence, on the one hand, he describes the social dimension ultimately as a living relationship and tension among individuals through the intermediary of cultural objects and practices in which they lose themselves. On the other hand, however, he points to the fact that the social or cultural dimension is also something individuals find themselves in and become aware of. (Merleau-Ponty 1991/1964d, 90) In Merleau-Ponty's view this occurs as we begin to understand the nature of our own life situations through those of others, or those of others through our own. We become aware of or learn to know different facticities only through what we share with them. Thus Merleau-Ponty writes:

Knowledge will then be based upon the unimpeachable fact that we are not in a situation like an object in objective space. Our situation is for us the source of our curiosity, our investigation, and our interest in first other situations as variants of our own and then in our life illuminated by (and this time considered as a variant of) the lives of others. Ultimately, our situation links us to the whole of human experience, no less than what separates us from it. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964c, 109–110)

In becoming aware of the facticity of our circumstances we, however, also make use of other cultural practices, language being often the most effective one, at least in the sense that speaking, thinking, and language are entwined. Merleau-Ponty believes language to be "one of the most fundamental social realities", which should be understood "as an instrument for conquest of self by contact with others" (Merleau-Ponty 1985/1973, 63, 97). He further believes that the world is so omnipresent, that we need, in fact, a layer of ideality to make it explicit to ourselves (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, xv). He finds language to accomplish this task in an ambiguous manner. It expresses the ideal, while it is itself forgotten. Consequently, it clarifies everything else but it itself cannot be directly apprehended. (Merleau-Ponty 1985/1973, 6)

In trying to understand the nature of how we as individuals or those around us live, we make use of shared understanding. We use language and rely on our experiences and knowledge of how others have behaved and understood things. However, our ambiguous and temporally structured being gives us only a subjectively and temporally limited understanding of the meaning of our own or others' lives. Moreover, since in Merleau-Ponty's view the meaning or the truth of an incident is arrived at through shared understanding (for example, through others accepting a certain individual's point of view or through a number of people witnessing the same event or phenomenon) he thinks that is why we recount and share experiences and realizations with each other. He writes:

It is nevertheless true that this desire for a total manifestation animates life as it does literature and that beyond the petty motives it is this desire which makes the writer want to read, sometimes prompts people to become writers, and in any case makes them speak, makes everyone want to account for him or herself in the eyes of x – which means that everyone thinks of his life and all lives as something that can be told, as both a story and as a history. (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 111)

In relating stories about our lives we gain a more objective perspective on them. Martin Dillon (1988), while commenting on Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, takes speech or the recounting of a story to create a cultural object in the end. He writes: "When my groping for words awakens a recognition in others, when my words come to fill my significative intention and communicate it to another, something is established which then has life of its own and becomes visible to me. A cultural object is born which mirrors my existence in the eyes of another and allows the inchoate existence to realize itself for itself" (Dillon 1988, 207). In Merleau-Ponty's view, language and the knowledge we acquire through it does, however, not abolish the corporeal and experiential nature of our lives. It rather sublimates them as Merleau-Ponty deems language to become meaningful when it establishes a situation. By this he means that we take a position in relation to the significance and meaning our being is invested in. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 193, 401; 1985/1964a, 7) This position deals both with the lived nature of a situation as well as with the significative system a language is.

To provide a general description of our cultural reality, Merleau-Ponty finally defines cultural or social facts to be structures<sup>123</sup> in which our reality unfolds as a participation in a spiral of signification that continuously repeats but transcends itself. These structures

give a formation to the 'interworld' in which individuals live by making use of the modes of communication and exchange corresponding to existing structures not necessarily knowing the principle governing their actions. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964d, 117) Structures might be viewed as networks of practical forms of life, which resolve and give meaning to the continuously emerging reality the unfolding of history and the world reveal to us. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 103) To summarize Merleau-Ponty's conception of culture, one could say that the communicative structures and structures of practice and exchange that function and spread around us a social and cultural dimension work expressly through people's involvement in the world. According to Merleau-Ponty, the entity a society and culture is made up of is finally a structure of structures in which different practical systems have subtle and variable relations with each other. The structure of society retains its multi-facetedness and works in a way in which transcendence (the lateral relation of individuals and things) supplies what could be termed a moving permanence. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964d, 118)<sup>124</sup>

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123. The way in which Merleau-Ponty understands structure has distinct features. He speaks of it on the basis of his notion of *Gestalt*, thus viewing it as a formation through which a total situation is received. (cf. Descombes 1980, 58, 72–74) He writes of structure: "Overused today the term had a precise meaning to begin with. Psychologists used it to designate the configurations of the perceptual field, those wholes articulated by certain lines of force giving every phenomenon its value. In linguistics, too, structure is a concrete, incarnate system. When Saussure used to say that linguistic signs are diacritical – that they function only through their differences, through a certain spread between themselves and other signs and not, to begin with, by evoking a positive signification – he was making us see the unity which lies beneath a language's explicit signification, a systematization which is achieved in a language before its conceptual principle is known" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964d, 117).

124. It seems that Merleau-Ponty's conception of culture is still relevant today as a comparatively recent study in cultural theory states the following: "culture is a web of flows, multiplying, converging and crossing. Some of the interconnecting whirls of culture are visible on the surface, others are hidden deep below. . . culture is not static but an everchanging flux. No one escapes being moved by it . . . No one emerges from this flow without leaving some small trace of his or her movements: human actions have effects. The river of culture is also a mixed, communal bath: cultural phenomena are shared with others, being means of intersubjective intercourse and communicative action" (Fornäs 1995, 1).

## 7 An Overview of Phenomenological Studies of Dance

In the western tradition, questions concerning the origin, nature, and meaning of dance in general have brought about a rather dispersed body of literature. Up until recently some of the most popular ways of researching dance have been through historical and anthropological inquiry. Relying on the latter genre, André Grau tells us that Drid Williams has constructed a genealogy of dance practices and the consequent understanding of dance through a thorough review of dance literature available to dance scholars up to the beginning of the 1990's (Grau 1998, 197). In this genealogy Williams shows that dance writers have traced the origin of dance for example to sex, play, animal behavior, magic, and so forth. His conclusion, according to Grau, was that "in short, the dance could have begun in nearly any primordium that anyone cares to postulate and its essence has been located nearly everywhere" (Williams 1991, 7 as reported by Grau 1998, 197). Dance, then, seems to be a phenomenon that lends itself to many kinds of interpretations. Furthermore during the last three decades dance studies have started to evolve into a scholarly discipline of their own. Scholarly writing on dance has consequently also spread its scope and become increasingly meticulous and self-critical. Especially in Northern America and Europe dance studies have been strongly influenced by the developments in the humanities and social sciences. In addition to anthropologists and historians other researchers in this area have themselves also become interested in the phenomena of dance as well as those of the dancing subject and the dancing body. (cf. Williams 1991; Goellner & Murphy 1995) Still, despite some notable exceptions, it generally remains the case that dance has not been widely discussed as a philosophical concern.<sup>125</sup> As a result, there neither is a generally recognized or established philosophical aesthetics of dance (McFee 1999, 1).

Similarly Merleau-Ponty himself never investigated dance explicitly even if he did on several occasions write about the visual arts (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993a: 1996/1993b; 1996/1993c). He mentions dance only a few times in his writings<sup>126</sup> despite the fact that it is said that he was the only philosopher during his time in Paris who took women to dance

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125. For some of the philosophical works on dance see for example Graham McFee's anthology *Dance, Education and Philosophy* from 1999 and Maxine Sheets Johnstone's anthology *Illuminating Dance: Philosophical Explorations* from 1984. They include articles from such well-known philosophers as Monroe Beardsley, David Best, David Carr, Joseph Margolis, Francis Sparshott and Graham McFee as well as Sheets-Johnstone themselves. Also the anthology *What is Dance?* dating from 1983 and edited by Roger Copeland and Marshall Cohen contains philosophical contemplations on dance. In addition, McFee's *Understanding Dance* (1994/1992), *The Concept of Dance Education* (1994), Francis Sparshott's *Off Ground* (1988), *A Measured Pace* (1995) and Betty Redfern's *Dance, art, aesthetics* (1988) are examples of the few books delving into the philosophical problems of dance.

126. See for example pages 142–143, 146 and 287 in *Phenomenology of Perception*.

(Pasanen 1993, 76). Moreover, when writing of dance it seems that Merleau-Ponty refers mostly to social dance rather than to any other kind of dance. This is unfortunate since theatrical dance drawing on the motility and expressiveness of the body could be regarded as a paradigmatic example of what his phenomenology advocates. Nevertheless, there have been several dance studies mostly concerned with modern or contemporary western concert dance utilizing and representing a phenomenological approach. In the following sections, I shall briefly introduce the few I have found to be most influential and thoroughly compiled. These book-length studies address phenomenology more as a philosophical discipline than as a method of qualitative description or research.<sup>127</sup> The studies are: Maxine Sheets-Johnstone's *The phenomenology of dance* (1966), Sondra Horton Fraleigh's *Dance and the Lived Body* (1987), Susan Kozel's *As Vision Becomes Gesture* (1994), and Jaana Parviainen's *Bodies Moved and Moving* (1998). Despite representing various ways of conversing with the tradition of phenomenological philosophy, they all address the experiential dimension of the dance event in one way or another. Three of them are widely accessible to interested readers as printed books. One of them is a revised manuscript of a Ph.D. dissertation waiting to be published in book form.

The subsequent overview of what the four phenomenological dance studies assert about the nature of dance and the dancing subject, serves as a general introduction to the realm of phenomenological conceptions of dance and other related concepts. These studies are highlighted here to demonstrate the existence of an emergent tradition of phenomenological dance studies dealing with a phenomenological aesthetics in the domain of dance theory. Of the presented studies, the latter three with their explicit interest in the dancing subject are most directly related to the concerns of this study. Nevertheless, as the first presented phenomenological study was the one that laid the groundwork for subsequent dance studies concerned with phenomenological philosophy, it is also included in the overview.

What needs mentioning here is, that as an overview this presentation, nevertheless, does not thoroughly and critically explore all of the themes or notions found in these studies. It only summarizes and briefly discusses what I consider to be their basic themes and problems.

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127. As indicated in Part I the writings of such phenomenological philosophers as Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger have particularly influenced psychological methods of inquiry as well the methodology and procedures of qualitative research. Moreover, the phenomenologically-influenced sociology of Alfred Schutz, P.L. Berger and T. Luckmann has had an impact on the latter mode of research. The phenomenological psychological or qualitative research emphasizes the lived experience of the research participants and aims at reaching empirical phenomena from the subject's own perspective through the descriptions of these experiences. (cf. Kvale 1996, 52) Examples of qualitative research related to dance and utilizing this sort of a phenomenological approach but not phenomenological philosophy itself, are the following: *Movement Experience in Modern Dance: A Phenomenological Approach* by Jean Bailey Braxton and *A Phenomenological Investigation of Improvisation in Music and Dance* by Louise Mathieu. Also recent Finnish research (*Vanhenevan tanssijan problematiikasta dialogisuuteen – koreografin näkökulma*) discussing the aging dancer and a dialogical relationship between the dancer and the choreographer conducted by Riitta Pasanen-Willberg could be said to belong to this field. Additionally, Joan Nora Sloss's study, *Experiencing Oneself in Dance*, has the hallmarks of qualitative phenomenological research in that it draws on written descriptions of her experiences of dancing and also introduces some central philosophical conceptions related to the thinking of Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

Some theories presented in these studies as well as my conceptions of them will be elaborated on in the later sections of this report where these dance studies are also referred to. To reiterate, the main purpose of this research is not to give in any sense a comprehensive picture of a phenomenological aesthetics of dance. Rather its focal concern is a phenomenological interpretation of the interview material in order to understand what being a contemporary freelance dance artist is like and which kinds of constitutive elements frame the existence of such a dance artist. In reference to this goal the following overview is instructive in that it continues to describe the theoretical perspective through which the interview material will be viewed and addressed in Part III.

## 7.1 A Phenomenology of Dance

The first dance study that attempted to illuminate dance through the lens of phenomenology was Maxine Sheets-Johnstone's *The phenomenology of dance* (1966).<sup>128</sup> In it Sheets-Johnstone approaches dance as a created dynamic form through what she considers a descriptive analysis. She addresses the nature of a dance by considering it a totality and by analyzing the structures inherent to this totality. (Sheets-Johnstone 1979/1966, 5, 8) Hence, though questioning what dance is, she narrows the scope of her discussion to traditional aesthetic concerns, namely dance as a work of art. She is, even if she never explicitly points this out, dealing with a theory of western concert dance. What she aims to create is a phenomenological understanding of the event of a performed dance piece which synthetically combines the lived experience of both the dancer and the spectator.

According to Sheets-Johnstone her study draws on Husserl's understanding of phenomenology but at some points it is expressly concerned with the later phenomenology of Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Sheets-Johnstone 1979/1966, 11, 15). Nevertheless there is no clear explanation of how this is done and these philosophers are rarely referred to in her research.<sup>129</sup> Instead the theories of philosopher Susan K. Langer are more prominent. The extent of Langer's analytic or logical aesthetic's influence is most likely due to the fact that her philosophy of art was generally quite influential in dance studies throughout the 1960's and 1970's at least in the North American context. This was so because it was one of the few philosophical works which dealt with directly dance. In addition it also

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128. Sheets-Johnstone's study was first completed as a doctoral dissertation in 1963 and was revised and published in book form in 1966.

129. Anna Pakes, while developing an interdisciplinary approach to investigate the way in which public arts funding influences the production and reception of contemporary dance, criticizes Sheets-Johnstone's phenomenological approach in that it does not sufficiently problematize the manner in which we reach and are able to write about lived experiences without allowing pre-established factual or theoretical supposition to influence them. In Pakes view, the many difficulties with Sheets-Johnstone's approach derive from the way she approaches her descriptive task, which points towards a radical separation of transcendental and existential modes of phenomenological inquiry. (Pakes 2001, 68)

regarded dance as an autonomous art form separate from its relation to music or narrative plot and explained that the materials of an art form become transformed in art works. The latter notion meant that Langer did not consider the expressive gestures of dance to be signals of our desires, feelings, and intentions in an everyday sense or to belong to the "real" world. Instead she viewed them as imaginary symbols, which open a work-centered way of signification, freed from the customary meaning of gestures and expression. These two ideas Langer presented were popular at that time amongst dance scholars as they suited the climate of dance then as this was the period when postmodern dance<sup>130</sup> first emerged. (Langer 1953,

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130. Some words to explain what is implied here by the term 'postmodern' are called for as the term is so ubiquitous in current discussion on western theatrical dance and the discussion taking place in diverse academic disciplines. In the 1960's the United States witnessed a new kind of dancing, from innovators like Merce Cunningham and the dance artists working in the Judson Theatre in New York. Anna Halprin questioned and set out to distinguish what they were doing differently from the conventions of modern dance. According to Halprin (1992, 52), they had a desire to "redefine the boundaries of dance and the role of the dancer". The manner in which they worked and performed became later, in the mid 1970's, to be normally referred to as postmodern dance. Thus, as Ann Daly writes: "In dance studies, the term "postmodern" originated as a historical category" (Daly 1992a, 48). Afterwards, Western theatrical dance continued to be influenced by the events of early postmodern dance; yet, it continued to create new means of expression and re-appreciate those of earlier modern dance.

Sally Banes has even detected an analytic phase in the later postmodern dance. In the first postmodern period of dance, dance artists were concerned with newly found methods and features of dance that came to "reveal the essential characteristics of the medium of dance" (Banes 1992, 60). The methods used to create dance included random methods, improvisation, rule-games, and tasks. The vocabulary of modern dance was expanded to include unstylized everyday movements, athletic moves, and ballet exercises. Nevertheless, the 1980's and 1990's saw dance returning to narratives and means of expression used in different periods throughout the tradition of western theatrical dance. Then dance become more overtly concerned with social and political issues as well. What this dance should be named has remained obscure. The question as to whether it is still postmodern dance, as Banes suggests, or modern dance, as Manning (1988) does, has in a European context been solved by the use of the term 'contemporary dance'.

By the 1980's and 1990's the term 'postmodern' was not only used to describe the nature of dance or the other arts; it also became a term used to describe a general cultural stance of the late 20th century western world. In 1979 Jean-Francois Lyotard with his book *The Postmodern Condition*, became regarded as one of the primary advocates of this mode of cultural awareness. In his book he argues that the postmodern has to do with a loss of belief in what he calls meta-narratives (Lyotard 1984/1979, xxxiv as reported by Welsch 1996, 120). No totalitarian, authoritarian, and unified understanding can explain the world or the phenomena we live with. They are considered to be, alongside of an ideology of progress, characteristics of modernity. According to Wolfgang Welsch (1996), the postmodern stands for a diversity of rationalities, of cultures, of discourses, and forms of life, "which certainly are not different in all aspects, but are incommensurable in some basic respects, so that their diversity cannot altogether be overcome" (Welsch 1996, 120). He also shows that even if the term 'postmodern' has been used to differentiate it from the earlier modern epoch, modernity itself has only become explicit and understood to a large extent through the postmodern considerations. He argues, furthermore, that there have existed many different modalities of modernities in the modern epoch itself some of which the postmodern period or postmodernity shares, too. Most important to the discussion at hand are obviously the artistic and even scientific avant-gardes of the earlier 20th century. Thus, Welsch writes that, "None of the contents of postmodernity first begins with postmodernity. Each of them was already implied in at least one type of modernity. Hence postmodernity signifies a shift in emphasis – the accent now moving from unity and totality to plurality and diversity – than a break between epochs" (Welsch 1996, 123).

As the postmodern stance critiques totalizing descriptions and acknowledges difference as well as the

169–187, Thomas 1995, 10) Postmodern dance began to question the representational tendencies that modern dance was attached to as well as its other performance conventions. In considering dance as an independent art form and discussing a work-centered way of communicating Langer's thinking legitimized working unconventionally in dance and exploring the features of the dance medium itself.

In her descriptions of dance, Sheets-Johnstone places the dancer at the center of the dance event, which, following Langer, she believes to be the result of a *virtual force*. This term refers to Sheets-Johnstone's understanding of movement appearing simply as a force and virtual signifying an appearance of a thing as an illusion, that is, as stripped from its practical and functional value. In her view, then, dance does not directly deal with the actual physically-exerted power of bodywork. Rather, in dance, movements become significant in an aesthetic context through the interplay of the tensions they create, for example, in the body, with space, music and lighting, as well as the semblance of feelings they evoke. (Sheets-Johnstone 1979/1966, 33–34, 41, 48) Consequently, Sheets-Johnstone argues that on the condition that dancers become one with their dancing – that is, that they live through the flow of dancing without reflecting on themselves apart from their dancing and thus disrupting the motional sequences – they create a “complete and unified phenomenon, an illusion of force, whose meaning suffuses the whole and derives from the uniqueness of that whole” (Sheets-Johnstone 1979/1966, 38–39).

The whole she discusses is the *ekstatic*<sup>31</sup> form-in-the-making, which the dancers generate through their dancing. In Sheets-Johnstone's view the dancer is the moving center of the dance, and she explains the *ekstatic* nature of a dance by saying that it “does not exist totally

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continuous modifications of prior forms of life involved in the existence of culture, it cannot itself be exactly defined. Consequently, it is difficult to understand it as a certain definable -ism. I will instead use the term *the postmodern* when considering it as a cultural stance and the term *postmodern dance* when I refer to the historical epoch of modern dance occurring in the 1960's and early 1970's. When I speak of current western theatrical dance following the tradition and alterations of different phases of modern dance including postmodern dance I will speak of *contemporary dance*.

131. 'Ekstasis' is a Heideggerian term Sheets-Johnstone introduces rather hastily without considering the full range of its implications. Kozel states that Heidegger is referring to the basic temporal nature of Dasein's being in the world with this term. He distinguishes this temporality from linear time and shows that temporality is concerned with an ontological dynamic occurring across the past, the present and the future opening Dasein to a field of being which it is concerned with. (Kozel 1998/1994, 180; cf. Heidegger 1995/1962, 364–365, 387–388) Heidegger writes of the intertwining relations of the past, present and the future, for example, in the following manner: “Only in so far as Dasein *is* as an “I-*am-as-having-been*”, can Dasein come towards itself futurally in such a way that it comes back. As authentically futural, Dasein is authentically as “*having been*”. Anticipation of one's uttermost and ownmost possibility is coming back understandingly to one's ownmost “*been*”. Only in so far as it is futural can Dasein be authentically as having been. . . . The character of “*having been*” arises from the future, and in such a way that the future which “*has been*” (or better which “*is in the process of having been*”) releases from itself the Present. This phenomenon of the unity of a future which makes present the process of having been; we designate it as “*temporality*”. . . . *Temporality reveals itself as the meaning of authentic care*” (Heidegger 1995/1962, 373–374). For a short discussion on care as the mode in which humans are entwined in the world see footnote 296 on pages 276–277. However, what I take Heidegger's notion of temporality based on care to imply is that it is the nature of our relation to our circumstances that qualifies the kind of time we live with.

at any one point in space or at any single instant in time: it, likewise, is continually moving toward a spatio-temporal future" (Sheets-Johnstone 1979/1966, 37). Sheets-Johnstone argues that dancers in living through this *ekstasis* in a pre-reflective manner offer a possibility for the audience to perceive the virtual force, which she finds dance to be essentially (Sheets-Johnstone 1979/1966, 38–39). It could be understood, then, that Sheets-Johnstone considers that it is only through a certain sort of a qualitatively-defined performance effected by the dancer that dance itself comes into being.

Before elaborating on the meaning of a dance any further, Sheets-Johnstone analyzes the qualitative structures that contribute to the revelation of the virtual force in more detail. She names these structures as the tensional, the linear, the areal, and the projectional qualities of dance. They all relate to the nature of movement revealed by a dance. Tensional qualities refer to the effort used for muscular contraction. This for her is something that exists only in a state of motion, and it is not a static force but the nature or degree of vigor in a movement. The linear quality, on the other hand, is simply the directional attitude the body has in moving, be it the body proceeding through movement by curving or twisting in its place or by creating lines or paths through space. Areal qualities in their turn denote two aspects: areal design and areal pattern. Sheets-Johnstone defines the areal design as the shape of the body that might be gathered towards the body or expanded towards space. She thinks of areal pattern in a similar vein. It is the quality a space is given by the dancing, which might for example be contained or complex. The projectional quality, finally, is the manner in which a movement's force erupts. Movements might emerge, for example, suddenly or slowly. As Sheets-Johnstone thinks that there is no predetermined significance or meaning in dance, which would be influential aside from the actual event, the interrelations of the qualities she describes have no meaning unless they are tied to and developed in the form-in-the-making itself. In fact, she draws the qualities together in what she calls the dynamic line of a dance. It is the unique qualitative organization of the above-described structures or forces inherent to a dance from its beginning to its end. Through it also the specific rhythm and temporal nature of a dance are created. (Sheets-Johnstone 1979/1966, 50–54, 56–57, 88)

In analyzing the meaning of a dance Sheets-Johnstone's turns again to Langer's ideas. To Sheets-Johnstone, the form-in-the-making and the particular virtual force it expresses are imparted in a symbolic manner. She believes dance's symbolism results from the fact that, as described earlier, dance is comprised of an abstraction of actual human feeling and an abstraction of movement. (Sheets-Johnstone 1979/1966, 59) In addition to this abstraction I find her thinking indicates that the actual individual bodies of dancers become abstracted. The virtual forces corresponding to a dance have nothing to do with the directly individual, social, and cultural connotations the body has. Instead what concerns her is that in dance, feelings, everyday movements, and bodies become 'formalized': they are transposed for the use of the dance medium and they lose their actual relations to the surrounding world. Sheets-Johnstone takes dance to exist outside of everyday life and to need no referents to past or future dance. The form of dance is complete in itself. (Sheets-Johnstone 1979/1966, 61)

She defines the meaning of a dance through the *import* it provides. By this term Sheets-Johnstone refers to a meaning that "suffuses a whole and is inseparable from it" (Sheets-

Johnstone 1979/1966, 62). In her view the audience grasps the form-in-the-making, which a dance is, as an integral reflection of its import. This means to say that the meaning of the dance as a symbol is not separate from the embodiment of its form. We can attest, then, that Sheets-Johnstone understands the meaning of a dance to evolve from the intertwining of its structures. She adds, nevertheless, that both the dancers' intuitions about the import of the dance as well as the audience's perception of it are part and parcel of the dance and its meaning. (Sheets-Johnstone 1979/1966, 61, 71, 75)

In my view, Sheet-Johnstone's approach underlines the formal and motional qualities of a dance piece and tends to lose sight of the concrete embodiment of a dance performance with dancers' actual or lived relations to their own bodies, to each other, and the audience. It reduces an experienced corporeality of dance to a consciousness of rather abstract forces, and it places dance in a space of a virtual in contrast to an actual reality, all of which make her phenomenological approach somewhat disputable. In fact Susan Kozel, in her phenomenological study on dance, makes a detailed criticism of Sheets-Johnstone's ideas. One of the primary contradictions Kozel points out is that Sheets-Johnstone cannot escape a dualistic perspective. In Kozel's view she reduces phenomenology to an investigation of an object external to the subject, giving the latter a mastery over the former, even if she claims to do something different (Kozel 1998/1994, 179).<sup>132</sup>

Added to her controversial phenomenological approach, Sheets-Johnstone's account of the meaning of dance lacks a sufficient discussion of the manner in which the comprehension occurs. Sheets-Johnstone does not address the means through which the dancer or the audience comes to understand or construe a sense of its significance in much detail. Furthermore, even if it might be found that there is a primary level of aesthetic experience, which relates to sensuous qualities of phenomena, no perception or understanding begins "ex nihilo" or is forged or imprinted on a "tabula rasa". The way dancers move and understand the dance as well as the way an audience perceives and understands it is influenced by perceptual habits, life histories, the venue the dance is occurring in, and also by the social and cultural relations implied by the event. The next phenomenological dance study considers this matter in a somewhat narrow sense, too, although it gives a description of dance which relies on more concrete experiences.

## 7.2 An Aesthetics of Dance and the Lived Body

Another well known phenomenological dance study was conducted by Sondra Horton Fraleigh. Her book *Dance and the Lived Body. A Descriptive Aesthetics* (1987), which refers to

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132. Susan Kozel notes that until recently many dance scholars have had to take two alternative approaches to dance. The first being to regard dance to belong to the realm of the irrational and corporeal, and the second being to abstract dance into a series of categories and operations. She criticizes Maxine Sheets-Johnstone and Susanne Langer, whose aesthetics have influenced Sheets-Johnstone, of following the second approach and of "compromising the corporeal, lived experience of dance by accepting rigid philosophical structures of thought" (Kozel 1998/1994, 30).

various existential and phenomenological philosophers<sup>133</sup>, takes as its premise the dancer and her or his lived body. In the beginning of her study she gives an account of the phenomenological grounds which led her to formulate her conceptions of dance. Here she states that what links the thinking of the various philosophers her study refers to is their notions of the body. (Fraleigh 1996/1987, xxi, 3–4) Nonetheless, as Pakes points out, in Fraleigh's work there is a tendency to extract concepts from philosophy to suit her preconceptions of dance and leave important philosophical considerations unattended to (Pakes 1999, 62). Fraleigh tends to valorize the lived experience of dance and a direct bodily transmission of the significance of dance but they are not meticulously investigated. Something similar could have been said of Sheets-Johnstone, who as we saw before attempted to place the dancer at the center of her conception of dance.

However, while discussing this idea further, Fraleigh emphasizes that dance exists in its most primary mode, and in her view it is the only mode, through the moving and sentient body of a dancer. She considers the dancing dancer to be dance itself. In taking this view of dance, Fraleigh turns towards a more concrete or, as she calls it, existential description of dance than Sheets-Johnstone did earlier. (Fraleigh 1996/1987, xv, xviii) Fraleigh holds that "dance can never be wholly abstract because the dancer is a person and a person is not an abstraction" (Fraleigh 1996/1987, xxiv). Indeed, the understanding of dance she provides is often created through descriptions of her own experiences of dancing and perceiving others dance.

Fraleigh's goal is to bring together the more subjective and objective dimensions of dance. This is apparent in the way she views freedom and individuality to be the existential context of modern dance, by which she also means its "postmodern school". This concept stresses individual creativity and values the uniqueness and original experiential reality of each dancer, all of which Fraleigh advocates. Regardless of this, she also sees that dance becomes art only when it enters an intersubjective field, when dance is created with other dance artists and performed with them in front of an audience. (Fraleigh 1996/1987, xxi, xxxii, xxxiii, 23) For this reason, she states that, "the dancer is required to move beyond the confines of self; yet her self is there in her art" (Fraleigh 1996/1987, 23). This demonstrates that Fraleigh is interested in the tension between a more universal or shared and a personal realm just as much as she is in the tension between the body as experienced by the dancer and a more objective body perceived by others and constructed through understanding others and objects.

Indeed her notion of the self is a fluid one. It is something that at times is directly confronted through awareness of the existence of an *I* but mainly only indirectly through the actions of an embodied self. The self in the end is its body but also has a body, that is, is capable of distancing itself from its body and regarding it in an objective manner. (Fraleigh 1996/1987, 25–27) When viewing the tension between the experienced life of a dancer and that of the perceptions of the audience concerning the dancer, she concludes that in dance the self is created in two opposite but reconcilable ways. She writes: "As a dancer, I am both

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133. The phenomenologists most often referred to in this work are Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Paul Ricoeur. However, Fraleigh also draws on the work of Henri Bergson and such existential philosophers as Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche.

universalized (like dancers in every culture and time) and personalized (I am my own unrepeatable body; I am my own dance)" (Fraleigh 1996/1987, 29). However, in the end, Fraleigh contends that in the act of successful dancing the dancer loses a sense of an objective otherness, self, persons, things, and even experiences. The purposeful, aesthetic, and skilled movements of a dancer find their completion in a communal event with an audience witnessing them. (Fraleigh 1996/1987, 61)

Accordingly dance could be understood to evolve from both the dancers' lived experiences of their bodies and motion as well as the self-transcendent expressiveness of a body in motion. Fraleigh, in fact, perceives the value of dance as art to be based exactly on the "bodiliness" of dance, namely the body's kinesthetic sensitivity and intelligence, through which the expressiveness of the body is grasped both by the dancer and the audience (Fraleigh 1996/1987, 47). She writes: "Dance does not end in any action outside of itself but rather is realized as itself. Dance as art is not intended to motivate action but to be valued for itself as an aesthetic expression of the body that opens us to human feeling through our sentient body-of-action and the power of creative agency" (Fraleigh 1996/1987, 47). With these lines Fraleigh emphasizes that it is first and foremost through the bodily sensations dance experiences provide that dance is communicated and gains its meaning.

In a dance performance the dancers and spectators share the event through what Fraleigh terms as the *vital movement sensibility*. Fraleigh takes the basic meaning of dance to be found in the movements and kinesthetic sensations that are transmitted from the dancers to the audience through a sort of an empathic understanding. Through it both the dancers and the spectators transcend self-limitations and move towards each other. The dance piece in fact takes place in between them. Nevertheless, as a sort of a secondary conclusion, Fraleigh claims that in the end, each dance means to us what we ourselves understand it to mean through the use of our cognitive faculties. Furthermore, she points out that only by relating a dance piece to the reality outside of it, are we able to distinguish the former from the latter. Also our being is invested with experiences through which we singularly interpret the dance we perceive and experience. Thus our life-world affects the meaning we find in dance.

In the end Fraleigh concludes that dance is a metaphor that refers to something beyond itself. For her this reference is to life in general. (Fraleigh 1996/1987, 59–61, 86, 117) She writes: "its imagery is of life (of the pure forces of nature and our own arising through them) and of living (of experiencing joys and sorrows, of actually falling down and getting up)" (Fraleigh 1996/1987, 172). Despite writing of the meaning dance can render through secondary conclusions, in my view this quote underlines her narrow conception of the essential meaning that dance conveys. To Fraleigh, dance is first and foremost of sensuous and emotional significance than of anything else. In a somewhat similar vein Pakes takes issue with Fraleigh's position as she values the body as an originary and universal essence and asserts that in dance we are allowed to return to a primordial mode of being transcending or undermining socio-cultural and lingual meanings. (In fact, Pakes further argues that there is a long tradition in dance writing that supports the view adopted by Fraleigh.) (Pakes 2001, 72)

In summary it is worth noting that Fraleigh, just as Sheets-Johnstone before her, seems to favor the self-sufficiency of the dance event even if it is in a somewhat more lenient

fashion. In contrast to Sheets-Johnstone with her descriptions of a revelation of a symbolic form, Fraleigh places more emphasis on the direct affective and sentient signification of dance. These two studies, when read in relation to each other, could however be seen as a more flexible interpretation of dance and to precede later work done in this field as together they consider both the formal, the tightly or loosely organized and structured nature of dance, and the expressive nature of the body. Such a view of dance is advocated by anthropologist Cynthia Novack (1990), who considers dance to be both formal and referential. The latter she believes cannot be avoided simply because the dancing body is always an image of a person relating to the dancing individual as a unique person, to other persons and their ways of living. Novack notices that "social references remain implicitly present, even in dances which claim to be purely formal or only personally expressive" (Novack 1990, 14). Here one could also rely on Randy Martin's (1998) notions of referentiality. He agrees that the body always refers both to what is going on inside a dance as well as to what is outside a dance and the actual act of dancing. He adds that even if a dance had a story to tell it would be "legible only in relation to the panoply of stories outside it" (Martin 1998, 57).

Paradoxically, then, in arguing against an abstraction of dance as it is actualized through a concrete person, in her book *Dance and the Lived Body* Fraleigh nevertheless implicitly reduces the significance of dance by prioritizing its kinesthetic and emotional qualities. She does not consider what we could call the extra-referentiality of dance meaning in a detailed enough fashion. Therefore, she evades the social, political, and cultural connotations inherent to dance. However, in a few of Fraleigh's later articles the reader may witness a process of clarification of her phenomenological approach and even reconsideration of the meaning of dance (cf. Fraleigh 2000; 1999a; 1998).

In one of her articles she first writes that, "But phenomenology does not rely primarily on the uniqueness of experience. Overall, it is propelled by a universalizing impulse, since it hopes to arrive at shared meaning, recognizing that this world is indeed 'our world', that our being-in-the-world is conditioned by the existence of others" (Fraleigh 1998, 136). Two pages later she adds that, "The phenomenologist approaches the task of defining and describing a phenomenon (a dance or a dance experience, for instance) as though seeing it fresh for the first time. Of course this is not possible since we do have conceptions, attitudes and assumptions which colour understanding. Phenomenology is at best an effort to remove bias and preconception from consciousness. It aims to describe through some direct route, not to analyse and theorize (at least not in the beginning), but first to describe the immediate contents of consciousness" (Fraleigh 1998: 138). These passages explain her double-layered understanding of how the meaning of a dance is grasped, which she relied on but did not meticulously present in her book *Dance and the Lived Body*. Nevertheless, she continues reflecting on this issue in her later writing. There she firstly extends her understanding of aesthetic values to be something recognizable in every dimension of life, not just in art or the somatic experiences of dance. In this context she acknowledges that, "Interpretation is not a unidimensional act. In dance it is more a process of weaving together various threads: discerning and describing aesthetic qualities (of form and expression), comparing and relating works or dance events, describing movement signature or style, deciphering whether

representational or symbolic content plays a part, relaying the tensions and resolutions of myth and narrative that often appear unannounced, and considering political, social, or historical context" (Fraleigh 1999a, 190). This shows that her understanding has shifted towards a more hermeneutical one and that she has broadened her conception of the meaning of dance, even if she herself continues to be interested in the kinesthetic or somatic qualities of dance.

Nevertheless, the following two phenomenological studies of dance aim to compensate for the tendency to sideline social, political, and cultural issues related to dance present in both Sheets-Johnstone's and Fraleigh's early work. The first does this by disqualifying simplistic notions of form and the second by a detailed consideration of the social and cultural implications of dance.

### 7.3 On the Sublime Vision and Gesture of Dance

The next phenomenological treatise referred to here is, in my view, an ambitious attempt to revise dance phenomenology, which distinctly separates itself from Sheets-Johnstone's earlier contribution. It was written by Susan Kozel in 1994 and titled *As Vision Becomes Gesture*.<sup>134</sup> Kozel's main concern is to show how dance is a dissolution of form, which thrusts the dancer and the dance audience into a dimension of the sublime.<sup>135</sup> She draws on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and some of Immanuel Kant's theories and applies them to dance. In her study Kozel also takes a critical stance towards Susan Langer's aesthetics and Maxine Sheets-Johnstone's phenomenological understanding of dance. At points her keen interest in philosophical considerations even leaves dance in a secondary position. Nevertheless, even if not directly clarifying the area of dance her study focuses upon, western theatrical dance seems to be the main target. This is reasonable to assume since she explains that her own experiences of dancing and creating dance lie in contemporary dance

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134. Kozel's study in contrast to Sheet's-Johnstone's and Fraleigh's phenomenological dance studies mentioned earlier, is unpublished. It was originally a Ph.D. dissertation submitted to the University of Essex in 1994 but I worked from an unfinished manuscript for publication based on the dissertation.

135. The sublime is a concept, which has been discussed rather intensely in recent studies of aesthetics. For example, Jean Francois Lyotard is of the opinion that since the beginning of the 20th century aesthetics cannot avoid addressing the question of the sublime. The arts are no longer concerned with the beautiful. Rather art has begun to deal with the problem or even impossibility of presentation, that is the impossibility of gaining understanding of the materials of the arts through concepts and even the formation of these materials (Lyotard 1990, 297, 298, 301). Lyotard writes: "The sublime is a *Geistesgefühl*, a feeling of the mind, whereas the beautiful is a feeling stemming from the affinity between nature and mind, or, and it amounts to the same thing, between imagination and understanding. This wedding, or at least this engagement, is broken off by the sublime" (Lyotard 1990, 299).

In aesthetic investigations, the discussion of the sublime originates from Edmund Burke's book *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* published in 1757 as well as Immanuel Kant's elaboration on aesthetic judgment, which he addresses for example in *Critique of Judgment* (1790) (cf. Armstrong 1996). The main text briefly clarifies some features of the manner in which Kozel referred to Kant's notion of the sublime in her work.

affiliated with new technological media.

In the beginning Kozel introduces Kant's understanding of aesthetic experience and its two dimensions: the beautiful and the sublime. She notes that there is a tendency in Merleau-Ponty's work that makes him seem more a philosopher of the beautiful than of the sublime. She argues that Merleau-Ponty's writing pleases and attracts us in a manner that "provokes a state of restful contemplation and a feeling of life being furthered and enhanced" (Kozel 1998/1994, 100). But she also maintains that Merleau-Ponty's later thought involves at least a latent sublimity, which she wants to address and elaborate upon. Kozel believes Merleau-Ponty's asymmetrical reversibility of the flesh, which involves an incessant escaping through which total identity is impossible to achieve, to be the basis for Merleau-Ponty's vocabulary of the sublime. It is, thus, the instability and indeterminacy of the perceived world that makes Merleau-Ponty's philosophy relate to the sublime impact of the unrepresentable. Still in reading the *Eye and Mind*, the last work to be published during Merleau-Ponty's life, Kozel does find a few occasions in which Merleau-Ponty writes in a manner that does not suggest a sublime interpretation of the event of dance and dancing. She concludes that Merleau-Ponty does not relate the indeterminacy of the world to the body in a manner that would show that the body in itself would be subject to formlessness or an absence of control, which are features of the sublime. She also detects an ocularcentric emphasis when considering how Merleau-Ponty conceives us to perceive paintings. (Kozel 1998/1994, 102, 106, 115)

Had Kozel studied other works of Merleau-Ponty in-depth, however, she would have found that he spoke of an ambiguous body, a body acting as the hinge of the flesh, and a body constantly on the move. All the same, her criticism of Merleau-Ponty's understanding of vision is something others have also paid attention to. Even if Merleau-Ponty wrote about the intertwining of the senses and argued that vision firstly was a global corporeal event, according to Martin Jay his attempts to defend an alternative philosophy of the visual was cut short by his untimely death. He also states that such scholars as Luce Irigaray, Michel Foucault, and Francois Lyotard have criticized Merleau-Ponty of holding on to the primacy of perception in general and vision in particular, even if he attempted to create a new conception of both. (Jay 1993, 160, 176–177) Still even after making the above-presented critical points, Kozel continues to utilize Merleau-Ponty's and Kant's theories in her creation of a sublime phenomenology of dance.

While relying on Kant's idea of such aesthetic experience (which claims not to be conditioned by conceptual understanding, practical concerns nor to be determined by the senses) Kozel outlines the presentation of the unrepresentable. In aesthetic experience the unrepresentable is paradoxically revealed as an excess, something disturbing and pleasing, which we do not quite come to grasp. This ambiguous area of revelation of the sublime she equates with Merleau-Ponty's notion of the invisible.<sup>136</sup> Kozel writes about the sublime by saying that it "is an attack upon the senses", but that it also "leaves the cognitive process of regular experience

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136. Kozel describes Merleau-Ponty's concept of the invisible as an absence within a presence. She writes that: "It is the absence which transports us to a world of implied meaning which is never made explicit, yet which is inherent" (Kozel 1998/1994, 91).

reeling" (Kozel 1998/1994, 41). She states that, "we are alternately repelled and attracted to the object that throws our cognitive structures into disarray" (Kozel 1998/1994, 41).

The experience of the sublime has indeed been taken to threaten the equilibrium of the body and mind and to arouse an unpleasant state of uncertainty in us. In spite of this, Kozel does not take such a view of the sublime when considering dance. She speaks more of the pleasure of witnessing an intensification of our existence through confronting the unknown. According to her, the sublime is related to "unboundedness" by which she seems to mean a recognized release of our dependence on both our rational or cognitive and bodily faculties. In her view witnessing the "unboundedness" makes us feel that our life force is suspended. (Kozel 1998/1994, 33, 39, 40) She writes that, "The sublime induces an absence of control into our bodies and lives" (Kozel 1998/1994, 106). In other words, it makes us transgress previously experienced and understood ways of being. It moves us. As dance is a moving art form Kozel presumes it to be most closely related to the sublime (Kozel 1998/1994, 101).

On speaking of the dancer Kozel firstly explains the dancer's position in dance as oscillating between control and being controlled. This is to say that dancers both mentally direct and manage their bodily actions as well as follow out the motion that spontaneously flows from the body. The body, as it were, responds to its environment and the mental directions it receives by itself. Kozel thinks of dancing as an active exploration, even an interrogation, of the space between this directing and responding. She thus takes intellectual participation as well as the body's movements to be integral parts of dancing. (Kozel 1998/1994, 70–71) She states that, "dance is the simultaneous harmony of physical movement and intellectual ideas in an expressive shape" (Kozel 1998/1994, 34). Even so, this shape that dance evokes is ephemeral and thus a challenge to form. Dance works in two directions by both developing and dissolving form. Kozel takes the lived experience of dance, both that of a dancer and that of an audience, to emphasize the latter. The dancers never quite grasp the space or time in between their cognitive or mental instruction of bodily motion and the movements that emanate from the body. Furthermore, for the dancers and audience alike the movement is already gone by the time that a comprehension of it is gained. In Kozel's view dance consequently occurs at a vanishing point, it disappears in the act of materializing, and as a consequence the experience of it is that of formlessness. (Kozel 1998/1994, 42, 81, 119)

Although Kozel emphasizes the formlessness and sublimity of dance her understanding of them is not a radical departure from a conception of form. She thinks, "that for something to be continually fleeting it must be continually reoccurring" (Kozel 1998/1994, 101). Formlessness, then, is tied to form by being the overflowing and the move towards a restoration of it. Yet, only in the overflowing does the form dissolve into an intensity of expression that dance is. It is through the sublime, therefore, that the dance event is disclosed to us. Kozel's rather fluid or motional conception of dance is well summarized in the next quotation: "Dance is a constant challenge to form, a dissolution and redevelopment of form. Since it exists in a constant state of transgression and restoration of shape, it cannot hold onto a fixed notion of form, or to a fixed point in space" (Kozel 1998/1994, 108).

What makes such a fluid and changing understanding of dance that Kozel contributes endure nevertheless is that the dance event is shared by dancers and audiences. In addition,

the experienced phenomenon of dance is talked and written about as well as documented in other ways. It is also re-created on the basis of earlier experiences and understanding, through which it consequently continues its existence. However, in Kozel's view the core of dance is still in the dance event itself as she writes that, "If we can speak at all of essence [of (a) dance] it is the amorphous flow of energy animating a dance which cannot be isolated in an instant" (Kozel 1998/1994, 94). Kozel stresses that this flow of energy exists in the concrete time of an actual event but that an excess of concrete cultural factors affects what a dance becomes at any moment. Kozel cites Selma Jean Cohen to describe this and writes that, "each choreographer has to work with limitations – ethical, psychological, financial – imposed by his time and place of work" (Jean Cohen 1982, 112 as reported by Kozel 1998/1994, 193).

Hence Kozel does, if fleetingly, acknowledge the influence of social and cultural factors on dance. What I would also like to stress in Kozel's account of dance is that dance experiences change us. She points to the fact that in transgressing ourselves through unique dance experiences and the confrontation of the sublime we transform ourselves. (Kozel 1998/1994, 136) If this idea were emphasized it evidently could be regarded as political in its application. This is a theme that alongside of the social and cultural influences on the dancing subject is addressed in the following phenomenological study of dance.

## 7.4 On the Construction of the Dancing Subject

The latest phenomenological dance study I turn to here was completed by Jaana Parviainen in 1998 and is called *Bodies Moved and Moving. A Phenomenological Analysis of the Dancing Subject and the Cognitive and Ethical Values of Dance Art*. It meticulously presents and interprets Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology but also deals with David Michael Levin's ethical considerations of bodiliness and Michel Foucault's body politics when considering the dancing subject. Parviainen also relies on Martin Heidegger's conceptualizations while dealing with the meaning of dance and utilizes among others the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu while clarifying the nature of the artistic field in which the dancing subject operates. She takes an interdisciplinary approach, which also refers to various studies of dance as, in her view, using material from only one discipline would not have allowed her to tackle the historical, social, and cultural issues that are preconditions of dance practices. In the end, Parviainen's study concentrates on western theatrical dance while inquiring how the dancing subject becomes constructed through contemporary dance and while creating what she calls a new phenomenology. (Parviainen 1998, 14, 15, 193) (Though for a more consistent phenomenological account of the dancing subject perhaps a more detailed discussion of the relation of the non-phenomenological sources to the phenomenological ones would have been called for.)

Parviainen, like Fraleigh before her, is very concerned with the lived body, by which she means, after Merleau-Ponty, the experienced and embodied subject that is not separate from others or from the world. She wants to emphasize that the lived body is individually yet necessarily also socially, culturally, and historically formed. She emphasizes, furthermore,

that our grasp of the lived body differs from an objective conception of the body, which is paradigmatically presented by what she labels the cultural Cartesianism that still permeates society. She states that the "Cartesian subject detaches things and other human beings, even the body, from himself/herself and scrutinizes them as exterior objects" (Parviainen 1998, 20). Parviainen thinks that for such a subject, vision has become disembodied as it does not take into account the wholeness of the other body-senses, which according to Merleau-Ponty are entwined with vision.

She critically approaches the outcome of this disembodied attitude, since it has induced an instrumental vision that has led to the domination of image in our culture. As a consequence she finds the body to be mostly explained through the framework of an objective body interpreted physiologically and anatomically, for example. In western countries the body has also come to be viewed as a product itself, as an outgrowth of the ideology of production and consumption. Again visibility is what validates the existence of the body as product. In her view even current research in the human sciences has focused only on the surface of the body as a textual plane to be written upon – in other words, made through divergent cultural means. The resistance and power of creating that the body itself possesses is ignored and the body is regarded as an object to be manipulated. Parviainen maintains that the lived body demonstrates the falseness of the aforementioned objectifications and dancing is an event that proves this point for her. She argues that when a dancer dances it is the body that comes to move the dancer instead of the dancer mentally ordering the body to move. (Parviainen 1998, 17, 22, 33, 137) In the final analysis, the lived body is, to Parviainen, "an intelligent body capable of self-reflection, a body capable of articulating its motives and reasons for action" (Parviainen 1998, 27).

Parviainen points out that when dance artists choose a dancer's career for themselves they also choose, in one way or another, a manner of embodiment that directs the whole nature of their lives. Consequently, she thinks that dancers create themselves not only as dance artists but more generally as individuals through the style of movement they work with. As contemporary dance has no set movement vocabulary through which it is learned or produced, the way they dance is dependent on the dancers' capacity to integrate styles of movement they have learned with their own interests and creations. In doing this Parviainen detects that dancers rely heavily on a personal knowledge of and an ability to be sensitive to and understand their own body. They accomplish this by being committed to a tacit communication with the experienced or lived body, which she does not consider to be purely subjective. Instead, it emerges from the cultural and communal understanding of embodiment of the life-world the dancer lives in. (Parviainen 1998, 118, 121, 130, 134)

Parviainen goes on to show that dancing itself is, as she calls it, a "living bodily heritage". She argues that dance as a tradition exists mainly through bodily communication by which it is passed from generation to generation. This passing occurs both from one individual to another and from one generation to the next. In addition, this passed bodily heritage is something that is impossible to translate into written form without losing much of its significance (and life-world). Parviainen consequently articulates dance tradition to be an obscure stream of dance practices handed down from one generation to the next. What is characte-

ristic of this stream is that it is in a state of constant alteration. Although it preserves and builds on the past, it does so by transforming it. Despite the fact that society affects dance traditions, Parviainen regards the tradition of dance to have a projective power of its own. The practices of dance, its institutions, discourses, and procedures further dance in their own fashion as well as being influenced by changes in other cultural areas. (Parviainen 1998, 74–80)

Parviainen advocates a socially and historically meaningful view of the art of dance not only by emphasizing its formation through its tradition. She also takes a stand against aestheticism, the theory according to which art need not serve any purpose and that aesthetic experiences are an end in themselves. This sort of an understanding of dance Parviainen views as an abstraction, which negates the context and cultural functions that make dance significant. (Parviainen 1998, 86–87) As proof against this she cites Bourdieu's theory of social or cultural fields. Following Bourdieu, Parviainen regards the art or dance field to be a relatively autonomous "social field constituted by the network of the relations of artists, art works, critics, art specialists, theorists, art schools, buildings for art, art journals etc." (Parviainen 1998, 91). The value of an artwork arises from the beliefs of the members of this field since it only exists when recognized by spectators and other members of the art field. The members of the dance field and its relative institutions are responsible for what sort of an aesthetic ideology and consequent body politics it supports.

Parviainen concludes that these ideals influence the dance artist's actions and productions though they do not totally control them. The aim of a dancer or choreographer in her view is to uncover meanings that have gone unnoticed or have been nonexistent in the surrounding social environment before. Following Heidegger, she maintains that the materials of a dance work, its dancers, movements, costumes, music, lights, staging, and so forth lose their everyday characteristics in a skillfully created dance work and bring into existence a new world. This world is a unique whole, with a certain duration and which occurs in a certain place forming a coherent unity of its own. Yet the world a dance work produces remains somewhat open. Parviainen takes the world a dance work reveals to paradoxically represent what it is not itself. It represents, so to speak, the world in general, as we learn to understand that we ourselves as well as our world are in the dance work. (Parviainen 1998, 91, 138, 145–146, 151) The dance work's world is ingrained in the more general world we live in and vice versa.

Since Parviainen's study, with its analysis of the socio-cultural dimension relates to the dancing subject, is an important reference for this study, I will briefly discuss a slight difference in the manner in which I interpret Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. This is also done in order to proceed towards the preliminary conception of the relation of dance and language this thesis relies upon and which is presented in the next chapter. Parviainen's aim is to reinstate cultivation of an understanding of the body's felt sense, the lived body, in the context of understanding dance. She does this in a manner that initially is rather hostile to the objective and theoretical conceptions of the body in addition to a linguistic articulation of the dance event. There is, consequently, an undercurrent in her thinking that prioritizes the lived body and even explicitly holds on to the dichotomy between it and the objective body. She nevertheless establishes this by showing that the lived, phenomenal, body and

the objective body cannot be reduced to one another (Parviainen 1998, 36). While considering Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, though, which is the primary framework Parviainen bases her study on, one can see that they are neither completely separate or different from each other even if they cannot be reduced into each other. In fact, there is no absolute sense of an objective or a lived body in Merleau-Ponty's thinking (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 332). Furthermore, during the course of Parviainen's work what becomes evident is that she appreciates the reversibility of the sentient-sensed, perceiving-perceived, and self-other relations the body accomplishes but does not admit that such a reversibility would occur between the lived and the objective body.<sup>137</sup>

According to Merleau-Ponty, the conditions of objectivity derive from viewing an object from an infinite amount of perspectives, which, even if incompletely, reveal the same object. There is objectivity, when it is agreed that these perspectives provide a shared understanding of the object, which attains a measure of acceptance amongst the general public over time. We can conclude, then, that much of what is perceived in one's own body and how one perceives its 'thingly' qualities or another's body relies on an objectivity alongside of more conceptual and theoretical understanding (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 68–71, 330–333; 1991/1964e, 92–93).<sup>138</sup> I believe all of these influence dance and dancing to a great extent. Dance artists perceive and experience their motional lived body in ways that are appreciated and favored by the practices and the discourse of the art world of dance. This does not exclude a physiological understanding or the visually-assessed motor achievements of the body.

In apparently trying to demonstrate that dance does not basically rely on objective

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137. While describing the reversibility thesis, which he also named the chiasm, Merleau-Ponty writes: "The chiasm is not only a me other exchange (the message he receives reach me, the message I receive reach him), it also an exchange between me and the world, between the phenomenal body and the "objective" body, between the perceiving and the perceived, what begins as a thing ends as consciousness of the thing, what begins as a "state of consciousness" ends as a thing" (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 215). However, even here he places the term objective in parentheses seemingly to highlight the fact that he is not speaking of the objective in a strong or the traditional sense.

138. Although Merleau-Ponty often writes about the ideal of objective thought in *Phenomenology of Perception*, he does so to underline that this position is an untenable one. Merleau-Ponty reasons that the objective, in the traditional sense of a reflective understanding of a completely defined object as it is in itself, is not possible. In his view things or entities always retain opacity as they transcend all perspectives due to the temporal and finite structure of each perspective they are grasped with. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 333) Indeed, he advocated a new understanding of the subject-object polarity and writes: "Our purpose is not to oppose to the facts objective science coordinates a group of facts that "escape" it – whether one calls them "psychism" or "subjective facts" or "interior facts" – but to show that the being-object and the being-subject conceived by opposition to it and relative to it do not form the alternative, that the perceived world is beneath or beyond this antimony, that the failure of "objective" psychology is – conjointly with the failure of "objectivist" physics – to be understood not as a victory of the "interior" over the "exterior" and of the "mental" over the "material" but as a call for the revision of our ontology, for the re-examination of "subject" and "object" (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 22–23). He writes, too, of the nature of true "objectivity" as a manner of circumscribing the irrational or the yet-to-be-grasped significance of the perceived sense of the world. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 25). The sense of objectivity Merleau-Ponty invites us to adopt, then, is a thing articulated by reflective understanding that does not negate its unreflective grounds.

conceptions of the nature of the body nor that of dance, she misunderstands the nature of dance and comprehends the purpose of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological project in a rather narrow sense. I understand the event of dance to rely on both more objective conceptions of the body as well as those experiences the body lives through, as it were, afresh. In fact, like Kozel, it is my opinion that dance occurs more as an oscillation between the two. In this oscillation, furthermore, they both become transposed, thereby gaining new significance. Moreover, Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, which searches for the grounds of existence, behavior, and understanding through an investigation of the phenomenal and perceptual body, nevertheless confirms that the lived and objective body are intertwined. In my view, he did not totally dismiss an objective understanding of the body. He wanted to re-articulate the nature of objectivity and relate the lived body to a more objective understanding of it in a manner that would coincide with a more global understanding of the body and ultimately of the world.<sup>139</sup> Sara Heinämaa argues that Merleau-Ponty did not speculate on the usefulness of causal and objective theories in constructing and manipulating the world. What he did was to problematize the sufficiency of these theories in understanding the entirety of the world and its entities. (Heinämaa 1996, 77)

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139. Merleau-Ponty writes of science, which he found to have a reductionist understanding of the body and the world, for example in the following manner: "We shall no longer hold that perception is incipient science, but conversely that classical science is a form of perception which loses sight of its origins and believes itself complete. The philosophical act would appear to be to return to the world of actual experience which is prior to the objective world, since it is in it that we shall be able to grasp the theoretical basis no less than the limits of the objective world" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 57). In his view, therefore, through regarding the premises from which objectivity is born one could understand the true nature of objectivity and then also have better insight into the nature of the sciences. As Dermot Moran argues, Merleau-Ponty was against a manipulative science which ignores its own foundations. He wanted science and philosophy to be aware of their rootedness in the world (Moran 2000, 392, 401). Merleau-Ponty also understood that a philosopher could not ignore the cultural achievements of his age and wrote about the relationship of science and philosophy also in the following manner: "How could any philosopher aware of the philosophical tradition seriously propose to forbid philosophy to have anything to do with science? For after all the philosopher always thinks about something . . . The philosopher thinks about his experience and his world. Except by decree, how could he be given the right to forget what science says about this same experience and world? Under the collective noun "science" there is nothing other than a systematic handling and a methodical use – narrower and broader, more and less discerning – of this same experience which begins with our first perception. Science is a set of means of perceiving, imagining and, in short, living which are oriented toward the same truth that our first experience establish an urgent need for. Science may indeed purchase its exactness at the price of schematization. But the remedy in this case is to confront it with an integral experience, not to oppose it to philosophical knowledge come from who knows where" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964c, 102).

## 8 The Bodily and Linguistic Nature of Dance

To bring part II and the presentation of the phenomenological framework to a close I would like to draw some conclusions and present a rudimentary conception of how dance and language are interrelated, which forms the premise of the investigation found in the subsequent sections of the study. The understanding of dance presented here considers how both bodily and linguistic practices direct the meaning and nature of dance art. However, in not specifically discussing such features as sound, space, imagery, and socio-cultural inscription it does not provide a complete description of the possible properties and constitutive structures influencing and thus determining western theatrical dance. As my research deals with how the interviewed dance artists give meaning to their lives as dance artists while speaking of them, I found it most important to consider how the concrete bodily practices of dance are related to spoken and written language.<sup>140</sup>

What has become evident in the previous chapter while discussing Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the cultural and social dimensions, is that they rely heavily on the functions and actions of the body. Dance anthropologist Ted Polhemus attests to this by writing:

Culture is not exclusively nor, I would suggest, even primarily encoded and transmitted by means of words or artefacts. At least in so far as an individual's first and most rudimentary experience of his or her society is via bodily manipulation and physical education in the broadest sense, the deepest and most fundamental foundations of being a member of a particular society are inevitably corporal. (Polhemus 1993, 6)

This is something Parviainen advocated earlier, too, by naming dance a living bodily heritage. I agree with this argument in that dance practices and perhaps the elementary meaning of dance are probably best passed on by being directly in contact with dancing and learning to dance oneself. The meaning of the bodily heritage of dance is obviously never totally furnished by speech or writing, since the way corporeal dancing expresses itself is different from them. Nevertheless, I would like to emphasize that this bodily heritage should not

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140. Of course elements such as sound, space, different cultural images, imaginations, practices, and materials also become extensions of the dancing body or affect a dance. In fact Verena Köhne-Kirsch has attempted to show that dance is an intermediary art combining the means of the other arts: music combined with sound and rhythm, sculpture and painting combined with images, and poetry combined with lingual expression. She writes: "The dance is an intermediate art form with closest resemblance to Man [sic], who is himself an intermediate being" (Köhne-Kirsch 1989, 294). I would not so readily stress that dance is the closest art form to humankind. As I regard humans to be profoundly cultural, which life-forms or practices are more elementary than others becomes difficult to define. On the other hand, I would agree that the body is a nexus through which different dimensions and entities come into existence and which combines them in itself. Thus, I also think that it is through bodily actions and practices that the different properties utilized in dance and influencing it become intertwined. A detailed discussion of the dance as a nexus intertwining different properties and cultural entities I shall leave for future study, though, and in the following paragraphs concentrate on the relation of bodily and linguistic practices.

only be seen as involving “physical practices of dance” but should also include all embodied ways of expression that are relevant to the formation of meanings related to dance. Merleau-Ponty understood language as an embodied way of being; a bodily expressive gesture that structures our perception and corporeal behavior. He concludes that the sounds and visible gestures of language surrounding a new-born infant already affect the child’s manner of being. (Cf. Merleau-Ponty 1985/1973)<sup>141</sup> Furthermore, Galen A. Johnson (1996/1993) points out that, while writing how painting and language are meaningful and arguing that these forms of expression are not reducible to one and other, Merleau-Ponty also holds that neither of them should be regarded as primary or secondary. They are both merely different modes of expressing the meaning of the world and life lived. (Johnson 1996/1993, 34; Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 84, 120; 1995/1962, 391)

Notwithstanding this, it is true that Merleau-Ponty at some point writes that, “gestures and forms of behavior are transmitted only by direct imitation” (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 190). But this statement, in my view, relates to motion and behavior, which is not assumed as something. While I acknowledge that we primarily move before we understand ourselves as moving and that the roots of dance in this sense are in our pre-conceptual bodily behavior, the movements involved in dancing become dance only when we, at least in a general manner, understand them to belong to a project that is referred to as dance. One could say that naming paves the way for an acknowledged existence of cultural entities. Merleau-Ponty finds that “denomination” is the “recognition of objects” and things, and that words “inhabit things” as “vehicles of their meanings” (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 177, 178).

Moreover, although a cultural manner of moving basically relies on a tacit transmission of a style of movement, to me it is evident that when I have learned a certain basic way of moving that is natural for myself and a language with names for the movements and the body parts involved in thus comporting myself, it is easy to learn new ways of moving simply by being instructed through verbal suggestions. Furthermore, it is common for teachers and choreographers to work with verbal instructions alongside of physical demonstration in teaching dance material. Added to this, my experiences of being a dancer have confirmed my belief that discourse affect how dancers understand dance as well as how they in fact dance, be it that of art critics, dancers amongst themselves, documentaries or recordings of dance performances. This will also become evident in later discussions of what the interviewed dance artists spoke of.

The fact that understanding and doing are influenced by the practices of spoken and written language, then, means that they also mold the tradition of dance. Randy Martin (1998, 5) likewise thinks that even if dance is not language it is clarified and qualified through it. Consequently a part of the meaningfulness of dance relies on language. Ted Polhemus (1993, 3), though accrediting non-verbal ways of communication in the workings of culture, thinks it foolish both to dismiss verbal language as a marker of the boundaries of social groups and as a means of depicting such a social group’s tradition and history, as well as to presume that

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141. Shaun Gallagher (1992, 75), while writing on this issue, mentions that more recent research has attested that the sounds of language already effect the infant in-utero.

language is the *only* means by which this happens.

Susan Foster in her turn while interpreting the body textually writes:

Each of the body's moves, as with all writings, traces the physical fact of movement and also an array of references to conceptual entities and events. Constructed from endless and repeated encounters with other bodies, each body's writing maintains a nonnatural relation between its physicality and referentiality. Each body establishes this relation between physicality and meaning in concert with the physical actions and verbal descriptions of bodies that move alongside of it. Not only is this relation between the physical and conceptual nonnatural, it is also impermanent. It mutates, transforms, reinstantiates with each new encounter. (Foster 1995, 3)

It seems to me that what Foster means by the nonnatural relation of referentiality is that the body always escapes our understanding. The phenomenal or lived body is in a constant process of becoming and cannot be grasped, understood or defined, exhaustively. Foster (1995, 4) argues that even if the body is "on the move" the metaphors we assign it give it its most comprehensible form. Merleau-Ponty himself speaks in a similar vein by stating that, "no thought ever detaches itself completely from a sustaining support . . . the sole privilege of speaking thought is to have rendered its own support more manageable" (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993c, 149). Foster, like Merleau-Ponty, implies that what prevents us from understanding the conceptual and referential nature of the body is that we tend to regard concepts as referring to something stable and distinct. However, the shifting and changing quality of the perceived and lived body also equips us with new phenomena – 'phenomena of no concepts'. The body produces significance in its own right.<sup>142</sup> While concepts or language direct the ways the body moves, the body adds to the world of ideas and concepts, as well. The body does not merely succumb to existing meanings and practices. It can resist them, too, and make us understand them in different ways. Foster advocates that verbal discourse cannot simply speak for the body; take the place of the body, but must enter into a dialogue with it. She takes dance to be an endeavor that cultivates a body that initiates as well as responds. In dance the body is *consulted with*. (Foster 1995, 9, 15; cf. Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993a, 8; 1995/1962, 391–392)

Inferring from Merleau-Ponty's suggestion that the body exists in the exchange or cross-over of sensing and being sensed, of oneself and the other, of nature and culture, one could view it to likewise exist in the exchange of physical and conceptual or linguistic expressions (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993c, 125). Dance as a corporeal endeavor could then be understood to exist in the last crossover mentioned as well. Relying firstly on the notion of both an implicit and explicit history affecting tradition and the dialogue of pre-conceptual<sup>143</sup> and conceptual significance the body exists through I would like to conclude by proposing that the heritage of dance necessarily flows through both "non-verbal" and "verbal", or bodily and conceptual practices.

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142. Cf. ft. 117 on pages 127–128.

143. or ambiguous pre-linguistic experience, the nature of which was discussed on pages 53 and 54 in Part I.



# PART THREE

– THE INTERVIEWS IN DIALOGUE  
WITH MERLEAU-PONTY'S  
PHENOMENOLOGY AND OTHER  
THEORETICAL SOURCES



This part of my research is concerned with the thematic interpretation of the interview material. Its order is to a large extent dictated by the main themes I delineated while analyzing the material. But the titles of the chapters also illuminate the constitutive elements that the interview material points towards and which I find to be influential in being a freelance dance artist. **Chapter 9** first introduces the general cultural sphere I consider the interview material to belong to. It also presents some of the comments the dance artists made on the form of art they are involved in and discusses the more structural constituents of the environment in which the interviewed dance artists worked. Then in **chapter 10**, after presenting an account of the historical passage of modern and contemporary dance in Finland, we examine the interview material in more detail. Chapter 10 discusses the interviewees' relationship to the field of freelance dance in Helsinki and highlights those of its features that they find pertinent to their lives as freelance dance artists. **Chapter 11**, in turn, looks at the mode in which freelance dance artists are involved in their field of dance through the distinct tasks and roles of a choreographer, dancer, and dance teacher. It also discusses the relationship of the dancer and the choreographer in some detail. **Chapter 12** addresses the more general manner in which freelance dance artists relate to their artistic activity in the terms of work and labor. It describes and interprets some of the socio-cultural values and practices related to dance work that freelance dance artists do. While **chapter 13** continues to discuss the nature of the work freelance dance artists are connected with, it concentrates especially on describing how freelance dance artists materialize dance in their bodies and contemplates the related goals and experiences that freelance dance artists have. **Chapter 14** focuses on the kind of relationship with the self that builds around being a freelance dance artist and discusses what it means to be a one. **Chapter 15** offers some conclusive comments on the outcome of the interpretative analysis conducted in the dissertation.

## 9 Representing the Heritage of Contemporary Dance

As an introduction and in order to begin my interpretation of the interview material, I will first address its overall character and the manner in which I consider it to be representative of a certain cultural and historical heritage and a particular social field of dance. This chapter firstly discusses how the interview material intertwines with the more general discourse on contemporary dance and then moves on to discuss a more structural conception of the sphere of artistic activity that has given rise to the interview conversations this dissertation comprises. Hence it offers an account of the constitutive features of that socio-cultural context that I consider to be most closely related to the interview material and which are taken as the starting point for the interpretation made of it in the subsequent chapters of the study.

### 9.1 Participating in a Communal Story

In discussing various themes related to being a freelance dance artist, the interviewees not only described their lived experiences of, for example, training for dance, rehearsing a dance piece, and creating choreography. They quite often contemplated and reflected upon what could be described as the current state of affairs of the field of freelance dance that they were a part of, the prevalent practices and values of contemporary dance more generally, in addition to the manner in which they were connected to them. The dance artists' views, therefore, were not only limited to their particular location, the freelance field of dance in Helsinki, or to their immediate experiences of working with dance. In fact, while reading through the interview material, I found that it often represented somewhat familiar concepts of contemporary dance even if doing so through their particular interpretations. It seemed to be entangled with the general culturo-historical discourse and practice of modern and contemporary dance. In my view the analyses the interviewees made of dance even related to a form of dance criticism since they attempted to delineate meanings and values attached to the practices of contemporary dance.<sup>144</sup> To me it was evident that the historical, cultural, and

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144. Graham McFee defines dance criticism as interpretations which are concerned with the nature of specific works of dance. These interpretations are based on the assumption that dance works are entities that can be understood, entities whose meaning can be discerned. (McFee 1994/1992, 129) Roger Copeland and Marshall Cohen in turn point out that 'criticism' is a term applied to a whole range of different sorts of writings about the arts. Theoretical, historical, and evaluative considerations of works of art or events in the domains of art are, nonetheless, often most prominent. (Copeland & Cohen 1983, 421) George Steiner adds an even more radical conception of art criticism. He maintains that artists themselves practice art

social dimensions of contemporary dance were valued by the interviewed dance artists as they derived meaning from them about their work and life. Such explanations of dance that rely on what Parviainen, following Hans-Georg Gadamer, calls aesthetic differentiation;<sup>145</sup> that is, an understanding of dance through dance works whose rootedness in their original context of life and the world have been stripped away, do not seem to be relevant for the interviewed dance artists (Parviainen 1998, 86–87; Gadamer 1988/1975, 76).

This position the interviewees took is a plausible one if we agree with Gadamer (1986, 9) that artists cannot develop their artistry without being at least somewhat familiar with the tradition of their art. What is quite obvious through the previous discussion of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology is that he shares a similar view. In his view we carry history and its institutions within us by making use of them in our actions. Merleau-Ponty (1995/1962) would, moreover, maintain that dance artists become dance artists exactly through the way they carry and experience the institutions of dance in themselves. In other words, it is the way in which dance artists live and are intertwined in an institutional setting of dance that they become dance artists. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 443) The following lines clarify the general meaning Merleau-Ponty gives to the term 'institution':

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criticism while creating artworks. He writes, "All serious art, music and literature is a critical act" (Steiner 1991/1989, 11). This it is firstly because artistic creation brings into being a rearrangement or divergence from previous or ordinary ideas about and forms of reality. Artworks suggest that things or circumstances might be different from the ones thought of so far. But Steiner continues that, "In painting and sculpture, as in literature, the focused light of both interpretation (the hermeneutic) and valuation (the critical-normative) lies in the work itself. The best readings of art are art" (Steiner 1991/1989, 17). New art is created on the premise and in the wake of previous art, which the former either straightforwardly or only tacitly comments on. Merleau-Ponty, in a somewhat similar vein, finds that artists themselves carry the true and living history of art through the art they themselves relate to and work on. Contrasting this living history to a secondary official and pompous history, which is found, for example, in museums, he writes: "But painting exists first of all in each painter who works, and it is here in a pure state . . . And there is the historicity which lives in the painter at work when with a single gesture he links the tradition that he carries on and the tradition that he founds. It is the historicity which in one stroke welds him to all which has ever been painted in the world, without his having to leave his place, his time, or his blessed or accursed labor" (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 99–100).

Extrapolating from the above, I take dance criticism to deal with a variety of means of creating and presenting understandings of dance as a historical and cultural phenomenon. Thus, I consider the interviewed dance artist's notions of the nature and meaning of contemporary dance to be affiliated with dance criticism.

145. According to Gadamer, aesthetic differentiation is based on an understanding of art as a beautiful appearance in contrast to practical reality. In his view this understanding, which was dominant in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was an outcome of the scientific worldview, which discredited the possibility of knowing outside of its own epistemology. As a consequence, art was understood to exist in a realm of its own. This realm was discerned only by the abstracting aesthetic consciousness which knew how to see "aesthetically" and which focused on only "pure works of art" ignoring all extra-aesthetic elements. (Gadamer 1988/1975, 73–79) Gadamer maintains that one consequence of this position was that artists lost an integral place in and their direct ties to society. Artists became outsiders capable of creating through sheer inspiration and without needing a commission. Gadamer writes: "The free artist creates without a commission. He seems marked out by the complete independency of his creativity and thus acquires the characteristics of an outsider, whose style of life cannot be measured by the yardstick of general morality" (Gadamer 1988/1975, 79).

Thus what we understand by the concept of institution are those events in experience which endow it with a durable dimension, in relation to which a whole series of other experiences will acquire meaning, will form an intelligible series or a history – or again those events which sediment in me a meaning, not as survivals or residues, but as the invitation to a sequel, the necessity of a future. (Merleau-Ponty 1988/1970, 108–109)

Instead of understanding institutions simply as distinct social, political, or religious organizations operating on the premises of some conventions or laws, Merleau-Ponty refers to them as general horizons directing the sense and significance of related experiences and understandings an individual has. That there exists such a thing as contemporary dance for the interviewed dance artists is obviously one of the basic institutions they carry within themselves.

What the above paragraphs take for granted, then, is that modern and contemporary dance, as one of the heritages of western theatrical dance, exists as a cultural sphere in its own right. When regarding cultural practices and settings in a common-sense manner, it is easy to come to the conclusion that different aims call for different ways of being in the world as well as different means through which these purposes are achieved. In sharing such a purpose with others a concentric dynamic seems to form around fulfilling this purpose. Indeed, Merleau-Ponty correlatively claims that, “All several men need to do is to live together and be associated with the same task for some rudimentary rules and a beginning of law to emerge from their life in common” (Merleau-Ponty 1991/1964e, 118). Such is the case in the tradition of dance observed in this dissertation as well. Parviainen describes this facticity by very generally noting that, “*The tradition of dance has a projective power of its own*” (Parviainen 1998, 79). However, she writes of dance traditions in the plural and depicts them as phenomena of distinctive (albeit evolving) movement systems and styles of motion as well as historically and culturally formed fields of social action. From this, I take her to implicitly argue that modern and contemporary dance (with an explicitly outlined history of its own, which she in her work accounts for in a condensed form) is also a dance tradition of its own (Parviainen 1998, 77–79).

With her notion of a distinct and living tradition, Parviainen attempts to point out that there exist practices, discourses, and concrete institutions characteristic to a specific form of dance. These are something through which modern or contemporary dance is perfected and something which continue to influence the future life of this dance heritage without exactly determining it (Parviainen 1998, 79). As the interviews dealt with the practices of contemporary dance from the perspective of artists actively engaged in the preservation of its tradition the interviews could also be considered representative of this heritage.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> In my research I shall directly describe this heritage only through a few comments on the history of modern and contemporary dance. These are presented in the next section of this chapter. But for a more detailed reading of the history of this dance tradition the reader might refer to Parviainen’s study (Parviainen 1998) or to several volumes analyzing the passage and changes of modern and contemporary dance during the 20th century both in America and in Europe (cf. Anderson 1997; Au 1995/1988; Cohen 1977/1974; Jordan 1992; Jowitz 1988; Novack 1990). The next chapter instead offers a short account of the emergence of modern and contemporary dance in Finland.

They are something that came into being in relation to that dimension of the world in which people are involved in contemporary dance and its practices.<sup>147</sup>

In addition to arguing that the interviewed dance artists are connected to the institutional setting of contemporary dance and that they discuss this connection in the interviews, it is noteworthy that they live within this tradition or setting as active artists. The meanings they give to the issues they conversed about arise from this perspective. Indeed, the interviewees could be regarded as belonging to a general and even a transnational community of modern or contemporary dance artists.<sup>148</sup> In describing the sense of community, David Carr writes in the following manner:

At whatever level of size or degree of complexity, a community exists wherever a narrative account<sup>149</sup> exists of a *we* which has continuous existence through its experiences and activities. When we say that such an account "exists" we mean to say that it gets articulated or formulated, perhaps by only one or a few of the group's members, in terms of the *we* and is accepted or subscribed to by other members. It is their acceptance that makes them members, constitutes their recognition of the others as fellow members, and determines their participation in the action, experience and life of the community. To be a participant or member in this sense, and to posit a *we* as a group-subject of such a communal story, are really the same thing. (Carr 1986, 163)

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147. However, it should be noted that modern or contemporary dance like any dance tradition is not isolated or closed. It is influenced by other social and cultural dimensions and influences them to an extent as well. The latter influences are, nevertheless, not so much the concern of this study as the former. Martin (1998, 5) argues that "identifying dance as purely different or clearly demarcated from any other cultural practice" is difficult. Apart from the sphere of dance art in general, dance artists live in and are naturally affected by other dimensions of the social and cultural world surrounding them. In one way or another their dance is always reflective of this. Furthermore, according to Martin (1998, 5), nowadays "dance venues, promoters and practitioners have self-consciously mixed dance with other aesthetic forms" and I would like to add that the customs of production, the trends and fashions of commodities, as well as theoretical, political, and other cultural issues are either tacitly or intentionally also noted while creating dance. Still in some areas of dance the impact of general cultural and social factors is more evident than in others. Different areas of culture are more or less responsive to social change and they change in different paces (Wolff 1981, 72; cf. Parviainen 1998, 79).

148. Helena Wulff (1998) writes of the transnational context of ballet and finds that in different nations dance artists share homogenous work practices. She points out that in the domain of ballet, dance artists tend to share conventions of dance to be able to cooperate. She also argues that international experience and exposure are considered helpful and valuable for dance artists' reputation and development. (Wulff 1998, 33, 37, 40) These concerns are something that I find to exist in the contemporary fields of theatrical dance as well. I think, furthermore, that a transnational understanding of dance, its meaning and practices, are influential in the domain of contemporary dance and the field of freelance dance in Helsinki. This is something that will become evident through the interpretation of the interviews as at many points they easily relate to notions of contemporary dance that describe the state of affairs observed in other western countries and written about in various studies of dance.

149. When investigating the narratives or stories we create while discussing of our lives and making them understandable, Carr does not credit phenomenology, even Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, to allow for the influence of social stories on individual lives. In his view phenomenology generally begins to consider reality through a first person perspective (Carr 1986, 5). I think the previous discussion on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology proves Carr wrong in arguing that his phenomenology does not take social narratives to influence individual life. After all, in Merleau-Ponty's view, intersubjectivity permeates subjectivity through

The interviewed dance artists were recognized by other dance professionals to be dance artists,<sup>150</sup> they themselves considered themselves to be dance artists and discussed shared issues related to being a freelance dance artist in the interviews. Although they did not state such things as “we dancers think . . .”, they did speak about matters I had heard dance artists and dance professionals speak about before or had read about in dance magazines and in studies concerning western theatrical dance more generally and contemporary dance particularly. Thus, in the interviews the dance artists both repeated parts of a communal story as well as continued to create it through their singular interpretations. The manner in which they spoke about aspects of a communal story, moreover, could be regarded as illus-

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and through. Moreover, storytelling is a cultural practice we become acquainted with early on in life, and it becomes instilled in us as a mode of social intercourse we habitually use and understand the circumstances of life through. Yet, it is true that Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology does not offer any detailed analysis of different forms of discourse and how these relate to life as it is lived.

In studying historicity and the structure of narratives, Carr utilizes both a phenomenological analysis of the temporal nature of human life as well as the narrative discussion, which takes place in the domains of literary criticism, historiography, and analytic philosophy. In fact, the term ‘narrative’ is one which Carr picks up from these latter disciplines even if interpreting it in his own way. He points out that these disciplines seem to hold on to the notion that stories or narratives of life and circumstances are “alien to, separated from the real world they profess to depict” (Carr 1986, 15). He considers things differently and writes, “What stories and histories portray is not physical reality as such but human activity including the very activities of projecting meaning onto, or finding meaning in, physical events. The physical world does find its way into stories, of course, but always as a backdrop and sphere of operations for human activity. It is human concerns and projections, along with the actions, thoughts and emotions with which they are intertwined, that constitute the “reality” depicted in stories and histories” (Carr 1985, 111).

Carr's concept of narratives or stories could be viewed as somewhat equivalent to Merleau-Ponty's account of stories discussed on pages 134–135. Stories let us organize our experiences making them more coherent and understandable as well as allowing us to share our experiences with others or those of others more effectively. Furthermore, like Carr, Merleau-Ponty asserts that the sense or significance of a lived situation is to an extent retained in speech. However, Carr also proceeds to argue that the narrative structure as a temporal flow with a beginning, middle, and end is based on lived experience and the whole sequence of human life. In his view, therefore, stories include the structure of experience and action themselves and vice versa. In our lives there is a sense of when one experience or action ends and another begins and these become particular experiences and actions through being directed by our intentions and projections. Life is not a simple sequence where one thing happens after another; rather, our experiences and actions are events involving anticipations by which we experience the present as the succession of something else and taking us yet further towards something different. In contrast to written or spoken stories, in life events keep unfolding and an exact or complete end is not discernible. But in lived life, too, we begin and end projects, find new ways of relating to the world which work for a time and then open ourselves to others etc. (Carr 1986, 61, 65; 1985, 110–113) Carr, furthermore, writes, “They [stories] are told in being lived and lived in being told. The actions and sufferings of life can be viewed as a process of telling ourselves stories, listening to those of others, and acting them out or living them through” (Carr 1986, 61).

In the end, if we think of Merleau-Ponty's conception of historicity and culture, we understand why no individual has any stories to tell; that is, any understanding of the meaning and value things encountered in life lived have, unless they were not intersected with stories and ideas recounted by others and found inscribed in cultural artifacts (Carr 1986, 84).

150. Proof of this is already the fact that I asked them to participate in this study. Nevertheless, their work was also reviewed in newspapers and magazines. Other dance professionals offered them dance assignments. In addition, they all were members of the Union of Finnish Dance Artists.

trating the manner in which they carry it as an institution (in Merleau-Ponty's sense) in themselves. But at the same time their thoughts and accounts, as well as the one that will be given in this study concerning freelance dance artists, could be said to strengthen and mold in their own way the communal story of modern and contemporary dance artists and, therefore, to some degree to affect the "group-subject" or the "communal we" that Carr discusses. This they do since in his view a sense of a shared realm is actually achieved through a "series of overlapping projections made from different but concurring points of view, those of the individuals involved" (Carr 1986, 161). Sharing the same tradition through taking its practices and conventions forward both in action and discussion means participating in things others participate in too. Even if Carr does not preclude conflicting understanding or conflicting practices while defining the "group-subject", he finds that there needs to be a sufficient amount of consensus for people to share a common denominator like that of being contemporary dance artists or having an understanding of the same tradition like the tradition of contemporary dance, which are both directly and indirectly addressed throughout the interviews (Carr 1986, 170). The following section presents a few of the meanings and values that the interviewees considered the heritage of modern and contemporary dance to involve.

### **Meanings and values related to modern and contemporary dance**

The interviewees themselves made a few direct comments on the nature of the art form they were involved in. Through them they showed that they were aware of the historical legacy of modern and contemporary dance, the traditional expressive orientation of this form of art, and its general position and value in western society. While discussing these few comments I will also describe some of the historical features of the evolution of modern and contemporary dance in order to give the reader some sense of the tradition of dance the interviewed freelance dance artists and this research are concerned with.

When thinking of the evolution of dance as a form of art, one of the dance artists says the following:

. . ./It has detached itself from something that used to be, social dances and other mutual dances. It detached from this so that in a way it developed rather quickly, but quite a lot behind the other arts. But in that way it has found . . . it has developed a broad range of expressing with dance./ . . .(3M)<sup>151</sup>

In reading between these lines and keeping in mind that this dance artist is a representative of contemporary dance, it seems to me that he finds that current, and especially contemporary, dance art is quite versatile. He also, though, reveals that the tradition that has enabled this state of affairs to emerge is rather short. As he takes the dance he is speaking of to have de-

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151. . . /Se on niin irtaantunut joistain mitä aikoinaan oli, jotkut sosiaaliset tanssit ja muut yhteiset tanssit. Se on niin irtaantunut siitä, että tavallaan kehittynyt suhtkoht nopeasti, paitsi aika paljon jäljessä muita taiteita. Mutta että silleen se on löytänyt . . . kehittänyt hirveän laajan spektrin ilmaista tanssilla./ . . .(3M)

tached itself from social dances, I think that he is, even if only implicitly, referring to the common belief that western concert dance as an art form emerged from the ballet tradition of Renaissance Italy and the consequent court-ballets of Louis XIV in France. In fact, Verena Köhne-Kirsch (1989) argues that ballet was the last art form adopted into the canon of the classical or fine arts. In her view this adoption was legitimized by the foundation of the Academie Royale de Dance in 1661 in Paris commissioned by Louis XIV. She also points out that, when regarded in this manner, ballet, as an art form, is younger than painting, sculpture, architecture, or music. (Köhne-Kirsch 1989, 4, 292)

However, another of the dance artists considers things slightly differently. Her thoughts seem more closely related to the history of modern and contemporary dance, which began emerging only at the turn of the twentieth century. While describing how she understands dance as art, she says the following:

. . ./When one considers matters in a general way, dance as an art form is extremely new. There hasn't existed much. . ./As a matter of fact dance has been a noteworthy art form only in this century [the 20<sup>th</sup> century]./ . . .(4F)<sup>152</sup>

I interpret this dance artist to undermine the previously-mentioned widespread conviction about the origins of western concert dance. Instead she seems to tie her understanding of dance as an art form to the tradition of modern and contemporary dance, the heritage in which she is most immediately involved. The following paragraphs roughly describe some of the early phases and the current tendencies of this heritage.

The dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the time when the forerunners of modern dance (e.g. Isadora Duncan, Loie Fuller, and Ruth St. Denis) wanted to free themselves from the constraints of the formal movement style of ballet and the nature of its expression. This became possible for them and their German and American followers because the cultural atmosphere at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century allowed for re-considerations of women's social identity and the understanding and experience of the body as well (Parviainen 1998, 80; Preston-Dunlop & Lahusen 1990, 1). Modern dance proper, if it can be called that, is mostly understood to have originated around the 1920's and 1930's in both the United States and Germany. In Europe this new kind of dance was called *Moderner Tanz*, *Absoluter Tanz*, *Freier Tanz*, *Tanzkunst*, and *Bewegungskunst*. However, the term *Ausdruckstanz*, translated as expressionist or expressive dance, remained the one most often used. (Preston-Dunlop & Lahusen 1990, 2) In the United States dance critic John Martin first introduced the term 'modern dance' in the late 1920's and made it more established through his writings during the 1930's. (Huxley 1994/1983, 152; Martin 1972/1933, 3-5)

Although modern dance evolved independently in the two continents, in both of them the dance artists tied it to a health movement and to a new national identity of the modern indi-

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152. . ./Sitten kun ajattelee yleisemmin niin, tanssi taidemuotona on niin mielettömän uusi. Eihän ole paljon mitään. . ./Itse asiassa vastahan se on ollut varteen otettava taidemuoto tällä vuosisadalla. . . (4N)

vidual. Modern dance artists struggled for recognition and to legitimize what they did as high art. According to Thomas, in America modern dance was affiliated with the ideals of “non-conformism, individualism, equalitarianism, and functionalism” (Thomas 1995, 26). In 1933 dance critic John Martin wrote that, “The scheme of modern dancing is all in the direction of individualism and away from standardization . . . The modern dance is not a system; it is a point of view” (Martin 1972/1933, 19, 20). The modern dance artists rejected a ready-made movement vocabulary or an exact style of expression, and the image of the artist that came to apply to modern dance was that of an individual communicating a personal vision. Indeed, modern dance has been described according to an emotional or expressionist aesthetics and to express the “inner” or emotional and experiential life of a dance artist (cf. Martin 1983/1946, 22).

Contemporary dance, a continuation of modern dance, is generally considered to be the forms of current western theatrical dance that have been influenced by all of the early German and American styles of modern dance as well as the postmodern<sup>153</sup> styles of dance that first developed in the United States at the beginning of the 1960's.<sup>154</sup> Fraleigh (1996/1987) finds that what ties the different approaches of dancing typical for modern and contemporary dance together is an attitude of discovery. Modern and contemporary dance artists have searched for their own means of expression by questioning already established models. They discover, reveal, and create something not seen before and even invent their own bodily being. (Fraleigh 1996/1987, xxxii–xxxiii) At the moment contemporary dance is linked to an eclectic aesthetics where historical boundaries and boundaries concerning genre, gender, nationality, and every possible difference are being tested and blurred. There is a pastiche and hybrid of styles and methods used in creating dance. As Sally Banes writes: “The present interdisciplinary spirit in both intellectual and artistic life allows for heady (some might say even dizzying) alloy of methods, fields, genres, mediums and styles” (Banes 1994, 282).

One of the interviewed dance artists seems to follow this ideal of discovery. He relates to it by speaking of a problematization he finds necessary when creating dance and art. Problematization for him is a challenge that makes a difference in what one is expressing and creating. He says:

. . ./I feel that if one takes things ready-made, then that's it. Some salt and pepper are needed [in dancing/dance], which I think are found through problematizing [things]. Dance or art in general is not easy. It is extremely difficult and with it one deals with difficult things which call for problematization. Through it one can attach what one [is doing] to oneself and to a larger frame./ . . .(1M)<sup>155</sup>

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153. Cf. ft. 130 in chapter 7.

154. On some more details on the relation of modern and contemporary dance see ft. 30 in Part I.

155. . ./Minä koen, että jos ottaa asiat annettuina se on sitten niin kuin siinä. Kyllä se [tanssiminen/tanssi] kaipaa vähän suolaa ja pippuria, mikä minun mielestä löytyy sitä kautta, että problematisoi sen asian. Ei-hän tanssi, tai taide ylipäätään, ole helppoa. Se on helvetin vaikeata ja siinä ollaan vaikeiden asioiden äärellä, jolloin problematisointi on paikallaan. Sitä kautta kykenee liittämään [sen, mitä tekee] johonkin omaan ja johonkin suurempaan kehykseen./ . . .(1M)

The same dance artists also shows that he shares the vision of modern dance as a concern of personal expression. He speaks about this through an analogy, which describes how a Finnish novelist always creates the worlds she writes about by relating them to herself, and continues to say:

.../Somehow it must be connected to one's self. Writers cannot write of something, which does not touch them at all. In some sense this is the case with anything that is called art. It must be tied to yourself./... (1M)<sup>156</sup>

He also says the following:

.../Art is concerned with the fact that things are subjective. If art were to be objectified it would become science. Then one no longer could speak of art. In my view one of the basic features of art is that it is subjective. It is wonderful that one is allowed to be subjective. But of course if one does pieces for other people instead of merely for oneself or one's best friend, one should also find a means to touch other people as well./... (1M)<sup>157</sup>

Hence, he does not emphasize subjectivity in a simple or naive way. He is aware of and concerned with communicating his ideas in a manner that come to be understood by an audience. This concern he also finds to affect the formulation and nature of his dance. Just as Fraleigh advocates dance for the dancer to be both a subjective and an intersubjective concern, this dance artists seems to believe that dance is necessarily initiated due to personal interests and that these in turn are shaped by considering how to make them receivable for others through dancing. Furthermore, one could interpret the dance artist to share a somewhat similar view to Merleau-Ponty on the task of the artist. Merleau-Ponty thought that the science of his day mostly detached itself from the objects it investigated and manipulated them in a reductionist manner. In contrast to this, he finds artists to aim to live through their artistic projects and to create emblems of this lived life. (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993c, 121–123)

The interviewed dance artists also spoke about another issue that in their view influenced the nature of dance art. Despite taking dance to be an art, several of the interviewed dance artists also spoke about it being devalued even in contemporary society. As an example, one of the interviewed dance artists says that:

.../I experience that dance has never been appreciated in society. At least I feel that it has never been a fashionable art./... (1M)<sup>158</sup>

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156. .../Sen pitää jollain tavalla olla yhteydessä siihen omaan itseän. Ei ne [kirjailijat] voi kirjoittaa jotain, mikä ei kosketa heitä itseään ollenkaan. Se on jollakin tasolla ihan sama kaikessa, jos sitä taiteeksi kutsutaan. Sen täytyy olla sidoksissa sinuun itseesi./... (1M)

157. .../Niin taiteessahan on kysymys siitä, että asiat ovat subjektiivisia. Jos taidetta aletaan objektivoimaan siitähän tulee tiedettä. Silloinhan ei voida puhua enää taiteesta. Minun mielestä se on taiteen yksi syvin olemus, että se on subjektiivista. Se on ihanaa, että se saa olla subjektiivista. Tietysti jos niin kuin tekee juttuja muillekin kuin itselleen tai parhaalle kaverilleen, niin täytyisi myös löytää jokin keino, että se koskettaisi myös muita./... (1M)

This position on value is legitimized in several studies concerned with western theatrical dance. There is still a relatively small body of literature in the academic disciplines in which dance is explored. Throughout the history of aesthetics, as Sparshott (1988; 1983; 1982) meticulously shows, there has been very little attention paid by philosophers to dance.<sup>159</sup> He also finds it no surprise that dance has not influenced a large body of literature in any academic domain. In order for this to happen, dance would have occupied a culturally relevant position at a relevant time, or the ideology of dance would have been integrated into a culturally prevalent ideology. Echoing the above-quoted dance artist, this never happened in Sparshott's view. (Sparshott 1983, 95–96)<sup>160</sup>

Thomas (1995), in a similar vein, sees dance's peripheral status in the area of, for example,

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158. . . /Minä koen, että tanssia ei ole ikinä yhteiskunnassa arvostettu. Minä ainakin koen, että se ei ole ollut mikään sellainen in-taide ikinä./ . . (1M)

159. If we trace a few notions of western philosophy concerned with dancing we find, nevertheless, for example, that both Plato and Aristotle understood dance to be of an educational nature. The purpose of dance, in addition to the aesthetic pleasure derived from it, was to develop an understanding of moral goodness. Similarly in the Middle Ages some dance was acceptable even to the Christian philosophers as long as it did not violate virtue. (Carter 1998, 20–22)

160. Ann Wagner (1997) has made a thorough study of what the clergy and other religious-minded individuals had to say against dancing. They opposed dance first in the pre-Reformation tradition in Europe and then the Puritan and Protestant reformation in America up until the 20th century. Her study initially deals with social dances, but when considering the opposition dance encountered in the 20th century she also examines popular entertainment. In her study she points out that in some cases dancing was valued as a means to accomplish graceful bodily comportment. But she mostly discusses the opposition to dance, and in her conclusions she draws together the reasons why dance was opposed. She mentions that some dance, such as folk or country dancing, was considered disorderly, while Christian doctrine advocated reason to govern the passions and behavior to display inner and outer control. Also the very physical nature of dancing was considered unworthy as it was non-edifying and did not lend itself to the elevation of the mind. In short, it was non-intellectual and a waste of time. One of the most important problems that the opponents of dance discussed was that they considered dance to inspire immoral conduct between men and women. In the end, Wagner finds that those who were opposed to dance did not appreciate the aesthetic features of dance and dancing because, in her view, it is most likely that they had little contact with dance in real life. They had no experience or training through which they could understand its merits. (Wagner 1997, 364–368, 384, 394)

In describing the neglect that dance has encountered within western culture, Thomas (1995) outlines three different ways it has been marginalized. She states that it has been marginalized, firstly, as an art. Secondly, it has been marginalized as a practice, because it places the body at the center of its discourse. And finally, it has been neglected, as it is viewed predominantly as a feminine mode of expression and representation. (Thomas 1995, 9) Sparshott relates to the first manner in which Thomas argues that dance has been neglected in western society. In his view the attempt of aesthetic theories to rationalize and find a realistic purpose for the arts are better grounds to understand the problematic artistic nature of dance. He argues that early ballet during its court-ballet, action-ballet, and romantic ballet periods did not fit into the category of the fine arts. The aesthetic theories of the time legitimizing the fine arts did not consider ballet to have a distinct purpose of its own and thus considered it inferior to the other fine arts (Sparshott 1988). Nonetheless quite a few historical dance studies consider ballet even in its earliest history to be a form of the arts (cf. Foster 1998/1996; Köhne-Kirsch 1989; Jowitt 1988; Cohen 1977/1974). They have combined naturalistic and socio-historical conceptions of the arts. According to Richard Shusterman, the first appreciates the immediate affective experiences of created objects, and the latter considers art an autonomous, historical, and cultural institution (Shusterman 2000, 5–6).

sociology to reflect its marginal institutional position within contemporary culture. This she says although she acknowledges that a dance boom has recently emerged and attempts to mass market some features of it. (Thomas 1995, 11) Even in the Helsinki area during the 1990's a visible development of contemporary dance occurred. More premieres were staged than ever before, and the media reviewed dance rather generously. The number of dance artists increased considerably. However, this did not lift contemporary dance out of its marginal position. The size of the audience did not increase in relation to the number of performances, nor did the economic support given to contemporary dance grow accordingly. Dance artists still struggle for recognition and the chance to create and perform their work (cf. Kaiku 2000; Laakkonen 1999; Suhonen 1999).

The next chapter of this study addresses the problems of material and social recognition the dance artists spoke about and which I find to be the most immediate manner in which they confront the marginalized societal position of dance art. One of the interviewed artists supports my assumption by answering a question I put to him the following way:

LR: Where does the lack of appreciation become apparent?/. . .  
. . ./It appears in material – well maybe mostly in the circumstances, as a materialistic concern, where money is distributed, where there exists rehearsal space. The lack of appreciation is also evident in the size of the audience. This is such a – I cannot answer this in an exhaustive way – this is such a complex issue./. . .(1M)<sup>161</sup>

What this section demonstrates, is that the interviewees were in part engaged in the institutional setting of contemporary dance, through believing that they were involved in a rather young art form which deals with discovery and personal expression and which holds a somewhat marginal position in society at large. It simultaneously demonstrates that they share the values and meanings that other dance and art professionals possess and thus indicates that they share a common heritage of dance with others.

## 9.2 A Local Sphere of Artistic Activity

The concepts the dance artists offered in the interviews were shaped by their exposure to the transnational heritage of contemporary dance and the manner in which they dealt with their artistry in a certain social and geographical setting. Indeed, the practices of dance mainly occur as concrete communication and cooperation between people, artifacts, and places in a geographical environment with a local history and conventions of its own. The local setting in which the dance artists were engaged in dance thus most likely influences

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161. LR: Missä se ilmenee se arvostuksen puute?/. . .  
. . ./Se ilmenee materiaali – no ehkä lähinnä olosuhteissa, materialistisena, että minne jaetaan rahaa ja missä on harjoitustiloja. Sitten se näkyy se arvostuksen puute myös niin kuin yleisö määrissä. Tämä on niin kuin hirveän moni – minä en nyt pysty tyhjentävästi tähän vastaamaan, tämä on hirvittävän monitahoinen juttu./. . .(1M)

the kind of communal story concerning dance artists they enact and convey in the interviews. The socio-cultural sphere of contemporary dance operates in a given geographical environment and includes the previously-mentioned historical and cultural features, as well as, the equally important concrete communication and cooperation between people, artifacts, concrete institutions, and places. One method of considering how this socio-cultural sphere operates is to think about the settings in which any dance art is produced and dance artists work as artworlds or in the case of this study danceworlds of their own. This chapter addresses this theme in more detail.

As was noted in Part II, Merleau-Ponty did not make a detailed analysis of the structures and functions of different cultural domains or social communities. What is more, he analyzed the practices of art in a rather general fashion, mostly considering them as historically-formed traditions, whose continuation primarily relies on the manner in which artists tacitly take them forward and transform them through their own artistic work. However, in order to have a more detailed understanding of some of the features that constitute a limited social sphere of artistic activity and thereby to have an instructive perspective on the kind of local domain the interviewed dance artists were engaged in, I will discuss the socio-cultural sphere of artistic activity through the work of a few other scholars.

This chapter first briefly introduces Arto Haapala's understanding of some of the basic features he considers to be constitutive of an artworld. Haapala's view is relevant here as his analysis is explicitly phenomenological, it suggests a geographical localization of particular artworlds, and it introduces some of those structural features of an artworld that the subsequent chapters of this study similarly address. Then we examine some of the more concrete cooperation in artworlds that the work of Howard S. Becker and Pierre Bourdieu addresses. They focus on issues related to the production and reception of artworks which are applicable to the manner in which the interviewed dance artists related to the freelance field of dance in which they worked and which are discussed in chapter 10.

The term 'artworld' was originally coined by Arthur Danto 1964 in an article similarly titled *The Artworld* (Danto 1976/1964). Ever since, both aesthetic and sociological scholars have continued to use it in a variety of ways emphasizing different features related to the production and reception of artworks.<sup>162</sup> Haapala uses the term in his own fashion and begins

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162. Regarding art as a specific cultural domain and naming it and its particular concrete manifestations as artworlds, derives from discussions in aesthetics and in the social sciences. In aesthetics the artworld was firstly a part of the terminology used by Arthur C. Danto (1976/1964; 1981; 1992) and George Dickie (1974; 1976; 1984) while respectively influencing and developing the so-called institutional theory of art. According to Lepistö (1991, 23), in Finland the term 'artworld' was first introduced into aesthetic discussion by Yrjö Sepänmaa in 1978.

The term was first coined by Danto in his article "The Artworld" dating from 1964. In it Danto shows that understanding art as an imitation of reality did not correspond to what 20th century art was all about. He contemplates, for example, what makes objects like Brillo boxes, or materials, such as white and black paint artworks instead of simply being real objects as the containers of soap pads are, or real materials like simple white and black paint are. He comes to the conclusion that to "to see something as art requires something the eye cannot decry – an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld" (Danto 1976/1964, 16). In Danto's view it is then the interpretation of an object or an entity

his presentation by arguing that worlds are not made up of composites of physical objects and neither do we function in the world through any clear-cut subject-object polarities. Rather, our concrete activity and practical relations with things is what brings an actual social world into being and gives it its prevailing sense. Nevertheless, as practical spheres of human existence always pre-exist us, in his view artworlds are networks of meanings, values, practices, and equipment that have become established historically and relate to the production and reception of the artworks of a particular art form. Artists, other art professionals, and the public are thrown into a pre-established structure, which depending on the current state of an artworld opens and frames a field of possibilities in which they can relate to art and make choices concerning it. In this sense it is firstly the prevalent conventions and values that constitute the kind of artworld a person at any moment inhabits. They simultaneously, however, constitute this person her or himself, since they direct the manner by way of which she or he goes about her or his dealings with art. Artists are, for example, committed to the artworld by creating artworks. This is the central-most activity that

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through knowledge of art history and theories that turns it into a work of art and makes it exist in the artworld. Thus, in Danto's view the artworld is "a world of interpreted things" (1981, 135).

George Dickie utilized Danto's notion of the artworld in his explicitly institutional theory of art. This Dickie did even though he acknowledged, after his very first application of Danto's conceptions, that Danto himself never aimed at an institutional theory of art and that the term 'artworld' which he coined has a different meaning from the one Dickie presented (Danto 1981, viii; Dickie 1984, 10–11; 1974). Dickie, unlike Danto, aimed to decipher how the conventions and practices of art conform to an artworld as a social system of creating, presenting, and accepting artifacts as works of art. In fact, Danto himself criticized Dickie's first interpretation of his thinking and distanced himself from the sociological institutional theories of art Dickie's writings initiated. He showed that the difference between his and Dickie's understanding is that he discussed what makes the existence of artworks possible instead of arguing about what makes an artwork actually be one. Danto never meant to say that the status of an artwork relied on arbitrary social recognition. Instead, he underlines that his understanding of the possibility of objects or works becoming artworks is based on a discursive reasoning relying on a historical understanding of the traditions of the arts. By presenting his views again he wanted to point out that the institutional theories of art should become aware of the importance of the significance of art history when considering the nature of art works. (Danto 1992, 37–39, 47) He writes: "To interpret a work is to be committed to a historical explanation of the work. The theory of artworlds to which I subscribe is that of a loose affiliation of individuals who know enough by way of theory and history that they are able to practice what art historian Michael Baxandall terms "inferential art criticism", which in effect simply is historical explanations of works of art" (Danto 1992, 42).

Nonetheless, Dickie went on clarifying how objects become art through the activities of people within the artworld by relying on somewhat controversial definitions concerning the nature of an artist, an artwork, and a public. (cf. Dickie 1984; 1976; 1974) The following few passages outline these definitions through some ideas he presented in his book *The Art Circle* (1984) in which his thinking had already been influenced by Danto's criticism. In Dickie's view the artist is a person who knowingly and intentionally creates works of art. He asserts that artists have at least a general idea of what art is and how to accomplish artworks. A work of art is, in turn, an artifact created by an artist intended to be presented to an artworld public. Thus, an artifact becomes a work of art by its being a part of the medium the framework of an artworld establishes. Dickie requires the public, like the artist, to have some conception of what art is and so to be prepared in some degree to understand an object presented to them as art. The artworld finally consists of all the artworld systems that make the existence of artists, artworks, and artworld publics possible. These systems are formed out of the conventions and roles through which the artifacts of each particular art, like dance, painting or music, are created and presented. (Dickie 1984, 75, 80–82)

determines their professional role. And while carrying on pre-established customs artists, other art professionals, and audiences both sustain and possibly come to transform the artworld they exist in.

Artworlds more generally involve, for example, equipment, institutions, spaces, and co-operating people. Their position, meaning, value, and functions are defined in relation to each other through the manner in which they participate in producing the results that an artistic domain at any moment strives after. What is noteworthy, in addition to this, is that the conditions of the artworld which are instilled in the actions of any agent functioning in it, are mostly tacitly assumed and taken for granted. They remain so until the artistic practices or values attached to a form of art change and make people question the structures and conventions according to which art is produced and received. Haapala also notes that even if one could speak of an artworld in the singular to denote the fact that to western culture

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Haapala (1990; 1989) nonetheless shows that Dickie's contribution to the discussion about artworlds is debatable. He describes what is already evident in the above formulation and finds Dickie's definition of a work of art to be circular. He writes: "The work of art is defined by reference to 'a certain social institution', the artworld, and when the artworld is defined one has to refer to works of art" (Haapala 1989, 25). Dickie (1984) tries to defend himself by arguing that this circularity is an informative circle instead of a vicious one. He points to the fact that before we speculate on what an artwork is we already have an implicit understanding of the existence of such entities. As a result, he views us as being irrevocably immersed in a cultural tradition, even before we are in any detailed manner aware of it. He argues that what he is really dealing with is making clear and explicit matters we already in some sense know. Consequently, he finds the circularity of his thinking not to be a fault, since it produces knowledge about what might be otherwise an only implicitly understood artworld. (Dickie 1984, 77–79) In fact, Haapala (1990) argues that it is Dickie's understanding of the institutional nature of the artworld which is most problematic. Dickie seems to imply that artworlds are practical institutions governed by normative conventions; that is, that the production of art involves some sort of rules. In the artworld there should then exist some discernible agreements, which are not broken while producing and consuming art. Yet Dickie concurs that in the artworld conventions are indeed broken to create new and original art works. In a logical sense institutions that rely on the existence of shared conventions, would collapse in the breaking of these conventions. On the other hand, institutions regarded as ordinary official organizations, with their set of administrative rules, practical conventions, members and such, do not account for the existence of an artworld either. Artworlds obviously involve these sorts of institutions, such as governmental arts administrations, funding foundations, unions, theaters, art schools and the like, but even when put together they do not control or direct everything occurring in an artworld. Even if, then, art possesses institutional features, Dickie's institutional theory remains insufficient to account for all the different art practices. (Haapala 1990, 91–92)

What, however, is influential in his work is that he regarded the contextual or social nature of the existence of art and artworks, which some later sociological studies embarked on as well. In the end, Danto's and Dickie's conversation on artworlds gave way to an understanding of art on the grounds of social and cultural relations as well as historically formed conceptions. It simultaneously influenced the emergence of such conceptions of art which now generally are referred to as the institutional theory of art (cf. Danto 1992; 1981; 1976/1964; Dickie 1984; 1976; McFee 1994/1992). Nevertheless, as Aino Sarje (1999, 10) points out, while the institutional theory directs one to observe the practices occurring in artworlds, it reduces and simplifies the activity of artworlds by placing emphasis on artistic work and the reception of artworks. In contrast, for example, Howard S. Becker's (1984) analysis of the practices of art brings us closer to a common sense and concrete understanding of the materials, activities, and people involved in artworlds in comparison to the institutional theory of art. He adopted the term artworld in his theories of art using it in the plural: art worlds. For simplicity's sake I will, nevertheless, continue to use the term 'artworld', while describing Becker's views in the main text further below.

generally inheres structurally-similar composites of practices and activities through which artworks are created and presented, artistic conventions differ somewhat according to the form of art and local cultural differences. In this latter sense he finds it legitimate to speak of individual artworlds of a specific type of art practiced in specific geographical locations. (Haapala 2000, 124, 126, 127, 128, 132, 133, 138; 1991, 93)

When deciphered in this sense the term 'danceworld' certainly depicts those constitutive structures of the historically-formed conventions of cooperation related to dance art that underlie the everyday practices of freelance dance artists in the dance scene or community they work in. However, while speaking about the atmosphere of the scene in which they work, the nature of the actual work they do, and the relations they have to other dance professionals, the interviewed dance artists referred to their community of dance only very rarely as the danceworld. They mainly spoke about the freelance field of dance. Sometimes they termed it the freelance field, the free field (*vapaakenttä*), or simply as the field – even using a possessive pronoun in front of these terms (e.g. our field). My questions concerning the community and environment they were working in obviously directed the dance artists to use the term field.<sup>163</sup> This concept was part of my insight into and derived from my experiences of being a freelance dance artist in Helsinki. The interviewed dance artists did not question this term, though. It seemed similarly to be a part of their spontaneous vocabulary that they used to speak about the setting in which they worked.

In order to illustrate what is involved on a concrete level in the cooperative practices of artworlds and to demarcate the field of freelance dance from the more general danceworld effective in Helsinki, in the following sections I will introduce both Howard S. Becker's and Pierre Bourdieu's sociological views of artworlds and artistic fields of production. I take both Bourdieu's and Becker's notions of artistic practices to be complimentary to Haapala's formulations and to illuminate some more particular concerns related to them. While considering the freelance field of dance a subgroup of the more general dance world of Helsinki, which among other things could be understood to involve a variety of dance schools, a higher level institution of dance education, a few steady contemporary dance companies, and the National Ballet of Finland, these sections simultaneously begin to introduce some other characteristics of the local setting of dance the interviewed dance artists lived in.

### **The concrete cooperation of an artworld**

Becker's ideas are not so much concerned with a sociological definition of the artworld than with how people actually produce and receive artworks. He does not, then, make artists or artworks the chief focus of his work. Aside from these core features of artistic production his main interest is the collective of people whose actions are involved in the creation and reception of art. In Becker's view artists, though working at the center of cooperative networks are, nevertheless, simply a subgroup involved in the productions of artworks, who by common consent make an important contribution to the created work by partly justifying

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163. Cf. appendices.

them as art. (Becker, 1984, x, xi, 35) Indeed, it is customary for dance artists to cooperate, for example, with costume and light designers, musicians, dramatists, painters, photographers, graphic designers, funding committees and theatres while creating dance pieces. Some do this to a larger degree than others. Although even while creating an improvised solo performance performed single-handedly in a park without any earlier notice, a dance artist cooperates with those people who happen to be in the park and to form an audience for the performance. Unlike writers or other artists, who might create works found and appreciated only after their death, dance artists do not survive without direct cooperation with other people, since their art mostly depends on a participatory event in which they themselves share a present with an audience.<sup>164</sup>

In Becker's view, then, the artworld is formed of people, who coordinate their activities to produce works of art. According to him they do this by referring to conventions that are embodied in common practice and materials as well as artifacts commonly used for the creation of art. Materials and artifacts that are part of the production of dance might be such things as performance spaces in buildings, dancing bodies themselves, costumes, training gear, stereo equipment or musical instruments, pieces of music, props, advertising posters et al.. Conventions, in their turn, are historically-formed customs which shape the manner in which artworks are produced. They regulate and facilitate the relations between co-operating people while producing and appreciating art. In dance, examples of some very basic conventions are: that dance is performed by dancers who execute bodily movements and that dance is often performed on a stage with the spectators seated in an audience. Nevertheless, the nature of artistic conventions is such that they allow for unconventional means of production and are themselves continuously revised. (Becker 1984, 29–39)

Paul Taylor's performances from the 1960's are a quite surprising example of the revisions of conventions. Then he danced a dance containing no visible movement. He just stood still, staring at the audience throughout his performance. A few years subsequently another example was provided by the works of Meredith Monk. In one of her pieces she made the audience travel on foot in a pageant to see the different scenes of the dance and in another even travel by bus through New York from one location of the same performance to the next (cf. Cohen 1977/1974, 196). A current Finnish example of a dance artist working outside of theatre space and in this case even undermining the conventions of premieres and evening-length performance is Reijo Kela, who creates choreographies and improvised dance throughout the year in the open air at both urban and rural sites. One of his performances that gained much attention was "Cityman" dating from 1990. He built a plastic construction composed of a "room" visible to passing people in a downtown square of Helsinki. Here he lived for seven consecutive days and nights, sleeping, eating, performing, and dancing on his own and with guests he invited to his "room". (cf. Strommen 2000; Sutinen 1997)

Yet, one can say that new ways of creating art are more difficult to produce than conventional

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164. Those dance artists, who, for example create video dance art are an exception to this convention. In Finland, for example, Rea Pihlasviita and Kimmo Koskela produced such works very successfully during the 1990's.

ones. They require the building up of new means of production and might at least initially mean a decrease in appreciation and circulation of art works (Becker 1984, 33). Again an example: the performances of the Finnish dance organization Zodiak Presents that took place in the 1980's revealed habitual hierarchies and expectations involved in the reception of dance. One means through which this was done was by performing with a minimal amount of movement occurring on stage. In this way the more internal movements or rather the state of being of a performer were brought under observation. The public often regarded these performances in a negative light. However, by the turn of the next decade the artistic achievements of the artists working in the organization became appreciated, and Zodiak Presents received a national award for dance. (Kaiku & Sutinen 1997, 207–208) Indeed, Becker takes change in the artworld to be an unavoidable fact. For one thing practices and artworks differ from those done earlier as art aims mostly at originality and no one does things exactly the same way as someone before. Surroundings, circumstances, and people worked with as well as materials used in making artworks, moreover, are never exactly the same. Still, only such novel means of creating art that acquire a supporting cooperative network survive. (Becker 1984, 300–301)

Becker also differentiates between degrees of conventional knowledge that artworld members have and states that the core members, such as artists and other art professionals, are the only ones who get to know the conventions and activities involved in the professional practice of an art form. They learn to understand the standard technical procedures involved in their art. Through their continuous endeavors and possible education in the arts they also become acquainted with its historical developments, capable of distinguishing between its different styles, and able to decipher and interpret the manipulation of standard elements in the vocabulary of the medium. Becker observes, furthermore, that the authoritative participants and professional members, like artists, art critics, art producers, and art theorists of the artworld, most often attempt to discern what kind of art they appreciate, what they find not to be art, and who is not an artist. He concludes that it is exactly through observing how these distinctions are made that one can understand the nature of artworlds in more detail. (Becker 1984, 36, 48, 59) The dance artists interviewed for this study could be viewed to have acquired a professional knowledge of their art in the above-depicted sense. They revealed additionally the nature of their appreciation of dance throughout the interview material in discussing different themes of interest. In this sense much of Part III of the research is concerned with describing the danceworld the interviewed dance artists were engaged in at the time of the interviews.

What this appreciative attitude also means is that artworlds involve aesthetic values; judgments according to which worth is placed on the procedures and end products found in an artworld. These judgments produce reputations that are taken into account by artists, audiences, and distributors, for example, who create art and cooperate with other artists as well as appreciating and supporting it, respectively. (Becker 1984, 36, 39) Values effective in an artworld, however, do not only evolve from the intrinsic practices of an artworld. Becker sees artworlds as being relatively open systems with no clear boundaries. They share interests and resources more dominant in other cultural spheres. Therefore, the conditions of the

surrounding societies are influential in forming the values of the artworld as well. Becker mentions the economic environment as the most important one. Well-developed artworlds usually have established systems of distribution and support, which both enhance and determine the production and reception of art. (Becker 1984, 35–36, 93)

This is an important concern for most of the interviewed dance artists, because their livelihood and capacity to continue to dance and create choreography depend on these systems of support. Working in independent dance productions often means that the nature of support and the way in which it is received are redefined in each case. In Becker's view artworks even bear traces of these systems and through them they become tied to the general economic structures of the surrounding society (Becker 1984, 94). As a simple example: the generously government-funded dance productions of the Finnish National Ballet are lavishly staged and costumed performances taking place in an exclusively spacious and technically advanced theatre, which the dance productions of the freelance dance field lacking the same kind of economic support are mostly incapable of producing. In fact, Virve Sutinen (1997) takes the barren spaces of the former cable factory (before it became a well organized and known site of cultural events) in which Zodiak Presents held its early performances to have added to their interesting nature. The cold concrete walls underlined the vulnerability and strength of the performing bodies. (Kaiku & Sutinen 1997, 208; cf. Ojala 1997)

In the Helsinki area, alongside of private foundations supporting cultural development, the government, the county, and the city council of Helsinki are the main sources providing funding for freelance dance productions. They influence dance through their art politics; through the plans and understandings according to which they support dance and decide to whom this support is given. However, alongside of offering funds for the creation of art the government, the administrative board of the county and the city influence it also through their general legislature. They decree such things as where and when performing is allowed, if smoking a cigarette is legitimate on stage without a fireman nearby, how loud music is allowed to be, not to mention legislation concerning employment. In the end, what is still necessary for the operation of an artworld is that it has sufficient political and economic freedom to create artifacts that are discernible from what other cultural domains produce. (Becker 1984, 165–166)

Somewhat like Haapala Becker also describes an artworld to stand for the broader outlines of a cooperative network that might involve smaller relatively autonomous and local subgroups (Becker 1984, 61, 63, 320, 348–349). Despite the increased circulation of filmed dance and new interactive technology, contemporary dance still remains mostly aligned to the concrete physical presence of the sites of rehearsal and performance as well as the direct cooperation of dancers, choreographers, dance teachers, costume artists, audiences, and the like. Dance is also mainly an urban art form often requiring theatres or other buildings for performance space and a sufficient number of people to foster cooperative networks that aid the production of dance and to form a public.

However, as mentioned, the interviewed dance artists mainly refer to the environment in which they work as the freelance dance field of Helsinki. In their view within the danceworld there seems to be a subgroup which they name the freelance field. Through their words

they suggest that they work in a situation and according to conventions that are discernible from the rest of the danceworld in Helsinki and even abroad. This distinction the interviewed dance artists made became evident, for example, in the following kinds of comments relating to slightly different themes of discussion. One of the dance artists speaks of the appreciation given to alternative modes of creating dance art, which she seems to equate with the work done in the field of freelance dance instead of that which is done in the fixed dance companies performing both contemporary dance and ballet:

.../Here there is no space given for an alternative to be born. Even if there is a ballet and everything, the alternative is wiped out as a noteworthy form of the high arts, which in this country it certainly is. All the ideas found in the [theatre] houses after all derive from the free field./... (4F)<sup>165</sup>

Another of the interviewees instead compares the state of affairs of the field of freelance dance in Helsinki to the dance scenes of a few other European cities in the following manner:

.../But here it is difficult – now that I am a freelancer in Helsinki – in some manner there is a difficulty with being a dancer. If you yourself do not feel strong, it is difficult to keep up being a dancer. In London, Paris or Copenhagen, where I've worked, it is somehow easier. There the training side is more versatile and the dance communities are somehow more open./... (3M)<sup>166</sup>

I take this dance artist to be speaking about the conditions of the freelance field in Helsinki, since the problem of training, which often involves taking dance classes, most often is different for dance artists working in more secure companies, which according to my knowledge of Helsinki usually offer their dancers regular dance classes.

These few quotations imply that the interviewees perceive a difference in the manner in which the field of freelance dance in Helsinki operates and is valued in comparison to the danceworld of Helsinki more generally and those existing abroad. Further analysis of the manner in which the interviewed dance artists perceived the field of freelance dance they worked in will be presented in the next chapter. In discussing the conceptions of the interviewed dance artists there, I will mostly refer to the setting they work in as the freelance field of dance, even if the line between where this field ends and the more general sphere of the danceworld of Helsinki begins is in no way distinct. In fact, they certainly overlap on many occasions. However, as the dance artists themselves make such a differentiation, I will follow their example. I will speak of the general danceworld of Helsinki mostly when the

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165. .../Täällä ei anneta tilaa sille vaihtoehdolle syntyä. Olkoot baletti, baletit ja kaikki, mutta se vaihtoehto on niin kuin pyyhitty pois semmoisena varteenotettavan korkeataiteen muotona, mikä se todellakin tässä maassakin on täysin. Vapaakentältäähän on tullut noihin taloihinkin kaikki ideat./... (4N)

166. .../Mutta täällä on siis vaikeata – nyt kun olen freenä Helsingissä – niin täällä on tavallaan sen oman tanssijuutensa kanssa välillä vaikeata. Jos itsellä ei ole vahva olo, niin silloin tässä kaupungissa on vaikeata pitää sitä tanssijuutta yllä. Jossain Lontoossa tai Pariisissa tai Kööpenhaminassa, missä olen ollut töissä se on jotenkin helpompaa. Siellä on se treenauspuoli paljon monipuolisempaa ja ne tanssijayhteisöt jotenkin avoimempia./... (3M)

dance artists distinguish their field of operation from domains in which other dance art exists. I do this since the study's aim is to understand what being a freelance dance artist is through the life-world of such dance artists.

### **The sub-fields of artistic production**

Since the dance artists refer to the setting they work in as a field I will describe how Pierre Bourdieu regarded what he calls cultural fields of production, a general example of which the danceworld would be. Nevertheless, he also describes the sub-fields of artistic production in such a way that is pertinent to the manner in which the interviewees relate to the field of freelance dance in Helsinki and in which I myself have come to understand this field.<sup>167</sup> In so doing I will emphasize those features that add to Becker's description of the artworld and are relevant to the purposes of this study.

Bourdieu (1996; 1995/1993) accredits Becker with having constructed a view of artistic production as a collective action and avoiding the naive view that artistic activity is the result of isolated artists. Thus, like Becker, Bourdieu believes the artistic field of production to be a network of relations connecting agents, such as artists, critics, the public, art historians, as well as institutions such as schools of fine arts, theatres, juries etc. together. What he underlines, however, with more emphasis than Becker, is that they participate in the production of the *value* of a work of art. Bourdieu argues that the sociology of art has to take into account not only the material production of artworks – the work of artists and their actual cooperation with co-producers and audiences as well as the materials they use – but also the symbolic production of artworks. By this he means that to understand art sociology has to consider the meanings and values through which artworks become defined. These are not, I repeat, produced by artists alone, but by the artistic field as a universe of belief of what is good art. This is, in Bourdieu's view, one of the central-most concerns through which artistic fields of production become structured and organized. (Bourdieu 1996, 224, 229; 1995/1993, 34, 37)

Bourdieu, then, is not so much concerned with individual agents as with the social dynamics that produce both artists and artworks. In his view the artistic field as a dynamic system of an evaluative and productive practice is comprised of the interrelations of what he calls the *habitus* and capital. What he means by the *habitus* are all those internalized social conditions that an individual agent functions through in her or his social environment and thereby also regenerates. (Bourdieu 1986/1984, 101) The 'habitus' is a term that correlates with Merleau-Ponty's notion of the body schema. Even if Bourdieu does not make a detailed analysis of the organization of the body, alike Merleau-Ponty, he finds the habitus to be formed as a historical embodiment of the surrounding world an

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167. Aino Sarje (1999, 11) points out that of the concepts developed by Bourdieu, especially the term 'field' has influenced the discourse of cultural politics as well as inserted itself in everyday thinking. As already noted, this is evident in the speech of the interviewed dance artists. Also reviews in the daily newspaper as well as several studies or reports on dance in Finland use this term (cf. Jännes 1998; Lukkarila 1998; Suhonen 1999).

individual finds himself in. The social conditions that an individual internalizes are something that surpass her or his mental consciousness and intention. Through their embodiment they become something, which often only tacitly directs the way in which an individual operates, thinks, and relates to a social world. (Bourdieu 1986/1977, 72–95) Randal Johnson, while commenting on the meaning of the term 'habitus', describes it as referring to a practical sense that, "inclines the agents to act and react in specific situations in a manner that is not always calculated and that is not simply a question of conscious obedience to rules" (Johnson 1995/1993, 5).

The habitus operates in two directions as a dialectical process through which the external world, with its values and practices, becomes internalized and reciprocally as the process by which an habituated grasp of these become externalized in each agents activities. However, Bourdieu, unlike Merleau-Ponty, is not exactly interested in how the habitus forms an individual, rather he is interested in how it upholds and reproduces social structures. Bourdieu finds that:

One of the fundamental effects of the orchestration of habitus is the production of a commonsense world endowed with the *objectivity* secured by a consensus of meaning (*sens*) of practices and the world, in other words the harmonization of agents' experiences and the continuous reinforcement that each of them, receives from expression, individual or collective (in festivals, for example) improvised or programmed (commonplaces, sayings), of similar or identical experiences. The homogeneity of habitus is what – within the limits of the group of agents possessing the schemes (of production and interpretation) implied in their production – causes practices and works to be immediately intelligible and foreseeable and hence taken for granted. (Bourdieu 1986/1977, 80)

Consequently, for Bourdieu, the habitus is a generalizing principle enabling shared understanding and cooperation. As an example, one of the most basic things dance artists (belonging to the same field of production) to a large extent rely on is that they understand each other's bodily motion. They are familiar with similar ways of moving and can adapt to new ways emerging in the field if not immediately at least through some practice.

Returning to Bourdieu's concepts: capital is what ensures power in a field. This capital is comprised of economic, cultural, and social assets that are useful and valuable in the production of the goods of any field. Alongside of economic factors, capital includes such symbolic assets as professional education, knowledge of the history of the field, practical proficiency, awards, important social contacts or skills etc. In fact, in Bourdieu's view, in some parts of the artistic field capital is most often concerned with its symbolic dimensions, namely prestige and recognition granted by peers, and only secondarily by economic and large-scale public success. (Bourdieu 1995/1993, 53; 1986/1984, 114–125)

Symbolic capital, obviously, is something that does not exist apart from the habitus or capacities and skills of single agents, that is, the individuals who are engaged in a field. Still it is something that becomes meaningful only in relation to the field. Agents, such as art professionals, occupy positions in the field, which are defined by the properties that allow them to be situated in relation to all the other positions. It is through them that agents are capable of obtaining the profits that are relevant to the field. As a result, it is exactly

through these positions and their operative value in the processes ongoing in the field that the capacities or dispositions of each agent are interpreted and understood. The interactions of the dispositions of agents and the positions they occupy are reciprocal. The skills and assets of an agent must in some manner meet the requirements of the position. Nevertheless, a person might, for example, possess abilities that allow for something earlier only potential in a position to become actualized, as well. (Bourdieu 1996, 231–232) What is often the case in being a dancer in a dance piece of a particular choreographer is that a dancer is required to decipher and perform dance typical to this specific choreographer. Some dancers do this better than others. In contrast, a dancer may also have such skills that the choreographer her- or himself does not have or is not previously familiar with and which the choreographer comes to adopt.

In Bourdieu's view, nevertheless, what is characteristic of agents occupying any of the diverse positions found in a field is that they engage in competition for control of the interests and resources which are specific to each given field. What Bourdieu's concepts emphasize, then, is that agents, whether they are aware of it or not, strive for what they consider to be positive ends with their engagements with the field. The struggles through which this occurs tend to conserve or transform the forces operative in a field. In the lives of dance artists, competition would, in Bourdieu's view, mean that they struggle between their dispositions and trying to achieve or maintain positions. Dance artists make efforts to create new "posts" or achieve those already existing in the field as well as to make themselves suitable to maintain such a "post". In the case of the freelance field of dance in Helsinki, which is still rather loosely institutionalized, a change in one position or the emergence of a new position in the network of positions initiates a general change in the whole structure. Actually Bourdieu finds that the fields, through the processes by which they exist, are in general continuously shifting in their nature and organization. (Bourdieu 1996, 265, 269; 1995/1993, 58–61)

In my view this explains why freelance dance artists often work diligently to enhance their skills in dancing, teaching dance, or doing choreography, as well as follow what is happening in the field. In a sense they need to be in touch with the shifting processes the field operates through, to adapt to these and to maintain their positions. Struggling for a post also means that dance artists often consciously attempt to build careers with a well-defined succession of honors (Parviainen 1998, 93). They are thus building reputations through which they can be considered valuable and suitable for different positions in the field.

The basic benefit that these positions offer its agents apart from recognition, prestige, or financial advantages, is a space of free play where their artistic pursuits and endeavors can be accomplished. However, this freedom involves limits and constraints that arise from the different, even opposite, dispositions of other agents occupying the diverse positions the field becomes organized through. Dance artists already need to distinguish themselves from each other to become indispensable in maintaining similar positions. While other dance artists that obtain a position show that such positioning is possible, a dance artist needs to have a certain level of originality to avoid being usurped by others. It could be said, then, that dance artists themselves constrain each other by needing to differentiate themselves from each other to prove that they are necessary to the field of operation. One of the inter-

viewed dance artists comments how she has experienced this constraining tendency between different dance artists with a rather intense remark. She says:

. . ./As actually a joke: what I am required of as a person, a woman choreographer is that I would disappear. That's what I experience here . . . Well, this is a small country, the struggle intense. This was a pointed remark . . ./. . . (4F)<sup>168</sup>

In the end, however, what Bourdieu understands the generative and unifying principle of the field to be, is struggle itself; struggle for a position and against the limitations that constrict the maintaining or existence of this position. The outcome of the struggle is a hierarchical field of domination. Those who acquire financial, commercial, or symbolic success and fit in with the prevailing ideology of either the one more intrinsic to the field or that of the surrounding society are in power and enjoy the consequent benefits as well as being influential in determining what good art is. (Bourdieu 1996, 215–218, 231)

The previous paragraphs implicitly point towards a concentric and eccentric dynamic operative in the field. Bourdieu, in fact, distinguishes two sub-fields in the field of artistic production based on the premise of how he considers the hierarchical structuring of the field to operate. He observes that artistic fields often have a highly autonomous sub-field of restricted production which claims a certain kind of independence from the other sub-field of large-scale production. The latter he describes as favoring the dominant economic and political fields and their views as well as means of production found in the surrounding society. Success in these areas of the field are counted through the level of book sales, number of theatrical performances, size of audience or acknowledgement by the general public, public prizes, etc. (Bourdieu 1995/1993, 40–42, 51–53)

The restricted field of production instead tends to a larger degree to identify itself with an independence from economical influence. Bourdieu describes this stance as that of pursuing art for art's sake.<sup>169</sup> In extreme cases this portion of the field produces artworks for the sake of other producers or art professionals in the field. Here artworks become recognized on the grounds of appreciated symbolic capital. That is, they become valued on the premises of the knowledge of the history of the field and its art as well as innovations in relation to these. However, the artists of the sub-field claiming autonomy of production become weakened by those endeavors that cater to the tastes of the dominant economical and political field. What is considered to be good and valuable art threatens to become determined only by the art produced in the sub-field of large-scale production. In Bourdieu's view this amounts to what

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168. . . /Sitten nyt vitsinä, että mitä minulta persoonana, naiskoreografina vaaditaan niin, sitä, että häviä, sitä minä koen täällä. . . Noh, tämä on pieni maa, kova tappelu. Toi nyt oli tuollainen kärjistys. . . / . . (4N)

169. However there is no pure mode in which art would exist for art's sake on its own. Even if art is created differently from (and even as a protest against) the policy of large-scale production it cannot escape inhering a critical and political dimension. The sub-field of restricted production itself becomes organized through a hierarchical order or domination. Furthermore, new art works comment on earlier ones and generally cannot refrain from referring to the everyday concerns of life in some manner or another.

one could describe as a struggle between the independence of the field and of it being used for the purposes of producing popular, commercially-viable commodities. He also perceives that in this struggle the borders of the field are tested and questioned. (Bourdieu 1995/1993, 40–42, 51–53) The autonomy of the restricted field of production itself is likewise questioned in this struggle. As Johnson points out, the degree of autonomy of a field is measured by its capacity to refract or transform external demands into its own logic (Johnson 1995/1993, 14).

As a short summary one could describe Bourdieu's conception of the artistic field of production as aiming to incorporate three layers of social reality. He firstly attempts to clarify the position of the artistic field within what he calls the field of power which was described in the above discussion as the dominant economic and political fields of production found in societies at large. Secondly, he deals with analyzing the structure of the artistic field itself by discerning the existing positions through which the forces of the field operate. Previously two sub-fields of the artistic field were determined as the sub-fields of restricted and large-scale production. Bourdieu finally also deals with the individual agents found in the field through examining the genesis of their habitus. (Johnson 1995/1993, 14) My work is mostly concerned with the last two layers Bourdieu pays attention to. In the subsequent chapters of this dissertation, the field of freelance dance the interviewed dance artists spoke about is understood, furthermore, to be mostly concerned with what Bourdieu calls a restricted sub-field of artistic production. In my view it is obvious that at the time of the interviews the freelance field of dance in Helsinki was not organized in a way that made reaching large-scale audiences consistently possible. Economic support and an adequate acknowledgment of a general public for creating such a situation was lacking. Additionally, even if struggling with economic problems and striving for a position to ensure their artistic pursuits, the interviewed dance artists seemed to me to be more concerned with the nature of their art and what they wanted or needed to express instead of considering what the general public would like to see.

## 10 The Freelance Field of Dance in Helsinki

In addition to demarcating a sub-field of artistic production, I chose to describe both Becker's and Bourdieu's understanding of the artworld and the artistic field of production as the first underlines the meaning of everyday cooperative practices and the second the meaning of positioning and struggle in the production of art. They both spoke about the value given to art, too. In my view these themes were cited when the interviewed dance artists described the nature of the freelance field of dance they work in. They included accounts of the general state of the field as well as changes that have occurred in it. The dance artists also spoke about how they perceived the field to involve constraints in relation to their endeavors as well as individual struggles to give meaning to and gain support for their work. To some degree all of this discussion involved descriptions of the dance artists' relations to other members in the field. These issues will be addressed in the subsequent sections of this chapter. The presentation begins by introducing a historical account of the evolution of modern and contemporary dance in Finland in light of the changes that the interviewees describe as having occurred in the field. Then it moves into the more particular concerns the interviewees find to affect their position in the field. The purpose of this chapter is to depict the field of dance the interviewees were engaged in and to describe and interpret those of its features that the interviewees find pertinent to their lives as freelance dance artists.

Before turning to what the interviewed dance artists had to say, what still needs mentioning is that in the previous chapter the cooperation and features that make up an artworld or an artistic field of production were discussed in a general manner, which mostly did not directly take into account the nature of the lived life or life-world of an individual member. Therefore, the ideas of Becker and Bourdieu are not the outcome of a strict phenomenological analysis in the sense of how it has been presented in this study.<sup>170</sup> Yet they are very much reliant on

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170. Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow state that Bourdieu's thinking continued and enhanced the thinking of both Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1999, 84). Bourdieu wanted to overcome a dualistic understanding of social reality, which regards its phenomena through an internal or external point of view. He formed a methodology in which the subjective and objective dimensions are inseparably intertwined. Randal Johnson describes Bourdieu's sociology in the following manner: "Bourdieu's genetic sociology or genetic structuralism – which should under no circumstances be identified or confused with Lucien Goldmann's methodology – thus combines an analysis of objective social structures with an analysis of the genesis, within particular individuals, of the socially constituted mental structures which generate practice" (Johnson 1995/1993, 4). In looking through what he terms as 'illusions', the *a priori* facticity humans are enmeshed in, and moving beyond dualistic dichotomies, Bourdieu like the afore-mentioned phenomenologists investigates the premises, the structures, that condition particular social realities. The starting point of his investigation, nonetheless, is different at least from that of Merleau-Ponty's analysis. For Bourdieu the first step of social analysis is exploring the objective conditions of the investigated phenomenon. He also, however, understands the necessity of objectifying the prerequisites of such an investigation. This means that the researcher's presuppositions and social situation are taken into consideration. (Pinto 1999, 98, 102–103, 107; Johnson 1995/1993, 4) Through his methodological considerations

what could be called participant observation and the concrete conditions through which art exists and new art comes into being. I take terms 'artworld' and 'artistic field of production' to be useful in this study of freelance dance artists, since they refer to the structures of a general social existence artists are involved in while creating their artistic work. What is more, I find them to relate to what Merleau-Ponty referred to as a cultural field of investigation, which is something that offers the possibility for a certain cultural mode of being to continue its existence and individuals to be engaged in such a being (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 96, 105). In my view, they illustrate structures and features of the meanings, values, and practices of such a field on a more particular level, enhancing our understanding of the related issues the interviewed dance artists found effective in their lives. Consequently, what is presented immediately below – how the dance artists understand the field they operate in – utilizes the concepts examined in the previous chapter.

However, such descriptions, as given by the interviewed dance artists on the freelance field, rely on the way that these artists find the field to be a setting for their possible actions. They are evaluative identifications of the implicit or existential manner in which the dance artists find themselves sharing tasks and gestures with others dealing with similar endeavors as well as the relation of these to their own pursuits. The field is something which is firstly taken for granted and lived through, and only in taking an individual position towards its tensions as well as the practices and understandings it operates by do the dance artists (by relating them to their own purposes and intentions) gain a reflective understanding of it. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 442, 444, 447, 448, 450) Accordingly, I think what the dance artists say illuminates features of the field that they find significant to their lives as freelance dance artists, but also to describe something of the particular state of the freelance field of dance in Helsinki in the mid 1990's.

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Bourdieu finds that he is able to develop a general social science with which it is possible to analyze the practices of all social fields (Johnson 1995/1993, 8). This is the point which Dreyfus and Rabinow are somewhat critical of. In their view, Bourdieu's theories attest to an understanding, which takes social struggle to be the sole motive of human life. But they value Bourdieu's work when it focuses on its own domain and does not conceal those concerns of humankind that override the struggle for symbolic capital and would value it more if it were to give up claims to universality (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1999, 91). In the end they write: "It follows from the Heideggerian/Merleau-Pontian understanding of human finitude as our inevitable involvement in a particular understanding of reality that constitutes us, that, as Bourdieu recognizes and demonstrates, you cannot get out of your own *sens pratique* just by recognizing that you have one. But this would seem to leave Bourdieu with a dilemma. If we are stuck in our embodied habitus as Merleau-Ponty holds, then there is no position from which to do an objective, detached study of one's own sense of reality. If, however, in the interests of liberation, one claims, as Bourdieu does in *Leçon sur la leçon* (1982b), that doing objective social science enables one to stand outside the habitus and its *illusio* and demonstrate the working of social injustice, there is no convincing way of accounting for this new motivation. Bourdieu's answer appears to be that when the scientist gets outside the social habitus, he or she is simply open to a new motivation: namely, to expose social injustice . . . Bourdieu's fruitful research program based on the ontology of Merleau-Ponty would in no way be compromised if he, like Heidegger, abandoned the claim to speaking from a uniquely authentic position. But he would then be obliged to admit that his *Wissenschaft* belongs not among the natural sciences but among the human ones" (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1999, 93).

## 10.1 The Richness of the Field

In describing how she perceives the freelance field of dance in Helsinki one of the dance artists says that:

.../It is very rich. It has more variety than what it did twenty years ago. Now it is very large. A radical shift occurred after the birth of the department [the Department of Dance at the Theatre Academy in Helsinki]. Ever more varied and in this vein richer things happen all the time. A lot of incubating work is being done. Currently there is also a lot of worrying and discussion about new dancers and an overproduction of them. I find it interesting to see if they will open the doors of our field of art even wider and to observe in what direction things will develop after a while. Nevertheless, the current richness [of the field] is good./... (2F)<sup>171</sup>

Another dance artist says:

.../A long time after I began to dance, for example, this school [the Department of Dance at the Theatre Academy in Helsinki] was founded. The amount of dancers has increased. This situation is very different from ten years ago, when I had just returned [to Finland] and pursued dancing. In some manner this is exactly what I've always wanted./... (4F)<sup>172</sup>

These quotations describe a change that has occurred in the field of dance with which both of the dance artists are pleased. They point towards increased activity in the field of freelance dance and a rise in the number of dance artists. To understand these concepts a rough sketch of some history surrounding the practice of modern and contemporary dance in Finland would be illuminating. The historical account<sup>173</sup> given in the following paragraphs offers a brief interpretation of where the freelance field of dance in Helsinki has evolved from and had arrived at by the mid 1990's. It also describes some of the meanings and values attached to modern and contemporary dance in Helsinki and so enhances our understanding of the interviewed dance artists' engagement with the field.

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171. .../Se on hirvittävän rikas. Se on monipuolisempi kuin mitä se oli kaksikymmentä vuotta taaksepäin. Nythän se on hirveän suuri. Radikaali muutos tapahtui laitoksen syntymän jälkeen. Yhä moninaisempaa, sillä tavalla rikkaampaa tapahtuu koko ajan, että sellaista kytevää työtä on valtavasti käynnissä. Koko ajan myös puhutaan huolestuneesti siitä, että tulee lisää tanssijoita, että liikaa tuotetaan. Minusta on kiinnostava katsoa, että avaako se meidän taidekentän ovia enemmän appeilleen ja mihinkä tämä sitten menee jonkin ajan kuluttua. Mutta se rikkaus tällä hetkellä on hirveän hyvä./... (2N)

172. .../Tänne on sen jälkeen kun minä aloin tanssia kauan aikaa sitten tullut esimerkiksi tämä koulu. Tanssijamäärä on täällä moninkertaistunut. Tämä on aivan toinen tilanne nyt kuin kymmenen vuotta sitten, jolloin minä olin juuri tullut tänne ja yrittelin. Että jotenkin sehän on juuri sitä, mitä minä olen halunnutkin./... (4N)

173. This outline describes the dance scene in Finland from the early twentieth century until the mid 1990's and is somewhat more focused on the events taking place in Helsinki than throughout the country. The presentation relies on a few MA theses, some articles on Finnish modern and contemporary dance, and a chronicle of the history the Union of Finnish Dance Artists. It does so because even to date there exists no thorough or in-depth analysis of the history of modern and contemporary dance in Finland.

### Modern dance in Finland

Free dance (*vapaatanssi*), which was the German-influenced style of modern dance taught and performed in Finland, was most influential in the 1920's and 1930's. Then modern dance existed through the efforts of individual dance artists, their occasional performances, and the private dance schools run by these artists.<sup>174</sup> The Second World War cut the connection Finnish dance artists had with their German counterparts. Consequently, the tradition of free dance was taken forward without any strong new influences or substantial changes until the beginning of the 1950's after which it began to stagnate. However, the 1960's saw a re-kindling of dance in a new form. (cf. Makkonen 1990; Hämäläinen 1980) As Tiina Suhonen (1997) tells us, it was only then that American modern dance, jazz-ballet, show and musical dance began to permeate Finland. The groups of Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham, as well as the American Dance Theatre with a program containing Alvin Ailey's choreography, and Ann Halprin's Dancers' Workshop Company performed in Helsinki during this period. (Suhonen 1997b, 28) Likewise some American dance artists came to teach in Finland for the first time. The Union of Finnish Dance Artists<sup>175</sup> was able to bring foreign teachers to Finland, and dance artist Riitta Vainio, who herself had studied dance in the United States at the end of the previous decade, also invited American teachers to her school. (Arvelo & Räsänen 1987, 40)

Thus, the term 'modern dance' was first used in a consistent manner in Finland in the 1960's (cf. Hämäläinen 1980).<sup>176</sup> Then the dance scene was empowered by the dance group Praesens which first performed in 1956 through the endeavors of Ritva Arvelo and Raija Riikkala among others, and which continued to perform on an irregular basis. During the early days of the decade it was coached by Riitta Vainio, too, and as a consequence was influenced by the tradition of American modern dance. (Suhonen 1997, 29; Arvelo & Räsänen 1987 40–43)

In the 1960's the question of creating professional education for modern dancers in Finland was similarly addressed with intensity. By this time dance artists mainly received their education by taking dance classes held in private schools or by attending courses given by the Union of Finnish Dance Artists. Only a few had the opportunity and financial support to study advanced level dance courses and at schools found abroad. Now, however, dance

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174. In addition to the dance artists affiliated with early modern dance, ballet dancers worked in the ballet company of the Finnish Opera which was first founded in 1926 and is now called the Finnish National Ballet (Arvelo & Räsänen 1987, 6).

175. The Union of Finnish Dance Artists was founded as early as 1937. Up until 1971 its members included those who practiced and supported free dance, modern dance, and ballet. However, at this point the ballet members felt that the union could not support their cause as it was addressing the issues of the still rather unprofessionally working modern dancers. The employees of the National ballet withdrew their membership and joined the Actor's union. Their employers belonged to the Theatre Union and this change enhanced the benefits offered to them. Furthermore the dance pedagogues established a union of their own. (Arvelo & Räsänen 1987; Repo 1989)

176. Hämäläinen, however, argues that the first Finnish performance that was referred to as modern dance took place in Helsinki as early as 1955. It was arranged by Anneli Vallasvaara, a dance artists, who had studied dance in London. (Hämäläinen 1980)

artist Riitta Vainio decided to establish a school, which aimed to educate professional dancers in an academic manner. Alongside of directing her school and giving daily classes, she created choreography and performed often with her professional students who, in the next decade, continued to pursue dance on their own. After ten years of financial struggles and working to gain governmental recognition of her educational pursuits Riitta Vainio gave up her school and directing her dance group by the end of the next decade. She, nevertheless, had greatly publicized modern dance by firstly performing intensely with her group, but also by discussing dance issues on television and writing about them in magazines. (cf. Arvelo & Räsänen 1987, 40–43; Hämäläinen 1980, 29–32)

In fact, Hämäläinen (1980, 31) considers the school of Riitta Vainio to be the cradle of Finnish modern dance, since till the beginning of the 1980's most of the representatives of modern dance in Finland had received their education there. The question of enhancing the professional skills of the modern dancers was, however, also addressed by the Union of Finnish Dance Artists. Briitta Järvinen (1972) in her study of the state of dance in Finland in the early 1970's shows that close to the end of the 1960's the union began to give weekly professional dance classes aiming at a professional education in dance. It continued to do so for four consecutive years until it gave up this project for financial reasons. (Järvinen 1972, 31)

However, the 1970's was the decade when other professional groups outside of the National Ballet really started to emerge. For the first time through governmental support Praesens was able to perform consistently and more professionally during 1971–74. With this group dance and theatre artist Ritva Arvelo created choreography in which speech, song, and dance were used to playfully comment on current issues in society. In 1972 choreographer Marjo Kuusela and dancer Maria Wolska founded the Raatikko Dance Theatre. The dance theatre included such dance artists as Tommi Kitti, Marja Korhola, Marja Leino, Aarne Mäntylä, and Pauli Pöllänen amongst others. This company was run through a democratic administrative policy and made sure that its artists received a monthly salary. It performed evening length narrative or epic dances, often created on the base of progressive Finnish literature and eclectic combinations of features of folk dance, acrobatics, pantomime, the pas-de-deux scenes of classical ballet, and modern dance. The group toured all over Finland and became well known to the general public. Also in 1972 a group called Dance Studio (*Tanssi Studio*), later renamed Rollo, emerged through the activities of such dance artists as Göran Lofström, Ervi Sirén, Tarja Rinne, Briitta Järvinen, and Kari Riipinen. In 1973 the City Theatre of Helsinki first started to employ dancers more consistently. This began the evolution of the theatres own, now well-known, dance company, which in the 1980's and 1990's was directed by such famous dance artists as Jorma Uotinen, Carolyn Carlson, and Kenneth Kvanström. (Furthermore, in Tampere, another southern industrial city in Finland, the Mobita dance group was founded in 1977.) (Suhonen 1997, 28–29, 31–34; Arvelo & Räsänen 1987, 87, 90)

### **Modern dance expands and turns contemporary**

During the 1980's the term 'contemporary dance' was first used to demonstrate the new influences that affected the modern dance that was being practiced in Finland (Hämäläinen

1999, 28; cf. ft. 30 in Part I). And modern, now to be called contemporary, dance continued to establish itself.

Despite the professionalization of modern dance occurring in the 1970's, it was only in 1983 that an official professional education in contemporary dance became possible in Finland. Then the Department of Dance of the Theatre Academy located in Helsinki was established.<sup>177</sup> However, by this time governmental student loans and foundations giving grants for studies abroad had made it easier for Finns to gain their education in dance abroad as well. The same year the Department of Dance was established also saw dance art receive its own division in the arts council.<sup>178</sup> (Kaiku 2000, 7; Laakkonen 1997, 6)

Alongside of the Dance Group of the Helsinki City Theatre and the National Ballet based in Helsinki a number of contemporary dance groups began to receive regular, albeit limited, governmental support. These included among a few others The Raatikko Dance Theater. A few years later, for example, such new Helsinki-based groups as Hurjaruuth, specializing in performances for children, and Zodiak Presents<sup>179</sup> concerned with new dance<sup>180</sup> received this support as well. However, by the end of the 1980's the number of governmentally supported dance groups was fixed at a certain limit and did not allow for any new entries. The beginning of a recession cut the already modest funding of dance art. (Laakkonen 1999, 23; Kaiku & Sutinen 1997, 205)<sup>181</sup>

During this decade the amount of privately-run dance schools grew, too. By the beginning of the 1990's even a few technical institutes outside of Helsinki started offering professional training in dance. (Kaiku & Sutinen 1997, 205; Laakkonen 1997, 6) Briitta Järvinen (1972) in her study on the position of dance and dance artists in Finland during the early 1970's estimated that in 1972 there were a total of about 200 to 230 professional dance artists in Finland. This number includes dance professionals, who taught, performed, and did choreography also on a part time basis. (Järvinen 1972, 10) By the late 1990's this number had increased to 738 unionized dance professionals including both ballet and contemporary

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177. The Theatre Academy offers university level education in the theatre arts. By the end of the 20th century it had become the largest institution in the Nordic countries offering an education in this area.

178. From year 1960, when the National arts council was founded in Finland, until year 1982, the theatre arts division of the same council was responsible for the support given by it to dance. From 1968 on, this council appointed a dance professional as one of its members. The council has a central role in arts administration since it gives grants to professional artists and advises the Ministry of Education on planning and implementing arts policy. (cf. Laakkonen 1997, 6; Repo 1989, 93–94)

179. Zodiak Presents was founded in 1987 as an association enhancing its members' artistic work. In its early days it was run by artists, who often referred to their work as new dance. In year 1997 Zodiak Presents was reorganized and renamed. It became a more established organization producing and presenting new contemporary dance works created by independent dance artists and is now called Zodiak – The Center for New Dance. (cf. Ojala 2000; 1997)

180. On new dance see ft. 189 on page 188.

181. The dance companies receiving governmental support are regulated by law. At the time of the interviews the law encompassed seven dance theatres. It has been extremely difficult for new groups to be included, since once a group is in it stays so. Only in 1998 was an optional possibility created by the National Council for Dance. It began to give ensemble-support for independent dance-groups for a three-year period. (Suhonen 2000, 21; Laakkonen 1997, 6)

dancers, dance teachers, and choreographers (Suhonen 1999, 11).<sup>182</sup>

It is evident that western theatrical dance began to have a more legitimate and appreciated position in Finnish society. Obviously a consequence of this was an increased activity in the area of contemporary dance. Dance critic Auli Räsänen, who has reviewed dance since the 1960's, describes this change in an interview dating from 1996. She says that "in the 70's there was some dance, in the 80's some more and now there is a hell of a lot of dance". She also says that in the beginning of her career she mostly wrote about the National Ballet. Now she mostly writes about everything else going on in dance. (Sutinen 1996, 14)

The increase in the number of dance professionals has been so quick that many of the newcomers have not been able to settle into any ready-made structures of executing dance. The existing structures have been rather limited, and the positions they offer have, furthermore, still been filled with those of the previous generations. This has created the situation in which most dance professionals in Finland works as freelancers. (Laakkonen 1999, 22–23; 1997, 6; Kaiku & Sutinen 1997, 205) In a study done in 1995 out of the 340 dance professionals 67% worked as freelance dance artists or in dance groups with short-term contracts. Only 26% of the investigated dance professionals had a permanent or long-term engagement with a dance company or other employer. Of the studied cases 7% fell under the category of retired dance professionals. (Karhunen & Smolander 1995, 11) Thus, it is evident that many dance artists have been faced with having to come up with independent and new ways of working within dance. A large amount, though not all, of these artists have, moreover, settled in the Helsinki area, the site of the most active dance scene in the country.<sup>183</sup>

### A spectrum of styles

Earlier two of the interviewed dance artists seemed to appreciate the circumstances dance found itself in by the mid 1990's. The positive sides of the situation are further illuminated by the following quotations from the interview material.

.../I perceive the freelance field of dance to be very versatile. In my view we have a rather broad spectrum of different approaches of work – different premises on the level of ideas and bodily work. There is a lot of potential and quite a few interesting artists here./... (3M)<sup>184</sup>

Kaiku points out that in the 1990's Finnish contemporary dance began to consist of an increasing variety of styles of dancing and cross-artistic elements. Dance could be likened to a fragmented aesthetics at this time and was influenced, among other things, by the theatre

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182. These dance professionals belong to the following three unions: The Finnish Actor's Union, The Union of Finnish Dance Artists, and The Union of Finnish Dance Pedagogues.

183. As an example, in year 1988 75% of the unionized dance professionals lived in southern Finland either in Helsinki itself or its near vicinities (Repo 1989, 82).

184. .../Minä näen sen [freelancetanssikentän] hirveän monipuolisena. Minun mielestä meillä on aika laaja spektri erilaisia tapoja lähestyä tekemistä – erilaisia lähtökohtia ideatasolla ja kehollisen työskentelemisen tasolla. Täällä on minun mielestä hirveästi potentiaalia ja aika paljon mielenkiintoisia tekijöitä./... (3M)

and performance arts. Sutinen observes that the variety of dance became a self-evident fact in Finland in the 1990's and that in the danceworld subcultures cultivating their own style of dance became discernible during this decade. (Kaiku & Sutinen 1997, 205, 211) <sup>185</sup> Another dance artist also seems to enjoy this situation and adds:

.../At the moment the field of dance is so colorful and its content structures are broad/.../ I find that everyone is investigating his or her own thing. It [the field] is one big piece of research all over. Those moments when people communicate and speak about how things can be observed through different perspectives are interesting. After all such things enrich dance. At least I do not experience any rejection or something like it. I find I feel good in Finland at the moment. I feel that through my own thing I am able to communicate. It is important for me that I receive feedback and through it at least on some level my thing circulates./... (2F) <sup>186</sup>

Elsewhere this dance artist says that she is working under very good conditions. This situation and the variety of discussion and practice are something she finds stimulating. What all of the above discussion points to is that by the mid 1990's an active sphere of contemporary dance existed in Helsinki, an active danceworld in which much of what was going on was accomplished by freelance dance artists working in the field of freelance dance. <sup>187</sup>

## 10.2 The Constraints of the Field

### **From bodily investigation towards commodity production**

Even if the freelance field of dance has expanded and has become more varied the interviewed dance artists did not regard all of the changes that have taken place in a positive light. One of them says that:

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185. In her study Aino Sarje determines these sub-cultures through the categories of the field of musical theatre, the field of dance theatre, the field of experimental dance, and the field of ballet. (cf. Sarje 1999)

186. .../Tällä hetkellä tanssin kenttä on niin värikäs ja tanssin sisältörakenteet ovat laajat/.../Minä koen, että jokainen tutkii omaa juttuaan. Se on sellaista yhtä tutkimusta joka puolella. Ne on aina kiinnostavia ne hetket, jolloin ihmiset kommunikoi ja puhuu asioista: miten monilla eri näkövinkkeillä niitä asioita voidaan nähdä ja katsoa. Sehän on sitä tanssin rikastuttamista. Minä en koe ainakaan hyljeksintää tai mitään. Minun mielestä minulla on tällä hetkellä hyvä olo Suomessa. Minä tunnen, että oman juttuni kautta pystyn kommunikoimaan. Se on minulle tärkeätä, että tulee jotain palautetta ja se asia jollain tasolla ainakin pyörii./... (2N)

187. According to the records of the Finnish Dance Information Center, for example, during 1997 out of a total of 1681 performances held in Finland 644 were given by independent dance artists working in the freelance field of dance or organizations supporting the work of freelance dance artists throughout Finland. (cf. Jännes 1998, 54) This amount however does not show the number of new premieres or pieces performed, since it deals with the total amount of performances given. In 1997 Johanna Laakkonen estimated that established dance companies including the National Ballet employ less than 30 per cent of all dance artists (Laakkonen 1997, 6).

.../I find that five years ago there was a more interesting situation here – the freelance field at the end of the 1980's and the beginning of the 1990's. All kinds of things existed and people really were questioning what was happening and found dance a “cool” thing. Then all kinds of things were experimented with./.../A searching atmosphere was prevalent then. But afterwards some sort of a power struggle surfaced in our field./.../the meaning of work changed. What started to be more important was how one succeeds with one's work and if it was trendy. The term 'trendy' became popular. So that dance art all of a sudden shifted from art, from corporeality and investigating corporeality, to the trendy./.../(4F)<sup>188</sup>

In the 1980's Finland was influenced by postmodern dance, Butoh<sup>189</sup> and the so-called new dance.<sup>190</sup> During the late 1970's a few Finnish dance artists, namely Reijo Kela, Ulla Koivisto, and Ervi Sirén, studied and worked with Cunningham-styled movement and other representatives of the late postmodern dance in New York. In the early and mid 1980's other dance artists, such as Soile Lahdenperä, Riitta Pasanen-Willberg, Liisa Pentti, and Jaana Klevering, studied at the modern dance department of the Theatre School of Amsterdam

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188. .../Minun mielestä täällä oli paljon kiinnostavampi tilanne viisi vuotta sitten – vapaakenttä kahdeksänkymmentäluvun loppupuolella ja yhdeksänkymmentäluvun alussa. Täällä oli kaikenlaista juttua ja oltiin tosiaankin oikein silleen, että “mitä nyt tapahtuu – tanssihan on makee juttu”. Silloin kokeiltiin kaikenlaista./.../Silloin oli sellainen valtavan hakeva ilmapiiri. Mutta sitten tälle meidän kentällä tuli jonkunlainen valtapeli pinnalle./.../työn merkitys meni vähän muualle. Merkittävämmäksi rupesi tulemaan se, että kuin sillä työllä menestyy ja että onko se trendi. Tällöinen sana kuin trendikäs tuli käyttöön. Eli tanssitaide meni siitä taiteesta, siitä ruumiillisuudesta ja sen tutkimisesta yks kaks siihen trendiin./.../(4N)

189. Sondra Fraleigh claims that the inception of Butoh occurred in 1959 with Tatsumi Hijikata's homoerotic performance *Kinjiki* (Forbidden Colors) and that it grew into a dance form out of the aesthetic upheaval and identity crisis in postwar Japan (Fraleigh 1999b, 4, 23). Ramsay Burt argues that initially Butoh was the work of European-oriented Japanese performers who were influenced by German modern dance artists, by American modern dance, and still held on to Japanese theatre traditions as well (Burt 1995, 7). Fraleigh attempts to capture something of the nature of Butoh by writing that, “Butoh has a flair for the theatrical (the adorned and painted body), and is unashamed of nudity as in premodern (pre-Western) Japan. It consciously tends nature (the nature of the body in this case), subverting the cultural body. Butoh explores awkwardness and organic simplicity, recultivating the body on new and often minimalist terms, as flower arrangement uses elements from nature and represents them to make the most of the fewest elements (even weeds)” (Fraleigh 1999b, 23).

190. Even if the term 'new dance' is not a clearly definable term, I use it here as it is one through which some dance practitioners in Finland describe their work. Here the term implies the European approach to contemporary dance, which was influenced by the postmodern dance initiated in the United States. In England, for example, the term 'new dance' is a general term referring to experimental work in dance. The term was popularized by a dance magazine which called itself “New Dance”. The magazine featured dance artists and practices of dance which advocated soft and body-friendly methods and which differed from the approach of traditional modern dance and ballet. The body politics of new dance emphasized the autonomy of the dancer to choose and create an individual body and an awareness of the image created with such a body. (Adair 1994/1992, 191; Briginshaw & Huxley 1988, 161) Borrowing words from Claid and Lansley presented in some of the early issues of the New Dance magazine, Briginshaw and Huxley assert that “it is important that the words 'new dance' do not become a label for a certain type of work which appears to belong to a small clique of artists . . . There is no one way of working or type of dance that can be labeled 'new dance'” and that “inherent in much of the work is an attempt to break through restrictive categorization into a flexible way of working that does not limit one to the use of a few specialized skills and formulas” (Claid 1977, 2; Lansley 1977, 3 as reported by Briginshaw & Huxley 1988, 179).

(Amsterdam Theaterschool Opleiding Moderne Dance) later to be called the Amsterdam school for New Dance Development. They all continued to practice what they had learned when back in their home country. Furthermore in the late 1980's such Butoh dance artists as Anzu Furukawa and Masaki Iwana came to perform and give workshops in Finland.

According to Kaiku & Sutinen (1997) then the aesthetics of dance was no longer concerned so much with revealing a mastery of technique. Instead what happened was that the uniqueness of each dancer's body and its way of moving diversified the movement vocabulary of dance. Also the non-verbal and non-conceptual reaches of experience became important issues addressed by dance. A more intense investigation of the body and a sensitivity to its experiential stances became central to the practices of dance. By the same token corporeality became a more and more central source of the content and meaning of dance. (Kaiku & Sutinen 1997, 206–209)

The quotation of one of the interviewed dance artist above argues that this type of exploration is no longer as popular as it used to be. Instead what it indicates is that public success has become a more influential factor in creating dance. Sutinen (1997) goes on to argue that by the beginning of the 1990's the configuration of movement alongside of an understanding of corporeality became a concern of dance once again. Dance works started to involve highly complex and physically demanding movement sequences and the minimalist expression of the previous decade was no longer so dominant. Sutinen argues, too, that the influence of a commercialization of dance and an increase in competition in dance that occurred in central Europe became visible in Finnish dance as well. Dance artists aimed at professionalism and to be punctual in their work as well as creations. A process-oriented attitude turned into an appreciation of completed artworks of first-rate quality and an entertaining manner of production. Dance works became commodities of a culture concentrating on production. (Kaiku & Sutinen 1997, 211)

Mike Featherstone (1991) writes of the topical term 'consumer culture' and describes the manner in which societies are increasingly premised upon the values and structures of capitalistic commodity production. He points out that along with other cultural domains the arts have become infiltrated by market values of exchange that do not necessarily support the more intrinsic qualities of art nor the more concentric values of its traditions. Also the social bonds and distinctions people and artists alike operate within have been influenced by this process and the strategies of commodity circulation. Produced goods and images themselves are used more efficiently in sustaining them. Furthermore, the production and consumption of goods has come to entail an active manipulation of signs. Now they possess multiple associations and have brought about a loss of culturally stable meaning. (Featherstone 1991, 13–15)

I believe this is something that the interviewed dance artists have confronted while creating and producing their own artistic work and thinking of their relationship to the surrounding field of dance as well as the broader society they live in. Keeping up with the ever-shifting currents of culture has proven to be an ordeal to one of the dance artists. She says:

.../I find this world to be very difficult nowadays, because the market economy is increasingly flourishing and commercialism is bubbling up everywhere. Today choreographers are required to renew themselves ever more hysterically and thus to have the maturity to deal with a cruel type of competition . . . to be able to keep one's own ideas, renew oneself, and fight in this ever increasingly commercial and stupefying society./ . . (4F)<sup>191</sup>

While thinking of dance artists in light of the consumerist tendencies described above, they can be understood to be the bearers of their own artistic work. Their bodies and, in effect, their whole manner of being become molded through the ways they work, and the dance pieces that are the products of this work could be viewed as commodities themselves. Furthermore, it is generally the case that the value given to the dance works created by certain choreographers and performed by certain dance artists also defines the way these dance artists themselves are regarded. What is more, according to Featherstone, the "ever-changing flow of commodities" has brought along with it "the problem of reading the status or rank of the bearer of the commodities more complex" (Featherstone 1991, 17). As mentioned before during the mid and late 1990's the amount of dance performances held in the Helsinki area increased considerably. In Finland during this time, the general flow and exchange of commodities and values given to them had also become more intense when compared with the 1980's. In this kind of a situation, in which both the production of new and diverse dance performances increases and the general values of culture become more diverse and fluid, the position of those who have enough symbolic capital and power to credibly judge what is good dance and who are good dance artists becomes heightened. Featherstone, following Douglas and Isherwood's studies, suggests, moreover, that this creates high standards for inclusion or tight techniques of exclusion by which the field of any art is controlled (Douglas & Isherwood 1980, 180 as reported by Featherstone 1991, 17–18).<sup>192</sup> This is certainly something that influences the struggle for recognition and consequent benefits given to an artist in the field of any particular art. Some of the consequences of the state of affairs in the field are discussed in the following paragraphs.

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191. . . ./Minun mielestäni tämä maailma on hirveän vaikea nykyisin, koska markkinatalous vaan kukkii enemmän ja enemmän – kaupallisuus pursuaa joka raosta. Nykyisin koreografialta vaaditaan yhä hysteerisempää uusiutumiskykyä ja siinä mielessä henkistä kypsyyttä, että kykenee tällaiseen erittäin julmaan kilpailuun . . . että pystyy pitämään omat ideansa, uusiutumaan ja tappelemaan tällaisessa kaupallistuvassa ja typeryvässä yhteisössä, joka tämä nyt on./ . . (4F)

192. Wolfgang Welsch relates to this situation by referring to the individualization process that has become heightened through the postmodern condition. He writes: "The more individuals become themselves in an individualistic way, the less will they find other people who share their highly specific views and are therefore potential agents for their artistic recognition. Modern artists cannot have a large public. Individualistic self-creation and social recognition move in opposite directions. Therefore it becomes more and more difficult to achieve the recognition which is necessary for the artwork and for the artist's self-confidence" (Welsch 1997, 24).

### The pressures of maintaining a position in the field

According to the views of a few of the interviewed dance artists keeping to one's own ideas and renewing oneself are not something plainly worked on by dance artists in the field. One of the interviewees found, what he calls, a *pubescent atmosphere* to be prevalent in the freelance field of dance. He explains this to mean that dance is not been concentrated on as art. He says:

.../According to my experience dance in contrast is about a kind of a survival. In other words, what is done is what is liked and what somehow is readily sold. All sorts of pieces are made, but I do not consider them works of art since they lack some sort of a flesh covering their bones. Because it [art] has not been created, on average the freelance field has somehow remained pubescent./... (1M)<sup>193</sup>

He, thus, does not appreciate creating dance works through concentrating on their worth as promoted and sellable commodities. Nevertheless, what most often is the case is that in order for works to reach an audience they must be advertised and made marketable. Dance artists producing their own works do this more and more efficiently. In my experience in the 1990's dance artists in Finland became more aware of creating a public image and producing refined advertisements for their dance pieces. Added to this, the media itself became more interested in all kinds of art, including dance, during the same period.

One of the interviewed dance artists comments on this tendency with an opposite remark and by relating that it has been a problem for him that he has not concentrated on his public image:

.../I've never tried to make any abstractions of myself in any situation. I've aimed at an openness in my artistic work. In relation to many things this has been a mistake. But it is my own path that I have proceeded through. People have a difficult time in pigeon-holing me and this creates problems. They don't know if I am a bird or a fish./... (3M)<sup>194</sup>

Another of the dance artists shows an implicit awareness of the benefits of freelance dance artists being mindful of creating better public relations and wished that he himself were more skillful at it:

.../I feel that one should have a capacity to handle public relations – a certain, I am sorry to say, capacity to fawn would be nice. If one could do this, things might be a bit easier, although it might not necessarily be so. This does not mean selling oneself – some do this also, for

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193. .../Minun kokemukseni mukaan sen sijaan [tanssi] on ollut sellaista selviytymistä, survivalia. Eli on tehty sitä, mistä pidetään tai mikä menee jollakin tavalla kaupaksi. ... Kaiken maailman juttuja tehdään mutta minä en koe niitä taideteoksiksi, koska niistä puuttuu joku sellainen liha luiden ympäriltä. Kun sitä ei olla tehty, niin koko taiteen ala on keskimäärin freelancekentällä jäänyt jotenkin puberteettiseksi./... (1M)

194. .../Minä en ole koskaan pyrkinyt abstrahoimaan itseäni missään tilanteessa. Kyllä minä olen pyrkinyt avoimuuteen tässä taiteilijan työssä. Ja se onkin ollut varmasti monen asian kannalta virhetikki. Mutta se on minun oma tieni, mitä minä olen kulkenut. Ihmisten on hirveän vaikea lokeroida minua mihinkään ja siitä tulee ongelmia. Ne eivät tiedä olenko lintu vai kala./... (3M)

sure./.../But if one could be diplomatic in one's fawning without selling oneself. It would be very good. Dance is created in a dance studio, but if it remains there it is to no avail. One must be able to perform as well. In freelance dance a sort of a self-presentation, a certain kind of an attitude of marketing would be great to have./... (1M)<sup>195</sup>

Even if the above two dance artists had not consciously concentrated on creating a "concept" of themselves as artists nor of their artistic style and artistic work, they felt the pressure to think about what doing so or not doing so resulted in. This means that they are inclined to take some kind of stand in relation to the tendency to strive for publicity and felt that it influenced their position in the field of dance.

The interviewed dance artists generally do not appreciate the pressures to conform to the standards that the intensified emphasis on productivity and publicity has brought along with it. They are concerned with how it affects their art. One of them considers that the commodification and marketing of dance pieces is a risky affair. For him dance is more of a philosophical questioning, and he seems to believe that this characteristic of dance is lost when it is marketed:

.../We were talking about marketing weren't we? They are two rather different things. Marketing [dance] is difficult because I think dance at its best is philosophy. . . Words cannot grasp things that are expressible in movement. . . It is philosophy. It is, as it were, a sensitive, deep, and internal thing for a dancer. How could one market this and attach it to different measurements and values?/. . . (1M)<sup>196</sup>

How the interviewed dance artists relate to their bodies and dance will be further explored in chapters 10, 11, and 12. What is noteworthy here is that the quotation speaks of the difficulty of marketing dance in a way that its innermost characteristic remains intact. Still, according to the discussions in the interviews, one of the concerns of receiving wider publicity and achieving recognition for dance was the question of making the contents of dance more approachable to the audience. The same dance artist as quoted above, however, has adopted controversial stance on this. He says:

.../Now I strongly feel that if I were to intensely advertise or explain my own dance works, I would be making them banal. I might necessarily not even be able to verbalize what happens

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195. . . /Minä koen, että pitäisi olla sellaisia henkisiä ominaisuuksia että osaa suhdetoiminnan – tietynlaista, ikävä sanoa, nuolemista olisi kiva osata. Jos sitä osaisi niin asiat voisi olla vähän helpompia – mutta ei välttämättä. Se ei siis tarkoita sitä, että niin kuin myisi itsensä, jotkuthan varmasti sitäkin tekevät./... / Jos osaisi kuitenkin olla diplomaattinen ja nuoleskella myymättä itseään, olisi äärettömän hienoa. Tanssia tehdään tanssisalissa, [mutta] jos se sinne jää niin se ei auta. Kyllä pitää päästä esiintymäänkin. Freelancepuolella tällainen itsensä esilletuominen, tietynlainen markkinointihenkisyyys olisi hieno omata./... (1M)

196. . . /Eikö kysymyksessä ollut se markkinointi. . . Ne kun taas ovat kaksi vähän eri asiaa. Markkinointi on vaikeata sen takia kun tanssi on minun mielestäni parhaimmillaan filosofia. . . Sanat eivät pysty tavoittamaan sellaisia asioita, joita pystyy sanomaan liikkeen kautta. . . Se on filosofia. Se on niin kuin sellainen arka, syvä ja sisäinen asia tanssijalle. Mene sitä nyt sitten jotenkin markkinoimaan ja asettamaan jotenkin toisiin mitta-asteikkoihin ja arvoihin./... (1M)

in them. Lately dancers have started to verbalize these matters in a commendatory manner. It is good that dance is translated into clear language for others. Yet, I hope that the consequence is not that the concrete practices of dance become affected./.../one dancer did say that one has to create such dance pieces that other people apart from dancers understand. If s/he does so that's fine. Yet I hope her/his works do not become banal, something like "The Bold and the Beautiful" in dance, since this would be a disservice [to dance]./.../(1M)<sup>197</sup>

Despite considering it worthy to speak about dance, this dance artist does not want dance to become sheer entertainment. In the interviews he also tells us, that he actually finds that there are only a very few dance artists in the field who have the talent and courage to develop their own true interest in dance, thus really familiarizing themselves with it as an art and, through the consequent insights, create their dance pieces.

Another dance artist agrees by saying that:

.../Regrettably only a few dancers know what they're doing. They simply do something or wonder about what they're doing as work either comes or does not come by./.../(4F)<sup>198</sup>

She too was concerned with the quality of dance produced. She speaks of a lack of original creations in dance found in the freelance field and argues that it is the conditions of the field that are behind this.

.../In my view everything in this art form currently looks the same. This is the outcome of not being independent, of not searching for such values that I find interesting – that people individuate themselves. [Here] people are not encouraged to work, to find things in an original way. Dancers are in general not encouraged to think originally. I feel that it is a bit like the freelance field of dance had fallen ill./.../(4F)<sup>199</sup>

This dance artist earlier told us that she finds the circumstances to have been different in the 1980's. In her view then dance artists investigated dance with integrity. Below she explains what has brought about the new state of affairs in her view:

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197. .../Minulla tuli nyt voimakkaasti sellainen olo, että jos minä alkaisin hirveästi markkinoida tai selittää omia teoksiani minä banalisaisin niitä. En minä välttämättä osaa ollenkaan verbalisoida mitä niissä edes tapahtuu. Viime aikoina tanssijat ovat kyllä kiitettävästi alkaneet verbalisoimaan näitä asioita. On ihan hyvä, että tanssia käännetään vähän niin kuin selkokielelle muillekin. Toivon, että se ei johdan siihen, että se alkaa vaikuttaa siihen tekemiseen./.../yksi tanssija sanoi asiasta, että pitää tehdä sellaisia tanssiteoksia, että niitä ymmärtää muutkin kuin tanssijat. Jos hän niin tekee, niin tehkööt. Toivottavasti siitä ei tule banaalia, niin kuin "Kauniit ja Rohkeat" tanssien, koska sehän olisi niin kuin karhunpalvelus./.../(1M)

198. .../Valitettavasti harva tanssija tietää, mitä tekee. Ne vain tekevät jotakin tai ihmettelevät, sitä mitä he tekevät, kun työtä vain tulee tai ei tule./.../(4N)

199. .../Minun mielestä tässä taidemuodossa kaikki näyttää nyt samalta. Se johtuu tällaisesta epäitsenäisyydestä, että ei haeta niitä semmoisia minun mielestä mielenkiintoisia arvoja, ja sitä, että ihminen jotenkin eriytyy. [Täällä] ei kannusteta työskentelyyn, siihen, että haettaisiin [asioita] omintakeisesti. Tanssijoita ei kannusteta omintakeiseen ajatteluun yleensä. Minusta tämä on vähän niin kuin sairastunut tämä freelancekenttä./.../(4N)

.../People circulate around their own small reality and this is interpreted in an ever cumulative manner so that the thing itself, creating dance; developing and investigating it as well as communicating with it, is not so important. Values that are formed in this seclusion become ever more inbred./.../What becomes a part of this sort of an atmosphere is a favoritism, which is quite imaginary and favors mediocrity. Original and more difficultly grasped things are rejected more easily. This hinders things and affects the level and development of dance art. This directly influences a consensus. Everybody starts to fear that they will be neglected. Thus, they keenly make sure that they act in a way that is accepted. What is more, usually in a small town syndrome there are only two or three people in power. They regulate the subject matter they are involved in through a form of very tight control./... (4N)<sup>200</sup>

As a result, she judges that the smallness of the field and the need to be accepted, to receive recognition and financial support, affects the artistic work produced in the field as well.

It is true that the freelance field of dance in Helsinki is relatively small. According to the member registers of the Union of Finnish Dance Artists during the late 1990's there were little less than 400 dance artists living in the Helsinki area. Not all, however, were freelance dance artists. Some of them had a regular position in dance companies and others, concentrating on teaching dance, maintained similar positions in dance schools. Again in my experience, the members of the field actively engaged in independent artistic production, which obviously include other members like dance producers, dance critics, musicians, light-, set- and costume-designer etc., are often familiar with the rest through working and communicating with them, hearing of others who have done so, or seeing them perform. Dance, furthermore, is a very collective art requiring the cooperation of a number of people, whose approach and understanding of dance influences the other people worked with. It is also common that a relatively small number of freelance dancers, who have established themselves as skillful dancers, circulate and perform the pieces of various different choreographers. Their bodily abilities and style of comportment bear traces of the dance pieces and types of dance they have worked with and reduce the diversity of dancing bodies seen in performance. A concentric and homogenizing tendency is thus immanent in the practices of the freelance field of dance in Helsinki which is quite natural when people are working together within a particular tradition and local field of dance.

However, the previous quotation also indicates the dance artist acknowledging that the field's support systems are insufficient to meet the creative needs of its artists. Indeed, it is often said that the instances offering support are too few and the amount of financial assistance given is too little to sustain all the dance work done (cf. Suhonen 2000; 1999;

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200. .../Pyöritään sen oman pienen [todellisuuden] ympärillä ja siitä luodaan aina kumulatiivisia tulkin-toja niin, että varsinainen asia, tämän tanssin tekeminen; sen kehittäminen ja tutkiminen sekä kommuni-kaatio, ei ole niin tärkeätä. Tässä eristäytyneisyydessä muodostuneet arvot muuttuvat kokoajan sisäsiittoi-semmiksi./.../Tällaiseen ilmapiiriin tulee sellaisia suosimisjärjestyksiä, jotka ovat imaginaarisia ja suo-sivat keskinkertaisuutta. Omaperäisiä ja vaikeammin avautuvia asioita torjutaan helpommin. Se jarruttaa ja vaikuttaa tanssitaiteen tasoon ja kehittymiseen. Siitä sitten tulee suoraan tämä konsensusilmiö. Kaikki rupeavat pelkäämään, että he joutuvat paitsiotilanteeseen. Täten he katsovat tarkasti, että toimivat tavalla, joka on hyväksyttyä. Pikkukaupunki syndroomassa on vielä yleensä näitä valtaihmisiä kaksi tai kolme. Ne sääntelee tätä asiaa sitten hyvin tiukasti kontrolloiden./... (4N).

Laakkonen 1999; 1997; Karhunen & Smolander 1995).<sup>201</sup> The quotation, however, additionally shows that the distribution of economic support given to dance artists is not evenly regulated. It implies what also Featherstone demonstrated; namely, that because of the variety of dance styles currently utilized in Finland and constantly shifting cultural values, it is difficult to discern what is good dance and this allows those in power to maintain a tight grip on the dance scene. This in turn tends to restrict the number of acknowledged dance artists who are given enough financial support to concentrate on their artistic endeavors more intensely. Such control, when maintained by a rather small number of dance and art professionals with their individual preferences and conceptions of what (good) dance is as well as the limited amount of economic support in a situation where a paradoxical variety of dance styles exists, threatens to be an impediment to the emergence of different or original dance works.

These circumstances create a situation where freelance dance artists most likely find themselves entering into a rather intense struggle or competition to gain a position in which their particular work is valued. Indeed, one of the dance artists speaks in the following way about being a dance artist in the field of freelance dance:

. . ./A sort of a hardness, which is very contradictory – I think that dancers should be very sensitive, because dance is a very sensitive form of art. At least I experience it in such a way that it is a fine and sensitive form of art. On the other hand you should be very tough in the field of freelance dance to cope with all kinds of challenging circumstances. One has to compete intensely for money, rehearsal space and everything./ . . .(1M)<sup>202</sup>

This competition has to do with gaining a position where their work is valued and where they are supported in their artistic endeavors. To this end the dance artists, through their creations, first of all must reach the attention of the supportive and distributive personnel (in other words those in control of grants and funds) and, to a certain extent at least agree, with their conceptions of dance. How else can one build a successful reputation than through relating to the public and other dance professionals in a positive way? And in a situation in which the economic and material circumstances are restricted and the struggle for recognition intense, a dance artist usually needs to have perseverance and work hard in order to achieve and maintain her or his position in the field.

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201. Added to this, it is often the case that when individual dance artists become so appreciated that they start receiving funding through the grants through which the freelance field mostly operates, after a few years they have been acknowledged and given grants by all the possible organizations. It takes a while before they will be funded again by these same sources.

202. . . ./Tietynlainen kovuus, mikä on taas hirveän paljon ristiriidassa. Minä koen, että tanssijoiden tulisi olla hirvittävän herkkä, koska tanssi on hirvittävän herkkä taiteenlaji. Ainakin minä koen sen niin, että se on hienovarainen ja herkkä taiteenlaji ja sitten sinun toisaalta pitäisi olla hirveän kova pärjätäksesi freelancekentällä kaikenmaailman olosuhteita vastaan. Kaiken maailman rahoista, harjoitustiloista ja kaikesta vaan on kynsin hampain kilpailtava./ . . .(1M)

### **The lack of economic support and spectators**

The problem of finances was referred to above and it was said that economic support is rather scarce in the field of freelance dance in Helsinki. Here are some more extracts addressing this issue. One of the dance artists asserts the general commercialism of western society to have affected art politics in Finland too. He says:

.../Politicians think that if we are not capable of covering more expenses through performance then dance is not supportable as nowadays a responsibility for profit is to a large extent effective. This means that if we want to create something other than entertainment we remain quite penniless./... (3M)<sup>203</sup>

By the late 1990's it was rare that independent dance productions received a larger budget (including salaries) than 150,000 Finnish marks for creating a dance piece, which more realistically would require half a million Finnish marks. Dance is often an expensive art to produce as it requires rehearsal and performance space for a longer period of time and involves a rather large number of people (a choreographer, dancers, costume-, set-, and light-designers, musicians, producers etc.) working on it for a performance to be realized. Commercial companies or enterprises seldom support dance. The sources that do so grant only small amounts of money at a time. Small audiences do not generate much money through ticket sales, and the money that is earned is often used to cover the costs of renting the rehearsal and performance venue. In most cases grants are used firstly to cover the costs of production and what remains is distributed as wages to the artists who worked on the production. (cf. Suhonen 1999, 32)

This not only means that dance works are produced with low budgets, but the undesirable fact that,

.../Well of course that I will never earn money. Our circumstances continue to be such that because we like what we do, we have to do it underpriced/paid./... (3M)<sup>204</sup>

Another dance artist is frustrated with this situation and the low wages that freelance dancers receive. He says:

.../How could dancers start pricing their work, as freelance dancers are nowadays assumed to? Now me too, I have been offered work: four performances, two months of rehearsing, a gross salary of 1500 marks, which is below the minimum wages [suggested by the Union of Finnish Dance Artists]. If individual dance artists start to price themselves they will soon price themselves out of the market./... (1M)<sup>205</sup>

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203. .../Poliitikot ajattelevat, että jos me emme itse pysty kattamaan enemmän tuloja esityksillä niin silloin se [tanssi] ei ole yhtään kannattavaa, kun nyt on olemassa tällainen tulosvastuullisuus hyvin pitkälle. Se tarkoittaa sitä, että jos me haluamme tehdä muuta kuin viihdettä me olemme kyllä aika pennittömiä./... (3M)

204. .../No tietysti se, että minä en saa koskaan rahaa. Meidän tilanne on edelleen se, että koska pidämme siitä, mitä teemme, jouduimme tekemään sitä alihintaan./... (3M)

It is not uncommon for freelance dance artists to work for such low wages. One thousand five hundred Finnish marks is approximately one fifth of a dancer's monthly salary as recommended by the Union of Finnish Dance Artists. At least two recent reports show that in Finland freelance dance artists often work with a very limited amount of money or even create productions without paying themselves (cf. Suhonen 1999; Jännes 1998). What the above quote further implies is that there is not much that a dancer can do about this situation if she or he wants to continue performing. If a dancer asks for higher wages than those on offer, he or she is easily replaced by another who is more eager to work and does not care about financial matters. This is, if not a proven fact, at least something dance artists fear. To survive, freelance dance artists often teach dance, or do other jobs, or simply rely on unemployment benefits to supplement their primary artistic work. (Suhonen 1999, 32; Jännes 1998, 60–62)

What the previous discussion on the competition for recognition and the limited amount of acknowledgement and economic support available to freelance dance artists point towards, is that the politico-economical status and the power structures of the field permeate these dance artists' lives. They affect the choices they make concerning the way they work already by simply being conditions they must be aware of and relate to while managing their careers in dance. An anxiety over earning a livelihood and being able to do their artistic work affects their emotional being. They live with an uncertainty which one of dance artists speaks of through considering what is required of a freelance dancer:

.../If one practices dance in the freelance field of dance/.../what is imperative is a capacity to endure uncertainty. Nothing is certain. It is not certain that one gets to dance in some piece, then it is not certain if this piece is performed in the end. If it is performed it is not certain that one gets paid. All sorts of uncertainties must be endured./... (1M)<sup>206</sup>

Another says:

.../And then we come to the question of what are the possibilities to function as a freelancer. It is terrible that this practice is not continuous. There is no security anywhere./... (4F)<sup>207</sup>

These passages speak of the necessity of enduring uncertainty but also in my view imply an anxiousness of surviving the lack of support. Obviously the life-standards shaping the

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205 .../Miten tanssijat alkaisivat hinnoittelemaan työnsä, kuten nykyään freelancetanssijoilta oletetaan? Minullekin on nyt tarjottu töitä: neljä esitystä, kaksi kuukautta harjoittelua, palkka bruttona 1500 mk, joka on alle kaikkien normien. Jos yksittäinen tanssija alkaa hinnoitella itsensä, se hinnoittelee itsensä helposti markkinoilta ulos./... (1M)

206. .../Jos toimii freelancekentällä/.../ehdotonta on tällainen epävarmuuden kestäminen. Ei ole mitään varmaa. Ei ole varmaa pääseekö johonkin juttuun mukaan, sitten että toteutuuko se juttu loppujen lopuksi ja, jos toteutuu, niin saako siitä sitten rahaa. Kaikki mahdolliset epävarmuudet on kestättävä./... (1M)

207. .../Ja sitten tietenkin tuosta tullaan siihen, että kun on vapaatekijä niin, miten se sitten on niin kuin, minkälaisia mahdollisuuksia täällä on toimia. Sehän on kauheata kun se ei ole jatkuvaa tämä toiminta. Ei ole mitään turvaa missään./... (4N)

everyday life of freelance dance artists also are somewhat dependent on the above matters. But so is the possibility of continuing to work as a dance artist.<sup>208</sup>

Another topic that was addressed, which in my view exemplifies the constraints of the freelance field of dance in Helsinki, is a lack of a large enough audience following what is going on in freelance dance. One of the dance artists longs for a larger audience. He says:

.../Yes, I want to clearly to say something to the audience and it is always a disappointment when I don't reach more people./... (1M)<sup>209</sup>

Another says:

.../As this is a performing art and one's own skill increases, appetite grows while eating. That is, one would like the amount of people one communicates with to increase./.../It is important to me that I want more people to communicate with. So much so that I'd like to receive an audience even abroad./... (4F)<sup>210</sup>

Dance indeed is a performing art made to be shared by an audience and hopefully appreciated by it. The dance artists quoted above show that they would like their art and objectives to be witnessed by more people. A larger audience or an altogether new one would obviously bring along with it benefits such as a broader recognition of dance occurring in the freelance field as well as the particular dance artists whose performances were attended. Gaining an audience abroad is furthermore generally considered to enhance a dance artist's reputation. But creating connections with foreign organizations and artists often requires much work and special concentration. Traveling to perform abroad in turn would require extra financial resources. These are problems not all artists are willing to face. In Helsinki itself the audience for contemporary freelance dance, despite its increasing numbers, is still too small to support many dance performances (cf. Jännes 1998, 54).

In my experience, a large part of the audience of freelance field dance productions consists of other dance and art professionals following what is going on in the field. What obviously affects this situation is the somewhat marginal position of contemporary dance in society in general. But some further causes might be the fact that freelance dance performances are shown at a variety of locales and even places not ordinarily used for performance, which often offer only small seating spaces for the audience. Added to this, a lack of large-scale advertising as well as the unfamiliarity of many of the freelance dance artists to the general public makes it difficult for the public at large to come and follow freelance dance

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208. The previous two concerns are something that become more evident in the following section where the individual struggles to create a position in the field the dance artists have experienced are discussed.

209. .../Kyllä minä haluan selkeästi sanoa jotain yleisölle ja se on aina pettymys, kun ei tavoita enempää ihmisiä./... (3M)

210. .../Kun tämä on esittävä taidemuoto ja oma taito lisääntyy ruokahalu kasvaa syödessä. Eli haluaisi myöskin, että määrä, jonka kanssa kommunikoi lisääntyy./.../Minulle on tärkeätä, että haluaisin enemmän kenen kanssa kommunikoida – sitä yleisöä – ihan niin, että se aukeaisi tästä Suomen rajojen ulkopuolelle./... (4N)

productions unless already genuinely interested. After a few years the audience that does attend the performances also becomes familiar with the style of distinct dance artists and thus it might be natural for a dance artist to crave encountering a different audience to see how it would react to their art.

### **Discontent with criticism**

Apart from being anxious about the size of the audience, the interviewed dance artists were worried about how it and dance critics perceive dance. In reading through the interview material it seemed to me that they felt that dance critics determine to a large extent what is valued as good dance art. Indeed the task of daily dance critics is to make public statements about the nature of dance works accessible to readers at large. They are the ones who take a very public and clearly defined stand in relation to the various dance works and events they witness and review. Dance criticism reviewing dance performances has traditionally been concerned with judging and evaluating what is good dance. And as Marcia B. Siegel furthermore notes it is common "that many people think that the business of a critic is establishing and protecting norms" (Siegel 1998, 91). Roger Copeland, Marshall Cohen, and Sally Banes show that another everyday purpose of daily dance reviews is as "consumer guides" portraying the nature of dance pieces in a limited amount of space in newspaper and magazine columns enabling possible spectators to decide which performances to attend (Copeland & Cohen 1983, 423; Banes 1994, 25).<sup>211</sup>

The positive side of daily reviews and dance criticism obviously is that they, alongside of the dance artists themselves, work rather efficiently in ensuring that dance is appreciated by the societies it is found in. Moreover if one agrees with Haapala's, Becker's, and Bourdieu's view that artworlds or fields of art, to an important extent, circulate around the meanings and values given to artworks, one also comes to acknowledge the necessity of creating such interpretations and conversing about dance and dance pieces. Haapala even distinguishes critical practices involving comparison or evaluation as one important structural conventions

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211. In 1994 Sally Banes wrote that until the current generation of dance critics, dance criticism had not professionalized itself as an academic discipline. She argues that many American dance critics have joined the part of academia that works on dance theory and studies alongside of their journalism. These comments were made during the conference of the Dance Critics Association, enhancing dance criticism. (Banes 1994, 16–18) To me, in the Finnish context it likewise is starting to be more common that dance critics are people associated with the academic world. Many of them have received an academic education, written about Finnish and foreign dance history, done other research on dance as well as worked in situations to enhance knowledge about and the practices of dance. This I surmise has increased a historical reading of dance, which no longer altogether neglects dance's relation to the more general cultural atmosphere of its time. Nowadays dance criticism is more and more about a contextualized analysis acknowledging the variety of styles influencing contemporary dance. Current reviews more often conform to what Sally Banes maintains dance criticism to be all about. She finds that it is concerned with 1) describing what the performers did on stage and the elements the work consisted of, 2) interpreting what they conveyed, what the performance meant, 3) evaluating if the above were done successfully and if the work was good and 4) giving a contextual explanation of how the work relates to the aesthetic and historical features of the tradition of dance (Banes 1994, 25).

characteristic of artworlds (Haapala 2000, 147). Discussion of the nature, meaning, and value of particular dance events through a historical awareness of their tradition and the ideas that adhere to them is an important means of understanding dance. It enhances our fore-knowledge and sensitivity to dance. Yet, the dance artists did not seem very content with dance criticism. Here are several passages addressing the dance artists' notions about reviews and dance critics.

One of the dance artists does not share the perspective on dance that she believes dance critics to have while reviewing dance.

.../Dance is most often perceived so emotionally. In this country it is not received by any means in an intellectual manner. It is viewed in an odd way: "What the hell are they up to?". It is not known how to interpret the form of a dance. This is a tremendous hindrance. Critics do not understand a thing about form. Dance is only understood to be about expression and entertaining movement. What kind of dance is that?/. . ./It is no art./. . . (4F)<sup>212</sup>

Another similarly does not share the views presented in some reviews:

.../If it is said that everything is marvelous, when one sees that people on stage are stiff and are not on top of their tasks, it is depressing. What good do such reviews do?/. . . (1M)<sup>213</sup>

And he is concerned how reviews influence the general public:

.../One shouldn't let reviews affect one too much. But I find that the manner in which dance is reviewed in newspapers greatly influences people who are not familiar with dance./. . . (1M)<sup>214</sup>

Another says that better reviews on dance would help him understand the kind of art he himself practices:

.../If we had such dance critics, who would write a bit more analytically, I might have more to say about my own dance style./. . . (3M)<sup>215</sup>

In creating dance works and performing them, dance artists generally relate to dance from a different perspective than its receivers and critics, who mostly are not engaged in the concrete processes of creation or the problems related to struggling for recognition in the

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212. . . /Tanssia yleensä katsotaan niin emotionaalisesti. Tässä maassa sitä ei osata katsoa millään tavalla älyllistäen. Sitä katsotaan ihan ihmeellisesti: "Mitä vittua tuo tuolla oikein touhuaa?". Sitä muotoa ei osata tulkita ja se on hirvittävä vaje. Niin kriitikko ei ymmärrä muodoista hevön. . . Se [tanssi] on vain sitä ilmaisuja ja kivoja liikkeitä. Mitäs se semmoinen tanssi on?/. . ./Ei se ole mitään taidetta./. . . (4N)

213. . . /Jos sanotaan, että kaikki on upeata ja kun näkee, että ihmiset lavalla ovat puupökölöitä, jotka eivät ole tehtäviensä tasalla, niin se on masentavaa. Mitä tekemistä taidekriitikillä on silloin?/. . . (1M)

214. . . /Eihän kritiikin pitä antaa vaikutta hirveästi, mutta kun minä koen, että se mitä kirjoitetaan tuolla lehdissä tanssikriittikinä on alaa tuntemattomalle ihmiselle hirveän tärkeitä./. . . (1M)

215. . . /Jos meillä olisi sellaisia tanssikriitikkoja, jotka kirjoittaisivat vähän analyttisemmin, minulla voisi olla enemmän sanottavaa omasta tanssityylistäni./. . . (3M)

field. It is not uncommon that artists disagree with their critics and might even enter into debates with them concerning their art. In fact, Haapala argues that evaluating contemporaneous dance pieces is a somewhat tentative affair, since the artworld does not yet possess any clear criteria for determining good art from bad art. These premises become established through time when the meaning of specific styles and artworks for the later practices of art is more observable. In his view discussing or reviewing contemporaneous works of art is more of a rhetorical affirmation instead of determining any more established value-qualities relating to a piece of art. (Haapala 2000, 131) In being somewhat disappointed with the reviews they have been confronted with, perhaps the interviewees already perceive dance in another way to the general public. Perhaps in their work they are attempting to portray something that is not yet generally established as valuable or conventional to contemporary dance.

There is no one right interpretation of dance pieces and dance performance. In fact, Merleau-Ponty argues that art works are "polymorphous expressions of being". They are open to endless interpretation. Still the meanings given to a specific artwork are also entwined with the meanings given to other artworks of the same form of art. This is so firstly because artworks come into being in a field opened by the creation of previous works of art and secondly because the positions they occupy in this field depend on how they relate to the other works that have been created and will be created in the future. But as an artist works in a world which simultaneously evaluates her or his performance and works, the nature of an artist or what the artist has to give to an artworld likewise becomes observed and delineated. (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993c, 137, 138, 149; Haapala 2000, 147)

As one of the interviewees suggests in relation to dance reviews, I believe that the significance the dance artists give to dance criticism as well as their interest in addressing new audiences partly indicates the fact that they themselves also learn of their own artistic achievements through the reactions of others. I take it also to be related to the fact that the views of others strongly influence their position in their field of dance. Merleau-Ponty writes about the uncertainty of artistic expression: "Expression is like a step in the fog – no one can say where, if anywhere, it will lead" (Merleau-Ponty 1991/1964a, 3). What he demonstrates with this line is that artistic expression is in some manner unprecedented and this it is even for artists themselves. Already in creating artworks and when regarding their completed works, artists often notice that the intention which motivated the creation of the work is being or has been transformed by the materials and the process of creation itself. Consequently, artists are not the full masters of their own creations. (Merleau-Ponty 1991/1964a, 3; Singer 1996/1993, 237) Merleau-Ponty also suggests that the nature of an artist's expression is permeated by the general style of her or his existence. This colors all her or his acts in a manner which is not separable from her or his life. Therefore, the artist her- or himself is blind to it. He writes:

Even when the painter has already painted, and even if he has become in some respects master of himself, what is given to him with his style is not a manner, a certain number of procedures or tics he can inventory, but a mode of formulation that is just as recognizable for others and just as little visible to him as his silhouette or his everyday gestures. (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 90)

Added to this it is often the case that artists are so engrossed in their artistic tasks, their intention and the processes of creation, that they can hardly perceive their work without these problems affecting their perceptions (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 91). What is more, in producing a new and singular work of art, artists have no way of knowing beforehand how the public will react to it (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993a, 69). Thus, one could infer that dance artists have a better understanding of their artistic accomplishments by relating their own experiences and intentions to the experiences and interpretations others have of their dancing and dance pieces. It is through the situations we find ourselves in, the people in them, and the way they relate to the world and us that we learn about ourselves and become recognized as certain kinds of people or artists (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 56).

Indeed, to have a grasp of the style of their performance particularly dancing/performing dance artists are especially reliant on the reactions of others. They do not have a chance to see themselves in motion as others do. They can feel themselves in motion and even see parts of their body moving, but they cannot obtain a view of its whole visibility directly. Still the understanding of the nature of their dancing and their dance works dance artist may gain through others never provides a complete view since, "the significance which the work has in excess of the painter's intended meaning involves it in a multitude of relationships which are only faintly reflected in short histories of painting and even in psychological studies of the painter . . ." or in accounts of how others have experienced the impact of certain dance artists' dancing or dance pieces. (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 105) To understand more the dance artist needs endless re-flections; new encounters with spectators, new reviews, new comments given by peers, new video-screening of their work, and ultimately new processes of creating dance, new performances and experiences.

In addition to learning about oneself and becoming established as a certain kind of artist through the manner critics and audiences relate to their work, it is worth noting, that there are some everyday concerns related to presenting one's work and reviews. I assume that the transitory nature of dance and the way in which dance performances are organized in the field of freelance dance have an effect on the worries freelance dance artists have concerning reviews. It is customary that the dance works presented in the freelance field of dance are only performed a few times during a relatively short time span. They are, furthermore, often never performed again. These dance works need immediate public recognition and participation by their audiences. As reviews partly act as consumer guides, I believe that freelance dance artists hope for their works to be reviewed and this to be done even in a positive light. As already suggested, dance reviews also affect the reputation of performing artists and choreographers which in turn influence their positions in the field. Dance reviews, moreover, still remain one of the most easily accessible historical documents depicting the nature of the dance pieces created in certain periods of time. So they are important in attracting dance audiences to certain performances, demonstrating and defining the nature of particular dance works, the accomplishments of particular dance artists as well as the tradition of dance more generally.

In sum, the constraints that the interviewees discuss in this section pivot around the necessity for freelance dance artists to become publicly recognized and supported in order

to be able to survive as dance artists. However, the interviewees did not value such an approach to creating dance pieces that is influenced by prevalent market values and trends. They are interested in original dance and would rather have it appreciated as such. They show that, with the lack of sufficient symbolic capital or public recognition and economic support, they struggle to renew themselves, understand the nature of their artistic style, and make their art accessible to the public without sacrificing its innermost nature in addition to competing for material resources and social recognition. It is in relation to these issues that they seem to feel that reviews of their work do not support their artistic activities.

### 10.3 Individual Struggles in the Field

Three of the four interviewed dance artists gave explicit accounts of ways in which they have attempted to come to terms with the restrictions they have faced in the field. These stories describe lived life, becoming aware of the circumstances in which they live, choices made, and actions taken in relation to the field mostly to ensure the continuation of each dance artist's artistic endeavors. To understand what the dance artists related to me, I will first present a concept originating in Merleau-Ponty's thinking which both Susan Kozel and Jaana Parviainen have applied in their phenomenological dance studies.

In *Eye and Mind* Merleau-Ponty writes:

The eye sees the world, and what it would need to be a painting, sees what keeps a painting from being itself, sees – on the palette – the colors awaited by the painting, and sees, once it is done, the painting that answers to the inadequacies just as it sees the paintings of others as other answers to other inadequacies. (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993c, 127)

With these lines Merleau-Ponty claims that the painter attempts to create something that existed only latently before the painting brought it to life. The painter turns an invisible domain, an only silently or latently existent one, into a visible and concretely shareable one. Kozel continues to follow Merleau-Ponty's idea of the painter expressing what he refers to as *inadequacies* the painter perceives to need a painted expression. But she uses the French term '*manque*' found in the original version of *Eye and Mind*, that is *L'oeil et l'esprit* (1961).<sup>216</sup> In Kozel's view the French term is richer in connotation and alludes to "loss, lack, missing, longing, anguish and, most significantly, desire that is a continuous reaching outwards" (Kozel 1998/1994 101). *Manque* is, thus, related to the constant process of becoming what we live with, since, as Kozel points out, it is a desire, a generating force, that compels an artist's work to make amends for worldly or artistic shortcomings. She relates this desire to our aspiration towards a merging which always is only on the verge of realizing itself and which Merleau-Ponty discussed in his reversibility thesis. (Kozel 1998/1998, 102)

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216. *L'oeil et l'esprit* was first published in January 1961 as an essay in the first volume of *Art de France*. Gallimard published it as a short monograph in 1964. (Johnson 1996/1993, 36)

(Through the reversibility thesis and the concept of the flesh it became clear that the phenomena we experience retain a difference or otherness that is never exactly embraced. There is always more to a phenomenon than we can perceive, and we can never wholly grasp its entire significance. We may come close to it, gain a better sense of it, but it always retains something hidden, something yet to be questioned. Nevertheless, while phenomena, entities, or things elude complete comprehension, they keep us in motion. Through a sort of a leakage we come upon something other than we anticipated. In *The Visible and the Invisible* Merleau-Ponty actually writes that our ability to be in *ec-stacy* in the world, that is, to have a world a part of which we are, relies exactly on this *manque* or lack. We are a fissure, an empty fold, that is constantly filled by the plenitude of the world, that is the flesh of the world, in the form of being constantly menaced and re-filled with another *this*, another (inarticulate) phenomenality<sup>217</sup> permeating our being. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 52–54)<sup>218</sup>)

Parviainen elaborates upon Kozel's notions of *manque* and points out that it refers to that facticity in which instead of experiencing belongingness to the world we experience it by missing and longing for it. *Manque* refers to the primordial and insurmountable distance behind all our interaction with the world and others. It is what drives us to create and find connection with others and otherness. She writes: "*Manque* is fundamental to our rapport with others and the world, since there is a distance between me and the other, I desire the other but it always escapes me. There is constantly a gap or distance, which is necessary to sustain in striving" (Parviainen 1998, 142).

Understood in this vein *manque* also relates to a possibility our lives are based upon – a possibility of a process, a passage towards something, and of that which becomes, which defines our being. In the end, it is about our directedness towards the world where we remain open to the validation or invalidation of our expectations according to the emergence of continuously renewed situations, perceptions, and understandings (cf. Dastur 2000). In fact,

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217. Merleau-Ponty also describes this primordial something, which permeates our being, by calling it among other things a "momentary desire", a "new sense-giving intention", a "vague fever" and in relation to language a "thought which is struggling to establish itself" as well as this "yet unspoken meaning" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 183, 389; 1996/1993a, 69; Madison 1990/1981, 114).

218. The reversibility thesis actually means that being or the sensate world exists at the intersections of the dimensions of being and that we, human subjects, are the locus – that chiasm – through which the upsurge of flesh or Being comes to occur (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 84, 117). In discussing the movement of Being which is graspable only through that of being, Gary Madison also shows that in Merleau-Ponty's thinking it involves a desire. Being is something that "never fully is" and to be realized needs to be articulated, experienced, and given meaning to, by us. It is as if Being itself would want to be come self-aware; so it turns upon itself. This is something that Merleau-Ponty describes while discussing vision as a movement of Being and stating that: "there is a fundamental narcissism of all vision" (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 139). The realization of Being in being is, as Madison points out, the ontological base of expression (Madison 1990/1981, 127). In applying this idea to intersubjectivity Madison writes: "It is the desire of self which is at the same time the desire of another that makes the carnal subject seize hold of himself so as to present himself to another desire: it is in this desire that expression is born . . . the seeing subject desires to see himself seeing, and it is in another vision that he must be reflected, as in a mirror. And so in order to seduce, fascinate, and captivate this other vision he produces gestures and sounds which are the sublimation of his own flesh" (Madison 1990/1981, 181).

here I want to apply the conception of *manque* that Kozel and Parviainen refer to in their discussion of the process of becoming that dance artists experience in relation to the practices of the field of freelance dance. This is instead of considering it a motivating force only inherent to artistic creation. The following passages from the interview material demonstrate the modes in which the dance artists would like to perform their activities as dance artists. They also describe and interpret the enabling or disabling conditions that they, while striving for their desires in the field of freelance dance, have found to prevail within it.

### Questioning withdrawing from the field

One of the dance artists was in the middle of questioning if he would continue his work as a dance artist altogether. He was anxious about the practices and values of the freelance field of dance. He had become disturbed by them since he was not chosen to dance in a very successful dance piece, despite expecting to do so. He had also just worked in another dance piece where the choreographer's understanding of the nature of dance and the quality of his dancing contradicted his own views and made him wonder if he understood dance after all. At some point he even says that he has not become a popular dancer. He did not agree, furthermore, with how dance was in general appreciated in the field. Experiencing the above problems made him anxious, uncertain, tired, and view the field of dance in a critical light. They made him even contemplate turning away from the field and the practices of dance, instead of motivating him to be subversive by viewing and creating dance in a different manner.

In the interviews he spoke about his experiences, feelings, and intentions at length. Here is a passage describing some of his feelings and thoughts:

. . . /I strongly experience – as a matter of fact this has even become a too personal a concern – that this form of art is not appreciated, I mean the contemporary dance that I represent. In contemporary dance itself there are so many styles and it feels like I would be in the marginal in this way too. It is terribly hard to continuously to try to defend or justify one's existence and one's art. All in all to be a freelance dancer in Finland is damned hard. This spring I've been extremely tired mentally. This spring many things have happened to me and they've made me completely depressed. I feel that a certain appreciation and right to exist has been denied [me]. Lately I've started to feel that I am even not committed to the whole field. I've felt that I'll just leave the whole shit and tell the system off. . . Now I'll finish this solo piece. It will have to be my farewell solo. . . /after it is done, I'll take a break and think of what will happen, think of becoming a bartender. . . (1M)<sup>219</sup>

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219. . . /Minä koen hirveän voimakkaasti, itse asiassa se on tullut vähän liiankin henkilökohtaiseksi, että tätä taiteen alaa ei arvosteta, siis tätä nykytanssia mitä edustaa. Sitten kun nykytanssisakin on vielä jonkin verran suuntauksia, tuntuu että on siinäkin marginaalissa. Se on hirveän rankkaa, kun koko ajan yrittää puolustella tai etsiä oikeutusta omalla olemiselleen ja omalle taiteelleen. Kaiken kaikkiaan olla tämän tanssialan freelancetanssija Suomessa on helvetin rankkaa. Minä olen tänä keväänä ollut jotenkin hirtittävän väsynyt henkisesti. Tämä keväänä on ollut hirveän monta asiaa, mitkä ovat masentaneet minut täysin. Minä koen että se tietynlainen arvonanto ja olemassaolon oikeutus on niin kuin eväty [minulta]. Jotenkin minusta tuntuu, että minä en edes ole sitoutunut koko kenttään. Minulla on ollut viime aikoina sellainen olokin, että jätän koko vitun paskan, että haistatan paskat koko systeemille. Nyt teen tämän

He tells us that he feels that his dance work is not appreciated to the extent that he feels neglected and has contemplated withdrawing from the field. In the next passage he continues to describe how he generally relates to the world. He believes that it is this attitude of his that has created what seems to be an unbearable situation:

. . ./That I try to be a very tolerant and not a racist means that all flowers are allowed to bloom. Why should one art form have more right to exist than another? This does not mean that I would be defending my own right to exist as the only [acceptable] one. No, instead, it should be equal with the rest. Of course this is very idealistic. Nothing, no idealistic cause, will ever be egalitarian. But for some reason I just search for it./ . . ./So why should a contemporary dancer not have the same right to exist as a ballet dancer has?/ . . .(1M)<sup>220</sup>

Here he argues that being a ballet dancer is no better than being a contemporary freelance dancer. But he has not received enough appreciation to make him feel a worthy dancer. While enduring this, he also has become lonely.

. . ./But somehow things are difficult for me now. I do not even have acquaintances in the freelance field to spend time with. In general there are only a very few people I can phone and even fewer I could phone and ask out for a movie or to have a beer. This creates a situation where I do not belong to the field so much either. When the society gathers everybody shares things, not directly related to dance, but private things. They've met, visited each other, baked pastry and drunk coffee. Some have traveled through the world. I haven't done anything like that. In this way I feel that I am both as a dancer and a person somehow outside the freelance field of dance. I cannot really say if it is a good or bad thing. Sometimes I am really content about it sometimes I am not./ . . .(1M)<sup>221</sup>

He tells us that, in addition to his professional relations, also in his private life he does not feel integrated into the social sphere of freelance dance. All in all I take this to indicate some kind of disappointment. When assessing his words, one can infer that the values and

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yhden soolon. Se saa olla sitten minun jäähyväissoolo./ . . ./kun minä sen teen, niin sitten on tauko, että minä mietin mitä tapahtuu, että ryhdyin kahvilanpitäjäksi./ . . . (1M)

220. . . /Koska minä niin kuin yritän olla hirvittävän suvaitsevainen enkä rasistinen, niin silloin annetaan kaikkien kukkien kukkia. Minkä takia toisella taiteen alalla olisi suurempi olemassaolon oikeus kuin toisella? Minä en tarkoita sitä, että minä puolustelisin omaa olemassaolon oikeuttani niin, että sen täytyisi olla ainoa. Ei, vaan että se olisi samanarvoinen kuin muut. Tämä tietysti on hirveän idealistista. Eihän mitkään asiat, tällaiset idealistiset asiat, ikinä tule olemaan samanarvoisia. Mutta jotenkin vain yritän etsiä sitä./ . . ./miksei nykytanssijalla ole samanlainen oikeus olla olemassa kuin baletillakin [balettitanssijalla]?/ . . . (1M).

221. . . /Mutta jotenkin [minulla] on hirvittävän vaikeata. Ei minulla ole edes freelancekentällä sellaisia tuttuja kenen kanssa viettäisin aikaani. Minulla on hyvin harva ihminen ylipäättään kenelle voin soittaa ja vielä harvempi kenelle voisi soittaa ja pyytää lähtemään elokuvaan tai kaljalle. Sitä kautta tulee se, ettei niin kuin kuulu kenttäänkään. Sitten kun on jossain seurapiiritapahtumassa niin kaikilla on sellaisia asioita, jotka eivät suoraan liity tanssin, vaan ovat sen tanssin systeemin ulkopuolella, yksityispuolen asioita. He ovat tavanneet, käyneet kylässä, leiponeet pullaa ja juoneet kahvia. Jotkut ovat matkustelleet ympäri maailmaa. Minulla ei ole mitään tällaista. Ja minä koen siinä mielessä, että minä olen niin kuin tanssijana ja ihmisenä jotenkin sen freelancekentän ulkopuolella. Mutta sitä en sitten oikeasti osaa sanoa, että onko se hyvä vai paha. Joskus minä olen hirveän tyytyväinen siitä ja joskus taas en./ . . .(1M)

conceptions of dance and even those of an individual's existence in relation to others that he has believed in and worked with have made him feel that he does not belong to the field in an integral manner.

Dastur (2000) writes of our directedness towards the world and others in a way that underlines that the possibilities we foresee, the expectations with which we move towards phenomena, others and situations, will never be completely fulfilled and that the menace of non-fulfillment can never be completely avoided. In moving 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 un-fulfillment, is nevertheless what allows us to be open to new events. In Dastur's view, it does this in two possible directions: we are either transformed or destroyed by these events. In the latter case we become unable to integrate the discordance we perceive and experience in a way that allows for an openness towards new expectations and possibilities. This openness, however, is something that is required for new events and the continuation of a process of becoming to occur in a certain dimension of life. (Dastur 2000, 185, 186)

Consequently, it is no surprise that the dance artist above is contemplating giving up his artistic career, though he was putting off making this decision for now. It might be that he still needs to contemplate his experiences, his relation to the practices of the field and his desire to achieve a more coherent sense of them to feel comfortable in deciding in which direction he wants to move on with his life. It is as if something of the mode in which he is a dance artist has only begun to become explicit and to force him to take a stand (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 363). What is often the case is that we tend to take the familiar and known world for granted and often extend the influence of our habitual ways of relating to the world as far as possible till our behavior simply no longer corresponds with our aims. Moreover, it often takes time, observation, and reconsideration to shed our inappropriate habits and to open upon something new.<sup>222</sup>

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222. In writing of becoming oneself and taking the life of an artist as an example, Welsch suggests that when we have become distracted or lost our way of renewing ourselves, self-attainment should involve the following kind of questioning: "Be prepared for not really knowing what your self will be like. And don't hurry, take your time. Be open to contingency again, to micro-processes in the reformulation of yourself. Pay attention to unexpected attractions, to things formerly unimportant which are becoming more important now. Don't slight the slow and unconscious processes in which you assume a new shape, rather let yourself be seduced by them. Don't just follow your rational project and intentions, be open to your emotions too, even to micro-feelings. Give them a magnifying glass. Allow yourself to have an unclear profile amidst the new tendencies, a profile which only slowly becomes clearer and more decisive. Trust the dynamics of this creative process. Live the process of *becoming* – not simply and crudely *realizing* – yourself. . . . In this perspective, intentionality and contingency are combined. A project – the project of becoming oneself – is the starting-point. But in the process contingency is equally or even more important. Finally, however, you will shift to intentionality again, but not to the previous one, but to the one which has evolved during the process and which corresponds to your new, actual being yourself" (Welsch 1997, 22–23). Merleau-Ponty echoes this suggestion of Welsch when writing that: "All action and knowledge

Still making a choice always involves confronting terror in the face of the unknown. The situations we find ourselves in can never be totally understood and yet we are condemned to act on the basis of the incomplete and insufficient information we derive from them. And the consequences of our decisions, which we are responsible for, are not exactly determinable from the situation which they arise from either. (O'Neill 1989, 144, 148; Merleau-Ponty 1985/1969, 94) Considering giving up dancing might be a relief for the interviewed dance artist as it would free him from considering and experiencing the discord he discussed. Nonetheless, since one of the primary modes of his life for a number of years has been that of being a dance artist, he would face new questions and worries: what would he do instead, who would he become, and how would people relate to him then.

In speaking of loneliness in this situation, the dance artist relates to the fact that it is human nature to actualize ourselves in the world and among other people. There is always a social dimension to our life. Actually, as discussed earlier, we are intertwined with and committed to others to such an extent that our intentions and their results are never entirely our own. Additionally, our being is reliant on a primordial *manque* which moves us to strive to become ourselves through mutual recognition and solidarity (O'Neill 1989, 145, 151). We are individual beings only insofar as we are intertwined with others and the world. In trying to understand who we are and justify the choices we make, what is more, we relate to how we perceive others to manage their lives. Merleau-Ponty writes about the course that our lives take in the following manner:

Any description of history as the confrontation of choices that cannot be justified omits the fact that every conscience experiences itself engaged with others in a common history, argues in order to convince them, weighs and compares its own chances and those of others, and in seeing itself bound to others through external circumstance establishes the grounds of a presumptive rationality upon which their arguments can take place and acquire meaning. (Merleau-Ponty 1985/1969, 96)

The interviewed dance artist felt that he had been denied a right to exist, that the abilities and desires he had did not open a possible field of operation in which he could engage with others in a manner that would empower and enrich his artistic interests and activity. He began to compare his relations to others by regarding how other dance artists relate to each other and came to feel that he was secluded even in his private life.

Merleau-Ponty asserts, however, that "my experience must in some way present me with other people, since otherwise I should have no occasion to speak of solitude, and could not

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which do not go through this elaboration [the answerable movement or transcendence of "the voices of silence" or "new significative intentions" into explicit meaning], and which seek to set up values which have not been embodied in our individual or collective history (*or* – what comes down to the same thing – which seek to choose means by a calculus and a wholly technical process), fall short of the problems they are trying to solve. Personal life, expression, understanding, and history advance obliquely and not straight toward ends or concepts. What we strive for too reflectively eludes us, while values and ideas come forth abundantly to him who, in his meditative life, has learned to free their spontaneity" (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 120).

begin to pronounce other people inaccessible” (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 359). Even if we find that we live without sufficient interaction, communication, or mutual understanding with others, we are always situated in relation to the social dimension. In contrast to Dastur’s idea of us closing off from the possibilities life offers through traumatic experience, Merleau-Ponty finds that the movement of becoming is never completely thwarted. He writes:

The truth of solipsism is there. Every experience will always appear to me as a particular instance which does not exhaust the generality of my being, and I have always, as Malebranche said, movement left to go further. But I can fly from being only into being; for example, I escape from society into nature, or from the real world into an imaginary one made of the broken fragments of reality. The physical and social world always functions as a stimulus to my reactions, whether these be positive or negative. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 360)

A narrowed scope of being towards others and towards the social world is still a mode of being in which human beings can realize themselves. Here the emphasis of being is just directed to some other dimension of life. In the case of the dance artist discussed above, one could assume that, instead of simply plunging into dance work with others and realizing his artistic ambitions, his disappointments have made him contemplate those values and practices of the field of freelance dance and even the communication its members have with each other that he himself does not share or is not engaged in. In this vein he is questioning the manner in which he himself is committed to the field and its members. In so doing he is simultaneously attempting to clarify what he wants to be committed to.

### **Finding work abroad**

Another dance artist conveys his desire to be able to concentrate on experimenting with choreography and to have work throughout the year. He has made concerted efforts to create such a situation in his life.

.../I was at that point in which I would either quit or – I do not want such a situation where I have only one engagement a year and spend rest of the time unemployed. After being depressed for a long time I took hold of myself and decided to direct my interests abroad. Here [in Finland] there is space for me, but there is not enough space for me to work on a continuous basis. With age I have come to need continuity./... (3M) <sup>223</sup>

He too implies that he lived in a confusing or unbearable situation before eventually deciding to do something about it. Merleau-Ponty thinks that foreseeing a new field of possibility, which in this dance artist’s case is the possibility of gaining continuous work by searching for it abroad, “is prepared by some molecular process, it matures in co-existence before bursting forth into words and being related to objective ends” (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 446). Tacit

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223. .../Minä olin siinä pisteessä, että joko minä lopetan – minä en halua sitä, että minulla on yksi duuni vuodessa ja sitten loput [olen] työttömänä. Sitten minä otin itseäni niskasta kiinni pitkän masennuksen jälkeen ja päätin suuntautua ulkomaille. Täällä on minulle tilaa. Mutta täällä ei ole minulle tarpeeksi tilaa työskennellä säännöllisesti. Tässä vanhemmiten on tullut tämä jatkuvuuden tarve./... (3M)

signals of discomfort, here in relation to the freelance field of dance and the way this dance artist pursued his profession, start to pile up and finally push us to change our course and realize that we prefer a different manner of being in the world (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 441). The dance artist continues to tell us about the concrete strategy he pursued to alter his circumstances:

.../It only took me a long time to believe in myself, my work, and the fact that people abroad are interested in it. When I notice there is a tremendous interest in it I again have the strength to continue to work./.../But it has required a great amount of work. I've never done so much office work in my life. Almost every week I am in tears, because you phone, phone, and phone and never reach anybody. You stay by the phone and notice that even if you are by the phone from nine to four you cannot get many things accomplished in one day. Then there is the question of dancing [training]. You have no time for it. If you do dancer's work, if you go training in the morning or do whatever, you are back earliest by one o'clock and you only have three hours left to make phone calls. That's not enough. So now I have sacrificed one year of my life to being a producer for myself. Now I've received work from Namibia. Next fall I'll go to the Barcelona theater-institute to teach and choreograph. Then I've managed to arrange for a tour in Europe. Still next fall I also have one job in Finland, but only one. Luckily I have these other things./... (3M)<sup>224</sup>

Thus, he shows that he has managed to create a new kind of state of affairs for himself. He has found enough social recognition to both empower him and enable him to work consecutively throughout the year. But it has taken him a great deal of effort and time away from the daily routines of working with his body. As a matter of fact, he still has a controversial relation to working in these new surroundings. Despite his success in gaining more work, in the end, he says the following:

.../But it's really devilish, really terrible, since I want to be in Finland./.../My choice was to be in Finland. I would gladly be and work here. That's why I moved back. I wanted to speak my native language, and I want to have a home somewhere. I've enjoyed being here. That's why I don't want to leave altogether./... (3M)<sup>225</sup>

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224. .../Se vain, että minulla meni hirveän kauan siihen, että minä uskon itseeni ja työhöni, ja että siitä ollaan kiinnostuneita ulkomailla. Kun minä huomaan, että sillähän on valtava kiinnostus, jaksan taas tehdä sitä työtä./.../Mutta se on vaatinut suunnattomat työn. Minä en ole ikinä tehnyt tällaista määrää toimitustyötä. Suurin piirtein kerran viikossa pääsee itku siitä, että kun sinä soitat ja soitat ja soitat etkä koskaan saa ketään kiinni. Sinä olet vain puhelimen ääressä ja huomaat, että kun olet yhdeksästä neljään puhelimen ääressä niin yhtenä päivänä sinä et tosiaan saa montaa asiaa hoidettua. Sitten se tanssijan työ: sinä et ehdi sitä. Jos sinä teet tanssijan työtä, jos sinä lähdet aamulla treenaamaan tai teet mitä tahansa, sinä olet aikaisintaan yhdeltä takaisin ja sinulla on enää kolme tuntia aikaa soittaa. Se ei riitä. Eliikkä nyt minä olen sitten uhrannut vuoden elämästäni siihen, että minä olen ollut sihteeri ja tuottaja itselleni. ... Nyt minä olen sitten saanut Namibiasta työtä. Minä menen ensi syksynä Barcelonan teatteri-instituuttiin opettamaan ja tekemään koreografiaa. Sitten olen saanut järjestettyä kiertuetta Eurooppaan. Sitten minulla on tulossa kuitenkin ensi syksynä tänne Suomeenkin yksi työ, mutta vain yksi. Onneksi on nämä muut hommat./... (3M)

225. .../Mutta se on kyllä hirveän pirullista, aivan hirveätä, koska minä haluan olla Suomessa./.../Minun valintanihan olisi olla Suomessa. Täällä minä mieluusti olisin ja tekisin töitä. Sen takia minä muutin

Instead of working abroad he would like to be able to remain in Finland. In the next passage he also says that he would prefer a steady job as a choreographer and not to continuously have to arrange for and even create the projects he works in.

.../At the moment my biggest problem is that, in a way, I am ready – Here I am, give me work. I could create pieces, and I have a lot of ideas. If I were to realize them I would be much more skillful in five years. So I am in such a situation where I should be able to do a lot of work to develop. You yourself do not want to create your own work situations year after year. Now that I've also produced all of my productions, which is quite a job, in a way it would be good to have such situations where the work environment already exists and is secured./... (3M)<sup>226</sup>

Attaining a sufficient amount of work engagements has meant that he has worked as manager and producer for himself and his artistic work. Doing choreography, nevertheless, remains his main interest and is what he would like to really focus on. How to overcome this controversy and the other disadvantage of having to work abroad when he would like to stay in his home country, he has not thought about so far. Yet, they point out another lack – that his hopes and desires are not completely fulfilled. To achieve a more satisfying working life he still needs to consider the conditions he works in as well as making an effort to overcome the discordances within his work life.

### **Coming to terms with the field artistically**

A third dance artist describes how she came to terms with the changes that have occurred in the dance field which relate to those issues that were discussed in the section addressing the commodification of dance art on pages 195–201. She begins by declaring that she was involved with introducing a personal or individualistic way of creating dance to the field in the 1980's and that she was surprised by the emergence of what she calls the 'trendy' orientation towards dance:

.../From the mid 80's I was intensely involved with introducing a kind of a new dance into this country. When I came here and started my professional work there was nothing./.../It was a different situation and it might be that the world was different. But I was very intensely creating it [a new kind of dance] and pushing for a personal approach. The change came somewhat as a shock to me. Then I deeply felt, that I was in the offside and that I should somehow be capable of following my time as I did not want to remain in the offside./... (4N)<sup>227</sup>

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tänne takaisin. Minä halusin puhua äidinkieltäni ja haluan kodin jostakin. Olen viihtynyt täällä hyvin siksi en halua täältä kokonaan pois./... (3M)

226. .../Siinä varmasti on minun suurin ongelma tällä hetkellä, että tavallaan minä olisin nyt valmis – että tässä minä olen, antakaa minulle töitä. Minä voin tehdä teoksia ja minulla on hirveästi ideoita. Jos minä saisin ne toteuttaa minä olisin viiden vuoden päästä paljon kyykkäämpi. Niin, minä olen siinä tilanteessa, jossa minun pitäisi saada tehdä paljon töitä, jotta minä edistyisin. Itse ei kuitenkaan vuosi vuoden jälkeen halua koko ajan luoda niitä omia työtilaisuuksia. Nyt kun minä olen myös tuottanut nämä kaikki omat produktioni, niin se on aikamoista puuhaa. Tavallaan olisi hyvä mennä sellaisiin tilanteisiin joissa se työympäristö on jo olemassa ja taattu./... (3M)

227. .../Minä olen ollut intensiivisesti koko kahdeksankymmentäluvun, sen puolivälistä eteenpäin luo-

When beginning her career in Finland, she approached dance in a manner she found valuable and believed that it was and would continue to be appreciated more generally. But as the field of dance in Helsinki evolved also the values through which dance was created and appreciated changed. They were different from the one's she followed at the time, and I interpret her as saying that she felt she no longer could participate in the field in a way she had grown accustomed to and enjoyed. But she wanted to continue to be actively engaged in the field and began exploring different ways of relating to dance:

.../At this point I returned to investigate what I'd learned of how to sequence/transfer movement and how to create audience-friendly [motion]. Could I do this while still holding on to that thinking and those artistic standards that interest me? This took me a couple of years.../Let's say that the trend boom influenced my work very strongly. It did not influence my work in such a way that I now too would be creating what is trendy. Rather, I understood that we are now in time in this way and that I had to deal with it or otherwise I'd be left alone.../The trend is this powerful thing and I have to be in some sort of terms with it. Otherwise things just don't work out.../to stay in the spirit of the time and still retain my own interests. I do have a feeling that I've coped with this quite well... (4F).<sup>228</sup>

She felt that she had to adapt to the current values and practices of the freelance field of dance in order to be able to continue her work and receive as much social recognition and communication with other members of the field as she needed. She believes that she succeeded in this. While so doing she simultaneously realized that she could influence the state of affairs in the field:

.../Times change, and if they don't in general, mine does. That's how things are influenced. Actually it is a rather new thought that as a creator one can influence what goes on. Back in the 80's I did not understand that I was influencing it. I did not experience, understand it. I did actually influence things, but I did not understand it... (4F)<sup>229</sup>

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massa tällaista uutta tanssia tähän maahan. Täällä ei ollut mitään, kun minä olen tänne tullut ja aloittanut ammattitoiminnan.../Silloin oli toisenlainen tilanne, saattoi myös maailma olla toisenlainen. Mutta minä olin hirveän voimakkaasti sitä tekemässä ja sellaista persoonallisuutta ajamassa takaa. Minulle tuli vähän shokkina tämä muutos. Sitten minä koin syvällisesti, että minä jäin paitsioon ja että minun täytyy jotenkin pystyä seuraamaan aikaani, koska minä en halua jäädä paitsioon... (4N)

228. .../Tässä vaiheessa palasin siihen, että ehkä hakisin vähän taas niitä oppeja miten liikettä kuljetaan ja tehdään yleisöystävällistä – voinko tehdä niin pitäen silti kiinni siitä ajattelusta ja taiteellisesta tasosta, joka minua kiinnostaa. Minulla meni tässä muutama vuosi. Sanotaan, että tämä trendibuumi vaikutti voimakkaasti minun tekemiseen, hirveän voimakkaasti. Se ei vaikuttanut niinkään sillä tavalla, että minä nyt myös teen tuota trendikästä, vaan minä tajusin sen, että nyt ollaan tällä tavalla ajassa, että nyt on pakko tehdä jotain tämän kanssa tai sitten minä saan pilkkiä itsekseen.../Se trendi on nyt tällainen niin kuin mahtava ja minunkin pitää jotenkin olla sen kanssa väleissä. Muuten ei tule yhtään mitään.../pysyä siinä ajan hengessä mukana, mutta silti säilyttää sen oman, mikä minua kiinnostaa. Kyllä minulla on sellainen olo, että olen löytänyt aika hyvin... (4N)

229. .../Ajat muuttuvat ja jos ne eivät yleisesti muutu niin minulla ainakin muuttuu. Sillä tavallahan asioihin vaikutetaan. Oikeastaan se on aika uusi ajatus, että voi tekijänä vaikuttaa siihen mitä [ajassa] liikkuu. Silloin kahdeksankymmentäluvun aikana minä en ymmärtänyt itse millään tavalla vaikuttavani siihen. Minä en sitä kokenut, ymmärtänyt. Kyllähän minä vaikutin, mutta minä en ymmärtänyt... (4N)

In the end she even thinks that:

. . ./I find that the way one communicates one's objectives is wisdom, if one communicates them in such a way that they are understood, that as many people as possible understand them. This is skill and wisdom. If one stubbornly sticks to "my way", it amounts to nothing. One is left alone if one thinks that, "I am the only person who's right in this world" or that, "this is extraordinary don't you see this!". Then one becomes blocked. If one thinks of an artist as a developing being, I think one important thing which needs to be understood to be able to develop further is that one's communication needs to be understandable, that one needs to understand why things now are like they are and what they mean and then think differently about those things one thinks differently of. I find it very important that one is aware of the times one is living in, that one follows what happens, [is in touch with] current tendencies and understands them to be able to communicate – for the things that I find important to be communicated in that language which is understood. With this I do not mean any popularism at all, on the contrary. But I think sensing the spirit of the time is very important. . . .(4F)<sup>230</sup>

She considers, then, that it is important for a dance artist to be aware of the times she or he is living in, witness what is going on in dance and perhaps culture more generally, in order to be able to create art that the public is interested in receiving and capable of understanding. I think she is implying that through her struggles she herself changed and really learned a new way of relating to dance. Now, for her the artist's task is to create a form of dance that is somehow significant to the public, somehow touches their views and understanding of the world.

Her struggle to overcome the lack she perceived in the circumstances and the means through which she created her art, as in the case of the previous dance artist, had to do with social recognition and communication allowing for better and more interesting possibilities to work with dance. All of the above examples of the struggles the interviewed dance artists experienced imply that this recognition is related to attaining a position in the field allowing for as much communication and support as the dance artists need in order to work on and create their art in a way that they appreciate and desire. However, unlike the other dance artists, this one thought about the nature of her artistic work and renewed the mode in which she was creating it without jeopardizing her artistic integrity, her innermost motives for creating dance. She also showed that she became aware of the power dance artists have in changing the field itself if they so desire. She underlines that for this end it is necessary to

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230. . . /Minä olen sitä mieltä, että se miten kommunikoi asiansa niin se on viisautta, että kommunikoi sen asiansa niin, että se ymmärretään, että mahdollisimman monet ihmiset ymmärtää sen. Se on taitoa ja viisautta minusta. Jos haluaa jäärpäisesti, että "minä nyt näin", siitä ei tule mitään. Silloin jää yksin siihen, että "minä olen ainoa oikeassa oleva ihminen tässä maailmassa", että "tämä on mielettömän hienoa, ettekö te kaikki huomaa". Siinä menee ihan tukkoon. . . Minusta se on jotenkin, jos ajattelee taiteilijaa tällaisena kehittyvänä ihmisenä, yksi semmoinen virstanpylväs, mikä pitää oivaltaa, että sen kommunikaation täytyy olla ymmärrettävää, että voisi kehittyä eteenpäin, että voisi ymmärtää, että miksi nyt on näin ja mitä tämä kaikki tarkoittaa ja sitten olla erimieltä niistä asioista, mistä on eri mieltä. . . Minä koen kauhean tärkeäksi sen, että sitä aikaa täytyy seurata, että mitä tapahtuu ja mitkä on virtaukset ja yrittää ymmärtää niitä virtauksia, että pystyisi kommunikoimaan. Jotta ne asiat, mitkä minä koen tärkeiksi välittyisi sillä kielellä, että ne ymmärretään. Minä en tarkoita mitään popularismia tällä ollenkaan, päinvastoin. Mutta semmoinen ajassa, ajan hengen aistiminen on minusta hirveän tärkeää. . . .(4N)

gain a sense of what is going on in the field and in culture in general.<sup>231</sup>

Indeed, as mentioned before, the field of any art becomes what it is exactly through the activities of its members. The positions the dance artists hold in the freelance field of dance are dependent on their dispositions. The latter type qualify the nature of the positions and might even change them. In fact, the field of freelance dance is partly perpetuated through the manner in which individual dance artists are engaged in it. It shifts according to the dispositions and acts of these artists belonging to its realm. What two of the above examples of the individual struggles the dance artists have undergone point towards, is that freelance dance artists are able to influence the circumstances that support their aspirations. Following Merleau-Ponty, who writes of social and political changes that amount to revolutions, I would like to call the process by which dance artists influence and change the circumstances they are working through a *r-evolution*. Here the passage of a *r-evolution*, similar to Merleau-Ponty's description of the emergence of a revolution, has been shown to involve becoming aware of the nature of the field, taking a stand in relation to it, and gaining social support for this stand empowering a new mode of action in its sphere. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 442–447)

What the possibility of an actual *r-evolution* takes for granted is that there is a general mode of existence, which already mediates our presence to ourselves, before we become explicitly aware of it. This is about a pre-established or habituated mode of co-existence and shared practices, which we might accept or decline, but cannot erase (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 447). The freelance field of dance the interviewed dance artists exist in molds what could be called, after Bourdieu, their habitus, their manner of being dance artists. It, however, does not completely determine it since we are free to choose and perceive things differently, find modes of dealing with the world that are possible but not actualized in certain social settings. Individual dance artists, when taking up themes that are only latent, not actualized, in the field of freelance dance influence the nature of the field itself. Thus, even if it might take time for the field to come around to the desires of and actions initiated by particular artists, it is indeed somewhat flexible and allows for change. But in order to create such change the dance artists struggle, distinguish and ponder modes of behavior and practice that are taken for granted, begin new ways of dealing with their situations and therefore also change themselves.

To draw some conclusions: This chapter discussed the nature of the freelance field of dance the interviewed dance artists were engaged in at the time when the interviews took place. It

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231. In taking as his example the life of an artist and writing of the process of becoming oneself in these times of ever more diverse values and increasingly individualistic artists, Welsch finds the relation of this process to one of the conditions of its possibility, social recognition, to be difficult. Nonetheless he suggests some strategies artists might pursue in order to overcome this difficulty and to achieve public acclaim. One of them is to link one's work to the standard perceptive modes of one's time, like electronic media. Other possibilities are to cater to the accepted perceptual norms of the public, or to make one's works playful and entertaining. He also suggests that artists might alternatively consider creating their works for a small but, in their view, competent audience. (Welsch 1997, 24–25) Even if none of these suggestions exactly correspond with what the above-quoted dance artist discusses, they still are possibilities similar to the ones she considered while struggling to change her circumstances.

introduced some of the historical features relating to the evolvement and current state of affairs of the field of freelance dance which condition the artistic activities of the freelance dance artists engaged in it. As was suggested in chapter 9, what the previous discussion illustrates is that this field is a living field. The values, practices, and structuring it possesses are of a shifting nature. Even if the interviewed dance artists found the current field of freelance dance in Helsinki to be versatile as well as rich and in this sense to offer them an invigorating locale to work in, the relation they had to the field was not a piecemeal one. Whilst they are certainly engaged in it by partly taking it for granted; trusting that it exists as a sphere in which dance can be created and tacitly appreciating much of its practice by simply taking it forward, what they say indicates that they question it. To be able to practice their art, find their path as dance artists in the somewhat loosely organized and changing field of freelance dance, these dance artists needed to become aware of its nature, their own relation to it, as well as make plans and choices ensuring the continuation of their artistic activities. Indeed, the interviewed dance artists had an evaluative, even a critical understanding of many of its features, which in their view hindered their artistic endeavors. It seems that they had mostly gained a more explicit understanding of the nature of the field through the challenges they had experienced. That is, it seems that those points of rupture where the preconceptions of the interviewed dance artists did not correspond with their pursuits in the field, where something that called them to observe and reflect upon the nature of the field more intimately.

In Merleau-Ponty's view, what firstly ties artists to the tradition of their art is the interest they take in delving into the more intrinsic questions of its practice. In his aesthetics he mostly dealt with the question of painting; how painting – both the concrete act of painting and the end result, the painting itself – could express the phenomenal world. (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 97, 99, 111) In dance's case the correlative core question is that of dancing, how the motional human body creates a certain mode or style of being and how this is expressed in a dance work.<sup>232</sup> Yet, it is true that the life circumstances of artists condition their freedom to live with their artistic task. There is no absolute freedom arising *ex nihilo*; freedom is relative. In Merleau-Ponty's thinking it is situational and emerges from the possibilities our particular embodiment is open to, our biography or life history, as well as the social,

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232. In my view both the positions that the dance artists I interviewed generally take in relation to the constraints of the field and Merleau-Ponty takes in relation to art are somewhat related to David Best's understanding. He writes: "There is a widespread assumption that the arts are forms of entertainment in that they are mere diversions from the serious concerns of life, from which nothing of any significance can be learned . . . [Still] The seriousness of the arts consists partly but significantly in the fact that what is expressed in them feeds back into life, in the insights given into the human condition and other aspects of life. When the arts lose this seriousness they atrophy" (Best 1992, 196–197). The interviewed dance artists might be understood to defend the seriousness of the basic questions their art deals with. Merleau-Ponty instead analyzes the premises from which art springs forth. What is interesting is that in his analyses he views these premises something very basic to human existence. He thinks that unraveling the mode in which the perceptive and active body of a painter creates works of art might be a concern that would give insight into the nature of culture in general. He writes: "What, then, is the secret science which he has or which he seeks? That dimension which lets Van Gogh say he must go "still further"? What is this fundamental of painting, perhaps of all culture?" (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993c, 123).

institutional, and historical relations we are bound up in. In his view freedom arises in relation to what is given. It is, however, never exactly determined by the given, nor are our choices ever absolutely freed from it. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 438, 453, 454, 455) When regarded in this sense freedom of choice becomes a question of managing particular concerns in particular situations. When a choice is made and a consequent action confirmed, the ambiguous relation of what is given and what is chosen becomes once more evident, since

Now this commitment too enters a sphere of the implicit . . . [And thus] All explanations of my conduct in terms of my past, my temperament and my environment are therefore true, provided that they be regarded not as separable contributions, but as moments of my total being, the significance of which I am entitled to make explicit in various ways, without its ever being possible to say whether I confer their meaning upon them or receive it from them. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 455)

Merleau-Ponty thinks that in retrospect it is difficult to discern if it is our circumstances and habits or our personal interests that made us act and direct our lives in certain ways. In our actions they intertwine, and, if we reflect upon them later on, the conditions we then are living under or the perspective we then take influences the way they are illuminated. (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993a, 75)

The social, institutional, historical, political, and economic concerns effective in the freelance field of dance that freelance dance artists find themselves in determines the concrete nature of that cultural sphere in which their artistic endeavors become possible. Thus, they also form an important part of that background from which a merely potential mode of artistic action can surge forth. Yet, despite the evident constraining tensions or pressures of the field, dance artists can choose to attend to the “first task” of their artistic work – be it the task of investigating the motional nature of the body and its expressiveness as advocated above or some other original motive their art revolves around. Even if this might be a difficult choice in the sense of arranging for an actual setting in which to deal with the more intrinsic and individualistic questions of dance, the dancing body and where its means of expression become possible, it is not an impossible one. Despite the tensions created by some of the economic and political values the freelance field of dance operates by, to a large measure the field itself has become structured towards this end.

However, for an individual the choice concerning the manner of creating dance art is one that needs to be made over and over again. In human life a commitment is valid only for a certain temporal cycle. When an actual process of creation is accomplished it recedes and we find ourselves committed to something else unless the effort is renewed. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 455) Consequently, a dance artist’s freedom to commit her- or himself to investigating and working with dance and dancing in a particular mode occurs every time she or he takes up her or his artistic work again in a correlative way. Freelance dance artists, moreover, often work with rather short term contracts, projects, and plans, which relate to performing seasons, festival invitations for single performances, teaching semesters, economic support given to one project at a time (which is, in fact, is sometimes not given at all) and the time and effort required to create individual dance pieces. They exist in a situation

where new artistic plans and new grant applications leading to work in different environments with different people is common. Since the situations and positions freelance dance artist's work in continue to change also the field itself is constantly fluctuating and they themselves are in a continuous process of becoming.

I assume that this makes the constraints of the field a heightened concern for them. It makes them question their motives and aims, the nature of the changing environments they work in, and the shifting values of the people they work with and of the field over and over again. How they view all of these has ultimately to do with their goals and reinstated endeavors. It is through them that the dance artists perceive and understand the nature of their life situations and the values operant in it (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993a, 71). In fact, I believe that one mode in which being a freelance dance artist is realized is that of questioning, a drawing attention to the manner in which freelance dance artists want to create their art and to the means through which this becomes possible. In discussing how she attempts to enhance both her more social and more artistic communication in the field of freelance dance, one of the dance artists says the following:

.../One constantly calls into question what and why, how someone else does things and how would I do something and of course. . . It is one's own communication on how you yourself experience things, what happens to you and why you feel like you do./ . . (4N)<sup>233</sup>

When considering these themes it is only natural that a freelance dance artist starts to build an evaluative attitude towards the nature of the field and towards their own relation to it.

Nonetheless, in striving for their desires to work and be engaged in the field in certain ways they showed that what was previously called a r-evolution is possible. There is a reciprocity between the field of freelance dance and its dance artists. Although it conditions and shapes the manner in which freelance dance artists are dance artists, the dance artists themselves with their interests and actions influence and even change the nature of the field itself. However, what became a heightened concern in this chapter was that being a freelance dance artist or the process of becoming a freelance dance artist, nonetheless requires social recognition. It requires the acknowledgement and appreciation of other members of the field which increases the self-esteem and enhances the social position as well as the economic status of the freelance dance artist. This underlines that the endeavors of a freelance dance artist are intertwined with and even dependent upon a whole social and historical dimension or field. It is what opens up the possibility of attending to artistic creation and even influences the mode in which an artist does this. But in the end it is also what validates the manner in which an artist has succeeded in her or his practice. In fact the themes of social recognition and self-understanding are something that several passages of the subsequent chapters continue to address in different ways.

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233. . . /Koko ajan niin kuin asettaa kyseenalaiseksi, että mitä ja miksi, että miten toi ja miten minä tuon tekisin ja tietysti sitten. . . Se on sitä omaa kommunikaatiota, että miten itse kokee, mitä itselle tapahtuu ja miksi minusta tuntuu nyt tältä./ . . (4N)

## 11 The Artistic Roles of a Freelance Dance Artist

As mentioned before, through what the dance artists related it became evident that the interviewees not only danced. Alongside of performing as dancers they created choreography and taught dance. What they primarily did at the time of the interviews depended on the life-situation and interests of the dance artists. Only one of them was mainly preoccupied with dance as a dancer. Even he was planning to work on some solo choreography in the near future, though. One of them taught dance a lot and choreographed dance pieces. She did this to such an extent that she considered she had not danced as much as a dancer should in order to be able to really call herself a dancer. Actually, she continued to tell us that she finds it difficult to dance in other choreographers' pieces because she feels that she has to go against her interests and instincts while so doing. In this sense I interpret her not to be particularly interested in increasing her amount of work as a dancer. One of them had turned from dancing for some years in a company to being a freelance dance artist. He grew tired of the heavy performing schedule he had to put up with previously and no longer enjoyed the physicality of dancing as much as before. Hence, he was now concentrating more on working with choreography. In addition, one of them had worked on choreography for a long time, although she mostly created dance pieces that she herself could also dance in. At some point early in her career she came to the conclusion that she did not always want to dance in ways choreographers asked her to. This made her concentrate on creating her own dance pieces in which she too performs.

The interview material, consequently, demonstrates that freelance dance artists have different occupational perspectives and work on different kinds of dance-related tasks. In describing them the interviewed dance artists told me, among other things, that they found that they always carried their artishood with them and that they could be themselves while holding the above-described perspectives. However, alongside of describing themselves as dancers, choreographers, and dance teachers, these dance artists also spoke of how they conceived these agents ought to be and how they ought to perform their tasks. In these instances the issues of responsibility, autonomy, solidarity towards co-workers, and versatility of skills were something that the interviewees addressed. This chapter continues to consider these themes in more detail in the next sections in order to appreciate how the interviewed dance artists performed as freelance dance artists and understood the tasks of such an artist. However, before turning to this undertaking, I will reflect further on the occupational perspectives of a freelance dance artist described above through some more theoretical considerations.

While describing their approach to dance by finding that their dealings with it belonged to the occupations of either a dancer, a choreographer, or a dance teacher, and doing this somewhat independently of my directive questions<sup>234</sup>, the interviewed dance artists also

showed that they were engaged in a conventional mode of participating in and understanding the freelance field of dance as well as their position in it. One of the conventions belonging to the artworld of dance and the freelance field of dance in Helsinki alike, is that its artistic practices are realized through, what in the phenomenological perspective could be called, different social or, in the case of this study more particularly, professional roles.<sup>235</sup> Being a freelance dance artist in itself could be understood as such a role. However, as the interviewees continued to detail their professional activities by speaking of the different roles of a dancer, a choreographer, and a dance teacher they inhabited, I will approach their discussion on professional roles and being a freelance dance artist mainly through using these terms.

What all these terms, 'dance teacher', 'dancer', and 'choreographer', refer to are historically formed practical conventions of western theatrical dance. They denote certain ways of participating and functioning in the artistic practices of a field of dance that a member of this field realizes and performs. They could thus also be described as cultural traits, social categories, institutionalized distinctions, or norms through which freelance dance artists construct their identity and through which their being gains meaning (Crossley 1996, 66). These professional roles are, then, something that, on their part, shape the manner in which freelance dance artists operate in their field and simultaneously establish them as certain kinds of artists as well as sustain the practices and existence of the field itself.

In entering a field of art, an art professional cannot avoid adopting some kind of a professional role. This understanding is already implicit in Merleau-Ponty's more general description of socio-cultural inscription. In relation to social roles he writes, amongst other things, the following:

The individual drama takes place among *roles* which are already inscribed in the total institutional structure, so that from the beginning of his life the child proceeds – simply by perceiving the attentions paid to him and the utensils surrounding him – to a deciphering of meanings which from the outset generalizes his own drama into a drama of his culture. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964c, 112)

What he, therefore, points towards, is that in learning first to tacitly comprehend and later more explicitly understand the operations and behavior ongoing in her or his social environment and participating in this environment through the consequently formed pre-comprehension, an individual becomes a socially-inscribed member of this environment. What

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234. In the questions with which I attempted to initiate a discussion in the interviews I did not use the terms 'dance teacher' or 'choreographer'. I solely referred to being a freelance dancer. Cf. ft. 7 in Part I and appendix I.

235. Alfred Schutz began creating an explicitly social phenomenology drawing on Husserl's and Heidegger's thinking as early as the 1930's. His thinking has been very influential in, for example, constructivist sociology through the work of Bergen and Luckmann. But he has also influenced such phenomenological thinkers as Maurice Natanson, John O'Neill and Nick Crossley (cf. Crossley 1996; O'Neill 1989; Natanson 1974). All of them, in one way or another, addressed the question of social roles. In this section, along with Merleau-Ponty's thinking, I will mostly rely on the thinking of Schutz, Crossley, and Natanson.

Merleau-Ponty's understanding implies is that basically we do not so much choose to enact a certain social role as become socialized into one. While discussing a Heideggerian understanding of socialization, Dreyfus describes this notion further:

I pick up my most basic life-organizing self-interpretations by socialization, not by choosing them. For example, one behaves as an older brother or a mama's girl without having chosen these organizing self-interpretations, and without having them in mind as specific purposes. These ways of being lead one to certain organized activities such as being a teacher, nurse, victim, etc. Each such "role" is an integrated set of practices: one might say "a practice", as in the practice of medicine. And each practice is connected with a lot of equipment for practicing it. Dasein inhabits and dwells in these practices and their appropriate equipment. In fact Dasein takes a stand on its being by a more or less integrated subpattern of social practices. (Dreyfus 1991, 96)

Still the influence of choice especially in relation to professional roles is, however, not totally inconsequential to them. Obviously an individual might aspire to become a dance artist and, for example, decide to study dance. Nevertheless it is only by being immersed in the practices of a field of dance and becoming practically familiar with its conventions that this individual can eventually become a dance artist.

As mentioned in chapter 9, the artworld of dance, or more particularly in the case of this study the freelance field of dance, like any other already established cultural domain, pre-exists an individual dance artist and offers her or him a space of possibilities in which to realize her or his artistic aspirations. When entering such a field the members of this field relate to the individual in a certain way but the field and its members simultaneously ask an individual dance artist to differing degrees to conform to its conventions. Artists become artists by engaging in the cooperative processes of art production and the related equipment, social networks, and concrete institutions. In relation to these processes and networks an artist cannot be an artist unless she or he conforms to the socially expected practices of a form or field of art in at least some minimal ways (Wilshire 1982, 258). In effect, Haapala argues that being an artist essentially entails a commitment to the conventions through which a field of art operates. Even an artist who wants to break away from traditional norms and practices is reacting against these pre-established criteria which thus shapes her or his actions to a greater or lesser extent. (Haapala 2000, 132–133)

As a result, social or professional roles as sets of practices are pre-established means, which when adopted and enlivened by an individual, allow this individual to be, for example, a dance artist or more particularly a dancer, a choreographer, or a dance teacher. Indeed, as culturally prevalent conventions, social or professional roles are somewhat formalized. As already established modes of practice they have become known and understood to denote certain kinds of courses of action and behavior in relation to a certain cultural domain acting as the meaning context for these actions and behaviors (cf. Schutz 1972/1967, 185, 187). Therefore, one strand of social or professional roles is that they involve expectations: they function either as tacit or explicit norms according to which an individual is discerned to act according to a certain role and as similarly tacit or explicit prescriptive ideals according to which an individual might act in order to accomplish a role provided she or he does this

in an appropriate surrounding.

Much of the discussion that went on in the interviews about the different modes in which freelance dance artists realize their profession was actually rather normative in its nature. However, it was not only the interviewed dance artists' spontaneous interest in understanding the different modes of realizing oneself in this way that resulted in a normative conversation. At some point I directly asked them about the prerequisites for being a freelance dancer and the responsibilities that comes with being such an artist. Through my involvement in the field of freelance dance I had come to understand that some skills and traits were valued above others. In tacitly assuming the practices and values of the field while being intensely engaged in it as a dance artist before conducting the interviews for this study, I had not reflected upon the premises that directed my approach to dance in any great depth, however. Hence, I had no thorough understanding of the prevailing values of the field of freelance dance in relation to the modes of practice and skills a dance artist was expected to foster and possess. This means that I directed the discussion towards a somewhat normative end and that the interviewed dance artists did not object to my approach.

Despite the normative expectations involved in understanding a particular professional or social role, they still are flexible schemes or patterns of practice. For example, when elaborating phenomenologically on social roles, Natanson writes that, "It is the flexibility of role-enactments which permits the mass of men to enter into roles and to carry them on with reasonably effective results" (Natanson 1974, 213). In line with Merleau-Ponty's idea of historicity and the manner in which individuals become socially inscribed by both carrying forward and transposing conventional forms of life and practices, Natanson continues by writing that, "We have the history of roles in the straightforward sense of how roles were enacted in earlier times; but we also have the history of the individual's role career. The latter is both a product of the former and a commentary on it. At one and the same time, the individual plays his role and becomes an exemplar of possible role fulfillment" (Natanson 1974, 211–212). This, then, means that social roles, even if they are to a certain degree pre-determined by tradition, are not static or fixed. Their nature changes over the course of time, while different people enact, mime and perform, them in different situations and at least in slightly different ways.

In describing the variety of possible role enactments, for example, Schutz and Natanson consider social roles something to be enacted in different situations and *left behind* while engaging in acting through the parameters of another social role in the next situation. Natanson even argues that an enacted role does not imply that it is an intrinsic or permanent part of an individual's being (Natanson 1974, 199). Schutz, in turn, continues by describing roles as something which, "we may drop whenever we want to" (Schutz 1964, 82).<sup>236</sup> Whilst

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236. At one point Schutz claims that the tradition an individual lives in is something that becomes an integral part of her or his biography (Schutz 1964, 96–97). To me this denotes an understanding that the social roles of this tradition also become an integral part of the life of an individual. These social roles, as mentioned in the above text, are not only a matter of choice: of choosing and stopping to enact one. Inhabiting a social role is not only a subjective enterprise. It is also about living in a social context in

it is true that we act differently in different social contexts, according to Merleau-Pontyian thinking, a role enactment is never totally erased. Merleau-Ponty's understanding of social inscription underlines that the whole being of an individual becomes influenced by the roles she or he is enacting at any particular moment. Even if certain meaning contexts or situations would no longer be encountered and in this sense action or behavior typical of a certain role would remain unrealized, the modes of acting, behaving, perceiving, and understanding things that in some situations were embodied and relate to a social role still continue to influence the further evolution of the body schema or style of being of an individual. (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 447)

Haapala further discusses the role of an artist in a manner closely related Merleau-Ponty's understanding of social inscription. He claims that, even if the term 'role'<sup>237</sup> involves connotations of play and theatrical acting that might be performed and then left behind, the professional roles that he discusses are something through which artists constitute themselves as artists. They are structures or modes of being that belong to the manner in which artists do and perceive things. (Haapala 2000, 129, 131–132; 1991, 85) It is evident that as long as an artist is an artist she or he cannot leave her or his role as an artist behind. What is more, however, is that her or his artistic activities also continue to influence the manner in which she or he organizes her or his life in general as well as understands and perceives things. The artisthood of artists determines their lives also at moments when they are not directly participating in artistic activities and activities related to the field of art in which they function. This is generally true of dance artists, too, and as will become evident later in chapter 12 the interviewed dance artists considered being a dance artist a way of life.

Regardless of this, the interviewed dance artists also explain that while they continue to be engaged in their professional practice they do so through the different perspectives and

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which others relate to you in a certain manner, too. In one of the quotations presented previously in the main text, Dreyfus writes, for example, about being someone's brother or daughter. We cannot choose these roles and still we continue to carry them through out our lives. We do this perhaps more vividly as long as our parents and sisters or brothers continue to live. But even after their death we continue to think of ourselves more or less in terms of these relationships.

Natanson, in turn, makes a distinction typical of role theory. He separates the person from the agent enacting a social role. Yet he writes that, "It is artificial to think that we snap off the person when the self performs in a role. Rather, what takes place is an affirmation of the pure possibility that, in any instance, the person may distinguish between his idiosyncratic needs and preferences and the requirements of a formal role" (Natanson 1974, 210). It is true that a certain role does not determine our being on its own and that different aspects of our being might even conflict with a role we are enacting. But I would still maintain that the social roles we perform mold our being in a more fundamental manner than Schutz and Natanson, at least in some portions of their texts, care to acknowledge.

237. Haapala notes that Dreyfus uses the term 'role' with quotation marks, as if to point out the problematic nature of the term. Merleau-Ponty in turn italicizes it. Indeed, while investigating theatrical roles through a phenomenological perspective, Bruce Wilshire argues that, "That we put offstage "roles" into quotes and do not do so with onstage roles is merely an arbitrary convention to distinguish them as we write" (Wilshire 1982, 260). However, not all phenomenologically-oriented studies follow this convention. Examples of these are the works Alfred Schutz and Maurice Natanson who write of social roles without quotation marks or italics (cf. Schutz 1967; 1964; Natanson 1974). To make the text more readable I have followed the example of these authors, though I acknowledge the problematic connotations of the term.

roles of a dance teacher, a dancer, and a choreographer. While working with dance they either continue to shift from one role to the other or at least at some point in their career have done so. However, they speak of their differing roles in a manner, which suggests that these different roles belong together or intertwine. One of the interviewed dance artists says the following:

.../Yet, I have trained, and I have taught, and I am attached to the dance world, and I have choreographed myself. But I have extremely long periods of time when I haven't myself danced./.../I really have these very strong strings going in different directions so that I cannot say that I experience myself only as a dancer. At the same time I experience teaching and then the rest of this. For me they are part of the same package./... (2N)<sup>238</sup>

She does not consider herself to be only a dancer, but also simultaneously a choreographer and a dance teacher. For her these roles are different facets of the same thing. In some respect, then, they belong together. They are all a part of the mode in which she completes herself as a dance artist. In fact, the different roles freelance dance artists realize themselves through could be understood to intertwine exactly because they are constitutive of one and the same freelance dance artist. Another of the interviewees seems to agree with this by stating,

.../I can move from situation to next, yet move as myself according to the task. If I teach, if I am a choreographer, if I am a dancer, it still is me as myself. So I can shift into the role that comes about through the situation by being in myself. It is a totally different thing if I myself dance in a piece or if I am directing it. Of course they have their own routines./... (3M)<sup>239</sup>

Despite the differences involved in working as a dance teacher, a dancer, and a choreographer, this dance artist feels that he can always work as himself when taking on these roles. In this sense they are inseparable from him.

One could also posit that all these different ways of approaching dance aid in understanding and perceiving the different aspects contemporary dance involves, irrespective of the manner in which it is approached in a certain situation. Even if the tasks of a dance teacher, a choreographer, and a dancer differ from each other, the experience of all of these most likely also influences the manner in which the tasks and possibilities of each are understood. One of the dance artists comments on this by saying that,

.../I perceive myself so much as a dancer that I am nothing as a choreographer. .../... (4F)<sup>240</sup>

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238. .../Minä olen kyllä treenannut, ja minä olen opettanut, ja minä olen tanssin maailmassa kiinni, ja koreografioinut itse. Mutta minulla on helvetin pitkiä aikoja, että minä en ole itse tanssinut./.../Minulla on todella nämä nuorat erisuuntaan tosi vahvat, että minä en voi sanoa, että minä koen vain olevani tanssija. Samanaikaisesti minä koen tämän opetushomman ja sitten tämän muun. Ne on kyllä minulle siis samaa pakettia./... (2N)

239. .../Siis minä pystyn tilanteesta toiseen siirtymään, siirtymään kuitenkin omana itsenäni tehtävän mukaan. Jos minä opetan, jos minä olen koreografina, jos minä olen tanssijana, niin se on kuitenkin ihan minä itseni, itse. Eli minä pystyn kyllä siirtymään siinä omassa itsessäni siihen rooliin tavallaan, mikä syntyy siitä tilanteesta. Onhan se aina eri asia, että tanssinko minä itse teoksessa vai ohjaanko minä sitä. Totta kai siinä on omat kuvionsa./... (3M)

She is commenting on her position as a choreographer, a person who creates dance pieces she herself also dances in, and suggests that if she did not dance and perform as a dancer she would not be much of a choreographer. She discusses this issue further:

.../Because they are my pieces, it is obvious what I want. That is why I am in them myself, because I couldn't imagine that I would do a – if there is for me a significant [theme] that I want to deal with now – I could not imagine that I myself would not participate. ... (4F)  
LR<sup>241</sup> .../Yes, you want yourself to go through it./...  
.../Yes, definitely and be part of creating the atmosphere, because I know best what should be aimed for./... (4F)<sup>242</sup>

She tells us that she dances in her pieces in order for her choreographic ideas to be realized in a manner that she aims at. Being a dancer enhances her choreographic abilities.

Hence, it would seem that the different roles through which the interviewed dance artists approach dance intertwine because they belong to the artistic activities of one and the same dance artist. But they are interlaced also because they influence each other. What so far has only been noted in passing, is that they found the different roles to involve different goals and responsibilities. This will become more evident through the quotations from the interview material in the following sections. Crossley writes of a practical knowledge specific to the role and position that a member of a community occupies (Crossley 1996, 94). Parviainen claims that, for example, the roles of a dancer and choreographer imply different social and artistic positions in a field of dance (Parviainen 1998, 11 ft.) For me it is easy to understand that dance teachers, dancers, and choreographers, while performing different kinds of dance-related tasks and furthering different dance-related interests, also utilize different kinds of practical knowledge and simultaneously occupy different social and artistic positions in the field of freelance of dance. But the interviewed dance artists demonstrate that their engagement with dance is not limited to any one of these roles. In fact, following the interviewed dance artists' suggestion that these different roles intertwine and my presupposition already presented in chapter 3 that freelance dance artists work with assignments defined and limited by different goals and short-term schedules, I would also argue that performing these different roles is constitutive of being a freelance dance artist more generally. They are the roles as well as the artistic and social positions through which freelance dance artists accomplish their core activities.

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240. .../Minähän siis miellän itseni niin siis tanssijaksi myös, että voin sanoa, että minä ole koreografina mitään./... (4N)

241. The initials LR stand for me as the interviewer.

242. .../Siis kun ne on minun juttuja, niin onhan se selvää, mitä minä haluan. Sen takia minä olen itse niissä aina, koska minä en missään tapauksessa voisi kuvitella, että minä tekisin sellaisen – jos on tällainen minulle merkittävä[teema], että haluan tätä nyt käsitellä – minä en voisi kuvitella, että minä en olisi itse mukana. ... (4N)

LR. .../Niin sinä haluat myös mennä itse sen läpi./...

.../Joo ehdottomasti ja olla siinä luomassa sitä henkeä, koska minähän sen parhaiten tiedän, mitä siinä pitäisi yrittää./... (4N)

Evidently it is possible that freelance dance artists might at times concentrate on occupying only one of the roles discussed here. In addition, they might, for example, work as producers of their own or each others artistic work, or hold a temporary position in different artistic institutions, associations, or foundations, and even occasionally work in jobs that are not related to the arts. In fact, in Finland it is customary for freelance dance artists to sometimes take jobs that are not related to the arts, and that some artists combine their work as dance teachers, dancers, and choreographers, while others occupy these roles consecutively (Suho- nen 1999, 11, 13). Yet I would like to suggest that the above-mentioned roles of a dance teacher, dancer, and choreographer, nevertheless, remain the central artistic roles through which freelance dance artist construe themselves as dance artists. These are the roles that involve acquiring, maintaining, and working with a practical knowledge of the artistic processes related to creating choreography, performing dance, and dancing more generally all of which are prerequisites for the existence of dance pieces.

In general the roles of a choreographer, dancer, and dance teacher are something that could be described in the following way, for example: a choreographer is an individual, who plans and creates the movement sequences or choreographic material of a dance piece, sets them to music and stages them in a certain way, as well as teaches them to a dancer in order for a dance work to be realized. A dancer in turn is that artist who dances, learns and re- hearses, the created dance material, and finally performs it in front of an audience. A dance teacher, in turn, is a pedagogue who teaches students the bodily techniques, conventions, and concepts relevant to different styles and ways of dancing. But these are only very limited and in relation to contemporary dance rather conventional determinations of a choreo- grapher, a dancer, and a dance teacher. As the previous paragraphs imply, the way these roles have been accomplished during different historical periods of time, in relation to different dance styles and fields of dance, and by different individuals, nonetheless, remains open to question.

In the following sections of this chapter I will turn to what the interviewed dance artists had to say in order to discern some of the features of the contemporaneous nature of these roles from the perspective of Finnish contemporary freelance dance artists. The subsequent sections do not, however, present a thorough analysis of the nature of the artistic roles a freelance dance artist inhabits. As mentioned in Part I the scope of the interviews are limited. In making an interpretation of what the interviewees had to say on the subject I shall pay attention to those features that I find to exemplify the issues that structure the artishood of a freelance dance artist or which seemed to be focal concerns for several of the interviewees. Therefore, while continuing to discuss the concepts behind the roles of a dance teacher, a dancer, and a choreographer that the interviewees provided, I will contemplate the nature and interrelations of these different roles as discussed by the interviewees in order to gain a more particular understanding of the manner in which the interviewees conceive of these different roles and how they come to influence the makeup of a freelance dance artist.

## 11.1 On Being a Dance Teacher

Despite the fact that three out of the four interviewed dance artists mentioned that they had experience in teaching dance, this role-theme was the one that was least discussed. In the interviews there seemed to be no overt reason for this except for the fact that I did not ask the interviewees about teaching dance. However, I did not directly ask them anything about choreographing either. Yet this issue was discussed a great deal more in-depth.

It is interesting that the interviewees demonstrated that they taught dance and still commented on it mostly in passing. From this it could be gathered that teaching dance is one of the activities a freelance dance artist might engage in. But at least in light of the amount of commentary on it, it does not seem to be the focal activity of a freelance dance artist. It could even be argued that, in a sense, teaching dance is not as central an issue to the production of dance works, which is generally considered the core activity of a dance artist, as are creating choreography and performing as dancers. Even if teaching movement sequences to dancers is a task that most choreographers attend to, teaching dance as a separate curricular activity is not in itself necessarily directly linked to the process of creating dance works and dance performance. Moreover, Stinson, Blumenfeld-Jones, and Van Dyke note, for example, that in the domain of North American western theatrical dance, it is recognizable that choreography and performance have considerably more status than teaching (Stinson, Blumenfeld-Jones & Van Dyke 1990, 14, 19; cf. Fortin 1998, 63). This view is familiar to me as a professional practitioner in the field of freelance dance in Helsinki. Even if I remained open to the emergent themes that the interviewees brought up, in retrospect I suspect that this view implicitly influenced the manner in which I continued to direct the conversation where the dance artists spoke about the roles and tasks of a freelance dance artist. However, perhaps this position also influenced the manner in which the dance artists themselves found certain themes and concerns they addressed in the interviews to be worthwhile and others not.

Aside from this, one could certainly argue that taking dance classes and having a teacher teach dance classes is the most common mode of transmitting and acquiring the skills that enable people to work with dance on a professional level. While teaching dance, dance artists transmit the aesthetics and ideologies predominant in their field to their students in addition to offering them a possibility of learning movement skills common in dance (Parviainen 1998, 96–97). During the last century and even more recently in the domain of both modern and contemporary dance it has been very common for performing dance artists to have taught the style of dance they utilize to dance students or other dance artists. In fact, those dance teachers who have also been well-known and respected choreographers as well as performers have often been valued above those who solely concentrate on teaching dance (Fortin 1998, 63). Many respected modern dance artists even created their own dance technique<sup>243</sup> partially in relation to teaching dance. They educated the dancers they used in their choreography by teaching them this technique which was based on their manner of moving and the movement motifs that they were interested in and which also formed the basis for their choreographic style.<sup>244</sup> Examples of this are Doris Humphrey, Martha

Graham, and Merce Cunningham. (cf. Parviainen 2002, 38; 1998, 99–100; Foster 1997; 246–248; Arnelagos & Sirridge 1984, 87, 92)

Although it is no longer customary for contemporary choreographers to develop a new dance technique in the sense of a more or less formal and comprehensive movement vocabulary transmitted to and maintained by other dancers or students, I would still argue that, while teaching dance, contemporary dance artists rely on their bodily experiences, their manner of moving, and their conception of dance when creating dance material and exercises used in these classes (cf. Foster 1997, 253). In this sense they are questioning and refining their understanding of dance and working with their characteristic motional and artistic problems. This is something I consider the interviewed dance artists were suggesting when they discussed teaching dance.

The following paragraphs present a few of the comments that the interviewed dance artists made on teaching dance. In my view, the interviewees relate to teaching contemporary dance while making these comments. Obviously this is their area of expertise. (But based on my knowledge of the nature of some of the dance classes or courses these particular dance artists have held, I assume that they are speaking of both teaching contemporary dance technique<sup>245</sup> as well as improvisational and compositional skills.) Nonetheless, what the interviewees state shows that they reflected on at least some of the pedagogical problems related to teaching dance and that in teaching they questioned issues related to dancing and dance technique that they also found personally interesting.

One of the interviewed dance artists speaks of a responsibility involved in being a teacher and teaching dance. She says:

.../In it [teaching] you have to really be responsible for the people, what they do and what you give to them. And in my view a healthy authority, which does not flatten the person, which somehow in my view realistically expresses that one understands one's situation and the situation of the student – what one understands. This guru thing is of course different. In my view it is not very interesting. Somehow this responsibility is the primary thing of a teacher. That's why teaching is so very heavy. . . / . . . (4F)<sup>246</sup>

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243. Parviainen argues that it generally is the case that 'dance technique' is a term which has a variety of different meanings depending on the historical context and situation in which it is used. In her analyses she distinguishes four characteristics to be typical of dance techniques related to modern dance. They are 1) movement vocabulary, 2) bodily control, 3) habitus or style, and 4) teaching method. (Parviainen 2002, 34, 38; 1998, 102) She thus implies that they employed certain kinds of movement material influenced by the bodily style of being and motional interests of their creator, aimed at enhancing certain kinds of bodily skills which mold the body into a representative of the practiced technique, and involved a style of teaching which is based on the imitation and repetition of given movement sequences.

244. In western theatrical dance during the 20th century, the concept of style was most often used to describe the nature of diverse movement vocabularies effective in its sphere and a dance artist's particular manner of performing a certain vocabulary of movement. As a categorical term it has also been used while discerning the characteristic features of particular dance works and dance artists' dancing in order to conceive of the historical origins, genres, or schools related to them. (Hammergren 1991, 192; Arnelagos & Sirridge 1984, 86)

245. See pages 244–245 for an analysis of the nature of technique in contemporary dance.

This dance artist speaks of a responsibility that inheres in teaching. She considers that a dance teacher should be responsible and responsive to her or his students. One could think that she is pointing out an understanding according to which a dance teacher should acknowledge and respect as best she or he can the situation a student finds her- or himself in a dance class as well as the physical and emotional limits that she or he has (cf. Smith 1998, 128). In stating that a dance teacher should understand her own circumstances, too, I take this dance artist to also appreciate a dance teacher who acknowledges and is capable of expressing her or his own limits and perspective on dance over and above the goals sought after in the teaching-learning situation. Along with these considerations, I believe that for this dance artist the ethical issues of acknowledging the difference of the individuals involved in the teaching-learning situation and clarifying the premises upon which the related cooperation is constructed are an important aspect of dance pedagogy. As Merleau-Ponty argues, for individuals to be involved in ethical communication in which their differences are recognized, it is necessary that a common ground, a shared perspective upon which common understanding and activity becomes possible, emerges between them and that the interlocutors are also partners in equality (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 354–355).

Indeed, the above quotation also addresses the issue of authority and rejects the idea of a charismatic and authoritarian guru-mentality in teaching dance. Apart from this, what has traditionally been the case is that, “In most dance technique classes, the teacher is the authority and the only recognized source of knowledge” (Stinson 1998, 27). The teacher assumes the position of a leader structuring the dance knowledge to be worked on and introduces the tasks to be solved in addition to the movement sequences to be repeated in order for the students to learn the subject taught. Clyde Smith (1998) claims that in dance classes submission to the teacher’s instructions and expectations is normal.<sup>247</sup> In spite of this, an authority figure, an expert and an individual in power, need not be authoritarian, demanding submission, suppressing individuality and experiential issues arising in a dance class. (Smith 1998, 125, 126, 134, 137) In my understanding, in order for a non-authoritarian atmosphere to emerge, sensitivity, alertness, and responsiveness towards the students and the learning situation plus related reflective and reflexive procedures are required on the part of the teacher. Also a de-centering of the source of knowledge, in

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246. . . /Siinä täytyy olla sitten todella vastuussa niistä ihmisistä, mitä ne tekee, mitä niille antaa. . . Ja todellakin minun mielestä terve auktoriteetti, joka siis sitä persoonaa ei litistä vaan jotenkin minusta silleen todellisuudentajuisesti ilmaisee, että ymmärtää, missä itse mennee ja missä tämä oppilas menee – sen minkä ymmärtää. Et tämä guruiluhan on tietysti eri asia. Se ei ole kauhean kiinnostavaa minusta. Jotenkin tämä niin kuin vastuuntunto on minusta se opettajan jotenkin ykkönen. Sen takia on hirveän raskasta opettaa. . . . (4N)

247. Clyde Smith describes this tendency further. He states that it is not always easy to discern when the students’ boundaries, their individuality and autonomy, are respected and when not. Often dance classes aim at enhancing certain definite skills and a dance student’s bodily ‘docility’ (as Foucault (1995/1977) refers to it) when confronted by the related exercises and demands of a teacher is often seen necessary by the teacher for the student to become a better dancer. Students might also idealize a master teacher with special knowledge and insights. In order to be acknowledged by such an authority they might also become oblivious to their own needs and experiences. (cf. Smith 1998, 125, 126, 134, 137)

which a teacher becomes more of a facilitator of the active process of knowledge construction and skill acquisition of the student, is a means through which to move towards a more egalitarian relationship between the teacher and the student.<sup>248</sup> From the teacher this requires a heightened responsiveness on the processes ongoing in the actual teaching-learning situation.

While making a phenomenological analysis of some of the activities teaching involves, Van Manen argues that reflective procedures are already implied in the very meaning of pedagogy which “by definition, signifies that teaching is done in an intentional manner that constantly distinguishes what is good or more appropriate from what is bad or inappropriate” for a student or students in particular situations (Van Manen 1999, 3). He writes of three modes of reflective-reflexive activity that a teacher generally makes use of. He discusses reflection as pro-active and post-active phases of teaching through which the teaching situation is planned and prepared for and through which it is analyzed and contemplated after the event in order to discern the nature of the ongoing teaching-learning process and how to proceed with it in the next class. In addition there is also something that Van Manen describes as engaged immediacy, a pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact, by which he means that “improvisational pedagogical-didactical skill of instantly knowing, from moment to moment, how to deal with students in interactive teaching-learning situations” (Van Manen 1999, 10). What these concepts imply is that teaching involves a rather thorough engagement both as a lived ability to be sensitive to the complex interaction (and in the case of dance the physical work) occurring in a teaching-learning situation, and to think by doing, as well as a prospective and retrospective analysis of the teaching and learning processes ongoing in these situations. Being responsible for this kind of work requires time and commitment. As the above-quoted dance artist suggests, teaching dance might become very taxing, then. It is especially so if a dance artist is preoccupied with dancing or creating choreography, too.

Another of the interviewed dance artists continues to reflect on her responsibilities as a dance teacher through considering what is expected of her as a teacher. She says:

.../It might be that I have to mostly think of what is expected of me when I teach. Let's say that before I perhaps thought about it more strictly, about what is expected from me, that I tried to fulfill someone's wishes. Now I can perhaps better combine also my own wishes with it – what I want to do, too. I am not claiming that they were terribly contradictory before either./  
.../Of course, in this teaching position I have to think very precisely about it./.../But perhaps the total picture has somehow become a more complete thing for me so that these things are woven into it more easily./... (2F)<sup>249</sup>

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248. Actually, such contemporary dance practices as contact-improvisation or release-technique commonly follow such an approach. They do not adhere to simply imitating and repeating pre-established movement sequences. Rather the students' bodies are allowed to produce new possibilities of movement. Especially in the case of contact-improvisation, both teacher and students determine what movement is appropriate at a given moment in a physical practice session. (Foster 1997, 250)

249. .../Ehkä minä joudun enimmäkseen miettimään silloin kun minä opetan, että mitä minulta odotetaan. Sanotaan, että ennen minä ehkä ajattelin sitä vielä tiukemmin, mitä multa odotetaan, että minä yritän täyttää joittenkin toiveita. Nyt tavallaan minä pystyn ehkä paremmin yhdistämään myös omat toiveet

She implies here that she herself has expertise in, at least partially, determining what is relevant to teach and how to do this, but argues that she also has to adjust her teaching approach according to the opinions of others to some extent. Here others could refer to such things as the tradition or field of dance she advances in her teaching, the employing institution, as well as the students she works with (Fortin 1998, 55). All of these are something that could be understood to involve expectations about the nature and outcome of her teaching practice. In stating that she has to think about these expectations very precisely, I interpret her to suggest that she has to reflect upon both the prevalent evaluative and normative issues related to teaching contemporary dance as well as the more particular understanding and aims her employers and students have in relation to her teaching. In putting forward her own mode of teaching she takes a stand in relation to these.

In my view, consequently, the above extract illustrates that this dance artist understands that teaching dance is not solely a question of furthering her personal interests. Rather, it is an activity that makes her reflect upon the practices of contemporary dance through a broader lens. In effect, this dance artist even maintains that it is in relation to teaching dance that she mostly thinks of the expectations related to the practices of dance she engages with more generally. Yet, especially lately, she finds that her own interests and the above-described expectations interlace in a more or less non-contradictory manner.

In the next passage from the interview material this same dance artist continues to describe the concrete nature of the questioning involved in attempting to convey her understanding and experience of dancing to her students. I shall quote her at length because I find her words to reveal a complex web of issues that she consequently confronts.

.../I thought, that I would sometimes try to go into the details of this. What is it to dissolve and re-establish technique training, or what is the journey from tight and compact to a looser state? Because that is what one thinks about all the time when one has to work with students. Where to begin from, what to reasonably begin, how to experience effort or how to experience something light, if one doesn't experience effort/strength? It is like a ball game composed of these things. To move through effort to – it doesn't mean towards powerlessness, that's it – other things start to come. Effort becomes more articulate. I think it is about effort becoming articulated somehow. It gains hues./.../I believe it gains more hues. In a way feeling the freedom in the body brings it different hues. If it is only about strength, it works on one level. This is a curious point, which I am myself very interested in./.../It is exactly what one thinks about: why is it so difficult for a student to recognize, if it is not about strength, why is it so difficult to acknowledge as work. What is work in dance, training in dance?/... (2F)<sup>250</sup>

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siihen, että mitä minä myös haluan tehdä. En minä nyt väitä, että silloinkaan se on hirveästi ristiriidassa ollut./.../totta kai minä joudun nyt siis tässä opettajan duunissa miettimään tosi tarkkaan sitä./.../Mutta ehkä tämä kokonaisympyrä on jotenkin minulle tullut nyt enemmän kokonaiseksi asiaksi, niin silloin nämä lomittuu sitten helpommin sinne./... (2N)

250. .../Minä ajattelin, että minä joskus ihan yritän paneutua näihin – että mitä se tekniikkatreenauksen purkaminen ja uudelleen asettaminen on, tai mitä se matkanteko siitä kireästä, tiukasta löyempään on. Koska sitähan sitä miettii koko aika tässä, kun joutuu tekemään oppilaiden kanssa. Mistä aloittaa, mikä on järkevää aloittaa, miten voi tuntee voimaa jos ei – tai tuntee jotain köykäistä, jos ei tunne voimaa. Se on niin kuin näiden asioiden pallottelu – semmoisen voiman kautta kulku johonkin – se ei

She is of the opinion, therefore, that physical effort in dance involves differing qualities or hues as she calls them. She thinks about how to help her students to move in ways in which these different qualities are used. These questions also make her think about how to approach working with students, her method of teaching. But not only this; she contemplates the nature of dance technique and technique training. She asks what they are like and what the process of acquiring certain technique-related skills in dance is like. One could surmise these are questions through which she forms her own opinion of these issues and enhances her understanding of the processes involved in becoming skillful in dance, of the nature bodily motion in dance, as well as pedagogical issues in teaching dance technique.

The previous few excerpts show that a responsibility and a reflective questioning belong to teaching dance. They demonstrate that teaching contemporary dance makes the interviewed dance artists think about pedagogical issues and contemporary dance technique (one of the contents of the subject they teach). They show that they are concerned with a teacher-student relation that acknowledges individual differences as well as their method of or approach to teaching. They illustrate, additionally, that the aspects of dance technique that they teach are chosen in relation to their own understanding of and preferences concerning dance, the students taught, as well as the context in which they teach. In my view the way the interviewees ponder these issues indicate that they are involved in a moral practice of deciphering the right course of action to take in teaching dance and which aspects of dance they value and want to transmit to their students. This they further imply that they do in a situation- and student-specific manner. Thus, they relate to Merleau-Ponty's understanding that moral action is not reliant on any pre-existent or universal norms. Instead, moral action and ethical communication are relative to particular situations requiring reciprocal and answerable communication between situated participants. (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 354–355; 1985/1964b, 30) In the end, when freelance dance artists teach dance, I interpret them as clarifying and even amplifying their understanding of the practices and skills related to contemporary dance as well as those issues of dance, dancing, and the related interaction that they value and find worthy of conveying to others.

## 11.2 On Being a Dancer

When speaking about the nature of a dancer, the interviewed dance artists spoke especially in terms of a contemporary freelance dancer as I had asked them to do when suggesting that

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tarkoita voimattomampaan, sehän siinä onkin, että sitten vaan tulee muut asiat: se artikuloituu se voima. Minusta se on jotain semmoista, että se artikuloituu jotenkin. Siihen tulee muuta sävyä./ . . /Minä uskon, että siihen tulee sävyjä lisää, että tavallaan se vapauden tunteminen kehossa, niin se tuo siihen sävyjä. Jos se on vain voiman tekemistä, niin se on yhden tasosta. Toi on jännä pointti, minua ihan itseäni kiinnostaa noin ihan hirveästi./ . . /Just tätä miettii, että miksi opiskelijan on vaikea tunnistaa, jos ei se ole voiman tekemistä, niin miksi sitä on vaikea tunnistaa työksi. Mikä on sitten sitä työntekoa tanssissa, tanssitreenissä?/ . . (2N)

they describe what being a freelance dancer is like and what kinds of abilities such a dancer needs. While doing so, the interviewees asserted that in order to be able to be engaged in the freelance field of dance in a productive manner, freelance dancers needed to be versatile. They also spoke about a dancer having to surrender her or his body and skills to the goals of the choreographer. In fact, part of the discussion that concerned both the roles of a dancer and a choreographer was conducted by relating these two agents to one another. Then, for example, the choreographer was described to be necessarily more autonomous than a dancer and to assume different kinds of responsibilities from a dancer. In this section, I will first concentrate on discussing the manner in which the interviewees conceived of the skills and character of a freelance dancer. Then, in section 11.3 of this chapter, I shall turn to how the interviewees discussed some of the features that relate to the choreographer. Finally, in section 11.4, I shall focus on studying the manner in which both the roles of the choreographer and dancer became determined more closely in relation to each other.

In one way or another, three out of four of the interviewed dance artists thought that a freelance dancer should be multitalented. One of them begins discussing this issue by saying that,

. . ./For example here in Finland, what's the use of being, for example, a Limon dancer? None. It is of no use to anybody. In the States it is quite ok that you go to the Cunningham studio and try to get into the company. Then it is sensible, but not in our country. I believe that a strong and versatile dancer. . ./. . . (3M)<sup>251</sup>

This dance artist suggests that it is fine to concentrate on becoming skilful in one movement style or technique<sup>252</sup> if there is an opportunity for a dancer to work in that way. In his view this is not possible in Finland. In Finland there is no modern or contemporary dance company concentrating on performing only one idiomatic style or technique of modern or contemporary dance. As mentioned in chapter 10, in Finland contemporary dance generally operates through a fragmented aesthetics relying on the shifting interests and styles of individual dance artists. Therefore, a versatile dancer is what the freelance field of dance in Helsinki requires.

Another dance artist continues discussing this issue when saying that,

. . ./At the moment the field of dance is so colorful and the content structures are so broad that you might end up anywhere, in any kind of [dance]. I believe that you cannot manage with only one technique./ . . ./I am a bit skeptical. I do not believe that one really manages with one. In a way you need to see and experience other things. The body has to experience. It has to be provoked through different stimuli./ . . . (2F)<sup>253</sup>

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251. . . ./Esimerkiksi meillä Suomessa, mitä kannattaa olla esimerkiksi Limon-tanssija? Ei yhtään mitään. Ei siitä ole kellekään hyötyä. Jossain Jenkkilässä se on ihan ok, että sinä käyt Cunningham-studiolla ja yrität päästä companyyn. Silloinhan siinä on jotain järkevää. Mutta ei meidän maassa. Kyllä minä uskon että vahva, monipuolinen tyyppi. . ./. . . (3M)

252. See ft. 243 and 244 in this chapter.

253. . . ./Tällä hetkellä tanssin kenttä on kuitenkin niin värikäs, ja tavallaan tanssin sisältörakenteet ovat

She similarly argues that freelance dancers cannot cope with mastering only one dance technique, one motional vocabulary or style of dance. Rather they have to stir their bodies in a variety of ways in order to be able to cope with the various kinds of dance tasks they might encounter.

As stated in the previous section it seems more generally to be the case that contemporary dance artists no longer establish and work with, what Parviainen calls personified movement vocabularies or techniques created by individual dance artists (Parviainen 2002, 38; 1998, 101). In the past it was typical for a choreographer to have a more or less permanent company with affiliated dance classes providing the dancers or future dancers of the company the ability to work with these personified vocabularies or other skills required for performance (Fortin 1998, 62). In addition, Foster claims that in the American context up until the 1970's, the different dance techniques of modern dance were considered unique and to mark a dancers body to such a degree that they could not adequately perform another technique. The related aesthetic projects were also conceived of as mutually exclusive. She argues that the increasing genre of independent contemporary choreographers, who largely depend on their own entrepreneurial efforts to promote their work, instead encourage dancers to train in *several existing techniques without adopting the aesthetic vision of any*. She maintains that lately these choreographers have come to prefer a multitalented body, a body competent in many styles of dancing. (Foster 1997, 253)

In Finland, too, modern dance choreographers tended to work with a more or less steady cohort or company of dancers. However, in the freelance field of dance it is now often the case that freelance dancers take care of their own training in individual ways. When working with different choreographers, they simply concentrate on creating, learning, and rehearsing the motional material related to the emergent dance piece itself. It is by and large true, moreover, that contemporary choreographers work in specific ways often requiring highly skilled dancers without any rigid stylistic imprints in their bodies. The current tendency of contemporary choreography that dancers perform a wide variety of movements from pedestrian and "natural" to the highly athletic and gymnastic is also effective here. Consequently, Finnish freelance dancers utilize eclectic vocabularies and even new interdisciplinary genres of performance, which combine, for example, technology, site-specific methods, as well as speech and song in addition to the more familiar motional practices of contemporary dance. (cf. Fortin 1998, 62–63; Foster 1997, 253)

In order to cope with the variety of dance tasks contemporary freelance dancers may encounter Parviainen points out that many of them "take a diversity of classes in ballet, contact improvisation, aikido, and yoga" in addition to individual exercise programs including jogging, swimming, weight lifting, etc. (Parviainen 1998, 101). The interviewed dance artists likewise demonstrated that they, among other things, jogged, swam, went to the

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niin laajat. . . että sinä voit joutua mihinkä tahansa, minkälaiseen tahansa. Minä uskoisin että sinä et yhdellä tekniikalla pärjää. . . /Minulla on vähän skeptinen suhde. Minä en usko, että sillä yhdellä oikein pärjää. Tavallaan tarvitsee nähdä muuta, ja kokea. Kehon täytyy kokea. Sitä täytyy ärsyttää erilaisin keinoin. . . (2N)

gym, rode the bicycle, stretched, did yoga and occasionally took aerobic and dance classes as well as simply trained and studied the motional qualities of the body on their own in order to maintain and enhance their physical abilities.<sup>254</sup> Foster calls the body that results from this kind of versatile practice *a body for hire*, which “trains in order to make a living at dancing” (Foster 1997, 255).

In Foucault’s terms any bodily technique or somatic<sup>255</sup> practice that aims at a monitoring, control, and transformation of the body is a discipline, which turns the body into an aptitude or capacity whose forces it seeks to increase. In relating to and working with one’s body through the regimens of such practices one is creating what is often called, after Foucault, a docile body, a body “that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved” (Foucault 1995/1977, 136, 137–138). In addition, as Clyde Smith argues, much of the dance training that dancers and dance students do aims at the docility of the body in order for it to be pliable material for a choreographer (Smith 1998, 131). A few of the dance artists, indeed, spoke about the necessity of a dancer surrendering her or his body and skills for the use of the choreographer. This theme will be discussed in more detail in section 11.4. However, one passage in which the pliability of the dancer’s body in front of a choreographer is discussed and which emphasizes a dancer’s motional skills is germane to this discussion. While commenting on what kinds of dancers she likes to use when working as a choreographer one of the interviewees said:

.../If I think of what kinds of dancers I like to use, the first thing of course is that one can move well. I expect that she or he is capable of performing what I want with her or his body and bearing./... (4F)<sup>256</sup>

Here this dance artist tells us that she appreciates a dancer who is able to move well and do the tasks she gives her or him. She expects a bodily docility on the part of the dancer.

Choreographers’ preferences for the kinds of dancing bodies they like to work with are influential in determining the position a dancer has in a given field of dance. What is still generally the case in the freelance field of dance in Helsinki is that there are more potential dancers than possible job-openings. Furthermore, freelance choreographers are seldom able to work on new dance pieces consecutively, immediately embarking on a new choreographic project after the previous one is finished. Moreover, they often like to ask different dancers to work in different dance pieces. When concentrating on working as dancers,

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254. For more details on the manner in which the interviewed dance artists trained see chapter 13.1.

255. Thomas Hanna, a somatic theorist, began to use term ‘somatics’ in the late 1970’s to refer to “the study of the body through the personal experiential perspective” or to the “field of study dealing with somatic phenomena: i.e., the human being as experienced by himself from the inside” (Hanna 1995, 343). As Jill Green states, for Hanna somatics is “a matter of looking at oneself from the “inside out”, where one is aware of feelings, movements and intentions, rather than looking objectively from the outside in” (Green 1996, 5). The terms ‘somatics’ or ‘somatic practices’ are now often used in dance research.

256. .../Jos minä ajattelen minkälaisia tanssijoita minä haluan käyttää, niin ensimmäisenä siinä tietenkin se on, että se kykenee liikkumaan hyvin. Eli minä oletan että hän kykenee toteuttamaan sen, mitä minä haluan, sillä keholla ja olemuksellaan. ... (4F)

freelance dancers, in turn, attempt to employ themselves as best they can as dancers. Hence, they circulate and work with different choreographers along with different groups of dancers and other artists in addition to different places and settings. While doing so, they need to be able to find ways in which to adapt to these initially new and varied scenarios over and above dancing the individual dance styles of each choreographer or learning to do so during a relatively short rehearsal period. As the interviewed dance artists themselves already suggest, for a freelance dancer multiple motional and expressional competence is one means by which she or he can attempt to acquire jobs and cope with new dance tasks.

I take the late development of an eclectic dance aesthetic to mean that the docility of the body is sought after more intensely than before, when dancers more often concentrated on sharpening their skills in one style only. In a situation where a freelance dance artist has to continuously adapt to very different kinds of motional tasks and work in different situations with different people, she or he has to question and mold the already habituated capacities of the body in more radical ways than a dancer who uses and performs only one style of dance and does so in a more or less steady company. One of the dance artist comments this state of affairs in relation to the practices of the freelance field of dance in Helsinki by saying that,

.../One can mold the body in a rather short period of time too, and this is what one always has to do, to begin from square one in the freelance field – one has to know where one is going and to mold one's body for a particular piece./... (3M)<sup>257</sup>

He implies that in beginning to work with the creation of a new dance piece a dancer has to re-orientate her- or himself to the approach used. By gaining an understanding of what is aimed at, a dancer attempts to transform her or his body to this end. In my view this interviewee is rather optimistic about the body's capacity to adapt to new situations and to learn to dance in new ways, but he still believes that for a freelance dancer beginning a rehearsal process means starting from scratch; encountering and working with an initially totally new bodily style of being.

Another dance artist continues by commenting on the necessity of having a multitalented body when thinking of the requirements of being a freelance dancer. He says:

.../The commonest or easiest answer probably is that one must be very versatile, that one is capable of doing everything. But I no longer necessarily share this opinion, because then one is evenly on a middle-course and one does not proceed towards something of one's own or in some other thing further./.../If one is versatile it is possible to get jobs in one direction or another. But if one gets a job and is odorless and tasteless, if that is the price, I am not interested. I could not endure watching a dancer who jumps from one piece to another and is odorless and tasteless in every piece. It is very boring and it is frustrating./... (1M)<sup>258</sup>

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257. .../Aika lyhyessäkin ajassa sitä voi sitä keho muokata, ja se on freelancekentällä se, mikä on aina aloitettava tavallaan nolasta – tiedettävä minin ollaan menossa ja muokattava sitä kehoansa tiettyä juttua varten./... (3M)

258. .../Yleisin vastaus tai helpoin vastaus on varmaan, että täytyy olla hirveän monipuolinen, että osaa niin kuin joka asiaa. Mutta minä en ole enää välttämättä samaa mieltä, koska siinä sitten ollaan joten

Whilst he considers that it might be beneficial for a dancer to have a multitalented body in order to acquire dance assignments, this dance artist also perceives it to have some possible disadvantages. He is interested in original dancing which requires a dancer to also find a personal manner of being engaged in dancing. According to this dance artist, aiming for versatility in one's skills might thwart a dancer's personal artistic development.

Inspired by Foster's notion of a "hired body" or a "body for hire", Parviainen describes a dancing body produced by various bodily and somatic techniques or practices in a rather derogatory fashion. She terms it a 'rubber body'. Her description of it is as a slim, pliable, and muscular body capable of moving fast and making clear movements. Like Foster, she notes that it is a body that increasingly develops those physiological and athletic aspects with measurable goals concerning, for example, elasticity, strength, and endurance (Parviainen 1998, 101; cf. Foster 1997, 255). One of the dance artists indirectly comments on Parviainen's description by saying that a dancer's body

.../must not have physical limitations, both practical and aesthetic. For example, that one would have some injury/handicap or be very tight or extremely fat./... (4F)<sup>259</sup>

She too, then, is of the opinion that ideally a dancer's body should be, at least quite slim and pliable as well as free of any severe handicaps.

In addition to these common tendencies, Foster's and Parviainen's list of traits signifies that attempting to acquire a multitalented body also involves aiming at a somewhat anonymous even if motionally well-functioning body. This is so since emphasis is placed on objectively recognizable physiological-mechanistic abilities, and, as previously mentioned, this is done without any distinct aesthetic discrimination. This kind of an approach to the body leaves the individuality of an embodied subject behind in that it encourages a form of bodily conformity (cf. Shusterman 2000, 160–161). Foster also judges that in aiming at a competency in multiple techniques one never gains as thorough an expertise in a certain style of motion as does a dancer who concentrates on utilizing one technique only (Foster 1997, 255). On the other hand, I would argue that even if multitalented bodies do not thoroughly master one technique, they most likely acquire expertise in transforming and shifting from one style of dancing to the next. By speaking of an "odorless and tasteless" dancer, however, the previously quoted dance artist seems to agree that training for a multitalented body might lead to a form of bodily conformity and leave a dancer performing only averagely. Actually, in appreciating original dancing, he seems more generally to share a similar view with Foster, who continues to relate to his comments by writing that,

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kin tasaisesti keskitiellä, eikä sitten päästä niin kuin varmaan eteenpäin jossain omassa tai jossain toisessa jutussa sen pidemmälle./.../Jos on monipuolinen, niin kyllähän siinä sitten on niin kuin mahdollisuuksia suuntaan jos toiseenkin päästä töihin. Mutta, jos sitten pääsee töihin ja on hajuton ja mauton, jos se on sen hinta, niin minua ei kiinnosta. Minä en jaksaisi katsella sellaista, joka hyppii laidasta laitaan eri ihmisten jutuissa ja on yhtä hajuton ja mauton joka jutussa. Se on hirveän tylsää ja se on niin kuin turhauttavaa./... (1M)

259. .../...että siinä ei ole sellaisia fyysisiä rajoitteita, sekä käytännöllisiä että esteettisiä. Esimerkiksi, että on joku vamma tai joku ihan hirveen tiukka joku tai hirveen lihava. /... (4N)

. . . the multipurpose hired body subsumes and smooths over differences. . . The hired body likewise threatens to obscure the opportunity, opened to us over this century, to apprehend the body as a multiple, protean, and capable, literally, of being made into many different expressive bodies. (Foster 1997, 256)

What is worth noting here, is that the terms 'a body for hire', 'a hired body', and 'a rubber body' introduced in this section in relation to the multiple skills expected of a freelance dancer give a picture of a body that is an instrument of general use-value for choreographers and dancers, while creating choreography and aiming to be hired for and cope with dance assignments respectively. In my view, this perspective on the dancing body is closely related to what Shusterman calls the representational and performative aspects of bodily practices in contrast to their experiential dimensions. Representational exercise of the body emphasizes its outer appearance and attempts to enhance its looks. Performative practices instead are concerned with the functional aspects and skills that the body is capable of while the experiential use of the body focuses on the aesthetic quality of its experience, its felt-sense. Obviously, all of these are interrelated in the sense that they are to some degree complementary to each other even if their immediate intentions and goals differ. (Shusterman 2000, 142–143) In exercising with the aim of improving the appearance of the body, for example, some functional and experiential aspects of the body are also employed. Still, in a situation in which freelance dance artists have to prove their worth as skilful dancers, I believe that the body's outer appearance and efficient motional functioning tend to receive more attention than its experiential dimension.

Attending to the body's felt-sense, nonetheless, is an important means through which a dance artist gains a sense of her or his motional and bodily stances and positions. As will become evident in chapters 12 and 13, the interviewed freelance dance artists also showed that they were highly interested in this dimension of the body. In addition, in following the qualitative feelings of the body's lived experience while training for dance or dancing, there "is no fixed external standard, no stereotypical representation, of what good or improved body feeling must be" nor of the nature of the motion that is the outcome of such an approach (Shusterman 2000, 152). Following the felt-sense of the body, then, might be one way of developing a personal manner of being engaged with dancing that one of the previously quoted dance artists argued for.<sup>260</sup>

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260. In relation to the previous few paragraphs it is worth noting that in her most recent study Parviainen finds that two different tendencies related to constructing skills in dancing are discernible in contemporary dance. In her view, while struggling to stay afloat as a successful dancer and acquiring jobs, contemporary dancers often increasingly rely on highly refined physiological knowledge adapted from the athletic field. In Parviainen's view this approach to understanding and molding the body trains the dancer's body into a technical weapon. While competing for funding and dance-positions, a dancer defends her- or himself with this acquired technical competence. The other tendency is affiliated with the somatic practice of the self and relies on experiential and tacit bodily knowledge. Through this approach dancers listen to their bodies and let their bodies direct the practices and exercises they choose to work on. Parviainen claims that this approach takes into consideration an ethical care of the self. It enhances a dancer's well-being and allows for individual preferences. (Parviainen 2002, 34) What I find baffling in her article

The previous paragraphs underline that freelance dancers should have a multitasking body capable of dancing in many diverse ways in order to answer to the demands of current choreographic practices and choreographers. This relates to Parviainen's notion that a dancer's skills are often estimated in terms of her or his technical abilities in dancing. She continues to argue that in contemporary dance the term 'technique' is used in two different ways. It refers to such skillful bodily control that is related to the general skill requirements prevalent in the field of dance instead of any single movement vocabulary. It also refers to the transformation or molding of the body through a variety of bodily practices in order for the body to become able to adapt to a wide range of different kinds of motional demands. (Parviainen 2002, 34, 39) In relation to contemporary dance, the term 'technique', therefore, does not only refer to the canonical or standardized movement vocabularies familiar to western theatrical dance. Nor does it single-handedly refer to the different movement aesthetics or styles of movement engendered by different artists or the dancer's ability to control her or his bodily motion. (cf. Parviainen 1998, 101–102) More exactly, while including these features, the term 'technique' also refers to the manner in which each individual dance artist relates to, understands, and transforms her or his body as a lived entity.

This "practice of the self"<sup>261</sup> requires of the dance artist a sensitive perception of their

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is that, on the one hand, she continues to argue that physiological and measurable knowledge of bodily functions *evermore strongly* influences the manner in which dance artists train (including contemporary dance artists!). She states that their exercise programs are similar to those of athletes. This tendency she contrasts with the experiential practices that dance artists also engage in. So Parviainen indicates that dancers also listen to their bodies and exercise in ways that they *feel* their bodies need. This latter approach she finds to be especially characteristic of the practices of contemporary dance. Modern dance techniques instead aimed at a conservation of existing movement vocabularies and aesthetics through imitative practices, which molded the body into a representative of a certain technique. The differences between the tendencies of the technique training of modern dance in relation to the approach of contemporary dance practice (in which dancers choose the manner in which they train through experiential consideration, let the body instruct them, and are concerned with their own well-being) she marks as an ethical turn in dance training. (Parviainen 2002, 39, 40) Where does she place technique as a weapon? In addition, are acquiring increased endurance, strength, and flexibility, which she places under this category, not practices of the self and do they not enhance the well-being of a working dancer? Does a dancer not self-consciously choose to increase these aptitudes and in this sense take an ethical stand in molding her- or himself as a dancing subject? Did the modern dancer not also choose to train in the manner he or she did in order to reach such ends she or he found valuable and worth striving for? Finally and to me most disturbingly, if a rational-technological-physiological approach to dance training is more and more prevalent and if this really is something that does not enhance an ethical relation to one's self, how can it then be argued that contemporary dance training has taken an ethical turn? Certainly technique training in contemporary dance has changed since the times of modern dance, but in my view Parviainen's line of argument in relation to the ethical practices of the self as presented in this paper lacks clarity and credibility in the above-questioned sense.

261. Foucault in his book *The Use of Pleasure* introduces a now oft used term 'the practice of the self' in relation to the manner in which subjects transform themselves through self-examination and different kinds of self-relations in order to move towards their potentials and embody their moral goal. This involves questioning and defining one's position in relation to reality, its dominant values and expectations, as well as choosing in what areas one wants to develop. This in turn "requires him to act upon himself, to monitor, test, improve, and transform himself" (Foucault 1992/1985, 25, 28).

own body, its motility as well as a self-reflexivity in order to further comprehend their bodily being in various situations. In *Eye and Mind* Merleau-Ponty points out that this kind of inquisitive perception always comes down to meaning that one is dealing with a “bodily technique” which illustrates and amplifies the structure of the flesh (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993c, 129). Thus, he wants to emphasize that any deliberate skill, even sensitive perception, is accomplished by the body as it lends itself to realizing our interests and goals. Later in the same article Merleau-Ponty, however, does use the term ‘technique’ in a different sense. He writes that, “The truth is that no means of expression, once mastered, resolves the problems of painting or transforms it into a technique. For no symbolic form ever functions as a stimulus” (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993c, 135). Here he uses the term to refer to a pre-established conception of what painting is or should be about and how to accomplish this. But in his view painting is more about each artist’s answer to those individual questions that the world poses her or him. Therefore, he argues that the artist moves on her or his singular path in answering these questions through her or his artistic endeavors.

By continuously working with different collaborators, choreographers, projects, and in training, to a large extent, according to personal preferences individually, and without any long-term and consistent schedules or similarly established institutional practices, I consider a freelance dancer necessarily to proceed with their artistic work along a somewhat unique path. Parviainen also argues that despite prevalent cultural and social tendencies as well as conventions, the dancer is not solely “made by the agents of the dance field”, but also through individual artistic choices. Additionally, the use and exact nature of bodily techniques found in dance already differ from one dance artist to the next because of differences in lived bodies. (Parviainen 1998, 117, 126) As a matter of fact, freelance dance artist, while working with shifting and divergent projects, might be understood to necessarily produce protean bodies. Yet, with a strong emphasis on conformity, this individualism be might be lost sight of. Moreover, choreographic practices themselves might repeat or cling to familiar ways of representing the body simultaneously imposing their influence on an individual dancing body.

Nonetheless, what I want to stress here is that in actually working with both already acquired bodily control and transforming the body, dancers still continue to deal with their own body as a lived entity to a large extent. As was argued along Merleau-Pontyian lines in part II, it is the lived body that accomplishes bodily motion despite the goal aimed for or perspective taken on the body while moving. The interviewees also imply that freelance dance artists are interested in the felt-sense of the body while working with and transforming it. This latter theme will become more highlighted in chapter 12 where the interviewed dance artists discuss what working with their own body means for them. In the following paragraphs I will continue to discuss those comments the interviewees made on the dispositional requirements of a freelance dancer that are related to transforming the body as a lived entity more specifically in relation to the choreographic process.

Aside from already possessing multiple skills in bodily motion, the interviewees also valued the dancers’ capacity to learn new ways of dancing, to perceive and shape their own body, and to be sensitive to the conditions in which they worked. One dance artist addresses the means

through which a freelance dancer should be engaged in dance work. She speaks of openness on the part of the dancer towards the circumstances she or he is working in and says:

. . ./I think the most important thing is to find open antennae in oneself/. . ./so that you can do many kinds of things, so that you can spread your thoughts on many levels. Somehow you have to be capable of an opened space./ . . ./In a way, when the duct is open, then I think things happen. I think something else starts naturally to happen too./ . . ./Tolerance, openness, and being sensitive towards situations. I find that being sensitive is one important. . . / . . . / To be sensing and feeling./ . . (2F)<sup>262</sup>

Even though this passage does not directly or single-handedly comment on the manner in which a freelance dancer should participate in the choreographic process, I think it is one of the situations it alludes to. What the passage suggests is the necessity for a dancer to be willingly engaged and interested in the questions that working with dance in general brings her or him. The quoted dance artist finds being open and sensitive to as well as tolerant of the ongoing processes of dance in different situations to be important. I take all of these attitudes to relate to responsiveness towards the situation that one is in. To be responsive in a sensitive and open manner requires perceptual faith and solidarity. The dancer needs to rely on her or his capacity to perceive and tacitly comprehend the situation he or she is in as well as the manner in which she or he is involved in it. In addition, a dancer needs to perform her or his tasks in a manner that is also beneficial for those others involved in the artistic process.

One of the interviewed dance artists appreciates the versatility of a dancer but with an additional emphasis. He says:

. . ./I think that versatility is an asset./ . . ./if it is assumed that you are a dancer who fearlessly accepts all kinds of jobs, then you have to be rather versatile. Her or his foundation has to be rather versatile, so that she or he can learn new things quickly. I think it is mostly the capacity to learn, the capacity to throw oneself into new things and learn new things. To be able to throw oneself into the world of the choreographer one happens to be working with at the moment and process the material and train oneself through one's own route for the performance. So being adaptable and versatile – and of course one has to have a good physical base to operate from so that one can tolerate different ways of working./ . . . (3M)<sup>263</sup>

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262. . . /Minun mielestä siis tärkein on löytää itsestensä avonaiset antennit./ . . /jotta sinä voit tehdä monenlaista, jotta sinä voit levittää ajatuksiasi monelle tasolle. Sinun täytyy kyetä jollain tapaa niin kuin avattuun tilaan./ . . /Tavallaan sitten kun se rööri on auki, niin minun mielestä siinä tapahtuu. Minun mielestä siinä lähtee luontaisesti muutakin tapahtumaan./ . . /Suvaitsevaisuutta, avoimuutta, tilanteille herkistymistä. Herkistyminen on yks minusta tärkeä./ . . /on aistiva ja tunteva./ . . (2N)

263. . . /No, minä luulen että monipuolisuus on kyllä on valttia./ . . /jos oletetaan, että on semmoinen, freelancetanssija, joka pelkäämättä ottaa kaikenlaista työtä vastaan, niin silloin sen täytyy olla aika monipuolinen. Sen perustan täytyy olla aika monipuolinen, että se voi nopeasti oppia uusia asioita. Minä luulen että se on lähinnä se oppimiskyky, se että sinä voit heittäytyä ja oppia uusia asioita. Kulloinkin kenen koreografian kanssa työskentelee, niin se että se pystyy heittäytyä sen maailmaan, ja omaa kauttaan työstää sitä materiaalia ja treenaa itseään sitä esitystä varten. Että silleen semmoinen muuntuvuus, monipuolisuus. Ja tietysti täytyy olla, siis täytyy olla siis hyvät fyysiset valmiudet, että keho kestää erilaisia tapoja tehdä työtä./ . . (3M)

Here this dance artist suggests that, if a freelance dancer is not “picky” and agrees to dance all the assignments offered to her or him, he or she needs to be physically fit to endure different kinds of motional work and have versatile experience in different styles of motion. He, thus, suggests that a freelance dancer needs physical endurance<sup>264</sup> and experience in motion in order to be capable of doing many kinds of dance. But not only this, he hints at the fact that a dancer should be capable of learning and adopting new ways of interacting with dance and dancing and doing this in a somewhat autonomous manner.

As illustrated with references to Merleau-Ponty in Part II, in order to be able to learn new motional manners of comporting itself the body needs a familiarity with some more rudimentary features of movement that underlie these new motional activities. Without sufficient habitual capacities that somewhat resemble a more complex motional task, the body cannot spontaneously reorient itself in the expected manner. This is why, like the dance artist above and as was already previously suggested, dancers need experience in moving and dancing in order to be able to dance in ever-differing ways with relatively little effort and rehearsing. However, in order to be able to learn and contend with a new way of dancing a dancer also needs to be exposed to the nature of this dancing. Paying attention to the choreographer demonstrating dance material, the bodily and verbal instructions the choreographer uses in transmitting her or his motional ideas, and seeing other dancers dance accordingly offer such exposure. This means that a dancer needs to pay attention to these actions in order for her or his body to be able to attune to and imitate the manner of dancing that is sought after. Nevertheless, not all moments of dancing evolve through direct bodily responses to the perceived motion of other dancers or the choreographer. Attentiveness to the instructions of the choreographer and her or his discussion of the nature of the piece being worked on, is useful for a dancer to gain at least a tentative impression of what is aimed at. Through it a dancer can construct an imaginary projection of the sense of a dance task in order to be able dance accordingly. Therefore, experience in bodily motion, attentiveness to it and instruction or conceptions related to it are something that might be considered to enhance a dancer’s capacity to learn and process the movement material worked on. Both of these themes relate to what I interpret the next passage from the interview material to allude to.

Another of the interviewees suggests that a generally good understanding of the functions of one’s body helps in adapting to each choreographer’s motional style.

.../I think that at least one of the basic things that comes up every time is how you know how to use your own body, whatever the technique is. Some sort of a basic knowledge of one’s own body and how to use it and then apply it to the techniques that you encounter./.../because whichever kind of dance you do with any choreographer in Finnish contemporary dance, there always is some technique./.../So the fact that you have a certain understanding, that you have a sense of your body, it helps in everything./... (1M)<sup>265</sup>

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264. This issue will be discussed further in chapters 12 and 13.

265. .../Minä luulen, että ainakin yksi perusasioita joka suunnilleen joka kerta tulee eteen on se miten osaa käyttää omaa vartaloa oli tekniikka sitten mikä tahansa. Joku sellainen perustietous omasta kehostaan ja miten sitä käyttää, ja sitten sitä soveltaa eri tekniikoihin mitä on eteen tullut./.../koska harrastit

In my view in this instance, this dance artist uses the term 'technique' to denote the particular style of dance a certain choreographer is working with. I also find him to be discussing a practical bodily knowledge, by which dancers to a large extent tacitly comprehend the stance of their own body and how to set it in motion in new ways and situations. I do this, since he speaks of knowledge of one's own body in relation to how to use it.

As discussed in Part II, the way we begin to comprehend our own body as a functional unity is on a lived level, while the body confronts its position and practical tasks. It is the body schema, which offers us a sense of how our own body as a whole is oriented to the world in a specific situation. This schema, in turn, is something that is progressively developed and refined throughout the course of our lives, while we find ourselves in different situations, relate to different kinds of activity, and encounter different people. The way we comprehend our own body is thus reliant on a history of bodily responses to surrounding circumstances, the manner in which it has been used, and the experiences we have had of it.

Edward Casey, in his phenomenological study on remembering comments on Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the habitual dimension of the body. He finds that it is an essential feature of a body-memory. As became evident in part II, habitual bodily aptitudes or habitual bodily memory makes our dealings with our surroundings operate through a level of familiarity. They establish the manner in which we orient ourselves in the world. Bodily memories, then, also direct the way in which we conceive of our own body in certain situations. They form the stuff of which our present circumstances are made in relation to the manner that they are deployed there and carried on into the future. Notwithstanding this, bodily memories themselves are not something we can grasp through mental or representational images. Rather, body-memory is something we trust as a capacity to act and relate to the world. In itself it is felt more as a bodily depth, in which elements and things ambiguously envelop each other as well as come into and vanish from awareness, while the body responds to the situation it finds itself in. (Casey 1987, 149, 163, 166)

In relation to a dancer, those bodily memories that are most often relevant in rehearsing dance pieces are the experiences of dancing and related bodily practices that a dancer has had. Actually one could say that a dancer's body is something that a dancer gives back to him- or herself through the manner in which she or he has cultivated it through dance-related practices and continues to do so (Irigaray 1991, 171). It is through the responses to the methods and techniques used in this cultivation that a dancer gets to know her or his body (Foster 1997, 236). The previously quoted dance artist continues to describe a practice, which has enhanced his understanding of his body. He says:

. . . /Even if I've here talked about the sinful classical ballet – there is still a point in a way: If nothing else it has taught me a great deal about outlining my own body. When I gain a sense of my body, I know in which position my pelvis is and how I am aligned. This gives me an

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sinä mitä tanssia tahansa, Suomen nykytanssissakin kenenkä tahansa koreografin kanssa, niin aina siellä on joku tekniikka./ . . . /Niin se, että sinulla on joku tietty käsitys, että hahmotat sinun ruumiisi, niin se auttaa kaikessa./ . . . (1M)

enormous freedom to do anything I want with this information. I needn't use it for classical ballet, but can use it in anything else./ . . . (1M)<sup>266</sup>

Thus he tells us that in doing ballet training he has learned to relate to his body in a manner that is useful in his other activities. Through bodily memory the manner in which he has previously related to and experienced his body is still accessible to him. It remains a part of his body's habitual capacities, part of its memory, which can be re-enacted in suitable situations.

Despite this, Foster demonstrates that dance-related bodily practices create, so to speak, two dimensions of the body. On the one hand, through them dancers learn to perceive their bodies through certain perspectives. Such a perspective could be that of bodily alignment, which aids in giving a sense of how one's own body is positioned, and which the above-quoted dance artist speaks of. On the other hand, dancers learn to strive for an imaginary or ideal body based upon the values and aesthetics of the performed bodily practice. Again in relation to the above quotation, this could be the imagery of perfect alignment. These two bodily dimensions constantly inform one another and are "constructed in tandem" (Foster 1997, 237–238). As Merleau-Ponty argues, "the imaginary" is "in my body as a diagram of the life of the actual" (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993c, 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 and integrates those aspects of the body that are of value to the subject's project and circumstances (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 100; Weiss 1999a, 1, 21). In effect, it is through a constant process of "projection, intro-jection, and identification" that the body schema continually "incorporates and expels" its own bodily dimensions, things, and other bodies (Weiss 1991a, 33).

I believe that it is through a bodily negotiation of these dimensions that a dancer perceives and shapes her or his body while attempting to respond to the requirements of the choreographic process. Dancers imagine possible movement sequences, focus upon their body to perceive how the body could accomplish them, and while the body does so they identify their projections in their bodily performance. A bodily act never fully achieves a body ideal which is affiliated with completeness leaving nothing to be desired, though. The ideal body and actual body are never synonymous. The body responds in its own way by producing unexpected and unimagined aspects, and the imagined projection itself remains incompletely realized. Nonetheless, it is exactly through embodiment that the ideal body it is accomplished. It is through bodily sensations and perceptions that it gains its form and influence (cf. Weiss 1999b, 131).

In the end, I interpret the dance artist above, while stating that dancers need to be able to

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266. . . ./Vaikka minä olen nyt tässä puhunut perisyntisestä klassisesta baletista – mutta siinä on tietyllä tavalla kuitenkin se pointti, että jos ei muuta, niin se ainakin minua on opettanut hirveästi hahmottamaan omaa kehoani. Kun minä hahmotan sen kehon, minä tiedän missä asennossa minun lantio on ja missä minun linjaukset menee. Niin sehän antaa minulle äärettömän suuren vapauden tehdä niillä tiedoilla mitä tahansa. Ei minun tarvitse käyttää sitä klassiseen balettiin vaan ihan, ihan missä muussa tahansa./ . . . (1M)

perceive and outline, understand and use their bodies, to suggest that dancers need to be attuned to their bodily memory, the felt-depth and ambiguous multi-dimensionality of their own bodies. They must be able to play with previously-learned body ideals in addition to adapting to and creating new one's in order to be able to have a sense of their bodies while working with different choreographers who have different stylistic and aesthetic preferences. Perceiving and shaping the body in addition to being able to move it in appropriate ways in any situation, is tied to the differing ideals a dancer has in relating to and understanding their own bodies as well as the memories or potentials the body already possesses. These inform dancers on the manner in which they are in their bodies and relate to the tasks and surroundings they work on and in.

To sum up: This section discussed the kinds of physical skills and bodily relations that are expected of a freelance dancer. It shows that the prevalent aesthetic values and modes of practice found in the freelance field of dance strongly influence the manner in which a freelance dancer is viewed and how such dancers are able to transform their bodies into competent dancing bodies. For freelance dancers these prevailing tendencies and the choreographers' expectations are especially important because of a need to survive and to be accepted for work in dance pieces. In short, freelance dancers need to acquire jobs in dancing. In a situation in which dancers have no steady jobs, Parviainen, in fact, suggests that the skills a dancer has become a "technical weapon" by which she or he can compete for and gain positions in dance pieces (Parviainen 2002, 34). The kind of body that contemporary freelance dance artists are therefore expected to have was shown to be a multitasking body easily capable of adapting to various kinds of dance tasks. Yet, while working with dance and their bodies, freelance dancers also need to be able to draw on their bodily experience, to be attuned to a bodily memory, to be attentive and sensitive to their work environment, as well as to interpret the shifting work-processes they are engaged in. It was also suggested that acquiring a multitasking body might push a freelance dancer towards a form of bodily conformity. Personal or original dancing that possibly reaches beyond existing criteria of what a good and useable dancer is, was also found valuable. Accordingly, a freelance dancer might be understood to have to solve the tension of responding to established demands in the field and yet to develop in a personal direction, dance in an original manner.

### 11.3 The Responsibilities of a Choreographer

When discussing the characteristics of the choreographer the interviewed dance artists made comments on the challenges they faced while creating choreography, but mostly spoke of those issues a choreographer needs to attend to or take care of while working with the choreographic process. The interviewees spoke of the responsibility of the choreographer in relation to the people they work with, the whole choreographic process more generally, and the choreographer's capacity to work autonomously. These are the issues addressed in this section.

Two of the interviewees claimed that what they, as choreographers, attempt to do is to

create worlds. In so doing, they echo the thoughts of Parviainen and Arnold Berleant who both argue that dances bring into being worlds of their own. Berleant points out that the movements a dance is made of define the contours as well as the nature of the space a dance inhabits and so open a certain region of experience for the spectator. The rhythm of the dance establishes the temporal flow in which the dancers and the spectators are engaged. In short, the conventions of representation and the nature of any particular dance form a synthesis, an integrated happening in which everyone and everything related to it are internally connected. (Berleant 1991, 154, 155, 158) Parviainen, in turn, borrows from David Michael Levin's understanding of the phenomenon of unity and writes about an open unity, in which an event has a beginning, an end and involves a coherence of its own. She notes that even if a piece of choreography remains the same throughout its distinct performances, the nature of the unity or wholeness a work is varies according to the place, the audience, and the performers of a particular performance. (Parviainen 1998, 150; cf. Levin 1988, 79; cf. Phelan 1993, 146)

One of the dance artists describes the relational features that he begins to question in order to be able set up a world while creating a dance piece. He says:

.../In my work as a choreographer I am creating whole worlds. That is, I do not only think about movement. My vision is larger than that. I think about the whole world, where the dance takes place, what the dance is, what are its surroundings and style. I think about these kinds of questions. Visual features also are very important for me. Some might think that this they are to the cost of dance itself./... (3M)<sup>267</sup>

He tells us that he contemplates and works with several dimensional features, while creating a choreographic unity in which they intertwine. Another dance artist says that she first gains a sense of the theme and the atmosphere of the piece she is about to create. These define the nature of the compositional parts of her piece.

.../always, of course, the space, for example, is concerned with what kind of a piece I am working on. The theme defines the space, and the theme defines the music, and the theme defines the visual aspects. And to a great extent the form defines them, too – that is the world, which I am attempting to create./... (4F)<sup>268</sup>

What she means by form is some kind of a preliminary structure of the scenes or acts she is creating which influence the atmosphere of the whole dance piece. She relates to form by saying that,

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267. .../Työssäni koreografina olen luomassa kokonaisia maailmoja. Eliikkä en ajattele pelkästään sitä liikepuolta, vaan visioni on suurempi kuin se. Eliikkä minä mietin sitä koko maailmaa, missä teos tapahtuu, mikä se teos on, mikä sen ympäristö on ja missä tyylissä se liikkuu. Kaikkia tällaisia kysymyksiä mietin. Sitten visuaalisuus on minulle hyvin tärkeää. Monen mielestä varmaan jopa tanssin kustannuksella useinkin./... (3M)

268. .../aina tietysti tila on esimerkiksi siitä kiinni, minkälainen juttu on. Se aihe määrittää tilan ja se aihe määrittää musiikin ja se aihe määrittää visualisuuden ja hirveen pitkälle siis muoto määrittää ne myös – eli se maailma, mitä minä pyrin luomaan./... (4N)

.../Not so much the movement composition. It is also important to me, but is still secondary. Instead, what happens after what, who does what, how many, where./.../This is what I believe creates the world./... (4F)<sup>269</sup>

Both of the above-quoted dance artists speak about the materials and structural components a dance piece is made up of as well as an imaginary realm influencing its formation. They suggest that, while working on a piece of choreography, they are creating a living unity with its own setting, agents, sounds, visual style, and significance depending on the theme or motif they have come up with.

Although the dance artists demonstrate that they contemplate and structure the materials their art is made of, they simultaneously imply that what they create is not something totally determinable. This they do for two reasons: they observe that they are creating worlds, which in themselves, according to Merleau-Ponty, are always ambiguous to a certain extent, and I believe they also indirectly suggest that they are imaginatively constructing scenes and events that do not occur in our everyday lives as such. In Heidegger's terms they could be understood to be creating worlds from the earthly materials they are working with (cf. Heidegger 1996/1971, 46–49, 56, 64, 69–70). Merleau-Ponty describes the worlds that artworks establish to be closed in that they organize ensembles of their own, but open in that they are re-presentative of the rest of the world. They possess its symbols, operate through the same sensible or sensate elements, and either indirectly or directly refer to pre-established cultural meanings and conventions. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 223) In addition, depth is an inherent part of artworks for him. They are the outside of an inside, emblems of a vision or relation to the world, along which a spectator's perception moves. Artworks, however, transcend the material forms and intentions of their creators since matter is always pregnant with the lived horizons it implies and therefore filled with tacit significance (the invisible stuff). A work of art is permeated by and suggestive of this imaginary texture. (Merleau-Ponty 1993/1996c, 126) Merleau-Ponty writes of a painting in the following manner: "Essence and existence, imaginary and real, visible and invisible – painting scrambles all our categories, spreading out before us its oneiric universe of carnal essences, actualized resemblances, mute meanings" (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993c, 130). Consequently, he considers works of art to bring into being unprecedented perceptions and views of the world and simultaneously to produce a metamorphosis of our known reality. They open a new lived perspective on things, issues, and situations that do not exist without them (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 393). In fact, Phelan argues that in live performance the imaginary and invisible realm that Merleau-Ponty discusses is of heightened significance, since "live performance plunges into visibility – in a maniacally charged present – and disappears into memory, into the realm of invisibility and the unconscious where it eludes regulation and control" (Phelan 1993, 148).

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269. .../Ei niinkään se liikekompositio. Se on minulle kanssa tärkeä, mutta se on toisarvoinen. Vaan se, että mitä tapahtuu minkäkin jälkeen, kuka tekee mitä, montako, missäkö./.../se on minusta se, mikä luo sen maailman./... (4N)

Nevertheless, to create these kinds of worlds choreographers work on concrete and mundane issues and materials while in the process of creation. One of these that the interviewees spoke about was the theme or motif of a dance piece. Freelance choreographers are occasionally commissioned to create dance pieces, for example, by dance education institutions, the few regular dance companies, and domestic and international dance festivals. However, they mainly begin works of choreography themselves, and even when doing commissioned work they often deal with such themes or subjects that they themselves are interested in. Thus, it is common that their dance pieces are based upon an idea or vision they themselves want to develop.<sup>270</sup> One of the dance artists tells us how she relates to the themes with which she works on:

. . ./The themes of the pieces, they are the subject matter. To me they are clear opinions/contentions. Then the form that comes about is – as this is non-verbal communication – as it were, the world./ . . .(4F)<sup>271</sup>

She argues that she is very clear about the motifs that she focuses on and therefore relates to Parviainen's notion that creating dance pieces is an attempt to incarnate a certain idea and bring it to life in performance. In her view this issue or question is something that emerges from a dance artist's dialogue with the world and is connected to a lack, the absence of a certain way of perceiving, a certain way of understanding, or of a certain mode of existence, which the dance artists attempts to make visible (Parviainen 1998, 160). One of the other dance artists talks about the manner in which he relates to the motif of his choreography:

. . ./Multi-dimensionality interests me a great deal in my art. I do not want to say things as if to underline them or tell others that things are like this. A black and white world is not my world, instead I am a gray person./ . . ./the scale of gray is endless between white and black, and I would rather mix the pigments together./ . . .(3M)<sup>272</sup>

Even if he speaks in rather metaphorical terms, this dance artist seems to suggest that he is not interested in making unequivocal or clear-cut statements with his art. Instead, while molding the hues and nuances of the materials and structures his works are made of, he perhaps allows them to influence the way his works emerge and simultaneously allows complexity and ambiguity to emerge in his work.

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270. This of course is not the sole source from which a choreographic process is initiated. Artworks with specific themes might be commissioned by festival organizers, composers, and the like. Also artists from various fields might cooperate and mutually create the idea, structure, and content of a dance piece.

271. . . ./Ne aiheet mitä niissä teoksissa on, ne on se aihepiiri, ne on minulle niitä selkeitä kannanottoja. Sitten se muoto, mikä niihin tulee, on sitten se – kun tähän on tätä non-verbaalia viestintää – se on niin kuin se maailma./ . . .(4N)

272. . . ./Monitasoisuus kiinnostaa minua suunnattomasti taiteessani. Minä en halua alleviivaten sanoa, tai kertoa asioita, että näin on. Mustavalkoinen maailma ei ole minun maailmani, vaan minä olen harmaa ihminen./ . . ./se harmaan skaala, on niin kuin loppumaton siellä valkoisen ja mustan välillä. Sekoit-telen mieluummin pigmenttejä sitten yhteen./ . . .(3M)

When concretely working with their visions, themes, or motifs, choreographers need to convey their ideas to the people whom they work with. One of the dance artists finds this an interesting challenge:

. . . /It is very exciting when I have some vision and it is worked upon. Then there is the whole working team. . . /In a way the manner in which I can engage all these people with this world so that we can all work towards one goal, even if everyone works in their own way. The manner in which I can express what we are looking for to these others, this is very exciting and different with different people. Yes, I do like the whole process. It certainly is very human business working with dancers. . . (3M)<sup>273</sup>

In addition to conveying a choreographic idea the choreographer most often orchestrates or facilitates the entire choreographic process involving, for example, dancers, light designers, costume designers, musicians etc. In order to be able to cooperate these people need to share at least a rudimentary understanding of the kind of process creating a dance piece involves and what kinds of tasks they are expected to accomplish. Parviainen also argues that the possibilities of experimenting with and achieving different choreographic goals depend on the individual artists' interests, skills, and resources, who happen to participate in the process of creating a dance work. In order to enhance a successful collaboration among the people involved, the choreographer should create an atmosphere in which these people are willing to work and capable of working. (Parviainen 1998, 164–165)

Creating a suitable atmosphere for collaboration is what the previously mentioned dance artist seems to want to do while advancing his own visions and ideas. He attempts to create a sphere of interaction in which people are participating in a mutual project and common tasks. Thus, he also attempts to enhance the formation of a communicative and functional cohort of its own (Merleau-Ponty 1991/1964b, 35). While doing so, he implies that he appreciates the differences of the people he works with and that he changes his manner of working depending on the persons he is interacting with. Even if he acts as the initiator of the process of creation, there seems to be a generosity, a willingness to recognize the other and to run the risk of having to change in order to produce a dance piece. In this sense he is also open to be challenged by the people he works with and to learn new ways of dealing with situations through them (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 58).

One of the other interviewed dance artists goes on to address this same issue by describing in a slightly different way how a choreographer might encourage fruitful collaboration. She says:

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273. . . /Minä pidän myös siitäkin – se on hyvin jännittävää, se että jos minulla on joku visio, ja sitä ruvetaan tekemään, sitten siinä on se koko työporukka. . . /Niin tavallaan se, että kuinka minä pystyn saamaan ne ihmiset mukaan tähän maailmaan, että me kaikki voidaan työskennellä sitä yhtä päämäärää kohti, vaikka jokainen työskenteleeikin persoonallisella tavallaan. Mutta se, miten minä pystyn ilmaisemaan sen, mitä olen etsimässä, näille muille, se on hyvin jännittävää ja eri ihmisten kanssa on erilaista. Kyllä minä tykkään siitä koko prosessista. Kyllähän se on jotenkin hirveän ihmisläheistä hommaa se työskentely tanssijoitten kanssa. . . (3M)

. . . /From my point of view, as a choreographer even if I were dancing myself too – one must be responsible for the other people involved – of course for the whole process from the beginning to end, but also for other people. / . . . /A healthy authority is called for – that one takes the situation as one’s own and still appreciates the characteristics and personalities of the others, but that it stays together. / . . . (4F)<sup>274</sup>

Somewhat like the previously quoted passage, this one demonstrates that, in acting as an orchestrating agent of a choreographic process, the choreographer simultaneously becomes responsible for it. In both passages a choreographer’s responsibility is not only considered to be related to creating dance material but also to the people they work with. The latter-quoted dance artist implies that being answerable to others is something that helps to maintain a shared and productive state of affairs. She finds that the responsibility of a choreographer is connected with a “healthy authority” through which the choreographer can appreciate her or his own position and the personalities of the others involved.

Authority in general is something that is granted by others either compulsorily or voluntarily. But as this dance artist is concerned with a “healthy authority”, one could assume that in this instance authority is the consequence of her collaborators, dancers and other, freely recognizing or tacitly taking for granted and accepting her in the role of a choreographer. Then the choreographer is given a freedom to work out the process according to her or his understanding and aims. In addition to beginning the choreographic process, it is customary that the tasks of the choreographer involve directing, evaluating, refining, and relating the different phases and aspects of the process of creation so that an integrated work of dance is realized (Parviainen 1998, 164). Ideally, while working on these tasks and reciprocally recognizing and taking the cooperative people into consideration, a choreographer not only creates an atmosphere where different people are capable of working but along with them weaves an orientation, a style of structuring bodily motion and a manner of shaping the representational conventions of dance, around which the collaborative process pivots.

Another dance artist comments on the fact that it is the choreographer, who keeps the choreographic process going. He says:

. . . /To working as a choreographer is related a lot of things that do not have to do with creating movement, but with having the entire process under control. / . . . (3M)<sup>275</sup>

In my view, he asserts that the choreographer is responsible for the whole process involved with creating a dance piece. I interpret him to indicate that it is the choreographer who ties

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274. . . /Minun näkökulmasta – paitsi siis koreografina vaikka olisin itse mukana tanssijana – niin siinä täytyy hahmottaa sellainen vastuuntunto muistakin ihmisistä, jotka on mukana – tietysti siitä kokonaisuudesta alusta loppuun asti, mutta myös niistä muista ihmisistä. / . . . /Sellainen terve auktoriteetti on paikallaan, että ottaa sen tilanteen, että tämä on minun tilanne ja arvostan teidän ominaisuuksia ja persoonia, mutta että se pysyy kasassa. / . . . (4N)

275. . . /siihen liittyy niin paljon siihen koreografina työskentelemiseen semmoisia asioita mitkä ei ole sitä liikkeen tekemistä, vaan sen kokonaisuuden hallitseminen. / . . . (3M)

the differing aspects, people, and practical concerns related to creating a dance piece together. Most often a dance piece is performed and rehearsed in a specific location, involves music or sound, lighting, costumes, possible props and settings. Aiming to create an organic unit, a dance piece, which is experienced as whole, the choreographer needs to relate these elements to each other. But there are also questions concerning production, funding, working and performing schedules, as well as advertisement that the choreographer deals with and makes decisions about. These latter issues are something that, especially in the field of freelance dance, commonly require the intense involvement of the choreographers, as they seldom work with dance organizations that would solve these problems for them. Even if a choreographer works with a producer, she or he negotiates these matters with the producer.

When I asked the dance artist quoted immediately above what motivates him to work as a choreographer he said that he enjoys the related problem-solving. He simultaneously gives a clue to what kind of activity is involved in being responsible for the choreographic process:

. . ./Well it is that enormous interest, and tackling new challenges, and problem-solving. It involves a great deal of problem-solving the choreographic process does. And I enjoy the entire work-process enormously./ . . . (3M)<sup>276</sup>

He tells us that he enjoys making choices and being responsible for the choreographic work he does. As a matter of fact, choreographic processes, like any other artistic processes, are something that cannot be predetermined in any exact way. In them the unfamiliarity of the next step to be taken is most emphasized as art mainly attempts to bring forth something original and new. Merleau-Ponty writes that "in art there is no solution for the man who will not make a move without knowing where he is going and who wants to be accurate and in control at every moment" (Merleau-Ponty 1991/1964a, 4). It is generally understood that it is through continuous questioning and breaking away from familiar social routines and pre-established modes of performing in and understanding the world from which artworks emerge (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993a, 75; Parviainen 1998, 161–162). Working with the unfamiliar, confronting the unsolved, and yet finding a mode in which to proceed towards the formation of a dance piece could, therefore, be considered something that the above-quoted dance artist finds fascinating and rewarding.

In addition to a committed engagement, responsibility, openness towards collaborators, and problem-solving, what directing and orchestrating the work involved in creating a dance piece requires from the choreographer is a capacity to work autonomously, according to one of the interviewees.

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276. . . /No, se on se suunnaton kiinnostus, ja uusien haasteiden saaminen ja se ongelman ratkaisu, siihen liittyy niin paljon ongelman ratkaisua siihen koreografiseen prosessiin. Ja minä nautin suunnattomasti siitä kokonaisuudesta, siitä työprosessista./ . . . (3M)

. . . /From the perspective of a choreographer I find that independence is an absolutely, singularly, important aptitude. Otherwise things won't work. To be able to take space for oneself, without guilt or other problems, in which to think, work, and from which to show that here is my thing now. This has been very difficult for me. . . /This kind of mental space, that one experiences that one is one's own and separate being, who thinks and acts separately and not symbiotically with anyone. This is the core. . . / . . . (4F)<sup>277</sup>

In my view this passage again speaks about a freedom enabling a choreographer to work with choreography through an individualistic or subjective perspective and to have the power to handle those tasks she or he conceives to belong to a choreographer.

Whilst we are culturally- and socially-determined beings and tied and open to each other already through the flesh or the transitivity of the body-subject, we still are individualized beings. In taking note of Merleau-Ponty's idea of a fundamental narcissism belonging to the flesh, Madison suggests that there is an individuation of the flesh. Each entity and individual is a unique fragment of the flesh which through the coiling over of its own flesh continues a process of differentiation not quite like that of any other (Madison 1991/1981, 241–242; Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 139). Through this individuation we also have a unique perspective on the world and this is an important feature in creating artworks. After all, the artist's task, according to Merleau-Ponty, is to express what the sensible itself wants to express as it fills an artist's being, that is, is perceived by an artist (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993a, 71). Besides this, "those gestures, those tracings of which he alone is capable . . . will be revelations to others because they do not lack what he lacks" (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993c, 128).

Following Merleau-Ponty's reasoning, choreographers could be understood to create works of art that are "emblem(s) of a way of inhabiting the world, of treating it, and of interpreting it . . . in short, the emblems of a certain relationship with being" (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 91). Still, as we are historical and socio-cultural beings, while creating dance pieces choreographers draw upon their whole life, their relation to others and the world, as well as the traditions they live in. It is "the life world, the culture and communal embodiment" that "cast the background against which" the choreographer identifies "meanings of movements" (Parviainen 1998, 134). Also the medium more generally, which in a choreographer's case means dancing and motional bodies, sound, space, staging, and costumes some of which are reliant on the work of other artists, is something which she or he works on and which affects the manner in which her or his perception of the world is transformed into a dance. Consequently, even when producing an emblem of an individual perspective on the world, while creating a dance piece the choreographer interacts with the world and others in ways

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277. . . /Koreografin näkökulmasta minun mielestä se itsenäisyys on ihan ehdottoman ainutkertaisen tärkeä avu. Muuten ei tule mistään mitään. Että voi ottaa, ilman syällisydentuntoja tai muita ongelmia, niin itselleen tilan, jossa sitten ajatella ja työskennellä ja josta sitten näyttää et tässä tämä on minun juttu nytte. Tämä on ollut minulle myöskin aika vaikeata. . . /Tällainen henkinen tila, että kokee jollain tavalla olevansa oma erillinen olentonsa, joka ajattelee ja toimii erillisenä, ei kenenkään kanssa symbioottisena. Tämä on minusta se ydin. . . / . . . (4N)

in which the socio-cultural dimension of her or his circumstances remain intact.

What does a choreographer's autonomy relate to, then? In relation to our subjective perspective on things, Merleau-Ponty argues that a "reduction to 'egology' or the 'sphere of belonging' is, like all reduction, only a test of primordial bonds . . ." (Merleau-Ponty, 1995/1964f, 175). For Merleau-Ponty autonomy is a question of a movement into such a distanced proximity in which we are free to accept or deny the opinions of others, but not to live without the other altogether. We are not free to ignore and close off from others in any absolute manner. Neither are we totally free of the situation we find ourselves in. Rather, it is exactly in being committed to this situation that we are opened to our actual freedom. Merleau-Ponty considers that freedom is something which is to be found "before me, in things". It is by engaging ourselves in a situation that we might choose to attend to these things or to commit ourselves elsewhere. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964g, 228; 1995/1962, 435, 452, 454)

Autonomy or self-government and freedom are thus relational. They are realized only in relation to concrete situations and other people. In concentrating on their personal vision and making choices accordingly, choreographers do not become solipsistic beings; instead, they concentrate on paying attention to how they themselves conceive of things to speak to them. In order to be able to create dance works that express their intention and relation to the world, choreographers need to be able to trust their own perceptions and interests while creating a piece. They need to be able to express them and make choices according to them. They need to live with a sense of freedom according to which they can act and direct the process of creating a dance piece, at least at certain points, irrespective of other people's opinions. At times when a choreographer's visions and goals clearly go against custom, a choreographer needs to have a strong conviction in the outcome of the choreographic process. This is what I believe the earlier quoted dance artist alludes to when speaking of a choreographer's independence.

Along with this kind of an attitude towards creating dance, situations might occur in which the artists working with a choreographer do not agree with or understand her or his aims. In seeking to materialize an original vision, the choreographer's approach to dance and dancing might be so unfamiliar to the collaborators that their imaginations or habitual attitudes to dance do not immediately align with the intentions of the choreographer. Merleau-Ponty, in fact, argues that when an individual regards "what is unique in incarnation lived from within" the other person tends to appear as a form of uneasiness (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1964g, 231). (When a person views the world from a subjective perspective, the other is still there with her or his individuality and particular perspective on things that may bring the subjective perspective of the former into question.)

In my view, one of the interviewees gives an example of a situation in which the dancer appears as a 'form of uneasiness', as something that questions or contradicts the choreographer's approach to creating choreography. When talking about his work as a choreographer he says that too much speaking during rehearsals makes his work difficult:

.../It [rehearsing] is [done] through bodily work to a large extent, and when bodily work is done I find that it should be done and experimented with. Speaking helps sometimes. But many times it doesn't. I feel that too much talk, many times, hinders the process of investigation. Of course one ends up contemplating all sorts of philosophical questions. This should be given its time and place. But sometimes it feels that it goes to the extreme./.../One can talk after work as well./.../An overabundant philosophizing during the rehearsals hampers my work. If I cannot see something, then I do not gain a feeling of it – if it is proceeding in the right direction or not./... (3M)<sup>278</sup>

It is evident that dance basically is about bodily movement, the investigation as well as perception of this movement, and not speaking. Nonetheless, conversing about unclear issues might enhance a dancer's ability to perform his or her tasks. Indeed choreographers often give verbal instructions to dancers and evaluate their performance orally alongside of demonstrating movement sequences physically. However, a choreographer also needs to see the movement sequences performed by a dancer in order to gain a sense of how to proceed with the choreography and instructing a dancer in her or his dancing. It bothers the above choreographer if dancers verbally question and speak too much during rehearsals.

It seems more generally to be the case that dancers themselves do not to have such an easy time speaking during rehearsals as choreographers themselves do. While speaking from the perspective of a dancer, the last dance artist mentioned surprisingly and contrastingly says that,

.../I find that people experience it a difficulty, if a dancer dares to open her or his mouth and speak on reasonable grounds. Suddenly it is something to be afraid of. On quite a few occasions I've suffered from daring to speak and say what I think. After all a dancer shouldn't do that. I've really got into trouble many times because of it./.../A dancer cannot be an independently thinking person./... (3M)<sup>279</sup>

He argues, in that case, that when speaking out as a dancer and expressing his opinion on matters, he has transgressed an expected mode of behavior and gotten himself in trouble. It is true that in some respects contemporary dance most often is a silent mode of interaction. Parviainen claims that traditionally dancers have been trained to be obedient, not to think for themselves too much or to speak aloud during dance class or rehearsal (Parviainen

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278. .../Se [harjoittelemineen] on hyvin pitkälle myös sen tekemisen kautta, ja silloin kun tehdään sitä kehollista työtä, niin sitä pitää minun mielestä tehdä ja kokeilla ja etsiä. Se puhuminen auttaa joskus, mutta monestikaan se ei auta. Minä koen, että liika lätinä kuitenkin häiritsee sitä etsimisprosessia, monta kertaa. Totta kai sitten päädytään joskus pohtimaan kaiken maailman filosofisia kysymyksiä, sille pitää olla aikaa. Mutta joskus tuntuu, että se menee aivan liiallisuuksiin./.../Voihan sitä sitten niin kuin sen työn jälkeen myöskin puhua./.../Semmoinen ylenpalttinen filosofointi siinä työtilanteessa häiritsee kyllä minun työtäni. Eliikkä se että, jos minä en pääse näkemään jotakin, niin en minä saa siitä sitä tunnetta, että oliko tämä nyt oikeaan suuntaan vai ei./... (3M)

279. .../Se koetaan mielestäni kyllä vaikeaksi, jos tanssija avaa suunsa ja uskaltaa perustellusti puhua. Se onkin yhtäkkiä niin kuin pelote. Minä [olen] joutunut kärsimään siitä aika monessa yhteydessä, että olen uskaltanut puhua ja sanoa mitä ajattelen. Tanssijahan ei saisi tehdä niin. Minä olen siis todellakin joutunut siinä siis pulaan monta kertaa./.../Tanssija ei voi olla itsenäisesti ajatteleva ihminen./... (3M)

1998, 106). What they are taught to do is to skillfully execute the bodily movements of dance. However, speech is also a means of enhancing a dialogical relation between the choreographer and the dancer, since it is one expressive mode of communicating how one relates to one's situation, understands it and is capable of acting in it. Although, given the dance tradition and despite those choreographers and dancers who already freely converse with each other during rehearsals, it might take time for dancers in general to unlearn a silent and obedient manner of being and for a choreographer to accept a speaking dancer (Van Dyke 1989, 108, 128).

The above passages, discussing speaking during rehearsals, demonstrate a difference in the conventional behavior expected of a dancer and a choreographer, but they simultaneously suggest that this behavior might be a possible point of contradiction. What is generally true is that working with others and advocating a personal vision may at times mean confronting contradictions in the choreographic process in which collaborators have difficulty in creating mutual understanding and a mode of shared action that suits all. Then the autonomy of the collaborating individuals, or at least some of them, might be threatened, as a flowing dialogue, in which the interlocutors relate to each other through solidarity and reciprocally acknowledging their individuality, may be difficult to achieve (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 354–355). Merleau-Ponty writes that, "In the absence of reciprocity there is no alter Ego, since the world of the one then takes in completely that of the other, so that one feels disinherited in favour of the other" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 357). The difference or otherness of the other goes unnoticed, and it is subsumed under the same limiting and even suffocating her or his freedom. Even though freedom is something that never disappears altogether, it might shrink in proportion to the extent that we hold on to or allow the influence of constricting conventions and modes of perceiving, understanding, and doing things. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 354–355, 441–442, 454)

Without fluent dialogical communication a choreographer's openness towards her or his collaborators might be thwarted, and the other might simply become a means to the choreographer's ends. This could be understood as a situation which one of the earlier quoted dance artist believes a choreographer should tolerate without becoming guilty. In times of controversial communication and understanding both the choreographer and her or his collaborators need to sustain the consequent tension in order to be able to continue to advance the process of creation. As a matter of fact, when collaboration is sustained, disturbing and unsettling experience might also be fruitful in that they make one question the expectations and habitual modes of acting shared in a situation and, thus, can eventually lead the collaborators to create new ideas, modes of practice, and performance. When sustained the collaboration might lead to something it might also begin with: a direct and enriching dialogical process in which each collaborator's understanding and skills spontaneously intertwine and carry them into new dimensions. (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 355; 1986/1973, 141) In spite of everything, it most likely takes time and a process of familiarization while working together for a group of collaborators to learn to trust each other, to become sensitive to each other, and to find a way of relating that "fosters the creativity of the group as a whole" (Blom & Chaplin, 1989/1982, 173)

What I would still like to call to attention to is that contemporary dance is often viewed as

“a choreographer’s art”. Despite the increasing practice of co-authored dance pieces in which dancers and choreographers, for example, mutually create movement and decide what is to be danced, and the use of improvisational sequences solved by dancers in performance, in the end, most commonly it is the choreographer who makes the final decisions on how a piece of dance is structured and what kinds of routines a dancer performs. For example, Sparshott underlines that it is a customary understanding that the choreographer takes the responsibility for bringing a dance into the world. It is the choreographer who undergoes the risk of creation and of standing in the spotlight as the creator. (Sparshott 1995, 390–391) Already this presumption when relied upon by the collaborative artists engaged in a mutual choreographic process, to some extent empowers choreographers to work according to their preferences. This seems to be an understanding shared by the interviewed dance artists since they speak of developing their own visions and producing their own creation. This, however, does not negate the fact that, while working as choreographers, they also attempt to recognize and appreciate the work their collaborators do with them.

This section introduced some of the features choreographers contend with while creating choreographies, which they consider worlds of their own. These worlds were suggested to be events, whose significance is formed through the interrelations of the structures, materials, performers and audiences present in a performance of a dance piece. After Merleau-Ponty they were also described as emblems of their creator’s, in this instance mainly the choreographer’s, relation to the world. This section, though, also discussed the responsibilities entailed when a freelance choreographer creates choreography. Three aspects, which they need to be open to, were introduced: a choreographer should be responsive to the people they work with, should moderate and attend to all the aspects involved with creating and producing a completed dance piece, and make decisions according to their own individual perception of the world and the emergent choreographic entity. These were shown to be the commitments a choreographer takes on when engaging in an actual choreographic processes (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1991/1964b, 38). If dancers were previously portrayed as living with a tension related to the transformation of their bodies both in conforming and personal directions, the choreographer could likewise be understood to live with a tension between following their subjective interests and visions and taking the personalities, skills, and inclination of their collaborators into consideration as well as dealing with the material and institutional issues related to producing a dance piece.

## 11.4 The Relationship between the Choreographer and the Dancer

It is obvious that some discussion of the characteristics and tasks of a freelance dancer and choreographer during the interviews was tied to a more direct discussion of a dancer’s relation to the choreographer in the previous sections. That the discussion proceeded in this manner is no surprise since choreographers and dancers cooperate intensely with each

other while creating and rehearsing dance pieces, so much so that Foster even argues that, “the process of making a dance and making a dancer are bound together” (Foster 1986, 2). As section 11.2 already discussed a multitalented dancer, it shows that the styles of bodily motion choreographers work with influences the manner in which dancers train and mold their bodies. In this section I will address in more detail the relation and interdependency of the dancer and the choreographer. While so doing, I will first pay attention to passages from the interview material that are spoken from the perspective of a choreographer. In these passages the interviewed dance artists speak of what they as choreographers think a dancer should be like. Then I shall turn to present some of the experiences the interviewed dance artists have had while working as dancers with choreographers. I do this in order to continue to describe and discuss features characteristic of either of these two roles or the more particular manner in which they are related to each other, the manner in which they differ from each other as well as intertwine. What is more is that the manner in which the roles of a dancer and a choreographer are determined in relation to each other in the interviews, in my view, emphasizes some affiliated communicative, dialogical, and even ethical, issues, which I shall also address.

One of the dance artists asserts that a dancer’s job is easier than that of a choreographer’s. She says:

.../It is considerably more easy, because even if a dancer performs wholeheartedly – a dancer does not produce the world or the movement material all the way, which the choreographer has to do and be responsible for.../A dancer needn’t be as independent. A dancer might be independent in relation to her or his body, but a dancer needn’t be independent in as a holistic or societal manner... (4F)<sup>280</sup>

Even if the degree of difficulty of the work of a choreographer and a dancer does is hard to estimate in relation to each other, I find this passage to indirectly denote a certain distinction between the roles of the choreographer and dancer. The passage implies a difference in the responsibilities of a dancer and a choreographer. It also places the dancer in close connection with her or his body and relates the choreographer to society more generally.

Foster suggests that choreography is a “tradition of codes and conventions through which meaning is constructed in dance”, and which “resonates with cultural values concerning bodily, individual, and social identities” (Forster 1998, 5). According to her, while a choreographer sorts, rejects, and constructs physical images, she or he makes manifest a style of decoding the prevailing choreographic conventions that determine how dances and bodily gestures mean what they do. In this sense, she observes that choreographers “theorize corporeality”. She considers a choreographer to engage with and fashion the body’s semiotic field. A dancer in contrast concentrates on performance. He or she concentrates on the individual

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280. .../Sehän on huomattavasti helpompi, koska se toteuttaa, vaikka sydänverellään kuinka, mutta se ei tuota sitä maailmaa eikä sitä liikemateriaaliakaan loppuun asti, minkä se koreografi joutuu, ja ota vastuuta siitä.../Tanssijan ei tarvitse olla niin itsenäinen. Se voi olla kehonsa suhteen enemmänkin itsenäinen, mutta sen ei tarvitse olla kokonaisvaltaisesti yhteiskunnallisesti itsenäinen... (4N)

and idiosyncratic execution of the semiotic constructs created by choreographers and the skills required to represent a choreographer's (re-)structuring of cultural values. (Foster 1998, 5, 7)

This understanding is something that I take the previously quoted dance artist's understanding to allude to. Choreographers need to be aware of or at least tacitly familiar with the socio-cultural tendencies of dance practices and even society more generally in order to create meaningful choreography. In my view, this does not mean that dancers would not benefit from such awareness, too. I take such an awareness to be helpful in creating a personal relation to the movement to be performed. Dancers, however, do not need to draw on a detailed understanding of the import and meaning the whole dance work carries nor of its distinctive nature in relation to other dance pieces to succeed in their own performance. They concentrate more on refining the motional and expressive sequences that they dance and their consequent position in the choreographic structure. However, choreographers in differing degrees of explicitness do contemplate the piece in its entirety and its nature in relation to other dance pieces. Their work could in fact be understood as a commentary on the heritage of previous dance works (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 111–112, 116). The previous passage from the interview material in affiliating dancers with their bodies also relates to the different perspectives choreographers and dancers have on dance. The choreographer mostly regards the meanings of the movements a piece of dance is constructed of through their visual appearance. A dancer, on the other hand, relates somatically to the choreographic sequences to a large extent. (cf. Parviainen 1998, 135)

The same dance artist continues to speak of the tasks of a dancer in relation to the choreographer. As a choreographer she says that,

.../I want every person to be there as her- or himself. That the person is so independent that he or she can participate in the process. That's what an interesting dancer is like. A dancer whose personality completely depends on the choreography is very tedious to watch./.../I appreciate an independent dancer enormously./... (4F)<sup>281</sup>

She later describes what she means by this sort of a dancer by saying that,

.../To have a capacity – this is very important – to follow the impulse that erupts from the choreographer or which the choreographer gives./.../In my view a dancer's artistry, dancerhood, requires a whole lot of motivation, a willingness to adopt the will of another./.../A dancer has to have that will, to ask "what does she want?", and to solve that painful phase, that problem, that "hey, I don't understand any of this". To be so confident and self-loving, that "okay, soon this will go, soon I'll understand this". That is the interest; how to realize what she now would like me to do. Only then is art fulfilled. It comes out of and is expressed by the person./... (4F)<sup>282</sup>

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281. .../minä haluan, että jokainen persoona on omana itsenään siinä. Että se on niin itsenäinen se persoona, että se pystyy tulemaan siihen prosessiin mukaan. Sellainen on mielenkiintoinen tanssija. Sellainen tanssija, jonka persoona riippuu siitä koreografista täysin niin on hirveän ikävä katsoa./.../Minä hirveästi arvostan semmoista omaa itsenäistä tanssijaa./... (4N)

282. .../Jotenkin silleen sellainen alttius, että voi tarttua herkästi. ... Että on sellainen kyky – tämä on

In relating these two passages to each other, I interpret this dance artist to say that an independent dancer is one who is skillful in making dance her or his own thus bringing some personal traits and depth to the choreographic structure. The quoted dance artist also seems to value this as the most important artistic input of a dancer. Somewhat in line with Forster, she appreciates a dancer who adapts to the choreographer's creations but continues to translate them in ways that produces original or idiosyncratic performance of them (Foster 1998, 9). However, the dance artist also says more about the requirements of learning a dance and making it one's own.

As mentioned in section 11.2 discussing the multiple skills of a dancer, this particular dance artist also implies that dancers should be open to the emergent choreographic ideas and material. They should have solidarity with the views and intentions of the choreographer. However, as mentioned in the section immediately preceding this one, the choreographer's intentions may not always be clear to a dancer or they may contradict the taste, preferences, and habitual abilities of a dancer. Despite this, what this dance artist suggests is that a dancer should have the capacity to endure unclear situations and to be tolerant enough to allow clarity to grow along with the process. Confronting something new or different, and gaining comprehension of, or becoming capable of living through a new perspective, according to Merleau-Ponty, actually emerges through a phase of bewilderment and disorientation (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 254, 282–283). When our usual ways of understanding, behaving, and acting do not work in a particular situation, they need to be questioned for a new mode of being to emerge. In this sense dancers are asked to question themselves, their way of moving, and understanding dance. Therefore, a willingness to recognize the unique intentions and otherness of the choreographer and to change in order for their dancing to be appropriate in the context of the piece worked on is expected of a dancer. One of the interviewees says that as a dancer he even gladly does this:

.../I can easily subject myself to being an instrument, as it were./.../I can easily be some choreographer's instrument. But this does not mean that I am a mechanical instrument. Rather, it means that I can easily adapt to a situation if my work is respected./.../I work through the perspective of another, gladly./.../from this way of doing things I can learn something and am always exposed to something. This is the good thing about subjecting oneself to [being an instrument]./... (3M)<sup>283</sup>

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hirveän tärkeä asia – seurata sitä impulssia mikä siitä koreografista lähtee tai mitä se antaa./.../Se vaatii mielettömästi motivaatiota minun mielestä se tanssijan tanssitaiteilijuus, tanssijuus, sellaiseen haluun omaksu toisen tahtoa./.../Se on pakko olla se halu, että "mitä toi tahtoo?", ja ratkaista sitä tuskallista vaihetta, sitä probleemaa, että "hei, enhän minä tajua mitään tästä". Olla niin luottavainen ja itserakas, että "joo, kohtahan tämä tästä, kohtahan minä tajuan tämän jutun". Se on se mielenkiinto, että kuinka minä sen toteutan, mitä tuo nyt haluaisi. Siinähan se vasta sitten täytyy se taide. Sehän tulee sen henkilön kautta ulos ja ilmaistuksi./... (4N)

283. .../Minä voin asettua helposti alttiiksi, työvälineeksi tavallaan./.../Minä voin mainiosti olla jonkun koreografin työväline. Mutta se ei tarkoita sitä, että minä olen mekaaninen väline. Vaan että minä voin adaptoitua helposti tilanteeseen, jos on kunnioitusta minun työtä kohtaan./.../Minä voin mielelläni tehdä työtä toisen ajatusmaailman kautta./.../tästäkin tavasta tehdä minä voin oppia jotain ja altistun aina jollekin, että se on se hyvä puoli olla alttiina./... (3M)

As a matter of fact, the interviewed dance artists continued to elaborate on the way choreographers relate to a dancer by arguing that it is important that a dancer surrender her or his body, skills, and actions for the benefit of the choreographer. One of the interviewees says:

.../I find that dancerhood is first and foremost about accepting that one expresses physically. If a person, who has been educated, be it for 50 years and gone to dance schools or whatever, does not surrender her or his body for use or do so willingly – a dancer has to do both. ... I find that a dancer has to surrender her or his body for the use of the choreographer and, of course, use it her or himself all the time. But if a dancer does not accept this there is no dancerhood./ ... (4F)<sup>284</sup>

Another continues:

.../I think that what is important in dancerhood, is that one can give one's instrument for use. To be so in balance with oneself that one can give one's knowledge of dance work to be used by different kinds of people. Of course, everyone has their own ethics and morals on what they do and do not do. But the essential thing is that a dancer is capable of freeing her or his creativity in the situations she or he is in for the use of the choreographer. This would be great. Instrumentalization is different from giving one's instrument to be used or using it together with someone. They should not be mixed. Instrumentalization is something else, something like exploitation./ ... (3M)<sup>285</sup>

These passages bring up several themes that I would like to address further. The first emphasizes a dancer's ability to do physical and expressive work with their body. They both signify that dancers need to submit this work and their body to be used by the choreographer. Finally, the second passage suggests that in making dance one's own dancers need to "free their creativity" and that submitting their skills and bodily motion to the choreographer might involve issues that subvert the integrity of the dancer.

Dancers' bodies form the core of the dance medium. It is the body itself that dances and realizes the choreographic structure. In order for this end to be achieved dancers need to set their bodies in motion, be willing to sustain and endure its motional stances, and to be interested in working with the consequent questions that arise, as well as to redirect the manner of their moving according to different goals. These could be understood as features

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284. .../Minusta tanssiuus on ennen kaikkea niin kuin suostumista ilmaisemaan fyysisesti. Jos ei henkilö, joka on vaikka koulutettu viisikymmentä vuotta, tanssikoulua käynyt tai mitä tahansa, suostu antamaan kehoaan käyttöön tai käyttämään sitä vapaaehtoisesti – molempia joutuu tekemään tanssija. Minusta se joutuu antamaan kehonsa koreografin käyttöön ja tietenkin kokoa ajan käyttämään sitä itse. Mutta jos se ei suostu siihen, niin ei ole tanssiuutta./ ... (4N)

285. .../Minä kyllä koen, että on tärkeä tanssiuudessa se, että pystyy antamaan sen instrumenttinsa käyttöön. Se että on niin sinut itsensä kanssa, että voi antaa erilaisten ihmisten käyttöön sen tietämyksensä tanssijan työstä. Sitten tietenkin jokaisella on oma etiikkansa ja omat moraalinsa, mitä kaikkea tekee ja mitä ei tee ja muuta. Mutta se on olennaista minun mielestä, että tanssija pystyy vapauttamaan luovuutensa kulloisessakin tilanteessa sen koreografin käyttöön. Se olisi hienoa. Välineellistäminen on eri asia kuin antaa oma väline käyttöön tai käyttää sitä yhdessä jonkin kanssa. Näitä ei pidä sotkea. Siis välineellistäminen on jotain ihan muuta: tämmöinen niin kuin hyötykäyttö./ ... (3M)

illustrating the manner in which the first quoted dance artist expects a dancer to be capable of working with their body themselves. But as she also speaks of a willingness, even commitment, to express physically, she could also be understood to point towards an enthusiasm and resourcefulness in solving the problems of making dance one's own. Foster suggests that in so doing dancers among other things

. . . may imbue the movement with personal meanings in addition to those described by the choreographer so as to attain a greater fervency. They may elaborate a persona – an integrative conception of the body-subject who would move in the way specified in the choreography – and then use this concept to further refine stylistic features of their performance. They may also calculate the effect of their performance on viewers and calibrate effort, intensity, and focus so as to “reach” the audience in a manner consonant with the choreography's theoretical goals. They may even connect to a history of performers or a traditional style of performance that informs their current project. Throughout the process of learning and presenting a dance, performers manifest these and other competencies, the product of years of arduous training. (Foster 1998, 9)

These kinds of skills, some of which involve tacit knowledge and spontaneously arising images that occur simply while perceiving a choreographer demonstrate movement or when moving oneself, are something that the dancer usually has learned to deal with while fine-tuning the nature of the movement sought by a choreographer. Furthermore, they are often capable of doing this and do so without the choreographer's directions. These considerations could be understood to relate to the independent nature of the dancer while making dance one's own in an original manner that one of the earlier quoted dance artists found important.

In addition to working with their bodies and their motional expression, the above passages from the interview material illustrate that dancers should yield their physical skills for the use of the choreographer. Choreographers need a dancer's body to become pliable material to fulfill their intentions. The solidarity and responsiveness of a dancer towards the choreographer that these passages point have already been discussed. Having said that, there is still a lot more to a dancer realizing the intentions of the choreographer through her or his movements. There is a dimension of 'mine-ness' or ownership in one's relation to one's own body and one's perception of the world. Nobody else can know exactly how I perceive and feel things. Between the felt-experience of one's movement and the visual-auditory, and in some cases tactile, perception of it by another, there exists an asymmetrical reversibility. They focus upon the same event from different perspectives, which influences the significance this event has for the perceiving subject. Notwithstanding this, through the transitivity and the *aesthesiological* quality of our embodied relation to others we are opened up to the significance of the acts another person performs and, along with a sufficient amount of shared cultural background and responsiveness towards the perceived subject, we can even immediately grasp the intentions of such acts. We do this only in an indeterminate fashion, however. There is always more to perceive and understand in any expressive gesture that is conceived of by either party, that of the performer or the receiver.

Yet, the purpose of dancing is to express and thus convey significance from the dancing

body to a subject perceiving a body dance. The transcendent significance of one's dancing is important aside from its felt-sense. In contemporary dance the stylistic features of motion that underline or amplify the transmission of its significance, be it such qualities as softness or sharpness of movement or more narrative features, are often paid a lot of attention to by the choreographer, since each new piece is created through somewhat singular expressive means, which do not rely on any generally known stylistic modes of representation and signification. This makes a contemporary dancer very dependent on the choreographer. Dancers need choreographers to assess the nature in which they move, as they themselves are unable, in any thorough or direct manner, to perceive how their dancing looks and sounds like to (or through a more comprehensive perception is received and felt by) another person. Therefore, in addition to willingly setting the body in motion, while following the directions of a choreographer in order to realize a choreographer's intentions, dancers surrender their bodies to the choreographer in another manner as well. Dancers expose their understanding of the tasks they are given to the choreographer in the act of concrete dancing. The impact it has on the choreographer describes its worth. The choreographer is the first "audience" a dancer works with and the first person to affirm the meaning of a dancer's dancing.

Indeed, a choreographer's evaluative and prescriptive commentary is what one of the interviewees finds helpful for a dancer if it is given in a constructive manner:

... /A professional choreographer is one who demands in a sufficient manner, in a pedagogical manner – that one develops in what one is doing. If too much is demanded, it destroys. If nothing is demanded, this too destroys. /... /Me too have I have also been told in a very constructive manner /... /before the next performance, that "listen you did this in the performance". But it has been said constructively: "You did this. It is quite good, but it could be better. Could you try this?" It is damned good that one is not content. /... /There always is room to come up with something that helps to develop [the performance of a dancer]. I think this is very nice: being uncompromising with the thing, to refine it. /... (1M)<sup>286</sup>

Commentary on the perceived significance of one's performance by the choreographer aids the dancer in gaining comprehension of what is going on in the dance and how her or his performance relates to the whole piece and which aspects of it could still be worked upon.

Nevertheless, one of the previous quotations implies that there might be a problem with the integrity of a dancer in relation to the choreographer. Indeed, implicit in some more of the comments of the interview material is the fact that the discrepancy between the way a dancer feels she or he is dancing or is capable of doing so and the manner in which a choreo-

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286. ... /Ammattitaitoinen koreografi on sellainen, joka vaatii sopivassa määrin, sillain niin kuin kasvattavassa määrin – että mennään eteenpäin siinä asiassa. Jos vaatii liikaa, se tuhoaa. Jos ei vaadi mitään, niin sekin tuhoaa. /... /Onhan minullekin taas toisaalta niin kuin hyvin rakentavassa mielessä sanottu /... /ennen seuraavaa esitystä, että "kuule sinä teit silloin esityksessä näin". Mutta se on rakentavasti sanottu: "Sinä teit näin. Se on ihan hyvä, mutta se voi olla myös parempi. Kokeiletko tehdä näin?" Mikä on niin kuin helvetin hyvä, että ei tyydytä. /... /Aina on varaa keksiä jotain eteenpäin. Se on minun mielestä hirveän kivaa; tinkimättömyyttä sen asian suhteen, että hioo sitä. /... (1M)

grapher perceives or continues to ask a dancer to move, aside from being a possibility leading to enhanced performance, might be such that it leaves a dancer feeling that she or he has not been recognized as the kind of dancer that she or he is. While speaking of their experiences of being dancers the interviewees describe situations in which they have felt frustrated by the manner in which choreographers relate to them or they themselves relate to a choreographer. This made a few of the interviewed dancer artists feel that they do not live up to the expectations they themselves have or the choreographer has of their performance.

One of the interviewees describes how he maintains his integrity, while working with a choreographer. He says:

.../Well I have no problem with it. I do retain – if there is such a problem that I am no longer myself, then one yells “argh” and does something about it. Then there is a battle with the choreographer: “Now you are raping me”. Of course, such situations can occur./... (3M)<sup>287</sup>

This passage shows a dancer who has the capacity, so to speak, to oppose the choreographer in order to retain his integrity. He finds that he has no problem with holding on to the sense he has of himself and perhaps the consequent manner in which he feels capable of adapting to his tasks, when they are questioned by the choreographer. He can express and maintain a limit to the extent to which he is willing to be transformed by the choreographer. When he so does, he reveals the moral standards he abides by.

Two of the interviewees spoke about their relation to the choreographer in a somewhat different manner.

.../When I work in others' pieces, it is always like banging my head on the wall. I once told you that I think there must be positive ways of doing pieces. Why, especially in my case, does it always have to be through the damned difficult? Or then it has to be something in me. Or it is in me. But I do not know if it is a mental or physical feature – that my physique does not lend itself to other people's pieces, or is it more of a mental rigidity. It is hardly a black and white thing either. .../... (1M)<sup>288</sup>

The other says:

.../as a dancer I do think that I must – perhaps as a dancer it is precisely more difficult especially when one works in another's piece – I have a sort of a humble relation to the choreographer. In a way I would like to fulfill her or his ideas as well as possible. Perhaps this is

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287. .../No minulla ei ole mitään ongelmaa siinä. Minä kyllä säilytän ihan – jos semmoinen ongelma tulee, että minä en enää ole minä, niin sittenhän huutaa “argh”, ja tekee jotain sille. Sitten tulee taistelu tuon koreografin kanssa, että “nyt sinä raiskaat minua”. Totta kai semmoisia tilanteita voi syntyä./... (3M)

288. .../Kun on joidenkin toisten jutuissa, niin se on aina sellaista pään seinään hakkaamista. Sinulle joskus just sanoin, että on minun mielestä varmaan positiivisiakin tapoja tehdä juttuja, miksi sen pitää olla aina jotenkin, varsinkin minun kohdalla aina niin saatanan vaikean kautta. Tai sitten sen täytyy olla vaan jotenkin minussa. Tai minussahan se onkin. Mutta minä en sitten tiedä, onko se psyykinen ominaisuus, vai onko se minun fyysinen ominaisuus, että minä en fysiikaltani taivu ihmisten juttuihin, vai onko se sitten psyykkistä jäykkyyttä. Tuskinpa se nyt ihan mustavalkoinen juttu sekään on. .../... (1M)

where my problems derive from when I am a dancer in another's piece. I am not satisfied by my own performance. . . . (2F) <sup>289</sup>

The first passage implies that, while working with choreographers, this dance artist faces some kind of resistance, deals with a conflict, which has left him feeling inadequate and uncomfortable in his relation to choreographers in general. The second passage, in turn, demonstrates humbleness, a kind of docility this dance artist has in front of the choreographer, which leaves her unsatisfied with her own performance, too.

Parviainen argues that in choreographic practice the relationship between the dancer and the choreographer may vary from an instrumental attitude towards the dancer's body to a mutual and intimate embodied dialogue. She suggests that the former must be overcome if differences in lived bodies, differences in individual ways of moving, responding to, and feeling about movement, are considered the source of dance. These are something that should be respected and encouraged. (Parviainen 1998, 162) Pasanen-Willberg, in turn, points out that a dialogue requires freedom, in which also the dancer might, to different degrees, reveal choreographically relevant manners of moving. Despite the potentially pre-established choreographic goals, she regards as important that the dancer is allowed to listen to her or his feelings and experiences of the movement and that the rehearsal process is actualized equally on the premises of both the dancer and the choreographer. (Pasanen-Willberg 2000, 212)

Many of the features discussed in the latter sections of this chapter show that the interviewed dance artists appreciate individualistic and original ways of creating choreography and performing dance. They suggest that the choreographer should be given the freedom to work according to their individual perspective on the world and that the dancer should be able to make dance her or his own in a personal manner. They both are expected, therefore, to be able to produce some variation on the familiar. In addition to this, the interview material indicates the necessity of responsiveness and solidarity between the choreographer and dancer. The choreographer attempts to acknowledge the difference of her or his collaborators and the dancer, in turn, should attempt to be open to and put her his physical abilities at the choreographer's disposal. In relation to these issues, I take the relation and communication of the dancer and the choreographer, at least in some ways, to need an intimate embodied or ethical dialogue in which the alterity<sup>290</sup> or the difference of the other

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289. . . ./kyllä minä asennoidun tanssijana niin että minun täytyy – ehkä tanssijana on just vaikeampi varsinkin, kun tekee toisen biisiä – minulla on kuitenkin vähän sellainen niin kuin nöyrä suhtautuminen koreografiin nähden. Minä tavallaan haluaisin täyttää hänen ideaansa mahdollisimman hyvin. Siitä tulee ehkä minun ongelmat just niin kuin tanssijana muitten biiseissä, kun minä en ole, kun minä en ole tyytyväinen omaan, omaan tekemiseeni. . . . (2N)

290. Galen A. Johnson shows that the term 'alterity' derives from the Latin term 'alteritas' which means "the state of being other or different; diversity, otherness" (Johnson 1990, xviii). He argues that 'alterity' was recently taken into use in English discussion of otherness to shift the focus from an epistemic otherness (the question of how can we know others exist) to the concrete moral other of political, cultural, linguistic, artistic, and religious practices (Johnson 1990, xix). It is in this latter sense that I use the term in this section.

is recognized and appreciated. This includes recognizing both the difference between the roles a dancer and a choreographer are enacting and the particular manner in which individual dancers and choreographers do so. I believe that, in order for both the dancers and choreographers to produce something original, they need to rely on their individual resources, trust their way of handling their tasks, and even receive some kind of support from each other while doing so. In order to understand the kind of communication this involves, I shall briefly discuss some of the ethical features that Merleau-Ponty's thinking is comprised of.

Merleau-Ponty never elaborated on the principles of morals to such an extent as to create an actual ethics of his own. His notions on the transitivity of the bodily relations between people and the intertwining of the flesh, through which he points out that otherness is a constitutive element of the body-subject itself, however, is based on his understanding of the relations between individuals as a generosity which is able to allow room for the otherness of the other. He discusses his more direct, albeit intermittent, ethical and moral understanding, while clarifying his conception of intersubjective communication and conversation in which both communion and conflict are possible. Whilst these considerations mostly refer to verbal communication and even if Madison, therefore, suggests that Merleau-Ponty is referring to a rational communicative ethics, I would suggest that, in line with his overall project, Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the ethical relation between subjects also involves the more ambiguous, affective, emotional, and motional/gestural dimensions of embodied communication, since for him intersubjectivity is intercorporeality. (Diprose 2002, 173; Madison 1999, 175; Busch 1999, 173; Yeo 1992, 38) Merleau-Ponty argues that the immediate perception of the other that he advocates is an ethical perception of the other as perception for him always includes an excess or a difference that resists assimilation into the familiar and known (Merleau-Ponty 1985/1964b, 16, 28, 30; Yeo 1992, 39–40). As argued in Part II, for him perception is a question of a passage between the subject, another, and the world, which has sensitive and affective qualities.<sup>291</sup>

What is evident in Merleau-Ponty's writing is that for him to open up to the other's elemental difference requires ever-renewed reciprocal and answerable communication

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291. What is perhaps worth noting in the context of discussing the ethical features of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology is that it was Emmanuel Levinas (1906–1995) who most intensely brought ethical problems to the forefront of phenomenological discussion. He did this especially in his late work that was published after the death of Merleau-Ponty. Although this study relies on Merleau-Ponty's thinking and in this sense the postulations of Levinas are outside of its scope, it is mentionable that Levinas criticizes Merleau-Ponty for excluding the possibility of a radical difference enduring between subjects. In his view, Merleau-Ponty subsumes the other under the same (cf. Smith 1990). However, other commentators such as Rosalyn Diprose argue that Levinas did not pay close enough attention to Merleau-Ponty's understanding of a de-centered subject and writes that, "upon close scrutiny, it is not so clear that for Merleau-Ponty the self as a perceiving body comes before and so dominates the other" (Diprose 2002, 182). Nor is she very convinced of the applicability of Levinas' understanding that the difference of the other is to be found beyond ontology to our experience of everyday life. This is a point of debate, but one that suggests that the wide interest, which Levinas' thinking and ethical consideration in general have lately acquired, has also made scholars investigate the ethical implications of Merleau-Ponty's thinking more closely.

between situated participants. Thus, in my view, Merleau-Ponty reveals that an ethical relation, which recognizes the alterity of the other, comes about in a responsive dialogue, which he describes in the following manner:

In the experience of dialogue, there is constituted between the other person and myself a common ground; my thought and his are interwoven into a single fabric, my words and those of my interlocuter are called forth by the state of the discussion, and they are inserted into a shared operation of which neither of us is the creator . . . we are collaborators for each other in consummate reciprocity. Our perspectives merge into each other and we co-exist through a common world. In the present dialogue, I am freed from myself, for the other person's thoughts are certainly his; they are not of my making, though I do grasp them the moment they come into being, or even anticipate them. And indeed, the objection which my interlocuter raises to what I say draws from me thoughts which I had no idea I possessed so that at the same time that I lend him my thoughts, he reciprocates by making me think too. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 354)

This passage shows that Merleau-Ponty considers an egalitarian relation between subjects to occur precisely in a reciprocal dialogue. In dialogical communication we are peers and capable of solidarity. The differences between us interweave and create a mutual situation, in which we are open to learn from the other and, thus, from ourselves. The openness we have towards the difference of the other is also something that frees her or him to be her- or himself. This is so because "the other who listens and understands joins with me in what is most singular in me" (Merleau-Ponty 1986/1973, 141). If the dialogue is a true dialogue of reciprocity, the other frees us to be ourselves as well. This understanding, then, signifies that answerable dialogue, which I consider to be an intercorporeal dialogue, exists where a mutual responsiveness towards each other on the part of the dancer and the choreographer occurs and which allows the dancer and choreographer to learn from each other as well as to be freed to be the particular kinds of artists they are. This latter possibility is something that only occurs when certain conditions are met, however.

According to Merleau-Ponty in order to open upon and recognize the difference of the other it is necessary that:

. . . at a certain stage I must be surprised, disoriented. If we are to meet not just through what we have in common but in what is different between us – which presupposes a transformation of myself and the other as well – then our differences can no longer be opaque qualities. They must become meaning. In the perception of the other, this happens when the other organism, instead of "behaving" like me, engages with the things in my world in a style that is at first mysterious to me but which at least seems to me a coherent style because it responds to certain possibilities which fringed the things in my world. (Merleau-Ponty 1986/1973, 142)

In an ethical relation with another we are firstly drawn away from our familiar ways of perceiving and understanding. In Merleau-Ponty's view, however, this deviation from the familiar is yet not a genuine experience of the other. For an ethical relation to be realized, the difference of the other should to some extent be integrated into an understanding of the other (Yeo 1992, 48). Merleau-Ponty suggests that we should be "led by the flow" of

the manner in which the other is related to our shared circumstances and “especially at the moment he withdraws from us and threatens to fall into non-sense” to allow ourselves to move accordingly in order to open to “another meaning” (Merleau-Ponty 1986/1973, 143). Through at least tacitly comprehending the unfamiliarity of the other we are opened to new possibilities and begin to see things differently. This means that in an ethical relation with another we ourselves are transformed as well. But the other is never comprehended once and for all. Rather the other “always slips in at the junction between the world and ourselves”, therefore, the other commands me again and again to throw myself into dialogical relationship, whose significance and meaning neither of us was familiar with before (Merleau-Ponty 1986/1973, 138, 142).

Therefore, according to Merleau-Ponty, in order for dancers and choreographers to recognize the singularity of each other and to work with an appreciation of it, they also need to allow themselves to be moved and changed by the other, and that this might even mean moments of disorientation that need to be borne in a trusting manner. Still, while suggesting that conflict is also immanent in the interaction between a dancer and a choreographer, this section proposes that, not all of the communication between them constitutes this kind of a dialogue. At different moments of creation and rehearsing a dance piece both the dancer and the choreographer need to turn away from each other in order to concentrate on their own tasks, aims, actions, and performance. Even when an intimate and ethical dialogue were possible, moreover, it is easy to fall into the humdrum everydayness of dance work and to continue to work according to one’s preconceptions leaving behind the difference of the other and the uniqueness of the situation. As Merleau-Ponty writes: “other people, as human beings, are menaced by the possibility of a stereotype within which the role encloses them. They can thereby disappear and leave only their role” (Merleau-Ponty 1993/1982, 57). The collaborative process relies on habitual and familiar expectations, forms of behavior, and other conventions, in addition to creating new ways of dealing with things and encountering the alterity of the other.

In closing I would still like to take the opportunity to suggest that for singular and original choreography and performance to emerge, at some points the choreographer and dancer should fall into a state of wonder, which in my view seems to be the means through which Merleau-Ponty conceives us of being able to open up to the strange and the unfamiliar (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, xiii; 1987/1968, 101–102). Patrick Burke, in fact, argues that the mode of wonder that Merleau-Ponty discusses is the most primitive openness to Being, the phenomenal pregnancy we live with, and that it is the originary mode and force of perceptual interrogation (Burke 1990, 93). Merleau-Ponty writes that the primary presence of things and others

Offer themselves therefore only to someone who wishes not to have them but to see them, not to hold them as with forceps . . . but to let them be and to witness their continued being – to someone who therefore limits himself to giving them the hollow, the free space they ask for in return, the resonance they require, who follows their own movement, who is therefore not a nothingness the full being would come to stop up, but a question consonant with the porous being which it questions and from which it obtains not an answer but a

confirmation of its astonishment. It is necessary to comprehend perception as this interrogative thought which lets the perceived world be rather than posit it. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 101–102)

Perceiving in wonder requires time, letting go of one's intentions, and trust. Through them it becomes possible that the thing perceived "takes possession of us in an unforeseen manner" and "brings us towards an unanticipated future" (Dastur 2000, 182). In line with the idea that art creates something new and original, the call for creating original choreography and performing dance in an idiosyncratic manner could be understood to require moments of wonder or astonishment on the part of both the dancer and the choreographer.

This section discussed the relation of the dancer and the choreographer. It suggests that choreographers in creating choreography construct structures of bodily motion imbued with differing socio-cultural values. Dancers in turn fill these structures and give them depth through idiosyncratic performance. In effect, this section underlines that contemporary freelance dancers should be resourceful in making dance their own, that they relate their understanding of their dance tasks to the choreographer during rehearsals, and should be willing to transform themselves according to the aims of the choreographer. It also discusses some ethical issues related to the relationship between dancers and choreographers. It argues that an intimate embodied dialogue in which the individuality and difference of both the choreographer and the dancer is appreciated is something that enhances both producing original dancing and dance pieces.

## 12 Dance Work as a Mode of Involvement with the Surrounding World

While the interviewed dance artists were mostly very intensely engaged in dance, some of them also realized that work in itself held an important position in their lives. The theme of work was addressed by all of the dance artists, in one manner or another. They began speaking about these matters when I asked them what it meant for them to work with their bodies. But they further elaborated on the meaning work had for them in relation to other concerns as well. In so doing, they did not take it to be linked only to a specific engagement with or practice of dance. It seemed to be a more general concern. They indicated that struggling with dance and thus attaining end results was something that they considered an indispensable part of their life. They told me that they were continuously working on it and considered it to be their way of life.

Actually, in speaking of their engrossment with dance as work, the interviewed dance artists appeared to think along similar lines to Parviainen, who finds that, instead of some kind of inspirational creation, the everyday artistic production of dance is plainly work (Parviainen 1998, 124). While discussing the preoccupations of a painter, Merleau-Ponty writes of this issue in more colorful terms. He states that, “the operation of expression, is not simply a metamorphosis in the fairytale sense of miracle, magic, and absolute creation in an aggressive solitude” (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 95). Instead, artistic expression is a question of labor and work,<sup>292</sup> which are responsible answers to one’s commitment to bring forth one’s relation to the world and to one’s existence in the midst of previously-established artistic traditions (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 95–96). What is more, for Merleau-Ponty, the very processes of work themselves are not only concerned with the end results. In his view, they generally are that activity, which projects a practical human environment around individuals. Moreover, the particular nature of these processes expresses the mental and moral structures through which individuals operate in the world. (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 109; 1991/1964e, 107–108) As an existential activity, work could, then, be understood as a means of establishing and maintaining a meaningful social world to which individuals are committed and in which they attend to various things and tasks as well as perform different kinds of actions (cf. Haapala 2000, 136). As was stated earlier, in the case of the interviewed dance artists, this world is the danceworld or more particularly the freelance field of dance to which they belonged. Also the roles or professional conventions through which they primarily operate were argued to be those of a dance teacher, dancer, and choreographer. Therefore,

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292. Although Merleau-Ponty himself did not clarify his use of the terms ‘labor’ and ‘work’ in more detail or clearly distinguish them from each other, this chapter continues to do so in while relying on Hannah Arendt’s thinking. What Arendt means by these terms will be briefly elaborated upon in the main text of this chapter.

the understanding they had of work and working and which they discussed in the interviews is further illuminative of how they as dance teachers, but especially as dancers and choreographers, were involved in sustaining and organizing the field of freelance dance in Helsinki at the time when the interviews took place.

The previous chapters have already illustrated that freelance dance artists often work without the immediate or regular support of any artistic organizations. They cultivate their careers and artistic endeavors somewhat like private entrepreneurs. They put effort into creating and maintaining the possibilities of doing their art by, for example, negotiating with other art professionals, applying for grants, renting rehearsal and performance spaces in addition to dealing with the actual practices of dance itself. Moreover, the minimal wages freelance dance artists mostly receive often force them to work on several assignments simultaneously to earn a living. Therefore, the way in which freelance dance artists are preoccupied with their field of dance and go about their profession apparently calls for industriousness and perseverance.

The interviewed dance artists identified somewhat different kinds of issues when they discussed and questioned their keen attachment to working, however. They suggested that this commitment was influenced by several factors. In my view, their thoughts about the meaning work holds in their lives relates to the nature of bodily functions that call for certain modes of action in order for the body to achieve and retain the techniques relevant for dance. At the same time, their comments relate to those values embedded in the practices of western theatrical dance which emphasize that dance artists work, or need to work, very diligently on their art and bodies to perform the demanding tasks required of them (cf. Adair 1994/1992, 15–17; Sparshott 1988, 299). But as they found work to be something they were inevitably committed to, the dance artists also spoke in terms that imply that they carried in themselves a general value of western culture: the centrality and worthiness of work in the lives of individuals (cf. Featherstone 1991; Arendt 1989/1958). It is, furthermore, common in this culture, for artists to be understood to follow a calling and to be passionately involved in their artistic endeavors (cf. Taylor 1996/1989). Later in this chapter it will be suggested, as will be further argued in chapter 14, that the dance artists found that being involved in dance was a compulsion for them – they mainly regarded their profession a vocation.<sup>293</sup> In addition, what was most emphasized in the speech of the dance artists was that they found that working with dance was a means of self-realization. Although they claimed that this mode of self-realization created some contradiction in relation to maintaining more intimate social contacts, they demonstrated that through it they were able to experience and understand themselves in various ways, recognize that they have achieved something in

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293. In chapter 14 the interviewed dance artists' vocational attitude will be discussed in more depth. What is worth noting here, however, is that the romantic conception of artists being filled with divine inspiration or at least taken to be exceptional beings, who are subject to rare visions and possess exceptional sensibilities, has lost much of its credibility in our times. Yet, as Charles Taylor argues, it still is still common for artists to be considered to accomplish works of art with great moral and spiritual significance and to possess a depth, fullness, and intensity of life rare in other practices or modes of life (Taylor 1996/1989, 422–423).

life, and receive social acknowledgement.

After making some points on the position work-related activity has had in western culture, the next sections of this chapter discuss the issues sketched above in more detail in relation to the interview material itself. Those concerns more generally linked to the cultural significance work has in contemporary western society that the interview material presents are addressed first. Then the issues more particularly related to the practices of contemporary dance and the body are looked into in more depth.

As I find the interviewed dance artists' contemplations on the meaning work has in their lives to be connected to some more general values of western culture, I will first discuss these values by briefly introducing Hannah Arendt's<sup>294</sup> thinking. Discussing her thoughts is helpful since, unlike Merleau-Ponty, she gives detailed descriptions of some more particular work-related characteristics of the life-world of the modern western individual. In my view her conclusions are still very relevant. In her book *The Human Condition*<sup>295</sup>, dating from 1958, Hannah Arendt explores the nature of human activity by contemplating how practical life has changed since the existence of the Greek city-state or *polis* in comparison to the nation-state of modern times. She concentrates on discussing these differences by focusing on the manner in which humans relate to nature, the world, and each other through a fundamental activity that she refers to as "doing". This activity she discerns to consist of three elementary forms; namely those of labor, work, and action. (Arendt 1989/1958, 5, 7; Moran 2000, 306) With her analyses, she attempts to clarify the manner in which humans through their actions are involved with each other and the world. Her understanding of the social organization of the world, nonetheless, is much indebted to Heidegger's views of human activity, being-in-the-world, and the worldhood of the world.<sup>296</sup> Nonetheless, she employs and extends Hei-

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294. Even if Arendt is not always recognized as a phenomenologist, she herself occasionally referred to herself as one and was strongly influenced by the thinking of Heidegger and Karl Jaspers, another early German phenomenologist. She especially applied and extended many of Heidegger's conceptions in her work. She, however, had no particular interest in the phenomenological method nor did she contribute anything to the theory of phenomenology. What most significantly ties her to phenomenology is that she explored the manner in which humans are engaged with the world and did this by returning to consider the concrete life-world of individuals. She examined the modes of human co-existence more discerningly than, for example, Heidegger or Merleau-Ponty. In her analyses she observed, for example, the private, public, productive, consumptive, and political realms of co-existence. (cf. Arendt 1989/1958; Moran 2000, 287–289, 306–310)

295. In Arendt's work the term 'human condition' refers to the fact that human beings belong to a historically-conditioned human world (Moran 2000, 292).

296. With the term being-in-the-world, Heidegger refers to a unitary phenomenon that is prior to any subject – object distinctions. Most significantly it is the mode of dwelling that is the essential state of the Being of Dasein. Being-in thus implies inhabiting something, which pervades us and is a part of us. Dasein's being-in-the-world is about an involved familiarity, which is exhibited in different modes of concern. (Heidegger 1995/1962, 78–80, 83; Dreyfus 1991, 45; Hatab 2000, 16) Heidegger describes concern by writing amongst other things that it refers to "having to do with something, producing something, attending to something and looking after it, making use of something, giving something up and letting it go, undertaking, accomplishing, evincing, interrogating, considering, discussing, determining . . ." (Heidegger 1995/1962, 83). These exemplify the possible ways Dasein has of being-in-the-world – the modes in which Dasein's being-in-the-world becomes organized.

degger's notions in an original and illuminating manner (cf. Moran 2000, 288–289; Snell 2001, 43–47).<sup>297</sup>

Heidegger, somewhat like Merleau-Ponty, argues that we are involved in the world exactly through our activity. This activity he calls *comportment* to avoid the mental tone of the term 'intentionality' and is keen to point out that activity is not merely reflectively intentional action. Instead, even if it involves this dimension, it also and most importantly is about the mode in which we are engaged with the world through non-thematically purposeful, culturally inscribed, embodied, and significant behavior. This is the first mode in which the world discloses itself to us. (Heidegger 1995/1962, 115–119; Dreyfus 1991, 47, 51, 57–58) For Arendt, too, practical life, or as she referred to it *vita activa*, is of special interest. She believes that this dimension of human involvement with the world had been neglected too much in the western philosophical tradition which instead prioritizes theoretical under-

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The worldhood of the world, on the other hand, refers to the referential and pre-thematically meaningful structures in which Dasein is always already involved and in which it is able realize its potentiality for being (Heidegger 1995/1962, 119). Heidegger gives an example of the worldly nature of a hammer, which in normal life we take for granted: "with this thing, for instance, which is ready-to-hand, and which we accordingly call a "hammer", there is an involvement in hammering; with hammering there is an involvement with making something fast, there is an involvement in protection against bad weather; and this protection 'is' for the sake of [um-willen] providing shelter for Dasein – that is to say, for the sake of a possibility of Dasein's Being. Whenever something ready-to-hand has an involvement with it, *what* involvement this is, has in each case been outlined in advance in terms of the totality of such involvements. But the totality of involvements itself goes back ultimately to a "towards-which" in which there is *no* further involvement: this "toward-which" is not an entity with the kind of Being that belongs to what is ready-to-hand within a world; it is rather an entity whose Being is defined as Being-in-the-world, and to whose state of Being, worldhood itself belongs" (Heidegger 1995/1962, 116). A piece of equipment like a hammer makes sense firstly in relation to other pieces of equipment like nails and a saw which exist "in-order-for" some end to be achieved. As Dreyfus demonstrates, in addition to this, the use of equipment "exhibits a "where-in" (or practical context), a "with-which" (or item of equipment), a "towards-which" (or goal) and a "for-the-sake-of which" (or final point)" (Dreyfus 1991, 92). These purpose- and interest-oriented features of Dasein's involvement with the world reveal the referential character of the world, its worldly nature.

What must, of course, also be noted is that Dasein finds itself thrown into a world and truly becomes Dasein only when it is a cultured entity instilled with a human and historical world of co-existence. Nonetheless, through its activity and practices Dasein already inhabits a meaningful world before any reflection or abstraction has taken place. Since Dasein is Being-in-the-world, its interests, in Heidegger's view, can be said to *be* in the world. (Hatab 2000, 19–20)

297. Both Moran and Snell maintain that Arendt at points was very critical of Heidegger's thinking. However, they do not consider her critical arguments to be well formulated or to be a discerning reading of Heidegger. (Snell 2001, 45; Moran 2000, 288–289, 300–301) What seems to be very insightful in Arendt's critique, though, is that Heidegger, whilst attempting to create a philosophy of action and being in the world, nonetheless, continued to philosophize like a traditional philosopher. Heidegger struggled to constantly begin again and to undo what had been done before. He worked with an unconditioned solitude trusting only his own experiences and thinking. This is a position very different from Arendt's understanding of truth as communicability in a public world shared by all. For Arendt philosophy is a communicative dialogue, which requires a plurality of individuals with different perspectives and understandings of the world. (Hansen 1993, 227, 229) For Arendt to withdraw from the world in order to contemplate it, as phenomenological methods often advocate, and to act in it with other people are totally different things (Snell 2001, 46).

standing or *vita contemplativa*. (Arendt 1989/1958, 7, 16–17; Moran 2000, 308)

It is exactly the manner in which practical life allows a mutual human world to exist that Arendt attempts to clarify in *The Human Condition*. The starting point of this analysis is the three fundamental modes of doing that she believed to significantly direct the manner in which individuals operate in the world. What must be noted, however, is that while she makes distinctions, she also shows that labor, work, and action are interdependent in that they build upon each other. In fact, the point in which one begins and another ends is seldom unambiguous. (Arendt 1989/1958, 5–8, 139)<sup>298</sup> The next few paragraphs roughly discuss Arendt's understanding of these terms with which she analyzes human doing. The position that Arendt discerns the first two modes of doing to have in modern western society forms an especially useful background from which it is possible to interpret some of the interviewees' notions of work and working.

Arendt calls such endeavors labor, which are most closely related to the biological life of the human body and which are necessary for the creation and maintenance of life itself. Labor is characterized by necessity as well as its cyclical and repetitive nature. It leaves nothing permanent behind and for this reason must always be recommenced. Labor, nonetheless, ensures the basic prerequisites of life. Work, in turn, is creative activity which provides the dimension of artifacts endowing us with a durable human or cultural world. In contrast to labor, work is something that produces an end result, an artifact, that continues to sustain its value and to live a life independent of its producer. Work thus generates something that extends beyond individual life and creates stability. The artifacts it produces are defined through their usefulness and utility in human life. Therefore, work is also something, through which humans construct and give meaning to their lives and the world they live in. (Arendt 1958, 5, 7–8, 87, 94, 98; Moran 2000, 310–311) Indeed, work could be understood to be an activity which molds nature into a world and forms a field for moral or political action. It paves the way for the third realm of doing that Arendt discusses. The domain of political action is that dimension in which people most clearly need not be concerned by the necessities of survival and can freely choose to take initiative and engage in cooperative deeds. Here action and speech that are directed towards others are seminal. Through them people appear to each other in their most singular manner and become known for who they are. Moreover, while engaging with others who have common interests they can create something original and new.<sup>299</sup> They can set in motion something whose future is not

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298. Cf. ft. 299.

299. Arendt suggests that work is what artists accomplish, for example. They create works of art, which continue to maintain artistic practices and the meaning art has in a culture even after the death of an artist. Moreover, for Arendt, great works of art, which sustain their value through the ages, are a paradigm example of how an enduring human world is sustained. However, without having a strictly utilitarian function, works of art also liken themselves to action and speech, which belong to the political realm. Works of art might reify action and speech through imitation. But since political events are about concrete cooperation and lived life, artworks seem to be borderline cases in Arendt's analyses. She considers theatre, in fact, to be the only form of the arts in which the political sphere of human life can truly be transposed into art. It is in this form of the arts that individuals' relations to each other is the main subject

foreseeable, but which nonetheless influences the manner in which humans become further conditioned in their lives.<sup>300</sup> (Arendt 1989/1958, 7, 9, 177–178; Moran 2000, 313)

Even though, Arendt is especially concerned with the position political action has in modern western society, she still remains a defender of the plurality of forms of life. Instead of wanting to lift any one form of life above another, she wants individuals to be able to realize themselves on all levels of their humanness (cf. Snell 2001, 45, 46, 49). With this end in mind she is rather critical of modern western society. She thinks that the necessity of ensuring life through increasing economic wealth has become its most central concern. The primary objective is that of ensuring the productivity of labor since society concentrates on the never-ending cycle of production and consumption. This tendency threatens to make individuals defined simply through their productive abilities and objects through their value as commodities. In Arendt's view it also has brought about a situation in which the earlier private life of family and housekeeping is established in the public realm as a collective concern. Political issues formerly reserved to public and non-economic functions are, likewise, mixed with a general economic "housekeeping" of the state. The public or social realm<sup>301</sup> even is something that ever-increasingly threatens to permeate that field which has retained its privacy, the intimate realm. In fact, Arendt defines the term 'society' by de-

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and these relations are one of the prerequisites of political action. (Arendt 1989/1958, 127–128, 169–174, 187–189; Moran 2000, 310–311)

Added to the above ambiguity, Dermot Moran demonstrates that Arendt's distinction between work and labor is not very sharp. He suggests that they are more like two poles in a process that often involves both (Moran 2000, 312). Dance pieces could be understood to belong to both categories. They are dependent upon bodily labor as will be discussed in the next section of this chapter. In addition, they are works of art that in themselves vanish, like the products of labor, often leaving almost nothing tangibly permanent behind. Still they continue their lives in notational scores, filmed documentation of the performances, the memory of their creators, their audience, and discussions of them. Consequently, they continue to influence the nature of the artworld of dance, the meanings through which the practices of dance exist. In this latter sense they could be understood to belong to the realm of work. As dance is a theatrical art it might also be taken to occur on a political level. This it does, however, only if it is cooperative and includes human relations, common interests as well as influencing culture or the traditions of art in such a way as to change its conventions and create new understanding and modes of behaving or creating art.

300. According to Arendt, added to the natural world of the earth, human life continues to be conditioned by the premises humans themselves create for their existence. She writes that, "Men are conditioned beings because everything they come in contact with turns immediately into a condition of their existence", but still "they never condition us absolutely" (Arendt 1989/1958, 9, 11).

301. In Arendt's view the public realm is what most genuinely creates a common world. Everybody has a chance to witness it and, thus, it constitutes reality. It also is something that depends upon permanence and survives the coming and going of generations. However, it was evident to her that in modern society the public realm has been eroded. In her view, this is exemplified by the fact that there no longer is much authentic concern for immortality. Transient fame and the conspicuous consumption of wealth are considered the summum bonum. Mass society not only ruins the public realm but the private realm, too, since it deprives individuals of their private homes. In her view, what has happened in the modern society is that both of the above-mentioned realms have submerged into a sphere of the social without a truly public or a private dimension. (Arendt 1989/1958, 50, 52, 55, 57–59) She writes: "In the modern world, the two realms indeed constantly flow into each other like waves in the never-resting stream of the life process itself" (Arendt 1989/1958, 33).

scribing it as “that curiously hybrid realm where private interests assume public significance” (Arendt 1989/1958, 35).

In the end, Arendt argues that modern society is conformist and tends to homogenize its members. It undermines the plurality of human life and excludes the possibility of political action because there is no truly public and enduring realm in which people can appear in their distinctness and in which original and outstanding achievement becomes possible. In her view we are living in a consumer society where individuals, instead of being able to efficiently act through all the above-depicted modes of “doing”, are reduced to exist mostly as laboring and socially-determined individuals. Consumerism conditions its members to become jobholders accomplishing socially-appreciated tasks in order to make a living. (Arendt 1989/1958, 4, 5, 28, 33, 38, 40, 46, 47, 126–127) <sup>302</sup>

While continuing to discuss the interviewed dance artists’ views of work and working, the following sections are mindful especially of Arendt’s understanding of the focal position productive labor holds in an individual’s life. Although I consider the physical work of the dance artists to be most closely related to Arendt’s conception of labor, the next sections do not attempt a detailed analysis of the work-related activities or issues that were described by the interviewees by considering to which of the three realms of “doing” discerned by Arendt they belong. Rather, while using both terms ‘labor’ and ‘work’ intermittently, the manner in which culturally-prevalent values and modes of organizing societal life could be understood to influence the lives of the interviewed dance artists is what is focused upon. I believe Arendt wrote with a similar goal in mind. Work and political action are quite familiar to the modern western individual but she considered them to be less valued and rarer than she thought necessary for humans to fully realize their humanity. This is what she argued and demonstrated in her work. (cf. Arendt 1989/1958, 199, 323–324)

## 12.1 Socio-cultural Inscription and Self-formation

### **Carrying culturally-determined values of work**

In addition to the effort needed to achieve and maintain the bodily and artistic competencies dance work requires and which the interviewed dance artists discussed, in my view consumerism, as one of the dominant orientations of contemporary western culture, also influences the interviewed dance artists’ relation to work. As Merleau-Ponty asserts, we are inscribed with the meanings and values of the culture and society we live in, since we learn to perceive the world firstly through the way we witness ‘culturally-acclimatised’ people to

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302. As noted earlier along with Featherstone’s arguments, this stance had not changed by the late 20th century. Consumerism and market values continued to flourish. Additionally, social scientists generally find that during the last century lifestyles became increasingly privatized. This is exemplified by the fact that “leisure, sexual relationships, family life and even self-hood and psychological pre-dispositions” were evermore intensively incorporated into state- and market-regulated mechanisms (Crossley 1996, 120, 154).

operate in it. The following paragraphs present a few quotations which I take to represent some cultural values that are affiliated with Arendt's understanding of consumerism.

One of the dance artists discusses the transmission of socially-approved modes of being involved with the world while questioning why he found work to be such an important part of his life. He contemplates the extent to which he carries the values of his family heritage with him. Working or laboring seemed to hold a predominant role in his childhood family.

. . ./In our family father and mother always worked. Even when we were children, they were always at work – a very work-oriented way of thinking. It is what creates the premise that if one works then one can do other things as well. It conditioned one to consider that work is very important. I have asked myself many times, how much of it I carry with me./ . . . (3M)<sup>303</sup>

He assumes that it is as far back as these early times, before he pursued an artistic career, that he, at least to some degree, learned to appreciate work. The environment of his childhood was to a large extent determined by work. In his family it was the premise that allowed for other pastimes.

Arendt also discusses the position leisure-time activities have in a consumer society and observes that in this kind of a society laboring has become so important that everything that is not necessary for the life of the individual or the processes of society becomes a hobby or some kind of play. Even if a hobby makes an individual feel fulfilled, it is not considered equal to laboring. The latter holds priority. It is what ensures survival. Besides this, in her view leisure-time itself is increasingly spent in consumption. This in turn again makes laboring more important, as it produces the means by which to consume as well as the products of consumption. (Arendt 1989/1958, 128–132)

When regarded in the light of Arendt's thinking in general, I find it obvious that being a productive laborer held priority in the above-quoted dance artist's childhood family. Moreover, in questioning if the fact that he finds work to be so important for him is built upon the same value, he simultaneously contemplates the manner in which social values and modes of being related to work not directly affiliated to the practices of dance itself have been transmitted into his life. This again offers evidence that generally prevalent social and societal tendencies influence a freelance dance artist's life and the field of freelance dance itself – as I will continue to suggest in relation to the next passage from the interview material.

Another dance artist discusses the central position work holds in her life in another manner. While commenting on how she takes care of her own body, she says that she just recently realized that she has not stopped working for years.

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303. . . /Meidän perheessä isä ja äiti teki aina töitä. Silloin kun me oltiin lapsiakin, ne oli molemmat aina töissä. Hirveen työkeskeinen ajattelutapa: se työ luo puitteet kaikelle ja näin, ja jos tekee töitä, niin sitten voi niin kuin tehdä muutakin. Se on semmoinen ehdollistaminen siihen, että se työ on hirveen tärkeätä. Sitä minä olen kyllä itseltäni kysynyt monta kertaa, että kuinka paljon on jäljellä sitä minussa itsessäni./ . . . (3M)

.../When would I – I just thought about it one day: I haven't had a phase, I'll be damned when, how long ago, that I wasn't working on a piece or teaching, that I would just train for myself. Listen, that hasn't happened in decades./... (4F)<sup>304</sup>

I believe that she even surprises herself here by discovering that she has continuously been preoccupied with creating dance pieces or teaching dance even though she too performs as a dancer. She has been so engrossed with the first two tasks that concentrating single-handedly on her own dance training has not been possible for a long time. While making this point, she simultaneously implies that she has not put off working with dance and that she has invested a lot of effort and time in working as a choreographer and dance teacher. She has been intensely committed to working in general and working with dance in particular.

Contemporary culture's emphasis on productivity means that people can easily exert themselves considerably in a multiplicity of socially-approved ways. In the domain of dance art in Finland, too, as mentioned in chapter 10, the general flow of production has increased, and one means whereby an artist can retain their position in this whirlwind is to be as productive as possible. If this kind of an orientation is something that has directed the above-quoted dance artist's intensive preoccupation with teaching dance and creating choreography, she too could be thought to exemplify the way in which certain cultural or societal values pervade individual life. What is also interesting is that she suggests that in concentrating on working as a dance teacher and choreographer, she has not been concerned with her own training as much. This makes me wonder if the call for socially-acknowledged productivity has also pulled her away from the more solitary or individually-oriented practices of dance work. It has done this to the artist who struggled to find work abroad, whose experiences were discussed in chapter 10. In any case, as it seems that she is surprised with the intensive way in which she has been engaged in working, she appears to be saying that she has taken it for granted. Much of the cultural inscription we carry, moreover, is something that in everyday life we do not pay any special attention to unless for some reason it needs to be confronted or no longer brings about expected or desired results.

### **Dance work and self-realization**

The previous section discussed a few examples of culturally- and socially-valued modes of understanding the world and acting in it, which I interpreted to be evident in the interviewees' words. While this section continues to discuss some cultural or societal and social tendencies which appear to influence the dance artists' relation to work, it concentrates on the self-realization that the interviewed dance artists found to be possible through working with dance.

One of the dance artists addresses this issue by saying that:

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304. .../Koska minulla on – minä just ajattelin tuossa yks päivä: minulla ei semmoista vaihetta ollut, siis jumalauta koska, miten kauan lienee sitten, että minä en tekisi jotain biisiä tai opettaisi, että minä vain harjoittelisin itselleni. Ei semmoista ole ollut kuule vuosikymmeniin kausiin./... (4N)

. . ./It simply is very rewarding to be able to be occupied with yourself. Additionally it is a job for which you nonetheless are not paid. But you acknowledge it as a job. To continuously learn about yourself is enough of a motivation. I find it extremely exciting and nice. It is very frightening too. But in itself it is very fun and interesting./ . . ./To grow as a person as such is simply so meaningful./ . . . (1M)<sup>305</sup>

For him working with dance is a question of developing his self-understanding and growing as a person. This is an important motivation that keeps him engaged with his work. According to Merleau-Ponty, it is exactly through such concrete activity that dance work is an example of how we firstly gain a sense of ourselves. He writes that, "I make my reality and find myself only in the act" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 383). We can imagine that we are one thing or another, but what we most genuinely are is to be found in our actual deeds; in the way we behave and act in relation to things, others, and our own being. It is on this lived level that we first have a sense of ourselves, since in the pre-reflective functions of the body-subject a reflexivity already exists, a tacit cogito, that affirms to us that it is our body, our being, which is experiencing something. In Merleau-Ponty's view, furthermore, it is the lived experiences that different kinds of activities produce which our more reflective self-understanding is based on. Following this line of thinking, to learn about oneself, to understand who one is, through dance work would firstly mean being engaged in the concrete act of dancing, teaching dance, or doing choreography. In this sense dance work opens up a field in which the above-quoted dance artist can grow as a person and learn about himself. He constructs his being through performing dance-related acts and gaining a (self-)reflexive understanding of them.

In addition to being able to understand who he is and grow as a person through being engaged in dance, the dance artist quoted above sees it as positive that he can do this through his job. His dance work, which opens up a field of experiences by which he can become aware of himself, also is his job. Indeed, a part of a professional dance artist's way of accomplishing her or his task is that working as a dance artist is her or his job. It is a means of earning a living however lucrative or not it proves to be (cf. Sparshott 1988, 300). Having a job is also a way of being engaged with the manner in which society and the field of freelance dance organize themselves. The social and societal implications of having a job and a profession are something that the above-quoted dance artist goes on to contemplate further. In speaking of this issue, he acknowledges the importance of the social recognition that is involved in having an occupation and being able to classify oneself according to a professional title. He says:

. . ./It is almost – very much that work is for a person./ . . ./If a person does not have work, it is a rather tough thing, at least in contemporary society. So as such, the fact that one has acquired a profession for oneself, sometimes even jobs, but in principle a profession, that one has an occupation . . . somehow it just is . . . That you can designate yourself, that I have a profession

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305. . . ./Se on sinänsä hirvittävän antoisaa, että pystyy puuhastelemaan itsensä parissa. Se on vielä niin kuin työtä, josta ei kyllä sitten niin kuin makseta. Mutta sen noteeraa työksi. Niin se riittää ihan motivaatioksi: se, että kun se on itsestään oppimista koko ajan. Se on minun mielestäni hirveän jännittävää ja kivaa. On se hirveän pelottavaakin. Mutta että se on sinänsä hirveän hauskaa, hirveän mielenkiintoista./ . . ./ihmisenä kasvaminen sinänsä on vaan niin yksinkertaisesti mielekästä./ . . . (1M)

and so on, is also a very motivating thing. I do not know if it has to do with a sense of belonging or something./ . . . (1M)<sup>306</sup>

As already evident through the earlier discussion of Arendt's arguments, one of the most valued ways of being productively engaged in the society one lives in is through having a job and working towards some socially-acknowledged worthwhile end. This is what I understand the above-quoted dance artist to allude to. He believes it is important for an individual to be integrated into society by having a job. With such a position or an education and the skills enabling one to practice a certain profession we have professional titles, through which others acknowledge our competencies and position in an organization or a field of practice. This dance artist finds it important that he can have such a title. Even when he does not have a job, he suggests that it might give him a sense of belonging to the field of his profession or even to his society more generally.

As the same dance artist previously spoke about a self-realization that occurs through working with dance, this latter quotation could likewise be interpreted in relation to this issue. Self-realization is something that does not occur in solitude. Our pre-thematic or lived experiences already have residues of otherness through the pre-conscious transitivity of the body-subject or the functioning of the flesh by which we are entwined with the world and others (cf. Madison 1999, 177). In addition to gaining a sense of oneself in pre-reflective experiences that are brought about by dance activity (which obviously include collaborating with others), an important part of learning to understand who one is comes about through the way others to relate to you and the world that surrounds you on a more articulate and reflective level.

It is through the recognition of others we comprehend very early in life that we are not only what we immediately feel ourselves to be, but also something others perceive and experience. It is through the tension and movement of these two dimensions and the expressive gestures that are inherent to them that personal or reflective awareness of the self grows (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1993/1982). Therefore to personally know who one is emerges through a dialogical relation between oneself and the other. It is exactly in a communicative dialogue, in which perspectives blend and validate each other, that Merleau-Ponty finds meaning to emerge (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, xix). Madison even argues that in Merleau-Ponty's thinking meaning and rationality are simply an appeal to another in order to attain mutual understanding (Madison 1999, 180). Hence, even if we can gain a sense of our experiences without addressing the other in a personal or reflective manner, we cannot confer meaning on our being or accomplishments alone. We need communication and most importantly the recognition and acknowledgment of others for this end. Having a job and a

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306. . . /Se on melkein – hirveän paljon se on ihmiselle se työ./ . . /Jos ihmisellä ei ole työtä, se on kyllä aika rankka juttu ainakin nyky-yhteiskunnassa. Niin sinänsä se, että nyt on hankkinut itsellensä ammatin – joskus jopa työpaikkoja – mutta ammatin periaatteessa, että on työ . . . niin se on jotenkin vaan niin . . . Se että voi niin kuin tituleerata itsensä, että minulla on ammatti, ja tällaista, niin sekä on hirveän motivoiva juttu. Minä en tiedä onko se jotain yhteenkuulumisen tunnetta tai jotain./ . . (1M)

professional title seem to offer this to the dance artist discussed here. They are connected with situations in which others recognize his competencies and offer him a space to use them.

After Arendt, one could also say that having a job and a professional title are means through which a dance artist's competencies and worth gain a reality status, since for her reality is made up of shared perceptions and understandings (Arendt 1989/1958, 50). Additionally, as Nick Crossley demonstrates, in Merleau-Ponty's view the self-referents or forms of address that language involves configure us in specific relations. Along with Judith Butler he goes on to note that the symbolic modes of identifying and differentiating an individual's relation to certain institutionalized meanings and positions can be very influential to the person who is linked to them. This is so since linguistic categories of human identity are also affiliated with forms of power and privileges. In fact, taken more generally these categories are something through which the subjectivity of the subject is continually re-worked and partially formed. (Crossley 1996, 58–59; Butler 1993, 225–226, 227–228)

What can be inferred from the previous paragraphs is that dance work opens up a field in which dance artists are capable of becoming aware of themselves through their lived experiences that are brought about by the concrete acts of dancing, doing choreography etc. However, as already suggested in chapter 10, it also unlocks a field in which they come to construe, know, and appreciate themselves through the social recognition given to them by others for their competencies and position in their field of practice or society more generally. Some more passages of the interview material show that the interviewed dance artists found working with dance to be of utmost importance for their self-realization. These passages also include contemplations of the relation working has to the dimension of their more intimate social contacts.

One of the interviewees tells us that without dance work he would be at loss in the following manner:

.../But now I realize that one's work contribution is very important in life. It is very holistic. Through it one can gain so many things . . . When one does not have it, somehow every thing is wasted/. . ./I notice that if I do not have work and have time to concentrate on relationships and see friends, I enjoy it for a time. But I notice that. . ./. . . (3M)

LR: . . ./You start to need . . ./. . .

.../Yes. It is not a compulsion to accomplish things, that I should show how good I am and what I can accomplish. It's not that, but that as a dancer and choreographer one can realize oneself in such a versatile way./ . . . (3M)<sup>307</sup>

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307. . . /Mutta kyllä minä nyt huomaan sen, että se on hirveän tärkeä tämä työpanos elämässä. Se on hirveän kokonaisvaltaista. Sitä kautta voi saada niin paljon asioita. . . Sitten kun sitä ei ole, niin jotenkin kaikki valuu hukkaan./ . . /Minä huomaan sen, että jos minulla ei ole töitä, ja minulla on aikaa esimerkiksi keskittyä ihmissuhteisiin enemmän ja nähdä ystäviä ja noin, niin minä nautin siitä jonkun aikaa, mutta minä huomaan sen, että . . ./. . .

LR: . . ./Et rupeaa tarvitsemaan . . ./. . .

.../Niin. Kyllä. Joo. Se ei ole vain se suorittamisen pakko, että minun täytyy nyt näyttää kuinka hyvä minä olen ja mitä kaikkea minä pystyn saavuttamaan. Ei se ole kyllä se. Vaan just tässä tanssijan ja koreografin työssä voi toteuttaa itseään niin monipuolisesti./ . . . (3M)

Like the previously cited dance artist, this dance artist places a great deal of significance on working with dance. He asserts that working with dance in the different roles of being a dancer and a choreographer allows him to realize himself in a variety of ways that he cherishes. As he seems to exclude social recognition and appreciation of his deeds from this realization, one could surmise that it is especially his pre-thematic experiences and even the more cooperative and dialogical relations with others that occur in dance work that he values.

Both Merleau-Ponty and Arendt state that when people cooperate and when there is a sense of solidarity as well as togetherness and equality among them, it is possible for an individual to appear at his or her most unique, revealing who he or she is. Nonetheless, this revelation truly occurs only through a pre-thematic apprehension of what Merleau-Ponty would call the style of being of an individual. Who one is cannot be fully grasped through what one is – one's qualities or one's accomplishments. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 365; Arendt 1989/1958, 178, 180, 181, 187) This might, in part, be suggestive of the manner in which the above-quoted dance artist is able to realize himself through dance work. In addition, Paul Crowther also emphasizes that aesthetic experience, which pays attention to and explores the sensuous qualities of bodily motion, for example, is something that both enhances and reflects our own continuity with the world (Crowther 1993, 165). Following Merleau-Ponty, he too considers that through such perceptual engagement we get a sense of our manner of being in the world already on a pre-thematic level. In spite of the exact manner in which the dance artist cited above conceives of being able to realize himself while working with dance, in any case it is something he needs in his life in order to experience that he is living in a meaningful manner. The worth of his whole life seems to be dependent on it. Still, he also implies that when working he does not have time to concentrate on his relations with friends and loved ones as much as he sometimes would like.

Another dance artist likewise holds dance work as a priority in her life but questions the relation between work and what she calls "a normal life" involving other people.

.../For me it is clear. This part is, as an astrologer told me, that work is 90% for me. It is an essential part of my life. It is, as it were, my mode of life and my life. I cannot cut it off just like that. That is impossible. But how to combine some sort of a normal life with it, especially when the first part involves other people? This is what I struggle with./ . . . (2F)<sup>308</sup>

She regards working with dance as her way of live which she cannot give up. Somewhat like for the previously quoted dance artist, for her dance work is to a very large degree that activity that makes her life significant. It is her way of life. We generally understand that if some preoccupation becomes a way of life it means that one's life becomes oriented towards the interests of this preoccupation. One's daily routines and the things one takes interest in

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308. . . /Se on minulle selvä. Tämä osa on niin kuin astrologi sanoo, että työ on minulle 90%. Se on olennainen osa minun elämää. Se on niin kuin minun elämäntapa ja minun elämää. Minä en voi sitä, minä en voi vaan katkaista sitä noin. Se on mahdotonta. Mutta mitenkä sitten siihen yhdistää kuitenkin tämän jonkinnäköisen normaaliolomisen varsinkin, jos siihen sitten kuuluu vielä toisia ihmisiä? Sen kanssa tässä kamppailen./ . . . (2N)

are, to a large extent, influenced by this orientation. It is that perspective through which the world and one's relation to the world become perceived and understood. Therefore, in time one's way of life basically becomes a familiar or habitual manner of dealing with the world.<sup>309</sup> In this light, it is no wonder that the previously cited dance artist finds that his life is useless without dance work. Without it he would not have a familiarly meaningful way of relating to the world. This is what most likely makes it difficult for the latter dance artist to combine "a normal life" with her working life. Her working life is her first priority and I take it to have different values and meanings than "a normal life", which she indirectly continues to describe in the next quotation, in my view.

Despite considering working with dance an essential and dominant feature of her life, she continues to question why it is so:

. . . /At the same time, with me too, every [process] has in a way been extremely difficult apart from one or two. It has always been extreme like – oh god, how did I come to this, how did I; a fool, why the hell do I have to do this. I still continue to ask myself this, because I don't, as I said, have a burning ambition to somehow show others (excel). Well, I do not know; it is certainly about proving something to myself. . . . /Is this the way to prove to myself that I can accomplish something? It is intriguing – now that I think of it – this is a very interesting point, since my life is very fragmented. It does not have, it somehow lacks – even if it has a thread running through it – it lacks some kind of a . . . Well it lacks a family, and it lacks a child, and it lacks all these things that one might think one should have. In a way what I can look at is my curriculum vitae to see what I've done. What do I get from this? I get some sort of security that in any case I've done something. Is this then proving to oneself that life has not been a waste, or what is it? . . . (2F)<sup>310</sup>

She thus wonders why dance work occupies such a central position in her life even if the processes she works on are often difficult and since she, like one of the previously quoted dance artists, is not driven by a desire to achieve social prestige. In the end, she sees that dance work offers her assurance that her life has been worthwhile, even if it lacks a family and other things. Instead of being assured by such experiences of dancing, creating choreography, or teaching dance that she cherishes, this dance artist finds assurance in the fact

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309. This theme will be discussed further in the next section.

310. . . . /Samalla kuitenkin minullakin kaikki nyt on tavallaan ollut helvetin vaikeita, ehkä ihan jotain siis yhtä kahta lukuun ottamatta. Se on aina jotenkin äärimmäisen niin kuin – voi hyvä Sylvi, miten minä tähän ja miten minä hullu ja mikä helvetin pakko sitä on tehdä sitten? Sitä minä kyllä itseltäni edelleen, koska minulla ei ole just sitä, kun minä sanoin sitä kunnianhimon pakkoa, että minun olisi jotenkin näytettävä. Minä en kyllä sitten tiedä, että se on kyllä näyttöä itselleni jostain. . . . /Onko tämä minun työstötapa tehdä itselleni tätä todistusta, että minä jotenkin saan jotain aikaiseksi. Se on jännä nimittäin nyt, kun minä ajattelen, tämä on hirveän mielenkiintoinen pointti. Koska minunkin elämä on hirveän jotenkin sirpaleista. Siinä ei ole oikein semmoista, siis jotenkin siitä puuttuu, vaikka siinä on se punainen lanka kyllä, mutta siitä puuttuu jotenkin semmoinen . . . No siitä puuttuu perhe ja siitä puuttuu lapsi ja siitä puuttuu kaikkia tällaisia, mitä tavallaan vois ajatella että voisi olla. Tavallaan se miten minä voin katsoa on minun kurrikulumi, että mitä minä olen tehnyt. Mitä minä saan siitä? Minä saan siitä jotain turvaa, että olen minä jotain kuitenkin tehnyt. Onko tämä sitten itselleen todistusta siitä, että elämä ei ole valunut ihan hukkaan, vai mitä tämä on? . . . (2N)

that she knows and has evidence that she has done something with her life. Her curriculum vitae, which is a sort of a biography, proves to her that she has been active, that she has labored and worked in order to create something in life.

In Arendt's view, action is about taking initiative and beginning a chain of events. It is about making a difference, creating something original in one's life, even if the consequences of one's actions are unpredictable, since they intertwine with those of others. As previously stated, action is also what reveals an individual in her or his most unique manner. The actions and deeds of an individual are the ways in which his or her individuality is expressed and witnessed by others. Merleau-Ponty likewise considers humans to be creative beings, who become conscious of their existence through expressing it in their acts. But both of them contend that for the subject the exact nature of who he or she is or the style of his or her being remains ungraspable. It is something that is better perceived by others, even if they too are unable to qualify its nature by characterizing its features in any comprehensive manner. Nonetheless, one means through which humans try to illuminate or make manifest their lives is through creating stories. In fact, in Arendt's view, life stories or biographies are something that essentially illustrate the individuality of their protagonist. They objectify and make understandable as well as bearable the actions an individual has taken during her or his life. (Arendt 1989/1958, 175–180, 184; Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 90, 111; Madison 1991, 81, 94; Hansen 1993, 220) A curriculum vitae is a condensed expression of the deeds of an agent. In this sense it likens itself to a biography. In the case of the dance artist discussed above, it gives her a means of witnessing and understanding the passage of her artistic life as it represents the artistic actions she has taken.

What is interesting is that both of the last two quoted dance artists speak of their working life in relation to their familial life or life with intimate relationships and friends. They, thus, seem to find that aside from their working life there is what could be called, after Arendt, a private life of family or an intimate sphere. In his investigation of the evolution of the modern individual,<sup>311</sup> Charles Taylor, somewhat like Arendt, illustrates that an affirmation of what he calls the 'ordinary life' is characteristic of modernity. By this term he means "those aspects of human life concerned with production and reproduction, that is labour, the making of the things needed for life, and our life as sexual beings, including marriage and family" (Taylor 1996/1989, 211). During the past few centuries a full human life has been strongly determined through two dimensions: those of productive labor and family life (Taylor 1996/1989, 213). Even if family life has undergone change and its forms are diverse, it is evident that there still remains a sphere of intimate emotional bonding and kinship that has retained its importance in an individual's life. However, both of the previously mentioned dance artists find dance work to be more important. For the first, living only with friends and through relationships is not sufficient to establish a fulfilling life, and the second says more directly that dance work is her priority. But she also questions this priority and finds that

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311. Taylor argues that we carry in ourselves various features of modernity. It is for this reason that he does not make a strict distinction between modernity and postmodernity. (cf. Taylor 1996/1989)

her life lacks things. She sees that there are possibilities related to family life that she has not pursued. Even if she might desire to pursue them, she finds this to be difficult as she is so intensely engaged with dance work.

In fact, through the extracts above it is evident that the life-world of a dance artist has different dimensions. Dance artists live within a dimension of work and a dimension of a more intimate nature, which, while not totally excluding each other, nonetheless do not easily mix with each other. This again suggests that even if dance work is their dominant way of life and it to a large extent influences the course of their whole lives, it does not totally determine it. Sometimes at least the intimate realm takes over and makes them question their relation to dance work. This in turn exemplifies how a subject might be considered de-centered and to live a fragmented or multileveled life. Taylor describes the modern subject as living with a plurality of goods, which are found to be beyond the self and taken to be roads to self-fulfillment. They are culturally-inscribed, projected ideals, through which we live in and construe differing dimensions which can never be fully aligned. (Taylor 1996/1989, 480, 507, 514, 518) Merleau-Ponty, in turn, views our cultural world as being fragmented and non-uniform. He writes that, "Instead of a [fully] intelligible world there are radiant nebulae separated by expanses of darkness. The world of culture is as discontinuous as the other world, and it too has its secret mutations" (Merleau-Ponty 1991/1964a, 4). With the words "the other world" he is referring to the phenomenal or irrational dimension of the world which remains unarticulated in socio-cultural terms. More in line with his terminology, one could then say that the world we inhabit is comprised of different worlds or spheres that are not reducible to one another. In being in contact with and influencing one another they retain their difference from each other (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 84).

All in all, the previous sections of this chapter emphasize that freelance dance artists are keenly attached to working with dance. This attachment is shown to be partly due to those cultural values that emphasize the significance of work and productivity in individual life. Another important issue affecting the attachment freelance dance artists have to dance work, however, is that it offers a field of self-realization for them. It makes it possible for them to experience and understand themselves in ways that they appreciate. Through dance work dance artists can also become aware that they can accomplish something in life and achieve a social position, both of which enhance their self-understanding and esteem. The interviewed dance artists, furthermore, show that dance work is the focal orientation through which life becomes meaningful for them, even if it threatens the possibility of their maintaining intimate relationships and a family life. In fact, in finding that they could not live without dance work and that it is the most important means by which they can realize themselves, they relate to Taylor's notion of art being one of the paradigmatic mediums in which the modern individual finds self-fulfillment. Like Arendt and Merleau-Ponty, he asserts that it is central to the way we express and realize ourselves. Through it we can become revealed and defined both to others as much as to ourselves. (Taylor 1996/1989, 476, 507-508)

## 12.2 Laboring with the Body

While discussing their relation to work, the interviewed dance artists also spoke about issues more closely related to bodily labor. The basic medium through which dance comes into existence obviously is the dancing body. In addition, dance artists usually deal rather intensely with the motional and expressive nature of the body while working on their artistic projects. Therefore, it is no surprise that all of the interviewed dance artists had something to say about what it meant for them to work with their bodies. Their talks on this issue show their desire to be attentive to their own body and to further understand and cultivate it in order to reach their performance goals. However, what they said also demonstrates what it means to follow this desire in everyday practice. It shows that the interviewed dance artists find working with the body to be a never-ending project, which influences their whole life. The following sections address these issues more specifically.

### **Paying attention to the otherness of one's own body**

Even if the dance artists found themselves in some sense to *be* profoundly their bodies, and even if they did search for an intimate awareness of the entwinement of the self and the body, or thinking and doing (which will be discussed further in chapter 13 where their approach to embodying dance will be addressed in more detail), they also experienced the body as something to be explored. Thus, especially while speaking about what it means for them to work with their bodies, they made comments that showed that the body was not something that they could immediately or thoroughly sense and comprehend. One of the dance artists says that working with the body means:

. . ./that I have to daily question everything I do, because my body's state changes from day to day. When I wake up in the morning I never know what today is going on [in it] and so forth./ . . . (3M)<sup>312</sup>

In stating that he has to question everything he does because of the body, this dance artist suggests that the body is something unfamiliar. The body is an other, whose situation or state of being changes from day to day and leaves him unaware of what is going on in it when he wakes up. For this reason it is necessary for him to question the body and to attune himself to it anew each day.

As is evident by now, the body is not a static entity, but rather always in the process of becoming and also has its own form of organization. The lived body, which is pre-reflectively intertwined with the world, is already meaningfully oriented towards the world before we are personally aware of this orientation. In David Michael Levin's view this means that a

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312. . . /No se merkitsee sitä että minä joudun itse asiassa päivittäin kyseenalaistamaan kaiken sen mitä minä teen, koska minun kehon tilanne vaihtuu päivästä toiseen. Kun minä aamulla herään niin en koskaan tiedä että, mitä tänään on meneillään ja niin poispäin./ . . . (3M)

givenness belongs to human nature, which we must accept (Levin 1989, 133). Merleau-Ponty describes this by writing, amongst other things, that,

Underlying myself as a thinking subject . . . there is, therefore, as it were a natural self which does not budge from its terrestrial situation and which constantly adumbrates absolute valuations. . . In so far as I have hands, feet, a body, I sustain around me intentions which are not dependent upon my decisions and which affect my surroundings in a way which I do not choose. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 440)

These valuations or lived meanings of the “natural bodily self” are something that describe the way the body-subject is in its situation and what it needs from us to maintain its equilibrium or to continue to proceed towards a given goal. Levin suggests that the felt-experiences of the body are a speech that tell us about its organismically organized needs and demands, which are able to make claims on, for example, bodily policies – the manner in which the body is addressed and understood (Levin 1989, 100). These needs and demands are something I think the above dance artist wants to attune himself to and take into consideration when turning to work with the body each morning.

Besides this, in speaking about the fact that he has to question the body anew each day, the above-quoted dance artist could also be understood to address its temporal nature. Merleau-Ponty argues that the temporality of bodily functions is cyclic. The present condition of the body is never sustained. Through the movement of time and the opening up into different situations the present turns into the past and the body erodes itself undoing what it has just done and functions differently. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 453) Even if the body never leaves its bond to the world, it is a potential body that through our personal choices and cultivation can incorporate new skills and move towards different goals we create for ourselves. However, its more complex and physically-demanding capacities lose their fluent functional quality when not actualized for a certain amount of time. During a long pause in training and performing dance, everyday life practices<sup>313</sup> begin to affect the body more strongly, and dance artists may lose their sensitivity towards their bodily experiences, positions, and motions (Parviainen 1998, 131). Therefore, in the case of dance-related bodily techniques, the body is in need of choices and acts that both further develop and conserve its abilities. To be able to perform any complex dance task skillfully the body needs relatively continuous exercise. It executes fluently and efficiently only motions that it is sufficiently exposed to through moving itself in practice (Dowd 1995, 3). This is most likely one of the basic reasons why the above-quoted dance artist, like any other dance artist, continues to work on his body on a more or less daily basis. However, while so doing he attempts to set

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313. Following Eugenio Barba (1991, 244–245), Parviainen distinguishes “everyday life body techniques” and “extra-daily techniques” from each other. With the former, Parviainen refers to those tenacious habits through which one maintains the routines of everyday life. The latter refers to the means of training and practices of the self used by performing arts educators and performers in order to change their habitual way of being. They do this in order to reach certain individual or collective aesthetic and functional physical goals. (Parviainen 1998, 125–126)

his body in motion in a manner that senses and acknowledges its current state of being.

Another dance artist further discusses the issue of listening to the body while also describing what it means for her to work with her body. She says:

.../Well, it means that it cannot be forgotten for even a moment... I cannot put it aside even for a moment. I am attached to it all the time./.../I have to pay attention to it all the time and in this way it keeps me awake./.../It communicates continuously. It pulsates with a speech. It continuously communicates and gives signs and signals – if it hurts or does not hurt, if it is tight or not./... (2F)<sup>314</sup>

She emphasizes that in working with dance and the body she has relentlessly to attend to a perpetual “speech” that the body emits. Indeed, as Merleau-Ponty argues, be it more or less marginal to our focal perception, our own body is something we cannot totally escape. It is at least tacitly comprehended in all of our experiences. It is the channel which expresses the presence of the world and itself to us. Through it we always exist in a plenum of being, a phenomenal pregnancy that we are experientially open to (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 452). In dance work it is the felt-experiences of the body itself that are something the above-quoted dance artists want to stay attuned to in order to be alert to its needs and the way in which motion unfolds. According to Merleau-Ponty, while we perceive the positions and feelings of our own body we are simultaneously aroused with a sort of a “potential movement”, that is, “a certain power of action within the framework of the anatomical apparatus” (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 109). These words illustrate that, while perceiving our own body, we not only perceive certain qualities but simultaneously are given a sense of further latent action. This is how what Levin calls bodily needs or demands are disclosed to us. As the quoted dance artist suggests, sometimes the messages the body sends us are very concrete and precise feelings like thirst, fatigue, tightness, and pain and make clear demands to drink something, stretch, rest, or avoid using a body part. The body, thus, informs the dancer on the manner in which it is plausible for the body to continue to act at some point to be able to accomplish those actions which she or he wishes.

However, sometimes the sensations of the body are more indeterminate and, like the first quoted dance artist points out, need a process of questioning in order to determine what they are (cf. Levin 1989, 133; Parviainen 1998, 30). How this dialogue with one’s own body occurs is something the dance artists described in more detail when talking about the manner in which they embody dance and it will be returned to in chapter 13. Yet, what the above paragraphs confirm is that the felt-experiences of the body are something which, when listened to, continue to give the dancer a tacit or bodily knowledge of how to proceed with their dance tasks. As the interviewed dance artists seem to propose, Fraleigh and Parviainen also suggest that dance artists work with experiential knowledge or kinesthetic

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314. .../No, se merkitsee sitä, että sitä ei voi hetkeksikään unohtaa. ... Minä en voi sitä hetkeksikään pistää syrjään. Minä olen kiinni siinä koko ajan./.../Minun täytyy koko ajan huomioida se, ja se pitää minut sillä tavalla hereillä./.../Se koko aika viestittää. Se sykkii kokoajan puhetta. Se kommunikoi kokoajan ja antaa merkkejä ja signaaleja: sattuuko vai eikö satu ja kiristäkö vai eikö kiristä./... (2N)

intelligence, an ability to perceive differences in movement qualities and alterations of the body's felt-sense (Fraleigh 1987, 26; Parviainen 1998, 130–131).

### **An unending source of labor**

A few of the dance artists also demonstrate that working with the body is an endless task. One of them says:

.../Look, by no means can one be ready with something as uninvestigated./.../I find that working with the body is unbelievably difficult. Not even a life time is enough to proceed half-way./... (4F)<sup>315</sup>

Another dance artist proceeds to tell us what working with the body means in the following manner:

.../Well, in addition to everything else it also means – sometimes it does make me anxious to work with my body/.../and to not be ready as a human being. I am never ready because humans are never ready. Yet sometimes it frustrates me: “fuck I am still here and I haven't gotten anywhere”, or I have gotten somewhere but the further I get the further the goal then moves and can never be attained./... (1M)<sup>316</sup>

Both of these quotations, in somewhat different ways, shed light on the difficulty of working with the body. The first does this by implying that the body is to a large extent, what we might call, a mystery and that to comprehend it and transform it experientially, functionally, and visibly towards our desired ends would take more time than humans are endowed with. In addition, the second states that the cause of frustration in learning more about the body and becoming more skilful in dancing is the process of becoming that we humans are. Because the theme of discussion at this point of the interview was that of working with the body, I take his words on becoming to relate to the transient nature of the body and likewise the ever-advancing nature of the goals one sets for the body.

The above passages from the interview material could again be considered to be linked to the emerging and cyclical nature of the body. If the body never remains the same, it is something that we need to continuously re-acquaint ourselves with if its experiential states are to be taken into consideration. As previously argued, it is additionally something that needs to be continuously cultivated or reworked on if certain kinds of taxing or complex functional

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315. .../Eihän sitä voi katso mitenkään tällaisen näin tutkimattoman kanssa olla valmis./.../Minusta tällainen kehon kanssa työskentely on niin uskomattoman vaikeata. Eihän siihen nyt yksi ihmisikä riitä puoleen väliinkään./... (4N)

316. .../No kaiken muun lisäksi myös merkitsee – kyllähän se aina joskus käy ahdistamaankin, se että työskentelee oman kehonsa kanssa./.../ja sitten kun ei ole sillain valmis ihminen. Koskaan [ei] ole ikinä valmis, koska ihminen ei ole koskaan valmis. Niin, aina joskus vaan käy ahdistamaan, että “vittu vieläkö sitä ollaan tässä ja ei ole päästy minnekään”. Tai ollaan sitä kuitenkin päästy jonnekin, mutta kun mitä enemmän, pidemmälle minä pääsen, sitä kauemmas se joku päämäärä sitten siirtyy, että ei sitä ihminen tavoita./... (1M)

qualities are expected from it. In this sense it is enigmatic: something, which we cannot control and comprehend once and for all. However, the body is also something that never reveals itself purely in itself. Especially in relation to the above two quotations, it is noteworthy that the way we experience our body is also dependent on the manner in which we are oriented towards it. Merleau-Ponty discusses this issue by writing that,

Feelings and passionate conduct are invented like words. . . there is not a word, not a form of behaviour which does not owe something to purely biological being – and which at the same time does not elude the simplicity of animal life, and cause forms of vital behaviour to deviate from their pre-ordained direction . . . (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 189)

As discussed in Part II, perception, even if it has its own mode of organization, is also culturally informed. Perception itself already reveals the body through socially-constructed perspectives. Moreover, the way we perceive our own body is also dependent upon our goals and desires (which the ideal body discussed in chapter 11 is an example of) in a field of personal concerns in addition to our habitual way of perceiving and the body's pre-reflective entwining with its circumstances and environment (Cataldi 1993, 91). It is the presence of a global and practical situation that makes the felt-experiences of the body meaningful (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 79). In this sense paying attention to one's bodily functions and experiences in any situation, which is never exactly the same as a previous one, always brings about new articulations of them (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 29, 30). Therefore, added to the fact that the body is in a continuous process of change throughout our lives, also the manner in which we perceive it changes and reveals the body in a different sense.<sup>317</sup> Even if the body does adapt to different tasks and incorporates new skills, it still always remains a fluctuating otherness to some degree and hence leaves room for further investigation.

Furthermore, one could infer that the way dance artists continue to perceive their bodies is related to the way they proceed with their work. Merleau-Ponty argues that the questioning through which a painter approaches his task is influenced by his previous experiences. They make him search again and again for expression which was only slightly intimated at in a previous painting. Thus, they direct the progression of his work. (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 95) Working with the body and dance likewise bring about experiences that produce new insights on possible modes of motion and expression that dance artists continue to investigate further. Consequently, it is very common that a new process of investigation evolves from the questions previous work instigates (Parviainen 1998, 124). This also means that the interests through which dance artists perceive and work with the body, change from one situation and artistic project to the next. In relation to this kind of an understanding

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317. Thomas Hanna, a somatic theorist and practitioner, has explained this facticity by showing that to experience what is happening in one's own body is to regulate it since the body responds to our observations by modifying itself, that is, by bringing to the fore the area and event we are focusing upon and pushing others into the background. Sensing is not only about receptive passivity but also about a productive happening, then. (Hanna 1995, 344–345)

Merleau-Ponty concludes that in the eyes of the artist "his work is never completed; it is always in progress" (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 95). The previously quoted dance artists attest to this determination in that both of them point out that in working with the body and dance one never becomes ready. Moreover, it seems that for the other of these two dance artists to always be in progress and never be assured that one has gone far enough become questions that are too intense to bear with peace of mind at times. He becomes anxious when he realizes that he has only accomplished so much with the body and thinks he could do better. In these situations the otherness of the body probably illuminates itself as a resistance, something that does not directly submit itself to a dance artist's personal projections and that still needs further cultivation.

### **A bodily-oriented mode of life**

What the above discussion exemplifies is that, while working with the body, dance artists pay diligent attention to the body and that the body in fact needs continuous attention in order for the dance artists to succeed in the difficult process of cultivating it for dance performance. In light of this rather challenging task of questioning, gaining insight into, and transforming the body, it is no wonder that the interviewed dance artists experienced that working with the body totally engages them. While speaking from the perspective of a dancer, which I believe is the role through which the interviewed dance artists most intimately worked with their own bodies, one of them says that it takes a lot of time to work as a dancer and that everything in life is related to it.

.../The form of life as a dancer – when I work as a dancer, it takes a lot time of the day to do the work. In a way it is a way of life. Everything else is related to it: a healthy life .../... (3M)<sup>318</sup>

Freelance dance artists, especially when working as performing dancers but also when teaching dance or creating choreography, use their bodies on an almost daily basis and invest a considerable amount of time in investigating, demonstrating, rehearsing, and performing dance sequences with it. Even in teaching dance and doing choreography, the felt-sense of one's own body and its experiences of motion are an important source of knowledge while instructing others to dance or constructing new dance material. In order to be able to cope with their work, freelance dance artists then need a rather thorough and experientially-grounded understanding of the dancing body, which is achieved through the specific practice of dancing. In addition, most of the time they need to be quite fit, which again is accomplished through a sufficient amount of physical exercise and enhanced by generally healthy life habits.

Like all dance artists, freelance dance artists are also simply most dependent on their bodies in their professional practice, so much so that the above-quoted dance artist finds that it is working with the body that shapes the mode of life a dance artist leads, which was

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318. .../Se elämänmuoto tanssijana, kun minä teen tanssijan työtä, se vie minulta hirveästi päivästä aikaa se työn tekeminen. Eliikkä se on tavallaan elämäntapa. Siihen liittyy sitten kaikki: terve elämä. .../... (3M)

partly discussed in the previous section of this chapter. Another dance artist similarly claims that working with the body means everything. She says:

. . ./Well, it does mean exactly everything. It is a/my whole life, certainly and completely a whole life./ . . . (4F)<sup>319</sup>

Both of the previous quotations show that the dance artists find that dealing with their own body through dance work is very significant to their lives. Their understanding is also closely related to Parviainen's argument according to which a certain kind of movement activity and aesthetic approach towards one's body calls for a certain kind of life. In the case of dance artists, this means, in her view, that they have to find such a rhythm in their lives that balances their bodily endeavors and everyday life in order to be able to respond to the condition and motion of the body and have confidence in it while teaching, rehearsing, and performing dance. (Parviainen 1998, 121, 131)

A question that many of the dance artists addressed and which is affiliated with finding such a rhythm of working that enhances a dance artist's bodily endeavors was that of excessive training or rehearsing<sup>320</sup> and rest. One of the dance artists thinks that, while the sensitivity of the body is lost when taking a break from dancing, it is also lost with too much training:

. . ./One understands that when one does not use the body in a way the sense is lost, that certain sensitivity is lost. But, on the other hand, the sensitivity is lost also when one trains like mad./ . . . (2F)<sup>321</sup>

Another shares a similar opinion about the amount of training that is suitable for a dancer. But he also says that it is difficult for dancers in general to keep to an average amount of training:

. . ./I do find that in a suitable degree continuous physical training is beneficial. But what is a problem for us dancers is an excessive training enthusiasm./ . . / You are allowed to rest, and you should rest./ . . . (3M)<sup>322</sup>

He continues to say that,

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319. . . /No se merkitsee kyllä ihan kaikkea. Se on koko elämä, ihan täysin koko elämä./ . . . (4N)

320. In this study the terms 'training' (treenaaminen) and 'rehearsing' (harjoittelemine) are used in a slightly different manner. Following my experience of the way in which these terms are often used in the field of freelance dance in Helsinki, the first is taken to refer to working in dance classes or doing physical exercise in order to enhance the body skills and the second, in turn, refers to practicing for dance performances.

321. . . /sen tajuaa, että kehoa kun ei käytä, niin tavallaan se aistimus katoaa, se tietty herkkyyys häviää. Toisaalta, se herkkyyys saattaa myös hävitä myös siitä, että treenaa hulluna./ . . . (2N)

322. . . /Kyllä minä olen sitä mieltä, että sopivassa määrin fyysinen harjoittelu kyllä, jatkuvasti on hyödyksi. Mutta semmoinen, mikä meidän tanssijoiden ongelma on liiallinen harjoitteluintoilu./ . . /Levätäkin saa, ja levätäkin pitäisi./ . . . (3M)

.../I do not want it to go to the extreme./.../There must... it actually is a freedom to sometimes not to think of your body./... (3M)<sup>323</sup>

He explains his views in the following manner:

.../When I work as a dancer, I am very oriented only to it./.../that is why one needs to have some pauses in between. Everything circulates around it. It takes a lot of time, being a dancer does and to keep in working condition – it takes a hell of a lot of time. It is almost from morning to night and then it continues to be with you all the time. It is extremely tiring./... (3M)<sup>324</sup>

Another dance artist likewise thinks it is important for her to be engaged in different kinds of activities apart from dance that allow the body to rest:

.../also different kinds of activities – so that not everything is related to dance – are very important, even if it is difficult to return [to work]. A little longer pause in which one does nothing related to this work and experiences being in one's body without dance./.../It [the body] has to rest from this work sometimes. Two months is a minimum, at least for me./... (4F)<sup>325</sup>

What these extracts illustrate is that for the interviewed dance artists the relation of bodily exertion and rest is an issue that they are aware of. It is a concern that influences the manner in which they organize their work schedules and makes them value other kinds of activities alongside of dancing. It is obvious that to endure the physical exertion that dancing requires the body needs rest to recover and gain energy for more training, new rehearsals, and performances. Without rest the body tires and becomes inefficient in physical performance and, like one of the dance artists tells us, the dancer also loses his or her sensitivity towards the body. In the above passages the dance artists also reveal that they are aware that dance artists need rest, but point towards a difficulty in really resting since dancers in general have a tendency to over-train and since returning to dance work after a pause is laborious. (Returning to working with the body after a break makes the dance artist again labor in order to regain the sensitivity and stamina of the body they are accustomed to.)

There are other issues that also account for the difficulty of resting, however. Dancing and rehearsing for dance pieces take a lot of time and effort. One of the dance artists describes this process in the following manner:

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323. .../Minä en halua, että se menee liiallisuuksiin./.../Täytyy tuota... se on itse asiassa vapaus olla ajattelematta kehoansa joskus./... (3M)

324. .../Kun työskentelee tanssijana, niin minä olen kyllä hirveän orientoitunut vaan sitten siihen./.../sen takia sitä pitää vähän pitääkin välillä paussia. Sitä pyörii aivan sitten siinä. Se vie hirveästi aikaa, siis tanssijana oleminen ja se, että pysyy työkunnossa, se vie niin hemmetisti aikaa. Se on siis aamusta iltaan suurin piirtein ja sitten se vaan tulee mukana kokoajan. Se on kyllä äärimmäisen rasittava./... (3M)

325. .../myöskin erilaiset toimitukset, ettei kaikki liity vaan siihen tanssiin, on hirveän tärkeitä vaikka se on vaikeata sitten aina palata, että on tällainen vähän pidempi paussi, ettei tee mitään tähän työhön liittyvää, että kokee olevansa siinä kehossaan ihan ilman sitä tanssia./.../sen on pakko saada levätä tästä työstä välillä. Kaksi kuukautta on minimi, minulla ainakin./... (4N)

.../What is completely ridiculous is that when a premiere is near at hand the stress of work and the amount of rehearsals usually grows, because most choreographers still want to work more and more and more and make the performance better, which of course is good. But in light of the dancer's physique this is damned bad. According to statistics, it is then, during the last three days that most injuries occur. So body-wise it is stupid. In athletics they sequence things rationally. We cannot really do that./... (3M)<sup>326</sup>

Rehearsing a dance piece is already taxing for a dancer because each new dance task she or he works on requires learning a new mode of bodily being however slight or large the difference between it and a previous task is. Internalizing a new way of dancing, letting the body adjust itself to this end, and becoming used to the task require effort and concentration. In one dance artist's view, working with the body is, in fact, about a struggle to maintain one's capacity to learn more:

.../Well it means a continuous listening, a continuous struggle, say, not to stop learning new things./... (3M)<sup>327</sup>

As argued in the previous chapter, this means that dancers need to retain their openness to the questions that arise while working with the body and dance as well as an interest to continue to answer these questions in practice through physical labor. In addition to this, rehearsing for dance performances is often done with such tight schedules and ever-increasing working hours that there is not enough time to rest sufficiently – especially during the latter part of this process. In these situations dancers easily over-exert themselves, and a tired body is more prone to injury than a rested body, since it might not have the endurance to execute dance sequences efficiently enough. In fact, Sally Fitt, a dance kinesiologist, suggests prescriptively that in order to avoid injury the smart dancer among other things “tries to get enough rest; eats well; recognizes her or his own fatigue warning signals; and cuts back on the activity or intensity that caused the fatigue” (Fitt 1988, 302).

From the previous discussion it could be inferred that dance artists and more particularly dancers already work intensely with the body because they are motivated to pay attention to and tacitly comprehend the felt-experiences and motional state of the body, which change from one situation to the next and offer an endless field of investigation. Also the process of rehearsing is such that it cause dancers to labor with the body extensively. Both of these concerns and the tendency for dance artists to work overly diligently with the body are something that in my view relate to the fact that a most common and influential value which shapes

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326. .../Sehän on just naurettavaa, kun ensi-ilta on tulossa, niin työpaineet kasvaa ja harjoitusten määrät yleensä kasvaa, koska useimmat koreografit kuitenkin haluavat vielä tehdä töitä lisää ja lisää ja lisää ja lisää ja lisää ja lisää, mikä tietysti on hyvä. Mutta tanssijoiden fysiikan kannalta se on helvetin huono. Silloinhan, kolmen viimeisen päivän aikana, tilastollisesti tapahtuu kaikista eniten loukkaantumisia. Se menee just typerästi kehon puolelta. Jollain kilpaurheilupuolella jaksotetaan silleen järkevästi. Meillä sitä ei oikein voi tehdä./... (3M)

327. .../No, se merkitsee jatkuvaa kuuntelemista, jatkuvaa taistelua, sanotaanko, sitä vastaan ettei lopettaisi uuden oppimista./... (3M)

the way in which dancers move and perform is that they must excel in what they do. This value is so influential that Fraleigh writes that,

The dancer does not show the audience what she cannot do . . . This is why dancers seem to have no limits; they seem to be able to do anything, however contrary the fact may be. The good dancer does not project her limitations; rather she projects her mastery of the dance she is performing. (Fraleigh 1987, 33)

One of the dance artists seems to attest to this value when describing the goals he has set for his dance work:

. . ./By now I've already eaten cake, so that every time I go to the studio I have to overcome myself./ . . (1M)<sup>328</sup>

He adds:

. . ./Above all a dancer of course has to be, at least that's how I experience it – be it how bourgeois or whatever – extremely diligent. Work ethics have to be high./ . . (1M)<sup>329</sup>

He, thus, requires intense diligence from a dancer. When going to the studio to train his dance skills or rehearse for a dance performance, he too seems to want to work hard and to improve his abilities.

By now it is evident that the body needs exercise to endure physical strain and to become supple enough to execute each dance's movements with mastery. But the desire to excel in one's dance task might push a dance artist to over-do it. As a dancer it is easy for me to relate to a feeling that many of the movement sequences that I perform could be done, for example, more fluently, with a more flexible, faster, and stronger body, which in turn would require me to train and rehearse more. The above-quoted dance artist picks up this idea. He says:

. . ./I think that a dancer her- or himself demands most of a dancer./ . ./Even a dancer cannot do everything in the field of dance. There are millions of dances, and so many styles and ways and whatever, so it is impossible to be competent at everything. But a dancer somehow/ . . ./easily has the feeling that he or she should know how to do everything simply because he or she is a dancer and has rehearsed and done this and that. At least I feel like this many times./ . . (1M)<sup>330</sup>

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328. . ./Nyt on kyllä sitä kakkua syöty, että itsensä pitää jotenkin ylittää joka kerta kun saliin menee./ . . (1M)

329. . ./Ennen kaikkea tietysti tanssijan täytyy olla, ainakin minä koen – olkoon se kuinka vaan porvarilista ja vaikka mitä, niin äärimmäisen ahkera. Ja työmoraali [täytyy] olla korkea./ . . (1M)

330. . ./Minä luulen, että eniten tanssijalta vaatii tanssija itse./ . ./Edes tanssija ei voi osata kaikkia asioita edes tanssin alalla. Niitä tanssejakin on niin miljoona, ja on niin monta tyylia ja tapaa ja mitä lie, niin ei voi niin kuin hallita kaikkia. Mutta tanssijalla jotenkin./ . ./helposti on sellainen fiilis, että pitäisi osata, kun on kerta tanssija ja kun on harjoitellut, ja kun on tehnyt sitä ja on tehnyt tätä. Minulle ainakin hirveen monta kertaa tulee [sellainen fiilis]./ . . (1M)

In fact, Foster even argues that, “dancers constantly apprehend the discrepancy between what they want to do and what they can do” (Foster 1997, 237). What they want to do relates to the projected, imaginary, and ideal goal dictating the accomplishment of their tasks and according to which the experiences of dancing the dancer has become evaluated. What is more is that the better you perform the more you are valued as a dance artist. This is especially important for those freelance dance artists who mostly work as dancers. Their future work assignments depend upon how other art and dance professionals perceive and value their dancing. But the body cannot endure just any amount of training and rehearsing. It tires and becomes increasingly vulnerable through strenuous exertion. Thus the body has limits that dance artists need to take into consideration. Again, listening to the body’s felt-sense and acting accordingly is one way of doing this.

To return more generally to a freelance dance artist’s mode of living: what the dance artists above suggest in the end is that their whole life-style becomes oriented towards the way in which they work with their bodies. If dance work in general is the focus of their lives, as suggested already in section 12.1, this section in turn proposes that this mode of living is centrally linked to and shaped by the bodily work that dance artists engage in. Attuning oneself to the body’s felt-sense, letting the body rest, and doing other activities or in contrast working till exhaustion were shown to be a part of this engagement and thus the mode of living of a dance artist. However, in working with the body not only the dance artist’s life rhythm and understanding of their own body becomes affected. As stated in section 12.1, the manner in which they perceive and understand the world is likewise influenced by this orientation. One of the interviewed dance artists discusses this in the following manner when again speaking of what it means for him to work with his own body:

.../In a way I am working with myself. I do not differentiate the body from myself so much, since it is a holistic thing. I cannot just train the body. Indeed, it does, if I think of my education, for example, it does simultaneously train my psyche very powerfully. The part of the body is a rather holistic thing./... (3M)<sup>331</sup>

He considers, then, that his psyche, mind, or personal understanding is also cultivated through his physical exercises. Indeed, in transforming the body, dance artists transform the medium through which they are engaged in the world in general. Helena Wulff in her anthropological investigation on the contemporary practices of ballet even argues that dance artists become their work, dance, to a larger extent than in many other occupations, since it is through their whole body and being that they internalize modes of practice, behavior, and communication (Wulff 1998, 102). These internalizations in turn give impetus to an existential manner of being in the world and viewing the world (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993a, 59; Parviainen 1998, 122; Köhne-Kirsh 1989, 171).

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331. .../No, tavallaan siis minä työskentelen itseni kanssa. En minä sitä kehoa niin eriytä siitä itsestäni, koska se on kokonaisvaltainen asia. En minä voi treenata vain kehoa. Kyllähän siis, jos minä ajattelen esimerkiksi minun koulutusta, niin kyllä se treenaa samalla minun psyykeä hyvinkin voimakkaasti. Se kehon osuus on semmoinen aika kokonaisvaltainen asia./... (3M)

To summarize: What all of the above discussion of section 12.2 comes down to is that, while working with their own body, the dance artists attempt to acknowledge its otherness through being responsive to its lived motional nature. This requires them to listen to their bodily experiences and a (growing) capacity to respond to these experiences while cultivating their bodies for dance. Not only this – in order to achieve, that is master, their goals and to gain a deeper comprehension of the dancing body, working with the body becomes a central concern of their life. It means almost continuous daily labor and comes to direct the whole mode of organization of the life of a dance artist to a large extent.

In relation to Arendt's concept that labor is something that must be ever recommenced and is closely related to biological and bodily functions, the dance artist's work with the body could be distinguished as labor in opposition to work. Moreover, the physical work of performing dance artists especially never really leaves them – leads a separate life from them like an artifact does in relation to its producer. It is their body which is integral to their being that dances. Moreover, in line with Arendt's understanding of labor, the body calls for continuous effort from the dance artist. However, through slightly extending Arendt's determination of labor and in relation to its function of maintaining the preconditions of life, the physical work of the dance artists could also be characterized as labor, since it is that activity through which dance materializes itself. Laboring with the body, its motion and felt-experiences, is the prerequisite for the existence of dance. Merleau-Ponty claims that painting exists first and foremost in the painter who works, who paints (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 99). This is true of dance as well. Dance exists first and foremost in the dance artist who works, who dances or creates dances.

In laboring with the body, dance artists could then be considered to take on a responsibility for sustaining the existence of dance, in their case freelance contemporary dance, and also of living such a life that is oriented towards this end. While so doing, the interviewed dance artists also show that they are related to their own bodies in a way that has ethical implications. While laboring with its motility, they acknowledge its otherness, its needs and even vulnerability, and mostly attempt to direct their performance in a manner that takes its difference into consideration.

## 13 Embodying Dance

By now already several chapters have discussed themes related to working with the body, dancing, and creating choreography. So far they have been associated with a more general understanding of the tasks and roles of a freelance dance artist as well as the meaning work has in such an artist's life. The interview material, nonetheless, continues to address these themes, while the interviewed dance artists describe how they themselves actually train and rehearse dance, as well as make some comments on performing. In these instances, the dance artists also spoke of how they experience dancing and what these experiences mean to them. While relating to some of the interpretations made in the previous two chapters concerning these issues plus the conceptions of the event of dance that the phenomenological studies of dance present, this chapter continues to elaborate on the more particular manner in which the interviewed dance artists made dance their own or searched for motion in order to create choreography as well as experienced dancing and performing. This chapter, then, continues exploring the nature of the work that freelance dance artists do and to discuss some of the central-most practices through which dance artists realize their profession.

In the next sections of this chapter, passages from the interview material, especially when speaking of rehearsing a dance piece from the perspective of a dancer and creating dance material from the perspective of a choreographer, at times are excerpts from the material provided only by a few of the interviewees. This is due to the fact that the interviewees discussed the way they embody dance through how they themselves were working on it. One participated in dance as a choreographer more than as a dancer, two worked equally on both doing choreography and performing as dancers, and one was engaged in dance mainly as a dancer. Consequently, while attempting to further delineate the practices that relate to being a freelance dance artist and embodying dance, this chapter presents some features of the different ways in which the interviewed dance artists worked in the roles of a dancer and a choreographer.

### 13.1 Training for Dance

As was already mentioned in chapter 11, the interviewed dance artists utilized a variety of bodily practices to enhance and maintain their bodily skills. Working with the body through a range of approaches was then shown to be valuable for freelance dancers in order for them to acquire dance tasks as well as to cope with them. Chapter 12 argued that freelance dance artists are very attentive to their own bodies in order to gain a sense of its perspectives, comprehend its motional nature, and enhance its capacity to handle dance. Here, however, the manner in which the interviewed dance artists themselves actually approach their own training is discussed more directly. This section looks into the means through which the dance artists themselves exercise in order to acquire and sustain the physical and other fundamental skills they need while performing their tasks. Through this discussion it

becomes evident that it is not only the prevailing choreographic tendencies that have pushed freelance dance artists to transform their bodies in numerous ways but also the dance artists' personal preferences, the working schedules of a freelance dance artist, and other unique circumstances of the freelance field of dance in Helsinki.

It is clear that working with and molding the body is one of the focal tasks of a performing dance artist. One of the interviewees comments on this by saying that,

.../Somehow I believe that it's obvious that if one wants to work in this profession/. . ./one has to keep one's condition, care for one's body a lot./. . . (4F)<sup>332</sup>

She is of the opinion that keeping fit and attending to the body are prerequisites for working as a dance artist. In addition to what this study has already said about the relation freelance dance artists have to working with their bodies, in discussing this task the interviewees also continued to describe why and how they train. Two of the dance artists thought that they train in order to feel good in their bodies while working on dance. One of them says that he trains because:

.../Well, I think that it is the awareness of the fact that I have to have the basics to do the job. If I go training, or jogging, or something like that, I am enhancing my well-being in working./. . .(3M)<sup>333</sup>

He also describes the positive effects of being fit:

.../That I still have some condition left in the body./. . ./It is about being sure, that I am certain about it. To [wonder if] I will make it to the end or not makes me very anxious. When working as a dancer I have to have physical certainty that I won't wear out before the end, because it makes the mental dimension weaker./. . . (3M)<sup>334</sup>

With these passages he shows that he needs to ensure he can do what is asked of him physically in order to feel comfortable in his work. He explains that he trains to develop his stamina as well as for him to have a sense of well-being and self-assurance while working as a dancer. The other dance artist shares a somewhat similar view when speaking of how his training relates to his artistic aims. He says:

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332. . . /Jotenkin se on minun mielestä itsestään selvä, että jos haluaa tätä ammattia tehdä/. . ./pitää vaan pitää kunto, kehostaan huolta kovasti./. . . (4N)

333. . . /Noh, minä luulen, että se on se tietoisuus siitä, että minulla täytyy olla ne valmiudet tehdä sitä työtä. Jos minä lähdän treenaamaan tai lenkille tai muuta, niin minä edistän sitä omaa hyvinvointia siinä työn teossa./. . .(3M)

334. . . /Se, että minulla esimerkiksi fysiikassa riittää vielä kuntoa./. . ./Se, että on varma, että on sellainen varmuus siitä asiasta myöskin. Että jaksanko minä tuon nyt loppuun vai enkö minä jaksaa, se on minusta tosi ahdistavaa. Kyllä siinä täytyy olla semmoinen, jos tanssijana työskentelee, niin kyllä täytyy olla fyysinen varmuus siitä, että minä en lopahda kesken kaiken, koska se heikentää sitä psyykkistä ulottuvuutta./. . . (3M)

.../I should train a lot and in a variety of ways/.../so that I can accomplish them [the artistic goals]. . . to keep myself physically fit./.../But on the other hand also the fact, because there are two sides to the coin, the physical and the psychic, by training in the right manner./.../I keep my psyche in condition too./... (1M)<sup>335</sup>

He continues to describe the benefits feeling fit brings to his sense of himself and attitude towards working:

.../if I am fit, I feel good in my body, I do not have to despise myself about being fat or something like this. I feel good./.../Immediately if I feel better with myself I have power and energy to direct to other things. If I have to continuously fight with my body, I do not have sufficient energy for other things, for example active creation in some rehearsal situation or something like that./... (1M)<sup>336</sup>

So, he also acknowledges that such physical exercise that makes him fit enhances his well-being when doing dance work. To keep fit he should train in different ways and being fit increases his ability to concentrate on the creative process instead of the problems he feels he otherwise might have with his body.

What the above paragraph shows is that training the body and transforming it not only relates to becoming skillful in bodily motion, nor just to being sensitive towards and aware of the body, as was suggested in the previous chapters. Rather, it is also about creating the right physical conditions that enable the body to bear the stress of the physical exertion that dancing requires. Moreover, it is about constructing such a bodily condition that enables dancers to trust their bodies and to perform their tasks with a feeling of self-assurance and well-being. Whilst in chapter 11 it was noted that dancers need to trust the body's capacity to produce motion and respond to their goals in the form of a perceptual faith, the above passages indicate that in relation to dancing this faith is enhanced by training that results in an appropriate physical condition. For a dancer, training the body, then, is a means through which to produce a general state of being that enhances working with dance. Achieving a suitable physical condition and a sense of well-being also means that a dancer has a better opportunity to concentrate upon the creative problems to be solved during the rehearsal process.

In describing what they do in order to produce the right physical conditions or to remain fit, the dance artists showed that they do a variety of bodily practices. This is in line with what was already suggested in chapter 11: that contemporary freelance dance artists attend

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335. . . /minun pitäisi treenata paljon ja monipuolisesti/.../että kykenen toteuttamaan ne [taiteelliset päämäärät] . . . pitämään itseäni fyysisesti kunnossa./.../Mutta se on toisaalta myös se, että koska on nämä kolikon kaksi puolta, fyysinen ja psyykinen, niin treenaamalla fyysisesti oikealla tavalla/.../niin pidän myös sitä psyykettä kunnossa./... (1M)

336. . . /jos minä olen hyvässä kunnossa, minulla on hyvä olla vartalossani, minun ei tarvitse inhota itseäni, kun minä olen niin laske tai jotain tällaista. Minulla on kiva olla./.../Heti jos on parempi olla itsessään, niin heti on voimaa ja energiaa suunnata toisiin asioihin. Jos minun pitää kokoajan kehoni kanssa tapella, niin minulla ei riitä energiaa muihin, esimerkiksi aktiiviseen luomiseen jossain harjoitustilanteessa tai tällaiseen./... (1M)

to their bodies through a variety of approaches. One of the dance artist's lists those physical activities he does to train:

. . ./Swimming, yoga, riding the bicycle quite a lot – lately I have done it a bit less. In the winter I sometime take aerobic classes./ . . /It is fun for a change./ . . /Then I perform and rehearse for performances. That's about it./ . . (1M)<sup>337</sup>

He trains his body in several ways in addition to rehearsing and performing dance pieces. He also suggests that some of the ways in which he trains he enjoys because they offer him a chance to escape repetition or routine. Another dance artist similarly says that he jogs, swims, and goes to the gym in order to keep fit. But he also describes the manner in which he executes these practices and explains why he does them. About running he says:

. . ./to keep in generally good condition and to have endurance and strength—that means running./ . . /My shinbones do not tolerate a lot of running./ . . /They do not tolerate running on asphalt. . . That is a pity./ . . /Although I do still go. Even when running half an hour your heart grows a bit stronger./ . . (3M)<sup>338</sup>

About going to the gym he says:

. . ./If I go to the gym, I work with very light weights, because I do not want to build bulk, which would only be in the way. But a kind of concentration on the circuits of movement, to purely go through the routes of motion, going through that maximal circuit with small weights./ . . (3M)<sup>339</sup>

And about swimming he says:

. . ./Well, swimming is. . . swimming is a very refreshing pastime./ . . /It's fun to do different kinds of exercises because water makes you lighter./ . . /I don't only swim there. I do kicks and gymnastics and whirl around in the water like a sea urchin./ . . (3M)<sup>340</sup>

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337. . . /Uimista, joogaa, pyöräilyä aika paljon – viime aikoina se on jäänyt vähän vähemmälle. Talvisin käyn joskus aerobikissa./ . . /Se on ihan kivaa vaihtelua./ . . /Ja sitten minä esiinnyn ja treenaan esityksiä. Se on lähinnä sitä./ . . (1M)

338. . . /se että pitää hyvän yleiskunnon koko ajan päällä ja sitten että on voimaa ja kestävyyttä. Eliikä siis juokseminen./ . . /Minun sääriluuni eivät kestä kauheasti tuota juoksemista./ . . /Ei kestä asfaltilla juoksemista toi . . . Se on kyllä sääli./ . . /Kyllä sitä aina sitten kuitenkin tulee lähdettyä. Puolikin tuntia kun juoksee, niin siinä vähän sydän vahvistuu./ . . (3M)

339. . . /Jos minä käyn, tuota niin, punttisalilla niin minä teen hirveän pienillä painoilla, koska minä en halua lisää massaa, koska se on vaan tiellä. Mutta semmoinen liikerataan keskittyminen, sen puhtaasti suorittaminen ja niin kuin koko liikealueen käyminen läpi, sen maksimaalisen liikeradan käyminen läpi ja pienillä painoilla./ . . (3M)

340. . . /No, uiminen on. . . uiminen on, erittäin, virkistävä, harrastus./ . . /Vedessä on kiva tehdä kaikkia harjoitteita, koska vesi keventää./ . . /Minä en pelkästään sitten ui siellä. Minä teen, niin kuin, polskutellen, ja vähän jumppailen ja pyöriskelen siellä, norppana vedessä./ . . (3M)

In order to dance fluently and to survive the physical exertion of dancing the dancer relies upon qualitatively different physical capacities. Some of these abilities that the previous passages relate to and which are often described as those physiological aspects that dancers need to develop are, for example, cardiovascular endurance, flexibility, and strength (cf. Fitt 1988). Developing these aspects are something that I believe the above-quoted dance artist aims for while practicing the different kinds of exercises he lists. In addition to presenting some of the ways in which he trains his body and describing the pleasure derived from doing so (which I shall return to later) this dance artist illustrates that his body sets limits to what he can comfortably do. He also indicates that, as a dancer, he does his gym exercises in a certain way. His engagement with dance makes him pay attention to and work with the body in a way that the suppleness of the body is maintained. I interpret him to suggest that apart from the different physical abilities (or physiological aspects) the dancing body relies upon and which make dance artists train in several ways, also the motional qualities dancing requires and the particular problems each dancer has with their bodies influence the manner in which dancers care for to their bodies while rehearsing differing physical exercises.

In relation to the notion that a dance artist's individual body sets limits to what a dancer can do and requires certain kinds of attention, one of the dance artists tells us that he has, in fact, stopped doing some sports he used to do. He says:

. . ./All the balls games and squash, which I used to do a lot, I've left behind altogether, because in them there is a great risk of injuring a knee or an ankle, especially the knees. Since the knees are a bit of a weak spot for me, I do not take the risk./ . . . (1M)<sup>341</sup>

This passage shows that dance artists not only regulate the manner in which they train according to what dance requires of the body and the nature of their particular bodies but that they also might exclude some practices from their routines altogether. Most likely the opposite is likewise true: they engage in such forms of exercise that suits their body and enhances their capacity to dance.

One of the dance artists further comments that, while training, dancers work with their bodies in dance-specific ways. He shows that he is very aware of the manner in which he now attempts to pay attention to his body while training. He says that such questions related to dancing as: "sensitivity and continuity interest me a great deal at the moment"<sup>342</sup>. I interpret him to mean that he is interested in being sensitive towards the movement his body performs as well as the way in which this movement proceeds. To achieve this goal he needs to concentrate on and pay diligent attention to the motional procedures of the body. He describes this kind of focusing in the following manner:

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341. . . /Kaikki pallopelit ja squashit, mitä minä aikaisemmin harrastin hirveästi, ovat jääneet nyt kokonaan pois sen takia, että niissä on suuri vaara joku polvi tai nilkka mennä, varsinkin polvet. Kun polvet on minulla vähän heikompi kohta, minä en ota sitä riskiä./ . . . (1M)

342. . . /Herkkyyks ja jatkuvuus kiinnostaa minua suuresti tällä hetkellä./ . . . (3M)

.../It does require a whole lot of concentration/. . ./to execute movement purely and to maximize the circuit of motion and the whole activity of the event. If you think of such a simple things as squatting, a plié, to be in it in the between phases, so that the muscles are alive through-out. . ./. . .(3M)<sup>343</sup>

He suggests that to be thoroughly aware of what goes on in the body while performing a particular movement in the best imaginable way requires concentration. He also thinks, for example, that training while taking dance classes is useless without, at least, some kind of focusing or concentration. He says:

.../The way in which you train is damned important. If you just go to a class and think that you'll just go through it and you're brain is still at home, it's not much use at all./. . . (3M)<sup>344</sup>

Nora Sloss, in her phenomenological investigation of dancers' self-experiences, introduces the term 'centering' to describe the way a dancer is aware of and relates to her or his body and movement in order to "facilitate integration, preparation and focus for her creative projects" (Sloss 1982, 79). In her view, centering allows dancers to have control over their experiences of dancing and I would add bodily motion more generally. She distinguishes three strands of centering that dancers utilize in their dance work. She names them as centering *through*, centering *in*, and centering *for*. Centering *through* is about the kind of awareness through which one pays attention to one's experiences. Sloss gives a few examples: imaginative consciousness, cognitive consciousness, and affective consciousness. Centering *in* is about the object of awareness, like a body part, another dancer, or a sequence of movement etc. Centering *for*, in turn, relates to the project of dancing for which a dancer does her centering acts. (Sloss 1982, 6, 81, 82)

I find the kinds of awareness that Sloss lists to be involved in the acts of centering *through*, centering *in*, and centering *for* to be very intricately entwined. The above-quoted dance artist could be understood to center *through* first by imagining the squatting motion (imaginative consciousness) and then while allowing the body to squat by paying attention both to how the movement feels (sensuous/affective consciousness) and assessing how it proceeds in relation to how he thinks it should proceed (cognitive consciousness). He would thus be engaging all three modes of consciousness that Sloss exemplifies as belonging to the category of centering *through*. In fact, centering *in*, which in this case is about the movement sequence of squatting, also becomes intertwined with centering *through*. The manner in which something is focused upon, the perspective through which one perceives something, influences the way in which this something is revealed. Furthermore, in the case of the above quotation, the objective of this centering, the centering *for*, could be understood to be the

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343. . . /Kyllä se vaatii hirveästi keskittymistä/. . . /se liikkeen puhtaasti suorittaminen ja sen liikeradan maksimointi ja koko sen tapahtuman aktiivisuus. Jos ajattelee jotain ihan yksinkertaisia asioita kuin kyykkyyntä meneminen, plié, niin että on mukana siinä välilläkin, että se lihas on elävä koko sen ajan. . ./. . . (3M)

344. . . /Se miten treenaa, niin se on kyllä hemmetin tärkeätä. Jos menet vain tunnille, nyt minä teen tästä näin tunnin ja sinulla on aivot kotona vielä, niin se ei kauheasti kannata./. . . (3M)

goal of learning to move in a more sensitive way and a manner in which continuity of motion is sustained better. This *for* obviously also influences the manner in which the performance of the movement is perceived.

Nonetheless, what these centering acts, which are tied to each other, enable a dancer to do is to gain as detailed a sense of the motional happening that they experience as possible, which in turn enhances their capacity to redirect and refine their performance in particular detail. It is by following and concentrating on or centering upon the lived event of their own motion through differing perspectives that dancers gain a rich sense of their bodily motions. This is something that I interpret the dance artist cited above to attempt to do while training for dance and developing his current interest in becoming more sensitive to his own motion and its continuity. In addition to describing the quality of the dance training that dance artists might engage in, the above passages from the interview material also provide evidence for the fact that dance artists pay attention to their bodies depending on the objectives that they happen to be interested in as suggested in chapter 12. They do not only do this when rehearsing the movement material of a certain dance piece or creating choreography but also when they train for dance.

A few of the previous quotations suggest an additional emphasis related to the training that the dance artists do. One of the above-quoted dance artists enjoys both running and swimming. Another finds aerobics “fun for a change”. Even if I believe that dance artists do not altogether avoid tedious routines in their dance training (as one of the subsequent quotations argues), I also believe that the pleasure that results from training is important in relation to a dance artist’s commitment to work with their bodies. What the above passages, in my view, imply is that the physical practices dance artists do are related to the sensory pleasures derived from different kinds of bodily motion performed in different environments (cf. Parviainen 1998, 133). Approaching the body in different ways while training offers different sensory experiences in addition to transforming the body in various ways. In fact, while using only one method, approach, or technique, there is a risk that the body might become so habituated to it that the sensory dimension or the felt-sense of the body becomes taken for granted or lost sight of. The dancer is not stimulated into feeling her or his body afresh. Nonetheless, in my experience, sometimes sticking to the same routine gives a dancer a sense of bodily stability and composure or coherency. At other times, however, these routines need to be questioned so that training does not simply become a question of maintaining the status quo in one’s relation to the body. In chapter 12 it was shown that learning more about the body is an important motive keeping dance artists working on their bodies. One of the interviewees comments on the need to shift his mode of training with the body:

. . ./At least for me it is important to have some kind of change in the routine. Even the muscles become habituated to the same routine, and I find that one should do different kinds of things so that the body does not become used to the same methods of nurturing [the body]./. . . (3M)<sup>345</sup>

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345. . . /Minulle ainakin se on tärkeätä, että on jonkinlaista vaihtelua siinä rutiinissa. Lihaksetkin tottuu siihen samaan rutiiniin, ja minun mielestä pitää tehdä erilaisia asioita, jotta se keho ei totu siihen samaan muokkaukseen./. . . (3M)

A routine might already be changed through consciously paying attention to different features of motion or areas of the body than one has done in the past. Naturally, a routine is also changed through doing something more obviously different – like taking an aikido class instead of going jogging. In general I believe dance artists to derive pleasure from training and to need to shift their routines. This need to vary the types of training I interpret as an attempt to avoid boredom and to simultaneously also push the body to transcend its habitual limits.

Still, another dance artist describes the routines she uses while training for dance. She further demonstrates that intermittent and shifting modes of training are very common for freelance dance artists.

.../I've been quite irregular. Or let's say it this way: I've had times when I haven't trained a lot, meaning traditional technique training. Then to keep fit: running, swimming and now going to the gym./.../Then I've taken technique classes a bit from here and there./.../I've circulated a bit, primarily going after a physical warm up./... (2F)<sup>346</sup>

In addition to telling us that she exercises with her body in a variety of ways, she also tells us that she trains sporadically. It shifts according to her interests even if her aim is to keep fit. In addition to going to the gym, running, and swimming when needing a warm up, she occasionally also takes dance classes, which, at least in the case of modern dance, were the main way in which dancers used to enhance their dancing skills. She says still more:

.../I haven't clearly had a thing like going to train at ten and then continuing from there. When you are a freelancer your schedule is quite indeterminate. You go when you have time to go and build it in between what else you have./.../Sometimes I feel that things are a bit too fragmented./... (2F)<sup>347</sup>

She, thus, suggests that the erratic nature of her training is in part due to fact that as a freelance dance artist she has an irregular schedule. Instead of following a daily routine, with a regular morning workout or dance class, she trains between other activities. At times this sort of an approach makes her feel a little disoriented.

However, when comparing the routines of his dance education and his manner of working with the body as a freelance dancer, one of the dance artists says he enjoys the freedom involved in not following a set daily routine of training:

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346. .../Minulla on hyvin vaihtelevaa. Tai sanotaan näin, että minulla oli aikoja jolloin minä en paljon treenannutkaan siis perinteistä tekniikkatreeniä. Sitten pitää sitä kuntoa yllä: juoksua, uintia ja nyt on just tätä kuntosalihommaa./.../Sitten minä olen käynyt tekniikkatunnilla vähän sillä tavoin noin: otansieltä ja täältä./.../Kierrellyt vähän. Lähinnä hakenut sellaista kehollista lämmittelyä./... (2N)

347. .../Minulla ei selkeästi ole ollut tällaista, että kymmeneksi treenaamaan ja sitten siitä. Kun on freelance, niin jotenkin se aikataulu on epämääräinen. Sitä menee vähän silloin, kun ehtii ja rakentaa sitten sen mitä muuta on, niin rakentaa sen sitten sinne väliin./.../Kyllä minusta välillä tuntuu, että vähän liian sirpaleista./... (2N)

.../In school this thing was programmed. There you had to do certain things at a certain time which does not suit me. I don't know if it suits anybody, at least not me. Now that I'm free I simultaneously also have more power and responsibility in what I do and when I do it. It's much nicer to be able to do things as you like, and when you like to do them, and what you need to do. But I don't really like everything I do. I just see them as necessary and in some ways they motivate me to do them./... (1M)<sup>348</sup>

Much of contemporary dance education concentrates on offering students regular and formal dance classes in addition to classes more closely related to concretely making art and other taught subjects (cf. Koff & Elkins 1999). This dance artist tells us that he enjoys the freedom of not having to follow a pre-established schedule, at least in relation to taking dance classes and training for dance. Even if he trains when and how he likes, he still shows that he is responsible about his training in that he works with his body in ways he does not particularly enjoy but implies he needs to do in order to be able to cope as a dancer.

What is worth noting in relation to the comments given by the previous two dance artists is in general the daily working schedule of a dancer or a dance student begins with a dance class. Although there are exceptions to this rule, it has been a common custom of modern dance companies, in some contemporary dance companies continues to be so, and so far as I know is generally so in the institutions of higher-level dance education. These classes usually last from an hour to two hours and offer the dancers and students a possibility to warm up their bodies for the day's work and with the aid of a teacher to concentrate upon such physical skills and issues that need attention. Contemporary dance companies, nonetheless, work in a variety of ways. For example Rebecca Hilton, a dancer who works with the Stephen Petronio Company based in New York, somewhat like the dance artists interviewed for this dissertation, tells us that,

A lot of times I don't go to class. We have an hour at the beginning of rehearsals that we can use to warm up. So a lot of time I'll do my own warm up. People in the company do all sorts of weird and strange things; a lot of people are into aerobics, some go to the gym, do swimming, or yoga. It goes in phases. People are doing yoga at the moment. I swim a lot. You get to a certain age and you have a wealth of knowledge and you know what's best for your body. . . The whole idea of company class is really bizarre to me. (Hilton & Smith 1998, 73)

Along with the fact that contemporary freelance dancers train in a variety of ways contemporary dance companies also have different kinds of practices and schedules related to a dancer's training and warm up. Therefore, even while working in a company, contemporary dance artists do not necessarily attend regular dance classes.

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348. . . /Koulussa oli kuitenkin ohjelmoitu tämä asia. Siellä piti tehdä tietyllä kellon lyömällä tietyt asiat, mikä ei sovi minulle. En tiedä sopiiko se kovinkaan monelle, mutta ei ainakaan minulle. Nyt kun on omalla vapaalla jalallaan, on paljon suurempi valta ja vastuu saman tien siinä, mitä tekee ja koska tekee. Se on paljon kivempi, että saa tehdä niitä asioita sillain kuin itse tykkää ja silloin kun itse tykkää ja niitä asioita mitä tykkää ja sitä mitä tarvitsee. Kaikkia asiat, mitä minä teen, eivät välttämättä ole sellaisia, mistä minä hirveästi tykkäisin. Minä vaan jotenkin koen, että ne on tarpeellisia, jolloin se tietyllä tavalla motivoi tekemään./... (1M)

However, dance classes seem to be of interest to the interviewed dance artists. One of the interviewees says that he has not been able to attend classes for a while.

.../It would be nice to take dance classes. I haven't gone to any for a year, exactly the same length of time that I've been a freelancer. It has just been like that; schedules, and money, and all these different things, that I haven't made it./... (1M)<sup>349</sup>

He would enjoy taking dance classes but his working schedules have made it difficult for him to attend classes. He also suggests that, for freelance dance artists with their small salary, paying for dance classes is not always an option. In addition, another of the interviewees says:

.../Now that I am a freelancer in Helsinki, it is occasionally, in a way, difficult with one's dancerhood. If you aren't strong it's difficult to develop your dancing./.../In London, or Paris, or Copenhagen, where I've also worked, it has somehow been easier, as there this training thing is more various./... (3M)<sup>350</sup>

Even though there are several privately run dance schools or studios in Helsinki offering a variety of dance classes, advanced or professional level classes are still rare and most of them are offered during the late afternoon or evenings. This is the time when freelance dance artists generally rehearse dance pieces, prepare for performance and perform or alternatively teach dance classes themselves. Without sufficient economic resources and a great variety of dance classes being offered, freelance dance artists might have difficulties in finding suitable classes to attend. Nevertheless, attending dance classes also depends upon the content and the teacher of the classes given. Not just any dance class suffices for the interviewees. One of them says:

.../It is very hard that there is no/.../training that you like./.../At least that's my experience – ok, the union has tried to arrange classes in Finland especially in Helsinki. But they so rarely have such teachers that are interesting enough for me to want to go./... (1M)<sup>351</sup>

At the time when the interviews took place The Union of Finnish Dance Artists was able to offer its members daily and professional level morning classes free of charge in Helsinki. In these classes different dance artists or dance teachers taught dance for a few week period at a time. With dancers increasingly training according personal preference, these classes

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349. .../Olisihan se kiva käydä tanssitunneillakin. Minä en ole vuoteen käynyt, just sinä aikana kun minä ole ollut freelanceri. On ollut vaan sellaisia, että aikataulut ja raha ja kaikki nämä jutut, että ei ole pääsyt./... (1M)

350. .../Nyt kun olen freenä Helsingissä, niin täällä on tavallaan sen oman tanssijuutensa kanssa välillä vaikeata. Jos itsellä ei ole vahva olo, niin silloin tässä kaupungissa on vaikeata pitää sitä tanssijuutaa yllä. Jossain Lontoossa tai Pariisissa tai Köpiksessä, missä minä olen ollut töissä, niin siellä se on jotenkin helpompaa, kun siellä on se treenauspuoli paljon monipuolisempaa./... (3M)

351. .../Se on hirveän rankkaa, että ei ole sellaista/.../treenaamista, mitä kaipaa./.../Minä ainakin koen – siis liittohan on yrittänyt järjestää Suomessa näitä ja Helsingissä nimenomaan, että pääsee noille liiton tunneille. Mutta sielläkin on hirveän harvoin sellaisia opettajia, joille oikeasti haluaa mennä./... (1M)

obviously could not respond to the needs or desires of everyone. As one of the previous passage points out, and also in my experience, the schedules of rehearsals are such that it is often impossible to attend these classes even if one wants to.

All the same, while working as a performing dancer, one of the interviewees finds it useful to attend classes but he too admits that he only does this when the class is convenient for him in terms of location, time etc..

.../When I've worked as a dancer fulltime, when I've had continuously running performances, I've attended classes quite regularly./.../Attending daily dance classes has been a very important element in my daily routines, but only in those situations when it has been possible to smoothly do so./... (3M)<sup>352</sup>

In my opinion attending a regular dance class offers a dancer a routine that might stabilize an otherwise fragmented work schedule. Obviously along with working on the body's ability in dance classes, its endurance, strength, and elasticity, are worked on in a dance-specific way.

The previous paragraphs suggest that freelance dance artists enjoy taking occasional dance classes, but their working schedules already make it difficult for them to attend them at least on any regular basis. Also the costs of dance classes and the preference the dance artists have about the kinds of classes they would like to attend narrow the scope of possible options. While not attending class, the dance artists engage in other kinds of physical exercise, such as swimming, yoga, jogging etcetera. However, as Rebecca Hilton in the above quotation suggests, one aspect of training is the warm up dance artists do on their own before rehearsals or performance. One of the dance artists comments on this issue in the following manner:

.../The way in which I warm up and prepare for a performance, I noticed, became shorter and shorter as the years passed. Suddenly I no longer needed to go wild sweating for an hour in order to warm up./.../And then according to the performance: if I now have this kind of a performance I know, by and large, what kinds of things to do. ... (3M)<sup>353</sup>

I take him to say that, along with his accumulated experience as a performer, he no longer has to exert himself as intensely while warming up for a performance. Now instead he warms up in ways more closely related to the upcoming performance itself concentrating on such movements and skills that are needed in it. This also implies that he knows his body well enough to understand how it needs to be exercised for the performance. A warm up that is meant to enhance the rehearsals or the performance of a particular dance piece enables the

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352. .../Silloin kun minä olen tehnyt sitä tanssityötä kokopäivätoimisesti, eli minulla on ollut esityksiä meneillään koko ajan, niin kyllä minä olen käynyt aika säännöllisestikin tanssitunneilla./.../Kyllä se on ollut hirveän tärkeä elementti se, että päivittäin menee tanssitunneille. Mutta vain semmoisessa yhteydessä, jossa se on ollut luontevasti mahdollista./... (3M)

353. .../Se miten lämmittelee johonkin esitykseen valmiiksi, niin sen huomasi, että vuosien mittaan se tuli aina lyhyemmäksi ja lyhyemmäksi. Yhtäkkiä ei tarvinnutkaan enää hulluna hikipäissään tunti riehua, että on lämmin./.../Ja sitten sen esityksen mukaan: jos nyt on tällainen esitys, niin tietää että suurin piirtein tällaiset jutut. ... (3M)

dancer to pay attention and become sensitive to the body in the manner a dance piece calls for. In warming up the bodily memory related to performing the movement sequences of a certain dance piece is recalled, and the physiological state of the body is changed in order for the body to more fluently engage in and endure the stress of the physical exertion required by the performance (cf. Fitt 1998, 319). Another of the interviewees describes the purpose of the warm up she does in the following manner:

.../I find that the goal is to make the musculature sensitive so that it hears and the muscles are open, so that the muscle memory is responsive. Things come from the muscle memory when one dances./... (4F)<sup>354</sup>

For her bodily memory is a muscle memory, which I think relates to the habitual and motional dimension of the body. While warming up, she tries to allow the body to become sensitive and to move according to the manner it has become used to moving or according to the manner in which movement flows from the body itself.

What the previous discussion seems imply is that contemporary dance artists themselves make up and vary the exercises in a warm up in relation to the tasks to be performed but also by drawing on their experience of working with the body and different bodily practices through the years. However, the last passage quoted from the interview material, while arguing that the "muscle memory is responsive" and that "things come from the muscle memory", might be understood to suggest that during warm up dance artists also follow the movement that in itself emerges from the body. This issue will be returned to in section 13.3, while discussing a few of the interviewees descriptions of their warm up routines through which they search for a motional state in order to compose movement and create choreography.

What, however, is worth noting here is that, while being rather articulate about the manner in which she works at warming up her body and opening upon a motional state, this dance artist tells us that she has created a fairly set personal method of training and warming up for dance. She gives reasons to why she has done so:

.../Even me, I never thought about anything like the fact that I should create some program. It some how has been natural as I chose not to attend dance classes because: First there were none. Then I did not want to go to them. Now I might want to, but there are none. As there is no such easy thing as attending a class and doing something, I had to come up with something./... (4F)<sup>355</sup>

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354. .../Minun mielestä on pyrkimys herkistää sitä lihaksistoa, että se kuulee, että ne lihakset aukeaa, että se lihasmuisti niin kuin antaa. Lihasmuististahan ne tulee ne asiat kun tanssitaan./... (4N)

355. .../Mutta en minä ole koskaan ajatellut mitään sellaista, että minun täytyy nyt tässä joku ohjelma kehittää. Se on jotenkin ollut semmoista luonnollista, koska minä olen valinnut että en käy tunneilla syystä: Ensín täällä ei ollut. Sitten en halunnut. Nyt taas voisín halutakin, mutta kun ei ole. Kun ei ole sellaista helppoa juttua, että menee vaan jollekin tunnille tekemään jotain, niin pakkohan sitä on jotain keksiä./... (4N)

She goes on to explain the fact that she needs her own method of training or warm up because:

.../Even if I clearly am a dancer, this always involves simultaneously creating my own pieces./  
.../my experience is that there are so many things to combine and it is such a complex thing to combine them. I'm not one of those people, that I believe in going to take a class and then going to do a piece – I'd go bonkers./... (4F)<sup>356</sup>

She, thus, tells us that she began devising a mode of training and warm up of her own because initially there were no suitable dance classes she could attend. As previously discussed, there is a limited variety of professional level classes offered in Helsinki and during the 1980's when this dance artist began her professional career in Finland they were even fewer. She also suggests that there have not been, and at the time when the interviews took place, were not any dance classes that she would enjoy attending. In the end, she also finds that, as she works both as a choreographer and a dancer, it is difficult to include attending dance classes to her schedule. Being responsible for both the tasks of a choreographer and a dancer already means she has to take care of a variety of other things apart from attending dance classes. For her these in themselves are draining enough. But in order to care for her body and create a suitable bodily state for rehearsals and performance she has created a training system of her own which will be further addressed in section 13.3.

This section discussed the manner in which freelance dance artists train for dance. It showed that the dance artists work on their bodies in order to achieve a level of endurance that allows them to feel good in their bodies and to concentrate on creative issues while working as dancers. It also suggested that freelance dance artist utilize a variety of physical practices for several reasons. It became evident that the dance artists simply enjoy different kinds of physical work and some variety in their routines. Working with the body in different ways is something that also forces the body to continue its transformation and to develop its capacities in diverse ways. Different kinds of approaches to training focus upon different body skills useful in dancing. But a freelance dance artist's working hours were also described as irregular. This also partly makes a freelance dance artist's training intermittent.

In addition to working with physical practices that are not directly related to dance, this section showed that the interviewed dance artists occasionally took and enjoyed taking dance classes. But they had difficulty in finding classes that they enjoy as well as attending the existing classes because of their work schedules and the costs of most classes. Nonetheless, in the end, it was noted that it is normal for contemporary dance artists, even those who work for a more or less steady company, to not attend dance classes in any regular manner.

Another feature that relates to the training that dancers do that was brought up by the interviews was the warm up they do on their own immediately before rehearsals or a performance. Here it was argued to be something the dance artists construct according to

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356. .../Vaikka minä totta kai olen tanssija. Mutta tähän aina liittyy tämä kun minä teen niitä juttuja koko ajan samaan aikaan./.../minun kokemus on se, että on niin monta asiaa mitä pitäisi yhdistää, että on niin monimutkainen yhdistää näitä. Minä en ole semmoinen ihminen, että minä uskon siihen, että minä menen tunnille ja sitten minä menen tekemään biisiä – minähän olen ihan sekapää siinä./... (4N)

what they feel they need to do with their bodies before a particular performance or rehearsal. The purpose of the warm up was suggested to be that of changing the physiological state of the body so that it becomes more adaptable to the upcoming physical exertion. In addition, it was shown to be a way in which dance artists turn their attention to and become more sensitive to the body as well as allow the motional skills it has already achieved to surface and the body to initiate movement on its own.

## 13.2 Making Dance One's Own

To me it was rather surprising that the interviewed dance artists did not have very much to say about the nature in which they as dancers concretely approach the process of learning to perform a dance during rehearsals. While the interviews took place, I felt that the interviewees spoke a lot about their own approach to dancing, but while building an interpretation of their thoughts and descriptions, I realized that many of their comments referred to a general understanding of a dancer's tasks and training. These themes were already discussed in chapter 12, which directly addressed the role of a freelance dancer and their relation to the choreographer in addition to the manner in which they collaborate. Still it seems to me that the interview material contains more thoughts on the general mode in which freelance dance artists work and how the interviewed dance artists value and experience these practices than on the particular ways in which they as dancers make dance their own. This it seems to do even if I directly asked the interviewees how they individually adapt to their dance tasks.

A reason for the lack of direct descriptions of the way in which they learn to dance dance pieces might be that doing it is about personal bodily knowledge that in my experience is often taken for granted during rehearsal processes. What I have found striking, especially in relation to contemporary dance, which is done in such a variety of ways, is that in starting to rehearse a dance piece both choreographers and dancers, who might initially be unacquainted with each other's work, often take for granted that the approaches they use in creating dance and making dance their own are tacitly understood by both parties. The way each is used to working or attempts to work during a certain process of rehearsals is seldom discussed beforehand or even explicitly addressed during the rehearsals themselves. Doug Risner, a choreographer and dance scholar, likewise argues that how dancers actually make sense, create meaning, learn and know the dances they dance often is not questioned or talked about (Risner 2000, 155).

Obviously, such features as being attentive to the body, relying on a bodily memory, setting the body in motion and following the intention of the choreographer relate to learning a specific dance and they have already been discussed in the previous chapters of this study. In addition, Parviainen describes the process of creating and learning a dance as a question-response dialogue, in which the choreographer's questions or requests and the dancer's consequent bodily responses give rise to an emergent choreography. She similarly describes dancers and choreographers to work together intuitively while selecting and making sense of bodily motion. (Parviainen 1998, 163) All of this she relates to the tacit bodily knowledge

a dancer has acquired through being engaged in the practices of dance. Sparshott further describes the process of learning to dance a specific dance by saying that it is initially about doing movements that are asked of a dancer by the choreographer or a dancer asks of her- or himself. In his view, in the concrete act of moving there is an intelligence in action that becomes more comprehensive in relation to the amount of practical dancing. This intuitive and tacit mode of grasping bodily significance and moving in relation to it is also something that Sparshott believes lends tacit comprehension to the values and meanings sought and to the way in which the execution of a certain movement phase is judged. Still, to learn these and to learn to dance in an appropriate manner means doing the dance, dancing. And when a dancer has learned a particular dance she or he has simultaneously learned to know it (Sparshott 1995, 353). This I think is an important feature that Risner also argues for, while analyzing interview material discussing the ways in which dancers learn and perform their dance tasks. Knowing a dance is the knowledge of a motional body capable of dancing a particular dance (cf. Risner 2000).

The interviewed dance artists' comments on making dance one's own relate to both issues: that learning a dance relies on tacit bodily knowledge or intuition and that learning to know a dance is about going through the concrete motion of dancing it. One of them emphasizes that his approach to making dance his own is not very analytic, at least during the actual rehearsals. Instead, it is about intuitively setting the body in motion and seeing how it responds to its tasks. He says:

.../I don't do it through a rational approach, because if I start doing things rationally it somehow fetters me. It easily becomes a prison for me. I search for things through intuition./.../Before a run-through or something in which we do some system, something which has been rehearsed to some extent already, I stop thinking rationally. I don't think or recollect it. I just, in a way, jump in and see what comes about./... (1M)<sup>357</sup>

As he also says that he talks a lot outside of rehearsals, I think he analyzes them later in order to gain more understanding on the processes he is working on in this manner, too. In fact, one could assert that the understanding that he builds with this habit is something that forms a background to his more spontaneous bodily work during rehearsals. While discussing the fact that he talks about the rehearsal process outside of the actual rehearsals, he says:

.../I do speak a whole lot. I have to have someone to speak with./.../And it doesn't necessarily mean that I expect the other person to give me something back./.../It's nice to have someone to talk to./... (1M)<sup>358</sup>

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357. .../Minä en tee sitä rationaalisen kautta, koska jos minä alan tekemään rationaalisen kautta, niin jotenkin se kahlehtii. Siitä tulee minulle helposti vankila. Minä yritän etsiä sellaisen intuition kautta./.../Ennen jotain läpimenoa tai jotain missä tehdään jotain systeemiä, jota on kuitenkin jo harjoiteltu jonkun verran, minä lopetan ajattelemisen rationaalisesti. Minä en ajattele ja muistele sitä. Minä menen vain siihen sillain niin kuin hyppään, että katsotaan, mitä tulee./... (1M)

358. .../Hirveästi minä puhun. Minulle pitää olla joku jonka kanssa minä puhun./.../Eikä se ole edes välttämättä sitä, että minä odottaisin, että se toinen hirveästi antaisi takaisin./.../Se on kiva, että siinä on joku jolle puhua./... (1M)

In a way to me it seems that this dance artist is a rather conventional dancer. He silently and self-reflexively learns his tasks through engaging with bodily motion during dance rehearsals and contemplates his experiences in speech outside of the rehearsal setting.

As it happened, during the interviews he, in fact, exemplified his manner of contemplating both silently while rehearsing or performing and out-loud, when reflecting a controversial process of rehearsing and performing a recent dance piece. The problem he had culminated in the question of the mode in which he believed dancers should perform, and he still remains uncertain about it. In recalling his experiences he says:

.../I feel extremely uncomfortable, odd on stage. In a way I am like a marionette, an empty doll, whom the choreographer has ordered to move in this way./.../I remember that on stage I thought about being present physically while I was doing things there. But is it enough? I don't know. I'm a bit like lost in space with this issue at the moment./... (1M)<sup>359</sup>

Earlier he nonetheless believed that,

.../If you one hundred percent stand for what you do on stage, that is, you are yourself in the motion, that's enough. Then it's rich and good to watch. But at the moment I no longer know./... (1M)<sup>360</sup>

As a consequence he has

.../I've thought a lot about what could be a different way of being credible on stage. I somehow hope that I would have a chance or that I would take such a chance, that I would go to some Butoh course so that I could really investigate movement and thinking together./... (1M)<sup>361</sup>

These passages, thus, show the way in which this dance artist might reflect upon issues confronted while rehearsing and performing a certain dance piece. What he is doing here is that he is questioning his previous understanding and mode of performing in order to have better and clearer understanding of it as well as self-assurance in actually performing. This also makes him want to concretely investigate the matter outside of rehearsals and performances. Consequently, his thoughts suggest that dancers might rather intensely reflect

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359. .../Minulle tulee hirvittävän ikävä, ihmeellinen olo siellä lavalla. Minä olen sellainen niin kuin, tietyllä tavalla marionetti, tyhjä nukke, jota koreografi [nimeää], on käskennyt liikkua tällä tavalla./.../ Minä muistan, minä olen miettinyt just siellä lavalla, että kun minä nyt teen tässä, minä yritän olla niin kuin fyysisesti hirveän läsnä, mutta riittääkö se muka? Minä en tiedä. Minä olen vähän niin kuin 'lost in space' tällä hetkellä sen asian suhteen./... (1M)

360. .../Jos sinä olet niin kuin 'one hundred percent' sen takan mitä sinä teet lavalla, eliikka olet itsesi siinä liikkeessä se riittää. Se on silloin täyteläistä ja hienoa katseltavaa. Mutta minä en tiedä tällä hetkellä./... (1M)

361. .../Minä olen sitten hirveästi miettinyt sitä, mitä se mahtaisi olla se joku toinen tapa olla uskottava lavalla. Minä jotenkin kaipaisin, että minulle tulisi tilaisuus tai minä ottaisin itselleni jonkun sellaisen tilaisuuden, että minä menisin jollekin, butokurssille, että minä niinku oikeasti pääsisin tutkimaan, liikkettä ja ajatusta yhdessä./... (1M)

upon the manner in which they make dance their own as well as succeed in doing it in an appreciated manner. Their experiences of rehearsals and performing along with such reflections possibly make them study issues and enhance their abilities outside of the process of learning and performing a particular dance piece.

Nonetheless, another of the interviewees similarly suggests that it is by doing, that is, concretely dancing during rehearsals, that he first tries to adapt to his dance tasks and to learn the style of movement that is sought after. In addition he shows himself to be a somewhat conversational dancer. He says:

.../I do try to find things by firstly doing them. If I need to, I ask someone. If I can't find a way of doing things within my own boundaries and my own body, I must ask. But I also give a kind of: "what about like this?". I also give suggestions. It's a way of making it more pleasurable for me./... (3M)<sup>362</sup>

In addition to learning movement material through actual motion, he also discusses things with the choreographer both in order to better understand what is sought after as well as to make suggestions that would help him perform his tasks in ways which he finds comfortable or interesting for himself. He also speaks about a certainty of knowing the dance he is performing:

.../Then when I've entered such a state, in which the movement is – when I've learned it precisely and there is no doubt about coordination, movement sequences, and accents, and about basic rhythm and blah, blah. The better I know it the easier it is for me to express myself./... (3M)<sup>363</sup>

It is important for him to feel that he knows the dance that he dances intimately. This is a point Risner also notes, that the dancers he interviewed for his study spoke about and which would require further investigation (Risner 2000, 167–168). In my own experience, it is important for a dancer to be confident that she or he can fluently execute a dance without forgetting something and making mistakes and do so in ways that the choreography requires in order to be able to concentrate on the details and qualities of motional expression while performing. The same dance artist carries on by saying:

.../I can perform/.../a sequence of dance, which is very abstract, but in performing I experience it as very personal and deep exactly because I've worked on the movement material to such an extent that I'm one with it. Then I believe it is also transmitted to the audience./... (3M)<sup>364</sup>

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362. .../Kyllä pyrin ensisijaisesti pyrin tekemällä löytämään. Hädän tullen kysyn. Jos ei löydä sille teke-  
miselleen sitä, missä omien rajojen sisällä voi tehdä oman kehonsa kanssa, niin kyllä sitä täytyy kysyä.  
Mutta minä annan myöskin ehkä semmoisia, että voisiko tehdä näin. Että annan kyllä ehdotuksia myös.  
Se on yksi semmoinen tapa, millä voi tehdä mielekkääksi sitä omaa tekemistä myöskin./... (3M)

363. .../Sitten kun on päässyt semmoiseen tilaan, missä liike on – missä minä olen omaksunut sen tar-  
kasti ja ei ole epäröintiä siitä, niistä koordinoinneista, liikeradoista eikä aksentoinnista, eikä mistään  
tämmöisestä perusrytmistä pääläpäliä niin mitä tarkemmin, minä sen osaan, sitä helpompi minun on siinä  
ilmaista itseäni./... (3M)

He additionally points out that being sure about the motional sequences of the dance that one dances also allows the dancer to feel integrated with the movement. This is a theme that will be further explored in the next section of this chapter. Nonetheless, he further implies that such a feeling also enhances the performance of a dance in a way that is perceptible to the audience, too. Thus, he considers it worthwhile pursuing such self-assurance. He tells us that in order to enhance this kind of a performance, in addition to concretely repeating the movement sequences through his body, he uses visualization.

.../One thing I always do before going to sleep before a premiere is that I go through a mental, empowering exercise./.../I don't allow myself to fall asleep before I've been able to go through my whole role without interruption in my thoughts. I feel the movements without doing them, the sequences and who is where and the timings./.../It's very calming. Then when you know that you can trust it, you feel less constrained. This is how I process the material a lot./... (3M)<sup>365</sup>

The above extracts from the interview material imply that dancers work with a bodily knowledge or a kinesthetic intelligence that is activated in the concrete act of dancing. In addition to drawing on the habitual capacities of the body and utilizing the body's ability to respond to the intentions of the dancer on its own, this knowledge offers her or him a felt-experience of the nature of the performed motion. The interviewees also imply that learning a certain dance piece, unless it is a solo dance that is created alone, is about intersubjective construction between the choreographer and dancer. The segments quoted in this section also show that learning to dance is, in addition to "knowing by doing", a reflective and imaginative process. The dancers reflect upon what they do, discuss it with others, ask questions and make suggestions in relation to their dancing and imaginatively visualize the passage of their dancing. Even if it was earlier suggested in chapter 11 that for the dancer rehearsals are often non-verbal, here it was shown that dancers do reflect upon and verbalize what they do even if not necessarily doing so during the rehearsal itself.

Watson and Wilcox suggest that we reflect, silently or audibly, deeply or momentarily, in order to understand our everyday experiences and that through such a reflective practice we might come to command a broader range of experience, solve complex problems, and understand that many everyday professional situations do not have any simple answers (Watson & Wilcox 2000, 57–58; cf. Schön 1983). Added to this, when starting to adapt to their dance task through a more pre-reflective approach and through concrete bodily activity, the dance artists could be understood to follow a logic of learning that Merleau-Ponty seems

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364. .../voin esittää./.../tanssinpätkän, joka on hyvin abstrakti, mutta minä koen sen esittäessäni hyvin henkilökohtaiseksi ja syväksi juuri sen takia, että olen työstänyt sitä niin pitkälle sitä liikemateriaalia, että olen yhtä sen kanssa. Silloin minä uskon, että se välittyy katsojallekin myöskin./... (3M)

365. .../Yksi semmoinen juttu, mitä minä teen aina ennen ensi-iltaa, on se, että ennen nukkumaanmenoa, käyn siis tämmöistä henkistä psyykkausta läpi./.../En päästä itseäni uneen ennen kuin minä olen pystynyt menemään pelkästään ajatuksella sen koko minun roolini läpi keskeytyttä. Minä tunnen ne liikkeet tekemättä niitä, ne liikeradat, ja ketä missäkin on, ja mitkä ne taimaukset./.../Se on hirveän rauhoittavaa. Sitten kun tietää että tähän voi luottaa, niin on paljon vapautuneempi olo. Sillä tavalla minä työstän hirveästi sitä materiaalia./... (3M)

to advocate. As is evident by now, in his view, we gain the first sense of our circumstances and dealings with our surroundings through the sensitivity and tacit abilities of the body. This is the precondition upon which any more explicit or reflective understanding grows.<sup>366</sup> It is also a precondition upon which we imaginatively project further possibilities of successful performance in our minds when wanting to enhance our future dancing.

As was discussed in chapter 12 and 13, however, dancers are expected to perform dance in personal and original ways. This I take to mean that they also develop their own way of doing things because each dancer's body, as a lived body, is already different from everyone else's. Sparshott argues that "as one learns dances, one acquires a learning style – a way scanning and packaging experience" different from other learners (Sparshott 1995, 352). Risner is also keen to note that dancers learn and know a piece of choreography in unique ways depending on their life histories and lived bodies. (Risner 2000, 169) They reflect on and deal with particular themes and issues that are relevant for them in a personal manner. One of the interviewees comments on this issue:

. . . /I've somehow grown as a person./ . . . /I've somehow achieved such certainty and the guts to search for movement, whatever it is wished that I search for and which ever way it wished that I do it, in my own way./ . . . (1M)<sup>367</sup>

He implies that with experience and through maturing as an individual he has also grown more self-reliant in the manner in which he approaches his dance tasks. Although he does not describe his approach further, he claims that now he works on his dance tasks in his own fashion. By doing their individual warm ups dancers already begin to concentrate on the process in their own way, even if their learning does involve shared structural components such as concretely doing the movement sequences to be learned, reflecting on these movements and the whole process of rehearsing and performing more generally. Some features of the particular manner in which dance artists approach embodying dance will become clearer in the next section of this chapter, which discusses how they embody a motional state of being.

### 13.3 Searching for Motion and Expression

The interviewed dance artists discussed the issue of searching for a motional state of being in order to begin creating choreographic material or warm up for performance and performing in a way that to me seemed very closely connected. They all related to the somatic<sup>368</sup>

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366. I am indebted to Leena Hyvönen's lecture on learning held at the Department of Dance and Theatre Pedagogy of Theatre Academy in Helsinki on the 27th of February 2002 for this insight.

367. . . . /On jotenkin kasvanut niin kuin ihmisenä./ . . . /on jotenkin tullut sellaista niin kuin varmuutta ja tietynlaista pokeria siihen, että alkaa etsimään sitä liikettä, mitä nyt ikinä sitten toivotaan etsittävän, ja millä tavalla ikinä sitä toivotaankin etsittävän, omaa kautta./ . . . (1M)

state of being and sense of self-awareness that embodying dance awakens in them. The interviewees stated that their aim in doing the above activities, amongst other things, was to open upon the motion of the body, transcend everyday awareness, feel connected to something larger, and experience themselves in a freer and richer manner. These aims were something the interviewees found to be affiliated with some kind of a connection the mind has with body or movement has with thinking that possibly happens through dancing. In fact, they keenly sought for a state of awareness and moving in which the mind and the body or thinking and doing are closely aligned. As an example, one of the dance artists discusses this by saying that,

. . . /Well the dancer needs. . . She needs that connection between the mind and the body. She has to find it in one way or another. People probably have different ways of searching for it. For me it is the A and the Z to somehow to be able to attune myself to finding a connection to what I'm doing, even if it isn't always easy./ . . (2F)<sup>369</sup>

Another of the dance artists', in turn, remarks on this issue by saying that in dancing and performing:

. . . /My goal is that the thought and the act, what the body does, would somehow be as close as possible./ . . (4F)<sup>370</sup>

These sections reveal that some kind of an integrated mode of being, in which different existential dimensions intertwine while performing or otherwise dancing, is of importance to the interviewed dance artists. Hence, to me it seemed that the interviewed dance artists valued a certain mode of dancing and a consequent dance experience above others. Through the manner in which they describe the individual approaches through which they embody dance and create dance material, it was evident that this goal influenced the manner in which they focus on their bodies and its motion in these instances. In addition, the manner in which they describe their related experiences shows that this approach to performing or dancing, in which they feel that the different dimensions of their existence are integrated, was of heightened importance for them.<sup>371</sup>

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368. In relation to the felt-sense of the body Bill Brewer argues that bodily awareness "includes at least the following: sense of joint position and sense of balance (which inform us of the current configuration of our bodies and limbs); kinesthetic sensation (which tells about our active and passive bodily movements); and tactual perception, very generally, of body-surface contact, moving stimulation, temperature, pressure" (Brewer 1998, 292).

369. . . . /No siis tanssija tarvitsee. . . Sen se tarvitsee sen mielen ja sen kehon välisen yhteyden. Sen tarvitsee löytää, tavalla tai toisella, sen täytyy se löytää. Siihen varmaan ihmisillä on eri tapoja hakea se. Sehän on minulle se A ja O, että jotenkin pystyy itsensä siihen virittämään siihen niin, että löytää sen yhteyden siihen tekemiseensä, vaikkei se aina ole niin helppoa./ . . (2N)

370. . . . /Minä pyrin siihen, että se ajatus ja se teko, mitä se ruumis tekee, on jotenkin mahdollisimman lähellä toisiaan./ . . (4N)

371. In this study I will not explore in any great detail how an individual dancer learns to consider this kind of an integrated mode of being, which draws different existential dimensions together, important to

The kind of experiential structure I believe the interviewed dance artists' comments relate to is well-known in phenomenological research on dance.<sup>372</sup> Before analyzing what the interviewed dance artists had to say about their approaches to creating motional material, dancing, and performing in more detail, I shall first briefly introduce what some of these studies have had to say on the issue and how their views relate to Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the perception of movement. I do this in order to present the perspective through which I interpret the interviewees' comments and with them add some notions to the phenomenological understanding of the experience of dancing discussed here.

Much like the interviewed dance artists, most of the phenomenological dance studies describe a state of dancing in which the dancer and the dance intertwine and underline that a dancer does not attempt to make a distinction between themselves, their dancing, and the dance.<sup>373</sup> This notion is something that Sheets-Johnstone's early study *The phenomenology*

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dancing. In this footnote, however, I would like to point out that one of the interviewed dance artists found that the intense engagement dancers have with dancing arises from an eventful dance experience. By this I interpret him to refer to a deeply experienced artistic event, which involves emotions and a personal relation to it (cf. Linko 1998, 11–12). According to this particular interviewee, these experiences also are what dancers search for and continue to explore after an initial exposure to them which he describes as a kind of an "initial spark". What is already familiar is that Merleau-Ponty writes of the emergence of a new and meaningful mode of perceiving or being as the foundation of such an existential dimension that after its birth does not lose its value. It opens a field of investigation in which it continues to be regenerated (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 96). In this sense, searching for an integrated mode of dancing could be understood to have flowed from a deep and rich experience which, when it is continued to be explored in the context of contemporary dance, grows into an understanding of a state of dancing in which, for example, thinking and doing are as closely aligned as possible. In fact, Cynthia Jean Cohen Bull, when writing about the different meanings sense and perception gain in different forms of dance, argues that even the sensual qualities of experience are shaped by shared meaning and social interaction (Bull 1997, 270). The following elaboration on the experiential nature of dancing found in the main text is one example of how we in the tradition of western theatrical dance have learned to experience dancing and consequently have come to understand the nature of experiencing dancing through a phenomenological perspective.

372. As a matter of fact, in general it is familiar to such dance studies that are concerned with the dancer and dancing. Karen Bond and Susan W. Stinson (1998) have shown that the experience that I am beginning to discuss here has been referred to as a state of oneness, a peak experience, a flow-experience, and as an experience of the super-ordinary.

373. While discussing perceiving dance from the perspective of a spectator, for example Graham McFee (1994/1992, 103–108) ponders if the dancer is distinguishable from the dance she or he dances. He suggests that the dance is a separate entity which can be confirmed by the notational score irrespective of the performer or a particular performance of the piece. Jerry Gill, one of the scholars participating in this discussion, nonetheless, argues that there is an important sense in which the dancer and the dance are one. Circum-spective perception, which stresses the mutually-interrelated aspects of experience, allows for such fusion. In fact, according to Gill, this is the kind of perception that reveals the meaning of art and allows aesthetic experience to emerge. However, closely in line with Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the figure-ground structure of perception, he points out that in everyday situations we are focally aware of some things and subsidiarily aware of others. He writes that, "Tacit knowing forms the ground or framework for explicit knowing. We always know – through subsidiary awareness and embodied existence – more than we can articulate and there can be no explicit knowing apart from tacit knowing" (Gill 1975, 128). Thus, he suggests that aesthetic awareness should be seen to flow from this tacit dimension and that in the arts meaning and knowing would be a result of the integration of subsidiary and bodily factors. He concludes that, "we attend from the dancer to the dance, and in this process are able to distinguish the one from the other, albeit tacitly"

*of dance* already focused upon by appreciating a pre-reflective manner of dancing in which dancers become one with their dancing. In turn Sondra Fraleigh, while drawing from her own experience of dancing writes that, "I exist my dance" as "I exist my body" (Fraleigh 1996/1987, 40). She, too, is of the opinion that the dancer and the dance are not separate. She explains this by arguing that, while she concentrates on her dancing, her dancing spontaneously becomes the center of her awareness and the somatosensory activity through which her existence at the moment is realized. Simultaneously the difference between the dance, the dancing, and herself disappears. It is in this manner that she considers herself to become the dance. (Fraleigh 2000, 57; 1996/1987, 12–13, 40–41) In line with Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the motility of the body, Parviainen, in her phenomenological study of the dancing subject, notes that it is not the dancer's mind which moves the body. Dancers do not order their bodies to move. Rather, movement erupts from the body without any special effort of the mind.<sup>374</sup> In her view, while dancing movement is not something exterior to the dancer but experientially present as the current mode in which the dancer's sentient body reveals itself. Consequently, she finds that in dancing dancers *think through* their movements and simultaneously make visible the choreographic motif. What she is attempting convey is the poetic nature of dancing, which reveals such sensuous and synaesthetic significance that often remains hidden in our everyday lives or that is unprecedented altogether. (Parviainen 1998, 136–137) She, therefore, seems to suggest that in dancing existence is revealed to us in a different sense than in our other kinds of activities. She also implies that in dancing the body might produce new sensations and experiences that even the dancer her- or himself did not anticipate beforehand.

In relation to dance, the concept of thinking through movement was previously introduced by Maxine Sheets-Johnstone in an article titled *Thinking in Movement* and published in 1981. Here she meticulously analyzes the experiential realm of living through dance improvisation, which she asserts relies on "an implicit bodily logos" – the body's capacity to pre-thematically and motionally explore the world (Sheets-Johnstone 1981, 399, 405). So she also develops her views of the pre-reflective experience of dancing and the mode in which the dancer and the dance are a unified phenomenon which she began to explore in *The phenomenology of dance*. In the beginning of her presentation Sheets-Johnstone attempts to point out

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(Gill 1975, 129). To me Gill's argument is very convincing and offers a phenomenologically-oriented understanding of the perception of a dance event. However, in the above discussion I am less concerned with the way a dance and dancing are received by spectators than with how dancers experience dancing themselves.

374. Even if the body produces movement without us part by part understanding its moving areas and step by step having to direct its physical movements, Dan Zahavi, while relying on Husserl's thinking, points out that our awareness of our own movements can be divided into three subcategories: "(1) I move, but involuntarily, be it because someone pushes me or due to a convulsive twitching. (2) I am in attentive control of my bodily movements: I am standing on the diving board and decide to jump. (3) Finally we have the vast majority of cases where my habitual movements occur without my supervision or explicit control" (Zahavi 1999, 99). Still he argues that the last group of movement actions is voluntary in the sense that the subject permits them to occur even if she or he could inhibit or prevent their occurrence (Zahavi 1999, 99).

what she is not concerned with when she writes about thinking in movement. In her view thinking in movement is not about constructing an understanding of discrete body parts executing discrete actions nor is it about constructing ideal images of the positions through which the dancing body passes. These thoughts *of* movements are something that conceal the innermost nature of bodily motion, which as Merleau-Ponty points out is about lived experience grasped by a more comprehensive or integrated perception. However, thinking in movement is neither about thoughts being transcribed or changed into movement form. Rather, thinking in movement relies upon the expressiveness any bodily gesture possesses. In dancing, the significance dancing has emerges and is perceptible in the event of dancing itself. Somewhat like Parviainen, she concludes that it is nowhere else nor is it in itself forgeable into any other expressive means.<sup>375</sup> In fact, Sheets-Johnstone argues that in such dancing, where the dancer's awareness follows the motions of the body, the sensing and moving body can be so closely intertwined that it is impossible to separate where perception begins and movement ends. (Sheets-Johnstone 1981, 402–403) She concludes that "thinking in movement is always a process in which sense becomes motion and motion, sense" (Sheets-Johnstone 1981, 403).

Consequently, in her view, while thinking in movement, the dancer proceeds with her or his dancing in a pre-rational manner in which thinking is not divorced from doing and neither is perceiving divorced from moving (Sheets-Johnstone 1981, 403). The possibilities through which motion comes to pass in this situation do not follow the logic of rational intention. They are tacitly given in the situation as it evolves moment by moment. The outcome is a fluid and pre-thematic complex of relationships and qualities. This complex is something that Sheets-Johnstone also refers to as an evolving and singular kinetic density which expresses "significations in the flesh" (Sheets-Johnstone 1981, 403, 405).

Sheets-Johnstone's views become a bit clearer, when we examine some of the notions Merleau-Ponty presents on movement and expression more closely. They form the foundation on which Sheets-Johnstone's understanding is based and suggest a reason why the above kinds of experiential modes of dancing have been appreciated by phenomenological studies of dance and by the interviewed dance artists, too. In exploring the spatial and motional dimension of our reality Merleau-Ponty concludes that objective thinking is incapable of

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375. What enables both Parviainen and Sheets-Johnstone to argue that dancing is significant in this unique way is, I believe, grounded on three assumptions: 1) They consider dancing a unique motional and bodily activity; 2) think that dancing for the dancing dancer appears through a certain mode of consciousness, which could be basically described here as a kinaesthetic awareness; and 3) find that being aware of dancing, while dancing, again to be a particular kind of self-awareness. These conditions would fulfil what Zahavi's criteria for being self-aware of one's dancing, i.e. gaining a sense of what it is like or what it feels like to dance (Zahavi 1999, 23, 111). I will not, however, go into here the question of the manner in which dance, contemporary dance, could be defined as something different from some other bodily and motional activity. I just note that I consider contemporary dance to involve bodily movements and positions, the latter of which become significant in relation to the former, and to involve its own conventions of representation. I take contemporary dance to have a tradition of its own, which shapes the manner in which bodily motility is understood, constructed, and perceived and thus forming a bodily practice of its own kind as well as effecting certain kinds of experiences.

grasping the nature of movement. The innermost nature of movement disappears when it conforms to thematic definitions or rational categories. His reasoning basically relies on three ideas. When we perceive an object in motion we do not clearly see or distinguish all of the intermediary positions through which the moving entity proceeds. Still this does not prevent us from comprehending that we perceive something moving (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 270). He gives an example of observing men unload a truck:

If I watch workmen unloading a lorry and throwing bricks from one to another, I see the man's arm in its initial and then in its final position, yet, although I do not see it in any intermediate position I have a vivid perception of its movement. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 269)

Consequently, he argues that a moving object is given to perception "only as beginning, pursuing or completing its movement" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 270). In describing the nature of a mobile entity further, he reminds us that in order for movement to occur it needs a thing, which changes position or place. In the previous example it was the body or at least the arm of a workman. But Merleau-Ponty underlines that movement is evident to us only if the subsequent movements belong to the behavior or actions of the same entity. We need to concretely witness the shifting in position or place of the moving object in order to understand that it has moved. Merleau-Ponty makes his thesis more explicit by giving an example again. He shows that if he after placing his wristwatch on his desk suddenly were to notice he had lost it and then to find it in the next room, he would not experience the shift in place of the wristwatch to be about movement. In addition to emphasizing that we need to witness the phases through which one and the same object changes place or position, this example contains a future condition. It implicitly takes for granted a stable background in relation to which something appears to be moving. Thus, Merleau-Ponty also acknowledges that motion occurs in a field, in which there is a background holding at least provisional stability against which the figure in motion reveals itself to move. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 270–271, 277–278)

Still, if we do not clearly perceive the different phases movement passes through and yet a moving object must pass through these phases in order for us to have an experience of something moving, how does our perception then open upon a motional event? In the end Merleau-Ponty concludes that the object in motion has only an implicit identity. It is evident to him that it exists in a different manner than an entity at rest. A resting object might be characterized through an endless series of clear and definite features. The mobile object, thing, or entity, in turn, is only to be found in the manner in which it is immersed in its movement. This is why Merleau-Ponty finds it to be recognized as *style of being* or manner of behavior. Things, which shift position and place, are something that, in his view, should be defined through their particular manner of passing. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 272–275) He describes his understanding in the following manner:

For example, the bird which flies across my garden is, during the time that it is moving, merely a grayish power of flight and, generally speaking, we shall see that things are defined primarily in terms of their 'behaviour' and not in terms of their static 'properties'. It is not I who recognize, in each of the points and instants that passes through, the same bird defined by explicit characteristics, it is the bird in flight which constitutes the unity of its movement, which changes its place, it is this flurry of plumages still here, which is already a kind of ubiquity, like a comet with its tail. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 275)

Similar kinds of experiences come about through the perception of human bodies in motion when we witness another person move. But I would like to argue that they likewise are relevant to the way a dancer experiences her or his motion while dancing. Movement as a motional event is generally comprehended as some kind of behavioral style of being in which the entity moving and the motion through which it passes are inseparable. For the dancing dancer, movement is an atmosphere or a significance permeating and coloring her or his situation, acts, behavior, as well as bodily sensations, and something which she or he cannot her- or himself perceive apart from engaging with the actual dancing (cf. Mazis 1993, 220). If the dancer wants to attend to and comprehend the innermost nature of the passing of their movements while dancing she or he necessarily has to relate to the global and pre-thematic or, as Merleau-Ponty has also called it, the existential significance of bodily motion in which the meaning is inseparable from the sign, so to speak.

In the case of grasping the sense of the movement of one's own body it is also important to remember that Merleau-Ponty found that such movement was simultaneously a consciousness of movement. The movement of our own body is something that reveals itself through the reflexivity of the body. This reflexivity at the same time informs the subject that it is her or his own body that is in motion. As we move we simultaneously feel that we move and tacitly comprehend the motional event. Still this comprehension comes into being against a background or perspective opened up by our personal projection or the call of a concrete situation. It is in relation to these that the movements of our body emerge. The significance of our movement is thus dependant on a perspective which forms the field in relation to which motion evolves. (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 110–111, 182–183)

However, the pre-thematic stance, in which the event of a motional sequence is grasped in its primary significance, is something where we live with perceptions and sensations which we do not identify as something or which we do not allow ourselves to experience in a fully-grasped manner. Still these ambiguous or indeterminate perceptions are filled with significance and influence our behavior. Elaborating on Merleau-Ponty's understanding, Eugene Gendlin pays attention to this dimension of our being. He writes about a pre-reflective body-sense through which the dimensions of emotional and kinesthetic experience as well as thinking intertwine. He finds that through the body-sense the body is its situation and that it might inform us very accurately of the mode in which our being at any moment is realized and thus lead us further in our activities. (Gendlin 1992, 341–355) Merleau-Ponty himself argues that for the pre-reflectively operating body-subject our bodily sensations, emotions, desires and environmental interaction intertwine forming a situational direction. In other words, they combine into a style of being through which the flow of our life proceeds. In our

pre-reflective experiences the different dimensions of our being intertwine into one event or temporal wave. This wave is something that could be understood as a lived present, since in the passing of such a wave the present moment retains its predecessor and anticipates its successor and our way of being coincides with our consciousness of it. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 275, 277, 284, 424) This is the kind of temporal stance, which Sheets-Johnstone, considers a dancer to exist in while dancing and thinking in movement. She writes:

The movement which I actually create at any moment is not a thing which I do, an action which I take, but a passing moment within a dynamic process, a process which I cannot divide into beginnings and endings. There is an ambiguity about my moving, a dissolution of my movements into my perpetually moving present and a dilation of my perpetually moving present in my movements. (Sheets-Johnstone 1981, 405)

What the previous discussion suggests, then, is that thematic perception in constructing its object of perception into some discrete thing is unable to reach the innermost nature of movement. In order to witness their own motional task in a manner that its significance as a motional event is revealed to them, dancers need in some way to leave reflective understanding behind and move towards a pre-thematic comprehension of their dancing. In my view, this makes it important that dancers listen to their bodies and aim for states of being in which they experience sensing and motion as well as thinking and doing to be closely aligned. In relation to Sheets-Johnstone's argument that in dance improvisation the possibility of further motion is to be found in the motional situation itself, we should remember that in chapter 12 it was argued that the body pulsates with a speech of its own, a bodily expectation of further action. This I believe to be most immediately witnessed in dance improvisation. However, from experience I also know that the body pulsates with speech that is able to inform and direct the dancer in details and shades of motion and further possibilities in the quality of moving even through set, rehearsed and habitual movement sequences.

What the above paragraphs argue for, thus, is that pre-thematic motional styles of meaningful dancing exist and that they are valuable for dancers in order for them to gain sense of what is going on in their dancing or bodily motion (whether their dancing is either about improvising or performing set sequences of movement). The above paragraphs also introduce and describe some of the conditions for and features of being pre-thematically involved in one's dancing. In the subsequent paragraphs of this section I will continue to discuss the nature of these motional stances and the way in which they occur through interpreting the meaning the interviewed dance artists give to their experiences of dancing. The next sections simultaneously introduce and discuss a few approaches and principles which shape the manner in which the interviewed dance artists search for motion and perform.

### **An integrated motional style of being**

Two of the interviewed dance artists described the mode in which they begin a choreographic process, search for a bodily style of being appropriate to a particular dance piece,

and create a suitable physical state for performing in some detail. I will begin by discussing their understanding of the process of embodying dance, since they offer valuable insight into how what I shall refer to as an *integrated motional style of being*<sup>376</sup> is sought for and achieved. Only after this shall I turn to address the comments that the dance artists made about performing dance, both of which extend the understanding of the process of embodying dance that the interviewees provide.

When working with the body to warm up for rehearsals and performance, one of the dance artists says that for her the most important thing is to find and sustain a motional state of being. By this I take her to mean that it is necessary for her to find a mode of awareness in which she is attentive to the lived event of dancing and the motion of the body in order to have a sense of what is going on in her body. I believe this demonstrates the manner in which she coaxes her body and awareness into a state that is appropriate for the concrete act of dancing and performing. She describes what she is aiming at by saying that,

. . ./to surrender to the preconditions of the body, as an intellectual person to not begin to dominate where the body likes to go or what it likes to do. Rather to be generous, to follow the course of events, the body's course of events./ . . ./My goal is that the thought and the act, what the body does, would somehow be as close as possible./ . . . (4F)<sup>377</sup>

She attempts to trust and to be generous towards the body's capacity to realize a motional event without personally controlling and directing it. For her, this means that thinking and doing in dancing are as closely entwined as possible.

Susan Kozel relates to this notion in her phenomenological study of dance. There she describes dancing as an exploration in which the dancer lives on the limits of controlling her or his body. She claims that,

Dance is an active exploration of that region where the subjective control over the body is at its limit. In this sense the dancer dances, and is danced by the force which she sets in motion. The chiasmatic relation is that of the *dancingdanced*. It is obvious that the dancer exerts strong subjective control over her limbs by virtue of the physical effort necessary to set her limbs in motion, but the momentum of any dance move is a created force which in turn animates the body in movement. The dancing-danced is about expanding the space between control and being controlled. . . The dancer mentally controls her body but also plays at the edge of control, letting

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376. In a previous article I referred to this stance as a state of oneness. But there I already noted the problematic connotations of this term. Through the interviewed dance artists' descriptions, it is evident that the existence of such states vary qualitatively from one occurrence to the next. The term 'oneness', even if surmounting distinct existential dimensions, however, does imply an invariable experience (Rouhiainen 2001, 64). For this reason and due to the fact that I believe the pre-thematic mode of dancing that the interviewed dance artists sought after has other dimensions in addition to thinking and movement I use the term 'an integrated motional style of being'.

377. . . ./kehon ehdoille suostumista älyllisenä ihmisenä, että ei rupea dominoimaan sitä, mihin se keho tykkää mennä tai tehdä. Vaan että antaa, seuraa mieluumminkin sitä tapahtumista, kehon tapahtumista./ . . ./Minä pyrin siihen, että se ajatus ja teko, mitä se ruumis tekee on jotenkin mahdollisimman lähellä toisiaan./ . . . (4N)

the physical momentum chart a path through space. The rigidly conscious subject withdraws and returns by degree; it can be more or less veiled, but never totally absent while shapes in space are carved and time and rhythm are played with. (Kozel 1998/1994, 70–71)

In writing about a rigidly conscious subject, Kozel is discussing our personal consciousness which has the capacity to project an imaginary or possible field of action in front of us. This dimension of consciousness is important for dancing, since it offers that directional intention in relation to which the body engages in some activity. It is also that faculty that dancers, even while moving, return to when they want to discern if their dancing really corresponds to their intentions. Therefore, the personal consciousness of a dancer functions as a sort of a frame through which the dancer's dancing acquires its meaning. Instead of thinking about dancing as an exploration of the limits of personal control over the body, one could also regard it an *interlocution* between the functions of personal consciousness and those of the body-subject which express the motional nature or style of dancing to the dancer. At the moment this is how I would like to refer to the exploration that Kozel describes, since she suggests that the situation in which thinking is intricately connected to dancing is firstly an oscillation between two dimensions of being. However, in my view, the comments the interviewed dance artists made on dancing and the manner in which they relate to Merleau-Ponty's notions of bodily motility and artistic expression yield a slightly more articulate understanding of the motional event that can occur through dancing. In addition to exploring the space between controlling and being controlled, I think something more also happens.

The interviewed dance artists suggest that, in searching for a motional state of being, they enter a process which begins with a similar active exploration to the one suggested by Kozel and then takes them deeper into something that I refer to as a *integrated motional style of being*. This is something equivalent to Sheets-Johnstones description of thinking in movement. Before discussing what the interviewees seem to suggest, it is worth noting that the circumstances in which thinking and moving are closely intertwined are not something acquired once and for all like a habit. On the one hand, the dance pieces, roles, and movement sequences, which influence the perspective the dancers have of their bodies or through which the dancer works to achieve an integrated motional state vary. Thus, the intention setting the body in motion differs from one situation to the next. On the other hand, the state of the body changes from day to day. As mentioned in chapter 12 dancers investigate and become acquainted with their body anew each day. Even if they work on the same dance task or sequence day after day, a rekindling of the interlocution between personal intentions, that is the specific dance tasks they aim to accomplish, and their bodily sensations of moving is called for. This daily interlocution means that the dancers have to feel their way through their bodily sensations in relation to the performed dance tasks and requirements again each day. In addition, thinking in movement itself is something which brings about qualitative divergent experiences. One of the dance artists, while describing what happens when thinking and doing are closely aligned while dancing, says that,

.../Every time it happens it is different, even if it were an old performance or the same performance, it can be completely new, in my experience./.../why the hell would I be doing this otherwise?/. . . (4F)<sup>378</sup>

She argues, then, that finding a connection between thinking and doing while dancing and performing, offers her differing sensations as well as impressions and, thus, different kinds of experiences. These she appreciates and they inspire her work.

Despite the shifting perspectives and the different qualitative experiences that come about while thinking in movement, the dance artists showed that they had an understanding of and means through which to approach their goal. In order to achieve a motional state one of the dance artists first concentrates upon that motion that already exists in the body irrespective of its practical and situational tasks. She describes this by saying that,

.../as a person is alive, thank god, it cannot be still. Something moves all the time, because the heart beats, blood circulates. Movement exists. I find that externally it is easiest to tap into, if not by paying attention to the pulse then to breathing. As breath is continuous, as you cannot stop breathing, I think that somehow concentrating on breathing and manipulating it allows me access to an awareness of the movement./... (4F)<sup>379</sup>

Merleau-Ponty likewise finds that the body contains nascent movements, which when paid attention to and sensed offer us a way of witnessing the basic rhythmic and motional qualities of the body and, in fact, life itself (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 78, 213). In order to allow motion to flow from the body on its own, which this dance artist intends to do in her warm up, she first attunes herself to that motion that already exists in the body. In stating that she controls her breathing in addition to listening to it (entering or leaving her body), I think this dance artist is suggesting that she gains a sense of the sensory and motional expressions of the body and simultaneously directs or asks the body to expand its range of movement according to the manner in which she understands them. The manner in which she understands them, in turn, has to do with the kind of motion and state she happens to be seeking. Instead of any specific movements, this goal might simply be that of releasing tension in certain areas of the body, feeling connected to the body, embracing a qualitatively specific motional state of being and so forth. Thus, she enters a conversation between herself and her body, so to speak, and participates in a process of motional becoming. However, in order to do this she first turns away from her environment and focuses upon the sensations and motions of the body itself.

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378. .../Se on joku sellainen, joka on tietenkin aina jokaisessa tuollaisessa tapahtumassa uudenlainen, vaikka se olisi vanha tai samakin esitys, niin se voi olla ihan uudenlainen, minun kokemuksesta./.../mitä helvettiä tätä muuten tekisi?/. . . (4N)

379. .../kun ihminen on elossa, jumalan kiitos, niin sehän ei voi olla paikallaan. Koko ajan jotain liikkuu, koska sydän hikkaa ja veri kiertää. Se liike on olemassa. Sitten ulkoisesti siitä on minusta helpointa saada tuntumaa, jos ei nyt ihan mene tarkkailemaan pulssia niin hengitystä. Kun hengitys kulkee koko ajan samalla tavalla, että ei voi olla hengittämättäkään, niin minä jotenkin siihen hengitykseen keskittymällä ja sitten manipuloimalla pääsen siihen liikkeen seuraamiseen./... (4N)

Another of the dance artists similarly describes the initial phase of her warm up which she does in order to reach a state in which to produce choreographic material, by saying that,

.../In a way my working method is perhaps rather inward. I mean that I try to eliminate external things and create a space inwards, at least in the beginning. If I think of the starting point, in a way I operate with internal spaces, internal bodily spaces, and then turn to external space. That's the easiest way for me. It is easiest for me to close my eyes and go to the core./... (2N)<sup>380</sup>

She elaborates on what this means:

.../In its simplest form, it is an exercise where I close my eyes and try to forget the outer world surrounding me. I try to listen to my own 'voice'./.../When the external is veiled, it is some kind of a clear stilling [of my being], as it were, already a way of seeking for the connection between the mind and the body. Somehow becoming quiet takes things in this direction./... (2F)<sup>381</sup>

This dance artist, thus, tells us that she explores the internal space of the body by closing off from the external world, becoming more still, and listening to her own body. Even if Merleau-Ponty considers bodily space to be mainly a dark and unattended background in everyday life in relation to which bodily gestures and their intention stand out, he also argues that the spatiality of the body is a spatiality of situation. He claims the body appears to the subject as an attitude directed towards a certain possibility or task. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 100, 101, 102) Here this dance artist perceives the form in which the spatiality of the body at a current moment is accomplished and most likely listens to the sense of the potential movements the body itself suggests.

Even if in this instance this dance artist does not suggest that she does any specific movement, simply exploring her body through sensing it could be understood as a kind of movement in addition to the motion of the body that always exist irrespective of intentional acts. However, I suspect that she does do at least some kind of movement as at another point of the interview she says that before gaining an awareness of the state of her own body she sets the body in motion. She says:

.../I begin from a larger picture: now some movement into this bar/rod, only then. .../... (2F)<sup>382</sup>

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380. .../Tavallaan minun työmetodini on ehkä aika paljon sisäänpäin kääntyvä. Minä tarkoitan sitä, että minä yritän poistaa mahdollisimman paljon ulkoa ja jotenkin tehdä sitä tilaa sisäänpäin. Ainakin aluksi. Tavallaan minä operoin sisätiloilla, kehollisesti sisätiloilla, ja sitten rupean jopa avaruudellisesti tilallisesti, jos minä ajattelen ihan sitä lähtökohtaa. Se on minulle helpoin tapa. Minulle on helpoin sulkea silmät ja mennä rungolle./... (2N)

381. .../Yksinkertaisimmillaan se on harjoite, missä pistän silmät kiinni ja pyrin unohtamaan ulkoisen maailman ympäriltä. Elikkä yritän kuunnella niin kuin omaa ääntä./.../Kun se ulkoinen peittyi se on jotain semmoista selkeää hiljentymistä, että tavallaan sillä tavalla jo yhteyden hakua sen mielen ja kehon välillä. Jotenkin se hiljentymisen vie niitä asioita väkisin samaan suuntaan./... (2N)

382. .../Minä lähdän semmoisista isommista kuvioista, että nyt tämä patukka liikkeeseen, että sitten .../... (2N)

She further describes what she means by saying that,

.../simply some kind of a general heaving through improvising./.../I haven't had any clear program where I would go through some system or something./.../I do some breathing stuff/.../to find some inspiration./... (2F)<sup>383</sup>

In order to attune themselves to their bodies, it is no surprise that dance artists engage in moving with the body, since, as Merleau-Ponty claims, the movements of our own body heighten our awareness of sensation. He even considers motion to be the basis for the unity of the senses. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 108, 234) Physical motion, therefore, offers dancers a more intense possibility of engaging with the felt-sense of their own bodies. It is also in action that our sense of bodily space as a part of a practical system interacting with external space emerges in the first place. Therefore, movement helps us in comprehending how our body inhabits space; the manner in which it positions itself and its parts enfold one another. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 102) In focusing upon the spatiality of the body in a pre-reflective manner, there might emerge a directly experienced relationship with bodily space, in which "there is a knowledge of place which is reducible to a sort of co-existence with that place" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 105). I believe this is something that the above-quoted dance artist searches for before an awareness of the lines and forces the body draws into external space which while inhabiting its own space in a certain way the body simultaneously produces. As she suggests, attending to the spatiality of the body already allows her to begin to emerge a position in which the mind and the body draw closer to each other.

Nonetheless, while describing their approaches both interviewees showed that finding a close alignment between thinking and doing was something that required time and some sort of a concentrated effort. It does not appear spontaneously at will. I believe that it either arises through the repetition of a dance routine or then through prolonged engagement with improvisatory dancing in which a dancer's awareness is centered upon her or his dancing as a lived experience. The first quoted dance artist shows that she follows an approach involving several motional phases. Her method begins with a tottering motion and repeated relaxed steps with the feet in order to relax the body. Then she concentrates on breathing as deeply as possible. During inhalation she stretches the chest and lifts it higher. In exhalation she allows the body to fall towards the floor. This initiates a motional process which according to her is very much like improvisation:

.../then emerges a "well, now let's just go" very clearly. What happens after is improvisation. I think that what comes about is either this or that. If you want to search for a direction a bit you can of course. But it is very difficult beforehand to decide that now I shall do this or that. I think that does not work at all. Somehow it is free and intuitive./... (4F)<sup>384</sup>

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383. .../ihan semmoista yleisvöllöntää, että vaan improvisoiden./.../Ei minulla ollut mitään selkeää ohjelmaa, että minä teen jonkun selvän kuvion tai jotain./.../Kyllä minä sitten teen jotain hengitysjutuja./.../hakee vähän inspiraatiota./... (2N)

384. .../sitä alkaa niin kuin tulla semmoinen että "no, että antaa mennä nyt sitten" hyvin selvästi. Se

She continues to explain what she means:

.../I believe that the body moves you and that muscle are productive. They produce the images./  
.../It happens if you only let go. In my view it is the best thing in this profession./... (4F)<sup>385</sup>

Somewhat like Sheets-Johnstone she speaks of the emergence of an intuitive process of improvisation in which it is the implicit bodily logos that shapes the direction of the dancing, instead of the dancer personally deciding what to do. The other interviewed dance artist continues her description by saying that,

.../Simultaneously while other things become veiled./.../It is about a journey from the very beginning. It is a journey of creating roots from the very beginning. Then what starts to emerge are perhaps the changes in the state of being etc. In a way the fleshy part starts to disappear. In my view this is quite important. It begins to transform into, what I could grandly label a basic element of force something like air, earth, fire, and water. The concreteness of the flesh transforms into a new dimension. At least it is an entrance towards something./... (2F)<sup>386</sup>

While continuing to concentrate on the internal spatiality of the body she embarks on a journey. She tells us that in this journey she first creates "roots" and then possibly witnesses a change in her state of being. In my view it is noteworthy that both of the previously quoted dance artists point towards the fact that in retaining a motional process and following the motions of the body something emerges or begins. I interpret them to suggest that what I have referred to as the interlocution that Kozel described, as it were, is a preface to what the interviewed dance artists are aiming at in the end.

The latter of the above-quoted dance artists suggests that in the interlocution a dancer lives through "a journey of creating roots" only after which does the state of being begin to change. When dancers live through such a journey their personal aims and bodily sensations are in a relationship in which they are responses to each other's 'questions'. What I mean to say is that, at this point, the dancer's dancing occurs in a circuit of awareness. In it the dancers, in one way or another, are firstly aware of their intentions, or the dance tasks, and then aware of their bodily responses to those intentions through the sensations movement

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mitä sitten tapahtuu on improvisaatiota. Minun mielestä sieltä tulee milloin mitäkin. Jos vähän haluaa jotakin suuntaa hakea niin tietysti. Mutta se on kyllä hirveän vaikea etukäteen päättää, että nyt minä sitä tai tätä. Se ei minusta toimi ollenkaan. Se on jotenkin vapaasti intuitiivista./... (4M)

385. .../Minä uskon siihen, että se keho vie ja ne lihakset tuottaa ja sieltä tulee ne mielikuvat./.../Se tapahtuu kun vaan niin kuin päästää. Minusta se on jotenkin tämän alan paras asia./... (4N)

386. .../Samanaikaisesti, kun sulkeutuu tämä muu, niin minulle on hirveän tärkeätä nämä energiavirtojen ajatukset, meneekö energia ulos, ja minne se menee, vai meneekö se sisään ja pudotan alas. Siinä on tällainen matka heti alkuun. Se on semmoinen joku juurrettumisen matka heti kiinni. Sitten mitä alkaa sitten tulla, sitten alkaa ehkä olomuodon muutokset ja muut. Tavallaan se joku semmoinen lihallinen juttu alkaa hävitä. Se on aika tärkeätä minun mielestä, että se alkaa tulla vähän semmoiseksi, miten sen voisi sanoa hienosti, perusvoimaelementiksi niin kuin ilma, maa, tuli, vesi. Jotenkin tämä lihallinen konkreettisuus muuttuu johonkin uuteen ulottuvuuteen. Ainakin siinä on joku minun mielestä semmoinen eteinen johonkin./... (2N)

arouses in them. The dancers understand these sensations by relating them to their previous intentions. If, for example, having decided to dance softly and trying to do so, I were suddenly to slip and take a sharp step to counter my balance, I would most likely regard such moves as being avoidable. I would, therefore, come up with a new way of moving softly, which would work out better on a slippery floor. Consequently, in gaining an understanding of their movements dancers can realign or direct their dancing towards new or more detailed aims. In dancing through the oscillation of the modes of awareness described above, that is the awareness of a style of movement and that of the intentions of the dancer, the criteria for the dancing remains in the intentional task the dancers started out with. It forms the meaning-giving background or orientation shaping the evolving mode of dancing.

However, in living through the oscillation or interlocution dancers with time and, in the case of a complex or difficult task, with repetition become used to this alteration. Before the dancers know it, they have already moved as they intended to or, in other words, they have pushed their body into the next stream of movements. This can be expressed in yet another way: the body seems to be moving them. The interlocution turns into a *dialogue*, in which the interlocutors are inseparable. Merleau-Ponty describes a similar event when writing of how painters perceive the landscape they are painting. Quoting André Marchand he writes:

In the forest I have felt many times over that it was not I who looked at the forest. Some days I felt that the trees were looking at me, were speaking to me . . . I was there, listening. . . I think the painter must be penetrated by the universe and not want to penetrate it . . . (André Marchand according to Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993c, 129)

Following such a description Merleau-Ponty argues that there is a moment in our awareness where our intentions and actions are so closely related that we can no longer discern who dances and who is danced, so to speak (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993c, 129). This I take to be the moment where an integrated motional style of being is truly actualized. A reversal occurs and the intentional task no longer is the criteria of the dancer's dancing. Instead, motion becomes the ground according to which the dancers are aware of their total being. This motion is about the sensations of movement the moving body produces but it is also very much concerned with the motion of awareness shifting through or in the midst of intertwining sensuous qualities and other impressions.<sup>387</sup> As Sheets-Johnstone writes, "possibilities arise and dissolve for me in a fluid complex of relationships, qualities and the like" (Sheets-

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387. Dan Zahavi indirectly supports my conclusion by stating that, "pre-reflective self-awareness must be conceived not as a simple, static, and self-sufficient self-presence, but as a dynamic and differentiated openness to alterity" (Zahavi 1999, 137). What he means here by alterity is the phenomenal ground of the sensations and impressions that offer us an embodied and pre-thematic self-awareness. In Merleau-Ponty's terms he is relating to that anonymous stuff or matter; that phenomenal pregnancy or the flesh which constantly permeates our being and through which we are inseparable from the flesh of the world. Zahavi writes: "The world is given to us as bodily investigated, and the body is revealed to us in its exploration of the world. It is when we perceive that we are aware of ourselves, and it is when we are affected that we appear to ourselves, i.e., it is exactly as exposed and self-transgressing subjects that we are given to ourselves" (Zahavi 1999, 123).

Johnstone 1981, 405).

The previously quoted dance artist recognizes that what this reversal accomplishes is a shift in her state of being. Merleau-Ponty writes of the opening of a new field or level of being through which our life is realized. The opening of a new field means that the body finds an anchor in its situation in a way that provides it with an integrated and significant world (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 250, 292). One could say that the anchoring is the perspective the body-subject holds and through which it is able to orient itself in a meaningful world. In the case of an integrated motional style of being in dancing the anchoring is in the motional style expressed by what Gendlin calls the body-sense. Because the anchoring point in this phase is the motional stance of the body and not the intention of the dancer, I believe it to be realized more on the premise of the body-subject than the phase which I have called interlocution. It is here that I believe an integrated *motional* style of being really occurs.

However, this does not mean that the affective, emotional, and cognitive dimensions involved in the phase of interlocution would be lost. Rather, a motional style of being becomes the background in which the reversal relations between these dimensions are revealed. What I believe happens during the process of inhabiting a motional style of being is that the flux of shifting sensations, feelings, imaginations, recollections, perceptions, and thoughts concerning the event of dancing are continuously erased and replaced by each other. They form a chiasmatic chain and simultaneously hide the hinge, the fissure through which they are transmuted into one another. In addition to there being a lack of control from time to time on the part of the rigid consciousness (since something else is occupying a dancer's awareness), there are also blindspots or imperceptible interspaces in our consciousness. Despite being imperceptible these interspaces, nonetheless, intensify the sense of motion because they are the precondition for change to occur in our perception or awareness. As Cataldi writes, following Merleau-Ponty's flesh ontology, "being is more than being-perceived. Some of it is imperceptible" (Cataldi 1993, 67). This kind of an analysis appreciates Merleau-Ponty's understanding that through reversibility no true coincidence occurs. Instead, there is a turning about and chaining of different dimensions of being which accomplish and sustain the motional event. Gail Weiss writes of the blindspots as *écarts* around which our bodily awareness pivots and which form a "space of non-coincidence that resists articulation", "that strange space of disincorporation that makes incorporation possible" (Weiss 1999b, 122).

As a result, since grasping one's own motion relies upon us having blindspots it also depends on something that in principle is unfelt, unperceivable, unthinkable, unimaginable, etc. In the end, what entering an integrated motional style of being, in which bodily motion and the motion of awareness become the focal organizers of one's whole being, means is that while attending to one's own movement the dancing subject does not only become aware of it through how they sense or feel their actions, which most previously published phenomenological studies of dance maintain. In writing of a body-sense, which in addition to blindspots involves cognitive, emotional, and kinaesthetic awareness, Gendlin in fact writes that we are aware of a ". . ." (Gendlin 1992, 341–353). He expresses the awareness of the body-sense that emerges in a concrete lived situation by a dotted line to point out that it is

something not quite expressible and so far seems to generally lack recognizable terminology. Merleau-Ponty somewhat similarly speaks of actors performing a role and implies that in such instances the issue is not that they are existing as intelligence or sensitivity but that they are capable of “losing [s’irréaliser]” themselves in a role (Merleau-Ponty 1993/1982, 51).<sup>388</sup>

As if offering evidence for my conclusions the quoted dance artist last says that when a genuine motional style of being has emerged, she experiences herself in “a more multi-leveled manner” (2F) (monitasoisemmin). What I also find interesting in relation to the above paragraph is that this dance artist finds that in entering an integrated motional style of being the concreteness of the flesh or the body seems to disappear. Experientially dancing, thus, no longer seems to be a question of only being aware of the body and its motility. Another of the interviewees shares a similar view. He says:

.../Lately I've related to my physical body through the psychic or spiritual dimension, so to speak. As a consequence the body-image in a way disappears a bit. It becomes more ambiguous./.../The fact that in principle they [the psychic and physical dimension] are synonymous, suddenly the body has disappeared./... (1M)<sup>389</sup>

In relation to an integrated motional style of being I think these notions are not a surprise. In such a state in which the body changes place and position in addition to the flux of our awareness, the body certainly reveals itself without clear contours and eludes any stable form. As suggested by Kozel in Part II, the dancer, like the spectator, experientially confronts a dissolution and integration of form or the defigurative and figurative moments of the body, whose porous and fluid nature allows it to dissolve its boundaries in endless directions. Yet, the body always attempts to regain its equilibrium, aims to turn itself back into a coherently functioning unit, and thus to incorporate the actions it lives through in a unified manner.

Now, this is the way I understand the mode of dancing that I believe the interviewed dance artists were searching for. In the above passages the interviewees depict the way in which they begin to search for motional material or warm up. While searching for movements in order to proceed with her choreography, one of the dance artists' describes what happens:

.../It starts to evolve in some direction from the context of aligning the internal state of being to the current external space./.../I am quite absurd and confused since I just let things happen./.../It just begins. And I try to find a way to be sensitive to where this thing is taking me./.../In some frame it starts to fix itself in some direction, while still being quite free from issues of form. But it has something in it, something I can grasp./.../which slowly becomes cultivated./... (2F)<sup>390</sup>

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388. Instead of using the term “lose” perhaps “de-realize” would be a more appropriate translation.

389. .../Minä olen viimeaikoina tähän minun fysiikkaanikin suhtautunut niin kuin psyyken ja henkisen kautta. Jolloin se ruumiinkuva tietyllä tavalla vähän niin kuin katoaa. Se alkaa sillain hämärtymään./.../Se, että periaatteessa ne [psykkinen ja fyysinen ulottuvuus] ovat samaa asiaa, että yhtäkkiä on kadonnut ruumis./... (1M)

390. .../Sisäolotilan kytkeytyminen sitten siihen ulkoiseen sen hetkiseen tilaan, siitä kontekstista se jotenkin lähtee pyörimään johonkin suuntaan./.../Minä olen kyllä aika sillä tavalla absurdin sekava, että

In continuing her improvisation and perhaps repeating movement sequences that arise from it, she says that some sort of a structure or way of moving starts to emerge which she feels to be interesting and which she continues evolving. This is how her choreographic material starts to develop. Furthermore, for her, it has to do with finding an integrated manner of moving in the sense that,

.../it has to do with feeling, that through intuition I know that this feels right, that I still am connected to what I find important. Somehow through intuition one grasps it. Or then one only feels, that one is somehow one with what one is doing./.../The basic feeling is that one believes it and trusts it. If not I think I could move to other things or search things in different ways./... (2F)<sup>391</sup>.

What I find interesting in this passage is that she tells us that in creating choreographic material she initially knows if some motion is right through intuition and thus judges if it interests her based on her feeling. But there is an additional qualification: feeling right is about feeling one with the movements she is doing. Therefore, I interpret her to say that it is on the grounds of an integrated motional style of being that her evolving comprehension of her dancing emerges and that it shapes the way in which her choreography develops. She even implies that if it did not inspire her in this manner she would have to use another approach.

The other dance artist, in turn, says that she creates form first, by which I take to her to mean movement sequences and choreographic structure, and then begins to search for a way of filling them with a certain kind of motional way of being. Before the quoted passage presented below, she explains that for her this state is a *suspended* experience of dancing in which thinking and moving are very closely aligned. Thus, I take her to be speaking about an integrated motional style of being. About her manner of creating choreography she says:

.../when one does, for example, a piece that is meant to be a complete whole, I proceed in a different order. When I begin to rehearse a piece I'm also interested in form. I fill these forms inwardly./.../Put simply, it is perhaps about living an internal world with one's body towards an external direction./.../In this way: if I have a form and begin to fill it, I search for a suitable state of being that would start to take it further./... (4F)<sup>392</sup>

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minä annan mennä vaan./.../Se lähtee vaan. Sitä yrittää löytää sitä herkkyyttä, aistia, että mihin tämä on viemässä tämä juttu./.../Jossain rajoissa se alkaa jäähmettyä johonkin suuntaa jolloin se on aikaa vapaa muodollisista. Mutta siinä on joku juttu, mistä minä saan kiinni./.../joka pikku hiljaa sitten jalostuu./... (2N)

391. .../sillä on jotain sen kanssa tekemistä, että tuntee, että tämä on intuition kautta, tämä tuntuu oikealta, että minä olen edelleen kiinni siinä mikä minulle on tärkeätä. Sen jotenkin intuition kautta ymmärtää. Tai sen vaan tuntee, että on jollain tapaa sen tekemisensä kanssa yhtä./.../Perustunne on siinä se, että siihen uskoo ja luottaa. Jos ei, minun mielestä, sitä olisi niin sitten, sitä voisi haravoida, hakeutua muihin juttuihin ja hakea muun kautta./... (2N)

392. .../kun tekee esimerkiksi jotain tällöistä valmiiksi kokonaisuudeksi tarkoitettua biisiä, minä menen toisessa järjestyksessä. Minua kiinnostaa siinä vaiheessa, kun minä alan sitä harjoittaa sitä teosta niin muodot myös. Minä täytän niitä muotoja sisältäpäin ja näin./.../se on ehkä sellaisen sisäisen maailman elämistä sillä kropallaan niin kuin ulos, yksinkertaistettuna./.../näin päin: jos on nyt se muoto ja sitä lähetään täyttämään, niin minä haen semmoista vastaavaa olotilaa, joka lähtisi viemään./... (4N)

She creates particular movements, which she then tries to enliven by searching for a suitable motional condition in which to perform them. Therefore she, too, suggests that in dancing through set movements it is possible to perform them through an integrated motional style of being. What both of the above dance artists imply is that entering an integrated motional style of being as well as experiencing and executing qualitatively different ones are something that elementally belong to their choreographic processes. The way they relate to their own motional being and through it probably to other elements such as sound, the stage sets, lighting, other performers and so forth during dancing is an important part of the choreography they create.

This section discussed an integrated motional style of being that the dance artists search for. It was shown to emerge through paying attention to the motional state of the body and was described as a process in which a dancer's existential level of being shifts. The dancer's total situational being becomes determined through this motional perspective. It was shown to be a qualitatively divergent state which the dance artists find interesting and through which they either begin producing motional material for their choreography or with which they come to determine the right qualitative mode of expressing and performing already created dance material.

### **Performing and dancing**

The interviewed dance artists also spoke of how they experience performing in a manner that is, in my view, closely related to the issues and themes presented in the previous section. Parviainen explains that performing a dance is about recollecting learned dance sequences and sometimes creating new ones during the improvisational phrases of a dance. For a dancer the choreography then appears as a "path" through which they "wander" by dancing during a performance. In these instances, the body spontaneously re-members the dance carrying the subject into a field of relations and interactions with, for example, other dancers, music, lighting, sets, space, audience. (Parviainen 1998, 170) Instead of meticulously analyzing these relationships, however, the interviewed dance artists mostly described the positive experiential aspects that they considered were involved in performing.

One of the dance artists whose ideas on searching for motion were also addressed in the previous section, describes what performing means to her in a way that relates to Parviainen's description of a path and wandering. She says that,

.../for me it is very important that it is a kind of journey./... (4F)<sup>393</sup>

She continues to portray the journey as one in which she is able to question

.../all the possible ways a human being can exist./... (4F)<sup>394</sup>

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393. .../Minulle on hirveän tärkeätä, että se on minulle joku tällainen matka./... (4N)

394. .../millä kaikilla mahdollisilla tavoilla ihminen niin kuin voi olla olemassa./... (4N)

As stated in the previous section, Sheets-Johnstone likewise suggests that a dancer, while thinking in movement, actively explores the world or circumstances she or he lives in as well as the possibilities it possesses. What a dancer experiences or perceives, while dancing-exploring, is revealed in this process of moving itself. Therefore, in Sheets-Johnstone's view the world a dancer explores is inseparable from the one she or he creates. (Sheets-Johnstone 1981, 402, 403) Kozel shares a similar view and claims the dancer interrogates her or his mode of dancing while dancing. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty's understanding of philosophical questioning, Kozel writes that interrogation, "is an attempt to correspond to the paradoxes, enigmas and "impossibilities" of the world, and the reason interrogation can do so is because it is motivated by wonder or fascination" (Kozel 1998/1994, 88). Hence, dancing-exploring involves an openness and generosity towards one's circumstances and is about living on the verge of the emergence of something unforeseen. Merleau-Ponty writes that in order for a subject to live through an event or to live with things in this manner he or she

must, without relinquishing his place and his point of view, and in the opacity of sensation, reach out towards things to which he has, in advance no key, and for which he nevertheless carries within himself the project, and open himself to an absolute Other which he is making ready in the depths of his being. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 325–326)

The body follows a perceptual faith or a "primary opinion" in which the questions it places upon things and situations receive answers in the consequent sensuous impressions which also implicitly reveal more than or something other than the question itself (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 319, 343). Along with these notions what I infer to happen to dancers as they dance is that through their bodily exploration they both bring into being and gain a sense of different potential modes of existing. It is in this sense that both Sheets-Johnstone and Kozel contend that what occurs during dancing is more than a dancer following the sensations of bodily motion. Dancers become aware of aspects of relationships, qualities, and generally the mode in which they are intertwined with the world at the moment. Dancers could even be simultaneously understood to be questioning the depths of human existence. Arnold Berleant argues that as dance is about a motional awareness it also epitomizes how we generate our spatiotemporal realm. He further suggests that, since dance is about the manner in which humans are present in their activities in relation to each other, additionally it is about engaging in a basic activity from which all human experience and construction of the world arise. (Berleant 1991, 166–167) In this sense he relates to the above-quoted dance artist's idea that she investigates the existential modes in which human beings can realize themselves.

The same interviewed dance artist continues to describe what performing means to her by referring to it as a pleasant suspended state which comes about through the close connection of thinking and doing in her view. She says that,

.../The pleasant side is that I find it to be a kind of a suspended state – a move into a level of experience which is somehow different from ordinary everyday bustle. This is why I find performing interesting. What happens in time, what kind of a conception of time emerges, what happens between other people and most importantly what does such a suspended state/

.../mean. Somehow it changes quite a bit through the performance/.../even if one did not go performing, through rehearsing./...<sup>395</sup>

She shows that, for one thing, she interrogates the time that is created in dancing. Merleau-Ponty argues that the body, while inhabiting time, also actively assumes it. In his view we gain access to time by occupying a temporal situation and grasping its entirety through the horizons of this situation (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 102, 140, 142, 323). Zahavi in his phenomenological study of self-awareness argues that time-consciousness always appears as a pervasive sensibility, as the flow of sensations and impressions we live with (Zahavi 1999, 122). These concepts suggest that the existential significance of time is related to the sense of a pre-thematic passage of a situation. Such lived time is not a steady or a linear in its progression. It involves stops, intensification, premonitions, and flashbacks. Kozel likewise writes that in dancing dancers explore time from "all sides, backwards and forwards" and that it disrupts our everyday concern with linearly proceeding time (Kozel 1998(1994, 114). Every dance has a temporality of its own and every event of dancing evolves through a lived temporality of its own making the experience of dancing significant in a particular manner. What interests the previously quoted dance artist above all, however, is the general nature of the suspended state that she enacts during performing. She, in fact, also describes this state as something she longs to experience when she is not performing or rehearsing. She considers it to be something transcendent and concludes that,

.../when you have performed, you certainly are a different person than before performing./... (4N)<sup>396</sup>

As suggested by the previous sections of this chapter, entering an integrated motional style of being means that a dancer undergoes a change in her or his mode of being. In addition, earlier it was shown that Sheets-Johnstone and Parviainen maintain that dancers in dancing experience such significance or states of being that they cannot experience through other means. It was mentioned, furthermore, that the event of dancing changes from one situation to next and brings about unanticipated experiences. In chapter 12 it was argued, moreover, that in order for a subject to experience or gain a sense of something unfamiliar it is necessary for him or her to open up to a difference and that in so doing she or he undergoes a change. In such an instance, the subject opens up a new mode perceiving and incorporates a sense of something it has not experienced before. All of these issues relate to the above quotation. However, before discussing this theme a bit further, I will introduce some comments the

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395. .../Se miellyttävä puoli, niin minusta se on se semmoinen kohonnut tila, tällainen jonkunlainen siirtyminen sellaiseen olemisensä kokemisen tasoon, joka on jotenkin toinen kuin tällainen ihan tavallinen arkinen touhuilu. Ja se on se syy, miksi esittäminen on minusta kiinnostavaa. Mitä siinä tapahtuu ajassa, minkälainen aikakäsitys siitä muodostuu, mitä siinä tapahtuu muiden ihmisten kanssa ja ennen kaikkea se että, mitä, mitä se semmoinen kohonnut/.../tarkoittaa. Se jotenkin muuttuu aika paljon esitysten myötä, kaikenlaisten, vaikkei menisi esittämäänsäkään, harjoittelunkin myötä./... (4N)

396. .../kun on esittänyt, on kyllä takuulla toinen ihminen kuin ennen sitä./... (4N)

other interviewed dance artists made on performing, which similarly relate to the transformation and pleasure that performing brings about.

One of the interviewees speaks of the manner in which he enjoys performing in the following way:

. . ./I do enjoy that moment, when I have had the chance to rehearse enough that I can forget about it and put myself fully into what I am doing. To be so concentrated and enjoy the concentration, in case of which I do not have to care about anything else except the situation. In a way it is like a drug./ . . .(3M)<sup>397</sup>

After a sufficient amount of rehearsing and after learning to trust his ability to dance a certain dance, during performance he is able to leave his mundane concerns and worries behind and focus only on the situation he is experiencing. This seems to offer him some sort of a “high”, some sort of a pleasing or rewarding experience since he describes performing to be like a drug. This description, in fact, relates to one of the previously quoted dance artist’s longing. It equally implies a dependency or a need to experience performing again and again. He continues:

. . ./For example, during performance I connect with others in a great way, usually, I mean with the other dancers. I find it a unique situation that you have, let’s say, an hour-long piece and you remain speechless and have strong contact. It is something really great./ . . ./it has so many hues and levels – the communication does. In my view this is really great and relates to the peak experiences of a performer, a dancer./ . . ./And then the euphoric feeling after performance. It is great./ . . . (1M)<sup>398</sup>

Again he speaks of the pleasures of performing but with an additional emphasis. He enjoys the pre-thematic and corporeal interaction dancers have with each other on stage. Fraleigh suggests that it is possible that in ‘being-with’ others instead of ‘being-towards’ others in dancing a point of intersection emerges, “a dissolution of selfness and otherness in the present moment of actual performance” (Fraleigh 1996/1987, 195). This could be understood as an experience of an intimate embodied dialogue or communion in which the dance danced is a common project and the body of one dancer is attuned to the body of the other in a spontaneous and sensitive manner. Especially in the case of dancing that utilizes somatic awareness of the body, it is possible that through physical contact a dancer’s body becomes

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397. . . ./Kyllä minä nautin siitä, siitä hetkestä, jolloin minä olen saanut harjoitella sen verran pitkään, että minä voin siinä tilanteessa unohtaa sen ja kokonaan eläytyä siihen mitä minä teen. Ja tavallaan olla niin keskittynyt, nauttia siitä keskittymisestä, jolloin minun ei tarvitse huolehtia mistään muusta kuin siitä tilanteesta. Tavallaan se on niin kuin se huume./ . . .(3M)

398. . . ./esimerkiksi esitystilanteessa minä saan mahtavan kontaktin niihin muihin, yleensä – siis muihin tanssijoihin. Se on minun mielestä aivan uniikki tilanne. Se että sinulla on sanotaan tunnin mittainen teos/. . ./te olette puhumatta täysin, ja hirveä kontakti. Se on jotain semmoista mielettömän hienoa./ . . ./siinä on niin monta sävyä ja niin monta tasoa sillä kommunikaatiolla. Se on minusta aivan äärimmäisen hienoa – liittyen näihin huippuhetkiin esiintyjänä, tanssijana./ . . ./Ja sitten se euforinen fiilis esiintymisen jälkeen. Se on mahtava./ . . . (3M)

the inside of the other's outside, so to speak, and vice versa. A reversal might occur which Kozel describes by saying that,

This happens when the dancers are so open to each other that they feel the tone and energy of each other's movement almost simultaneously. They absorb this tone into themselves altering it . . . and returning it from whence it came – which is to say from the self as well as from the other. (Kozel 1998/1994, 85)

I also think that this sense of communion is heightened by the presence of the audience. As Parviainen claims, in performing dancers are naked and vulnerable (Parviainen 1998, 170). They present the manner in which they have come to interpret a certain dance piece and basically have no other control over how their performance will be received by the spectators except for the manner in which they perform. Usually performers would like their performance to be appreciated. In order to achieve this kind of a response, I believe that performers concentrate on the actual performing of the dance in a heightened manner. Simultaneously their awareness of and sensitivity towards other performers living through the same event is intensified. This experience is something that the previously quoted dance artist enjoys a great deal.

Another of the dance artists while speaking about the positive sides of dancing speaks of a communion as well. But he does so in a more general manner.

. . ./I achieve the best feelings when dance is not a separate part of something, but is a part of a connection. Through dance you can gain such feelings/. . ./that you find a connection between your own existence with all of the rest of existence. You are a part of a larger whole./ . . .(1M)<sup>399</sup>

He thus seems to enjoy the less constricted and inhibited structures of experiences that dancing brings about in him (cf. Berleant 1991, 168). In the event of dancing and an enacted integrated motional style of being, everything present in a dancer's circumstances becomes affected; the dancer's body, memories, her or his self-awareness, perception, and consequently the relation to other dancers, the audience, the set, the space, the music, the costume, the lights, etc. Since in the integrated motional style of being impressions and sensations are grasped in a pre-thematic manner their distinctness and separateness is dissolved. What I think is important, in addition to an intimate relation to other performers, is that the dancer experiences the audience as a part of a shared event. Berleant writes of this by saying that,

The originary actions of the dancer combine with the active response of the onlooker as both participate in the interplay of forces that constitutes the dance. . . By joining in the field of forces that constitute the realm of dance experience, the audience also performs the dance. (Berleant 1991, 158, 170)

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399. . . /Kaikkein kivoimmat tunteet minä tunnen silloin kun tanssi ei ole mikään erillinen osa-alue mistään vaan tanssi on osa yhteyttä. Tanssin avulla tietyllä tavalla pääsee sellaisiin fiiliksiin/. . ./löytää jonkin sellaisen säikeen tämän oman olemassaolon ja kaiken muun olemassaolon välillä. On osa isompaa kokonaisuutta./ . . .(1M)

It is through the synaesthetic powers of the body that the audience immediately grasps the lived significance of a dance performance. The performer similarly gains a sense of the presence of the audience which in different spaces and with different kinds of spectators also affects the general significance the performance has for a dancer.

The interview material contains one other description of the positive experiences dancing awakens in a dancer. One of the interviewees says that,

.../It is also like a liberation./.../You acquire wings and fly in the air freely. It is extremely difficult to define what it is./... (2F)<sup>400</sup>

Even if she finds it hard to describe she tells us that dancing brings about a sense of freedom and lightness. All in all the above paragraphs contain many descriptions of the positive nature of performing and dancing. To summarize the positive effects the interviewees ascribed to performing or dancing: they find performing and dancing to transcend everyday reality and to be connected to a sense of pleasure; dancing is something that liberates them; it makes them feel their existence in a multifaceted manner; it is like a drug that makes them feel euphoric; finally it makes them feel that they are connected to something larger which they feel to be important. What these descriptions, then, emphasize is a sense of pleasure that results from dancing and performing.

Social theorist Pasi Falk writes about bodily pleasure by explaining that it derives from the body's capacity to cross boundaries through its expressional and experiential nature (Falk 1994, 64). Following this line of argument, I interpret performing and dancing, while producing an integrated motional style of being, to be pleasant because it dissolves the boundaries of personal or reflective consciousness, for example. This is something Fraleigh writes about too. Somewhat like a few of the interviewees, she believes that the dancer's individuality and everyday persona are transcended in dancing. In her view dancing also binds the dancer to other dancers and the audience (Fraleigh 1996/1987, 30). What an integrated motional style of being seems to accomplish through the flux of sensations and impressions it bestows on the dancer is a joining of existential aspects that in an everyday context derive their distinctness through how they differ. Indeed, what is necessary for a sense of pleasure to evolve, according to Falk, is that in one's actions, one is directed to something which is yet not actualized and which one does not know in a detailed manner in advance. (Falk 1994, 65–66) Parviainen, in turn, reminds us that even when performing set choreography, each performance is somewhat different and reveals itself to the dancer in a different light (Parviainen 1998, 171). Consequently, in entering performance or falling into an integrated motional style of being the dancer confronts something unfamiliar. She or he has to have enough courage or faith to allow her or him to plunge into dancing despite the uncertainty of how her or his dancing will be realized and what she or he will experience.

As the interviewed dancers speak about a pleasure derived from dancing and performing,

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400. .../se on myös niin kuin vapautus./.../Saa siivet selkään ja lentelee ilmatilassa vapautuneesti. Sitähän on älyttömän vaikea määritellä, mitä se on./... (2N)

I also interpret their experiences to have emotional significance. The nature of the emotional experiences given by dancing can be clarified through Glen Mazis' analysis of the motional nature of emotions. While relying on Merleau-Ponty's thinking he argues that the situational changes in our manner of being are experienced exactly as emotional or indeed are emotion itself.<sup>401</sup> He writes that,

"To be moved" means to come to a different position *in regard* to one's situation. It is to experience a change in one's "Being-towards" something or someone or to things in general: the relationship has suddenly burst forth, or perhaps has slowly blossomed forth, into some significance, in such a way that a distinctive quality of that relatedness has come forward into manifestness, whether for a moment or for quite a time. It is this relationship, now permeated by certain significance, a certain lived quality, within my body and consciousness, that is the emotion. (Mazis 1993, 22)

In writing of a "lived significance" he is referring to the experiences provided by our body-sense, which pivot about each other and form a unified temporal wave with a prevailing sensed quality. When writing of emotions he underlines that they are formed by a motional happening. In fact, he uses the term 'e-motion' to emphasize the motional basis of emotions. In so doing, he wants to show that emotions emerge through the intertwining sensations and impressions our circumstances provoke.<sup>402</sup> In dancing, some of these are the feelings, images, and memories related to dancing the dance performed and to bodily motion more generally, in addition to the dancer's relation to the surrounding space, sounds, people and so forth. Just like Falk, Mazis also argues that is important for the emergence of an e-motional experience that a subject is directed towards something unfamiliar or at least something, which is not yet actualized in his or her current situation. (Mazis 1993, 22, 29, 205, 213) He writes:

The unity of e-motion is the resonance of movement: one can only move outside oneself by moving beyond that ring of lit territory, of the known and the familiar which has already been possessed as my own. The differing, the unknown, the dissimilar, the dark, gives the necessary space and pull to create the movement of e-motional unity . . . (Mazis 1993, 266)

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401. In his work Mazis does not make a clear distinction between feeling and emotion. However, Marcia K. Moen shows that the term 'feeling' has many meanings. By it is understood, among other things, sensations, aesthetic awareness, feelings, affects, desires, empathy, and intuition (Moen 1991, 26). As Mazis' thinking relies to a large extent upon Merleau-Ponty's theories, I believe, that a categorical definition differentiating feelings from emotions is unnecessary. I also believe that all of the above meanings implied by the term 'feeling' are a part of what Mazis refers to by his term 'e-motion'.

402. Mazis' understanding of the motional and bodily nature of emotion comes close to what M.L. Lyon and J.M Barbalet have also discussed. In presenting some of the conceptions that Ludwig Feuerbach, Karl Marx, and Claus Schere have of emotion, they claim that emotions come into existence while the body senses its own activity. The feelings derived from this influence our behaviour and these feelings also imply a practical situational direction as well as empower us to follow this direction. (Lyon & Barbalet 1994, 57)

In relation Falk's and Mazis' understanding and the interviewees comments on their experiences of dancing, I draw the conclusion that they are interested in dealing with something that cannot return to its previous state and continually creates something new. Dancers achieve this goal by opening up to an integrated motional style of being that allows them to traverse the boundaries of their everyday selves. Their earlier experiences of dancing in an integrated mode operate as a blueprint which takes them towards the concrete realization of a pleasant and transformative experience of dancing. Performing and dancing in this manner, nonetheless, is something that comes to be revealed as an e-motional disclosure of an integrated field of presence (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 416, 423). As Merleau-Ponty contends,

If to live is to invent, it is to invent beginning with specific givens . . . Thus one's self-expression is an exchange between that which is given and that which is about to be accomplished. (Merleau-Ponty 1993/1982, 55)

### **The pleasant and unpleasant experiences and expectations related to dancing**

To end the discussion of this chapter I will briefly discuss the difference between pleasant and unpleasant experiences and expectations related to dancing and the body, since the dance artists seemed to value the former and spoke rather reservedly of the latter. In my view these two dimensions of experience are connected since they operate as conditions for each other. Before turning to the interviewees comments on this issue, I will say a few words on painful and constricting bodily experiences.

Drew Leder in his phenomenological account of the body describes feelings of well-being as something amorphous. He claims that they are experienced as having no distinct beginnings, ends, or abrupt transformations. In his view, pain instead effects an intentional disruption and a spatiotemporal constriction. (Leder 1991, 72, 73) We usually do not freely choose to experience pain and, when we do experience it, we are forced to pay attention to it and are unable to totally control its nature and duration. Elaine Scarry in her study of pain finds that pain is world-destroying. In her view pain mimics death since it seems to be a felt-experience of what one is not able to feel in death (Scarry 1985, 30–32). When a body through pain or even severe fatigue becomes less efficient in being aware of and functioning in the world, obviously the liveliness and richness found in the world diminishes. Drew Leder agrees with this kind of description when pointing out that pain tends to induce self-reflection and isolation (Leder 1991, 75). From the earlier discussion found in the previous section, it could be inferred that in contrast an integrated motional style of being and dancing more generally, as they evolve through crossing over boundaries, are expansive. They are so even if dancers first turn "inwards" to listen to the sensations dancing stimulates in their bodies. Added to this, both Fraleigh and Leder point to the fact that an integrated motional style of being in dancing and pleasure respectively enhances the dancer's relation to other people and the surroundings they are in (Leder 1991, 75; Fraleigh 1996/1987, 30). Unpleasant sensations occurring during dancing or in the body more generally could be understood to restrict the variety of dimensional qualities found in dancing and even hinder dancing

altogether. The interviewed dancers valued and searched for the opposite but still spoke of pain and fear to some extent.

To me it was surprising that pain was spoken so little of during the interviews, since I know from experience that dancing involves suffering the pain of fatigue, of a bruised the body, and even of completely running out of breath. In the interviews I also spontaneously asked about the unpleasant sides of dancing and being a dance artist. In fact, Kozel finds that to deny the pain and the perceptions of distortion that dancing entails is to curtail its existence by denying half of its vocabulary (Kozel 1998/1994, 115). One of the dance artists comes to a similar conclusion and says that:

.../I would not be doing this if it did not involve aches and other things, because I want them too./.../Somehow the main thing is the positive side, or they have to be in balance./.../ Otherwise I would surely do something different and not go through the trouble of suffering./... (4F)<sup>403</sup>

She suggests that suffering aches and pains is what makes the positive experiences of dancing worthwhile and that the positive experiences make her endure the not so positive ones.

However, in general the interviewed dance artists were rather quiet on the issue of pain. One of them said:

.../At some point I had a pain in the lower back for a couple of months and then some hip pains. But they all passed with training./... (3M)<sup>404</sup>

He tells us that he used to have some pain in his body that was relieved with appropriate exercise and rehabilitation. Another seems to refer to pain as something common, an issue shared by dancers, when she says that some cases of bodily pain are classic.

.../the feelings one has when one works with the body? Well, of course the classic ones, that this muscle here is especially painful./... (4F)<sup>405</sup>

She continues to speak about issues closely related to pain, when referring to the weak areas and a slight injury she has in her body. Both of them are something that I believe to be experienced if not through severe pain at least through such unpleasant feelings as tiredness and aching. She says:

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403. .../Enhän minä muuten tätä tekisi ellei tässä olisi niitä kolotuksia ja muita, koska minä haluan myös sitä./.../Jotenkin se pääasia on tämä positiivinen puoli. Tai niitten täytyy olla tasapainossa./.../muuten minä tekisin varmasti jotain muuta, enkä viitsisi ollenkaan vaivautua kärsimään./... (4N)

404. .../Yhdessä vaiheessa minulla oli alaselän kipu pari kuukautta ja sitten lonkkakipuja, mutta ne meni kaikki treenaamalla ohi./... (3M)

405. .../niitä tuntemuksia kun työskentelee kehonsa kanssa? Siis tietysti nämä klassiset, että on erityisesti tämä lihas tässä nyt kipeä./... (4N)

.../Of course I have these kinds of weak areas like every body does, which I try to work with and mold in order to expand the range of motion./.../This body is the result of enormous work. Most of the time I experience it as quite pleasant./.../It does not create any larger problems, other than some small things like that sprain there./... (4F)<sup>406</sup>

Despite these problems, which she considers small, she feels good in her body. All of the above passages in my view suggest that dancers do have some kinds of painful experiences when they work with their bodies but they endure them. They even have ways of working with their bodies that ultimately lead to them experiencing less pain and so are able to dance more effortlessly. Therefore, it seems that they share my view that the soreness of muscles, some inflammatory pain, and pain from bruising are everyday phenomena dancers live with. Dancers become accustomed to them and bear them to the extent that the pain does not become so severe as to hinder their ability to dance. Merleau-Ponty writes in relation to this, "We all know that moment at which we decide no longer to endure pain or fatigue, and when, simultaneously, they become intolerable in fact" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 441). In the case of a dancer the moment they become intolerable relates to the moment the pain and some kind of injury or overuse of a body part that it implies, is intolerable in dancing itself. While dancers generally are highly sensitive to their bodies and attempt to relate to it in a beneficial manner, they often also endure pain quite well. They seem to accept the fact that in order to move towards the pleasant experiences of dancing they need to endure some more uncomfortable experiences related to physical exertion.

Nevertheless, the interviewees showed that they also are concerned with the limits the body has in enduring and living through severe physical stress. The interviewed dance artists worried about their health and the degeneration of their bodies. They were anxious about the possibilities they foresaw could or would happen to their bodies. One of the possible set backs that worried the interviewees was the possibility of physical injury that might leave them incapable of dancing for some while and thus restricting the life-world they are accustomed to living in. One of them says:

.../you have to endure all the insecurities, plus the fact of your own body – if you break a knee you probably or possibly won't do any pieces for two years./... (1M)<sup>407</sup>

Another adds:

.../the negative side of being a dancer is ... that it involves a certain kind of insecurity in relation to remaining healthy./.../It is something one has to confront because always, always,

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406. .../Minulla on tietenkin tällaisia heikkoja kohtia niin kuin jokaisessa kehossa on, mitä minä yritän hirveästi työstää ja hakee, niin kuin laajentaa sitä liikkuvuutta./.../Tämä on niin mahdollottoman työn tulos tämä keho. Suurimmaksi osaksi ajasta nykyisin minä koen sen ihan miellyttävänä./.../Se ei järjestä suurrempia ongelmia, vähän jotain pientä niin kuin nyt toi revähdys tuolla./... (4N)

407. .../kaikki mahdolliset epävarmuudet kestettävä, plus myös sitten se, että oman vartalonsa, jos siinä menee polvi paskaksi niin sinä et sitten varmaan kohta mahdollisesti kahteen vuoteen tee mitään juttuja./... (1M)

things always happen – to myself it happened once. And then when you always know someone who has been operated on something or something like that. To put yourself in a physically risky situation is a point of insecurity./ . . . (3M)<sup>408</sup>

Working with the body and daily consulting its state, which at times involves fatigue and pain, is something that I believe makes the dance artists understand that the body is vulnerable and that it has limits. This aspect of the body is underlined by experiences of injury they themselves have had or through how they have perceived the bodies of other dancers to be affected by such damage. In thinking of these issues, the dance artists foresaw or even anticipated that they themselves also might have such accidents. They were aware that dancing that is highly demanding and requires excessive endurance or meticulous control of the body involves going on a limb, taking the risk of placing the body in a vulnerable situation. For obvious reasons they would like to avoid accidents that result in physical injury.

Another issue that the interviewees addressed when speaking about bodily anxieties was that of ageing. One of dance artists experienced that getting older meant that dance work had become physically more demanding:

. . . /Being a dancer is hard./ . . . /Now I feel that it is becoming harder and harder all the time, I mean physically because one is getting older./ . . . (1M)<sup>409</sup>

The physical fact that with age certain dimensions that influence the motility of the body such as muscle strength and elasticity decrease seem to have influenced this dance artist's felt-experience of dancing (Pasanen-Willberg 2000, 53–54). Another of the interviewees instead contemplates the inevitable fact of ageing in advance. She did not feel that she was ageing in a manner that she was having somatic experiences of it at the moment, but understood that it was an existential fact that her body would change with time. She says:

. . . /When things start to go well with dancers, they start ageing. It's a very slow process of finding yourself, then a short peak and after begins the degeneration, the degeneration of the body./ . . . /I find it to be very close to the problem of existence./ . . . /I don't find that I myself am deteriorating yet. On the contrary I'm anticipating it. I think a dance artist needn't deteriorate as young as they've been told [they might expect to]/. . . /The age limit will surely rise by almost twenty years./ . . . /After all it depends on what and how one does things./ . . . (4N)<sup>410</sup>

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408. . . . /tanssijana olemisen haittapuolia . . . siinä on semmoinen tietty turvattomuus, siitä että olen, pysynkö terveenä./ . . . /Se on semmoinen mihin joutuu törmäämään, koska aina, aina, aina sattuu ja tapahtuu. Itsellenikin joskus ja sitten kun tietää, että aina joltain on jotain leikattu ja muuta. Onhan se, että panee itsensä sillä tavalla myös fyysisesti riskialttiiseen tilaan, niin onhan se sellainen turvaton pointti./ . . . (3M)

409. . . . /Tanssijana oleminen on rankkaa./ . . . /Nyt jotenkin tuntuu, että se kokoajan vain rankistuu, siis fyysisesti, sen takia kun vanhenee./ . . . (1M)

410. . . . /Kun alkaa mennä hyvin tanssijoilla niin ne alkaa vanheta. Siinä on tämä hirveän hidas itsensä löytäminen ja sitten huippu on lyhyt ja alkaa degeneraatio, ruumiin degeneraatio./ . . . /se on jotenkin hyvin lähellä tätä eksistenssiongelmaa minusta tämä./ . . . /Minä en vielä katso koe rapistuvani. Päinvastoin minä ennakoin sitä. Minä olen sitä mieltä, että tanssitaiteilijan ei tarvitse rapistua ollenkaan niin nuorena kun sitä on käsketty./ . . . /Se tulee varmasti se ikäräjä nousemaan lähestulkoon kaksikymmentä vuotta./ . . . /Sehän riippuu, että mitä tekee ja miten./ . . . (4N)

In her view dancers, thus, can go on dancing well into their mature years if they dance in a way that the ageing and changing body adjusts to. But she does refer to the ageing body as something that relates to deterioration. The general attitude western people have towards ageing is that with it something is lost. In fact, it is generally understood to be the process taking us to our disintegration – death. Western culture like western dance is suffused by an ageism in which ageing is considered a sign of incapacity – a sign of a narrowed scope of living and dealing with the world. In contemporary dance, too, it is often the case that young, physically energetic dancers are appreciated, since they can easily endure the physical exertion of complex and acrobatic choreography. Riitta Pasanen-Willberg argues that in modern and contemporary dance it is common that a dancer's experiential knowledge that has accumulated through the years of working with dance is seldom appreciated as much as what Shusterman calls the performative and representational bodily aptitudes. She even considers dancers themselves to empower ageist attitudes about dancing by no longer performing as dancers after they have reached the age of 35–40. Yet, she also illustrates that in many dance forms, such as Butoh, Indian dancing, and flamenco, things are different. Experience and the wisdom gathered during life and while ageing are appreciated. (Pasanen-Willberg 2000, 55) What ageing dancers might come to lack in physical endurance they most likely gain in the somatic understanding of the body and the knowledge of performing dance and expression through it.

In fact, in modern and contemporary dance it is quite common that individual dance artists continue to perform when they enter or pass mid-life. A famous example is Isadora Duncan, who was still performing publicly during the year of her death at the age of 49 (Blair 1986, 391). Martha Graham, likewise, performed publicly for the last time when she was 76-years old (Graham 1991, 238). A more recent example is Carolyn Carlson, who just recently performed in Finland at the age of 59 (Räsänen 2002). And another example: Nederlands Dans Theater has formed its own company for dancers over forty still willing to dance. Jiri Kylian, the artistic director of the company, finds that the skills in dancing are not lost when a dancer turns forty, even if bodily changes limit the technical possibilities of their dancing. In his view, it is a task for choreographers to learn to deal with older, more mature, dancers and to utilize their life-experiences and skills (Räsänen 2000; cf. Pasanen-Willberg 2000, 55). To me this shows that if they so desire, dance artist can go on performing despite their age as the above-quoted interviewee suggests.<sup>411</sup>

However, the changes that occur in the body through ageing (and which vary from one individual to the next), also mean changes in the manner in which dancing is experienced

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411. However, as stated in Part I, in Finland it has been common for dancers to end their careers before or during middle age. While studying the ending of dancers' active careers, Johanna Laakkonen writes about the voluntary and compulsory ways in which dancers come to abandon their artistic work. The latter category includes those dancers who cannot continue their profession due to injury or a decrease in jobs offered to them. Laakkonen argues, however, that dancers also stop dancing because of difficult work-schedules, economic hard-ship and because for family reasons. (Laakkonen 1993, 50; cf. Pasanen-Willberg 2002, 56) Thus, Laakkonen's study illustrates several issues that make it generally difficult for a dancer in Finland to continue to perform.

by the dancer and the manner in which dancers have become accustomed to relating to their bodies. This is what I think makes dancers quite anxious about ageing, in addition to the values and practices effective in the field of freelance that are not very generous to the ageing dancer. Growing older might not only bring along with it the "intellectual experience of disorder, but the vital experience of giddiness and nausea, which is the awareness of our contingency, and the horror with which it fills us" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 254). Ageing necessarily means a continuing transformation and life taking us towards our death. This process, however, is not only about a deterioration of the body. As life proceeds, individuals become more individualized through the development of the scope of their life history. With it they might also gain depth, originality, skills and ideas related to dance and dancing that no one else has. In the end, even if most of the interviewed dance artists did not themselves experience themselves to be ageing in any profound manner, this issue was still spoken of to some extent. In anticipating the future the freelance dance artists evaluate the values and practices of the field they work in and perceive how others have managed their artistic careers. From this they draw conclusions about their own possibilities to make career choices. As Merleau-Ponty states: "I possess the remote past, as I do the future, therefore, only in principle, and my life is slipping away from me on all sides and is circumscribed by impersonal zones" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 331).

This section discussed some of the bodily pains and anxieties the interviewed dance artists had. It argues that dancers endure a certain amount of pain in their everyday work, but that an intolerable amount of pain hinders their dancing. In fact, it became evident that the dance artists perceive the body as vulnerable, as something that is threatened by injury if its limits of endurance are exceeded in dancing. The possibility of injury made them uncertain and anxious as did the prospect of ageing, both of which were described as something that at least provisionally constrict the richness of the life-world dancers are accustomed to (before readjusting to a new mode of relating to their circumstances). Still, despite the inevitable fact that the body changes along with our lives and ageing, it was shown that dance artists have the possibility of continuing their careers in performing as long as their tasks are such that the body adjusts to them. As was shown, though, it is quite rare for most Finnish dance artists to continue their careers as dancers after the age of forty.

## 14 Identifying Oneself as a Freelance Dance Artist

In addition to portraying different kinds of issues related to being a freelance dance artist, the interviewees also made comments on how they themselves conceived of their bodies and themselves as dancers and choreographers. More generally, they spoke about what being a dance artist means to them and, more particularly, about being a freelance dance artist. Whilst many passages from the interview material that are related to these themes have already been presented in the earlier chapters of this study, this chapter will examine those comments which so far have not been addressed. It does so since the understanding the interviewees have of their own bodies and themselves as artists express the more personal traits the dance artists consider to characterize and shape their being. Like the experiences of their bodies, the perceptions and understandings of dance practices and the dance field that they have, the conceptions they have of themselves fashion the way in which they make choices, understand, and deal with their artistic work and life circumstances. Therefore, aside from the experiential and practical activity that they engage in and the knowledge related to both, I also consider the conceptions that the dance artists have of themselves to exemplify an existential dimension related to that of being a freelance dance artist.

In relation to this kind of a more explicit self-understanding that the interviewees provided it should, however, be noted that all of the interview material presented in this study could be regarded as biographical in the sense that it conveys meanings and vignettes of the life-world of the interviewees. The previous chapters introduce comments by the interviewees in which they clarify their own understanding of and relation to being a freelance dance artist. This they do whilst acknowledging that they are bringing forth meanings from their own perspective or that they are conversing about issues of more explicit personal experience. This means that both the content of their conversation as well as the manner in which they speak and address different issues relate to features of self-awareness and are indicative of the existence of some kind of a self. One point that relates most to the first category, and which in the case of dance artists is generally important, is their relation to their bodies whose sensations and state they consider an integral part of their conscious being. However, while speaking of the ways in which they pay attention to their bodies, their physical performance and the more reflective practice of making sense of the dance practices they are engaged in, the dance artists addressed themselves and their life-world in a variety of ways in the interviews. Among other things their discussions included reflective descriptions, recollections, thematizations and even categorizations of their understanding of and relation to different issues. Thus, throughout our conversations together a sense of the self of the interviewees was present, even if in different instances it was expressed in different ways. Their accounts indicate types of self-awareness and aspects of the relationship they have with themselves.

This manner of apprehending the nature of the self is part and parcel of Merleau-Ponty's work. In the next few paragraphs I shall briefly clarify the main tenets of his thesis concerning the self in order to point out the kinds of characteristics related to self-awareness and self-knowledge that I consider the interviewees' comments addressed in this chapter to be most closely related to. While doing so, I shall also clarify how the interpretation that I give here on the manner in which the interviewees identify themselves as certain kinds of dance artists is related to the personal identity of the interviewees, although this is not of the immediate subject matter of this study.

For Merleau-Ponty the self is about a situational and relational subjectivity, that is, a flux of relations, which can never be clearly grasped. He states that "I know myself only in my inherence in time and in the world: that is I know myself only in ambiguity" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 345). As was already noted in chapter 12, he further characterizes the nature of the relations we have to the world through which we come to recognize our own being by stating that we find and realize ourselves only in our acts, be these acts of perception, concrete physical acts, acts of speech, or those of reflection (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 383). In his view, then, we are not simply a series of solipsistic consciousnesses nor what we believe ourselves to be through our personal understanding. Instead, our acts simultaneously involve both a contact with the world as well as self-consciousness. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 377, 383, 400, 405, 407) However, this they do in a manner that, "they outstrip themselves leaving no interiority of consciousness. Consciousness is transcendence through and through" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 376). It takes flight in things, in others, and in the world (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 369). Merleau-Ponty, therefore, repeatedly underlines that subjectivity must be understood as a somewhat indeterminate inherence to the world. For example, he writes additionally:

I am not myself a succession of 'psychic' acts, nor for that matter a nuclear / who brings them together into a synthetic unity, but one single experience inseparable from itself, one single 'living cohesion', one single temporality which is engaged from birth, in making itself progressively explicit, and in confirming that cohesion in each successive present. It is this advent or again this transcendental event that the cogito retrieves. The primary truth is indeed 'I think', but only provided that we understand that thereby 'I belong to myself' while belonging to the world. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 407)

For him it is the tacit cogito, the pre-reflective entanglement of the body with the world, that informs our consciousness of ourselves. Whether they have originated in the past or influence the present, the subject's experiences are offered to her or him by the body schema, which is organized through temporalization, self-reflexivity, and the intentional arch. Therefore, along with these functions the pre-reflective experiences we have are already tacitly assumed to be ours even if they are anonymous and are not the result of our personal acts.

In the above passage Merleau-Ponty also acknowledges our more reflective stances and elsewhere underlines that reflection is reflection on a pre-reflective basis. Hence, a reflective conception of the self, self-knowledge, is likewise reliant on the pre-reflective self-awareness described above. The pre-reflective stances we have are something, which in Merleau-

Ponty's view, necessarily motivate our more explicit understanding of ourselves (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 376). Zahavi illustrates this understanding while arguing that reflection changes the givenness of the experience reflected upon – otherwise there would be no need for reflection. It permits the differentiation of the dimensions of our lives, but this differentiation is not something that is externally imposed upon the object of reflection, it discloses and articulates what is implicitly contained already in the pre-reflective experience itself. (Zahavi 1999, 186–187) Merleau-Ponty describes the emergence of a reflective grasp of one's pre-reflective experiences, for example, in the following manner:

'My life', my 'total being' are not dubious constructs. . . but phenomena which are indubitably revealed to reflection. It is simply a question of what we *are doing*. . . Going back over the preceding days and months, I am made aware that my thoughts and actions were polarized, I pick out the course of a process of organization, a synthesis *in the making*. Yet it is impossible to pretend that I always knew what I now know, and to see as existing during the months which have elapsed, a self-knowledge which I have only just come by. . . The love which worked out its dialectic through me, and of which I have just become aware, was not, from the start, a thing hidden in my unconscious, nor was it an object before my consciousness, but the impulse carrying me towards someone, the transmutation of my thoughts and behaviour – I was not unaware of it since it was I who endured the hours of boredom preceding a meeting, and who felt elation when she approached – it was lived, not known, from start to finish. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 380–381)

This quotation relates to Merleau-Ponty's understanding that for a subject to be conscious, or to experience things, requires an internal connection between the body, other people, and the world. This in turn derives from the situated nature of our embodiment. In the end, Merleau-Ponty argues that the self is an open, indefinite unity or a field of experiences in which one experience builds upon another. In fact, as he argues that this sedimentary history is relevant to both the genesis and the significance of our experiences and thoughts, I consider him also to refer to it when he writes of a background form which our experiences stand out, are linked to, and form a continuity, which he labels a "universal I" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 395, 406). Due to this situatedness (which is made up of a history of experiences as well as the current relations we have to the world through our body), we are surrounded by an indeterminable sphere and cannot be totally transparent to ourselves, even if we can explicitly grasp aspects of our being in our acts and thoughts. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 96, 381, 406)

While commenting upon Merleau-Ponty's understanding of human ambiguity and the self, Hugh Silverman argues that he attempted to create a new conception of the self as an interwoven experiential whole which "requires that we go beyond an eclectic self, that a person is whole and not divided up into parts or sections, that one's understanding of this wholeness should form itself in terms of that whole and not in terms of its parts" (Silverman 1997/1987, 64, 67). As argued in part II, for Merleau-Ponty human existence is not about a set of facts. It is rather the fabric of their interconnections and therefore is found in between facts and features (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 166: Heinämaa 1996, 156). In addition to us being a field of experiences and relations, this means that the significance and meaning

we derive from our acts is likewise a question of the interrelations of situational features.

Nonetheless, we have the power to take hold of our life and construct conceptions of it through personal reflection, denomination, or verbal expression and, thus, to make our relation to the world exist in an explicit manner or to "immortalize moments of fleeting life" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 177, 178, 386, 389). As Silverman states, "In any consideration of the human self, some meaning arises, that is, we can be described in a certain way" (Silverman 1997/1987, 82). Nevertheless, we never quite become an object for ourselves since our understanding of ourselves relies on an indeterminate lived zone and since we find ourselves pushed into new situations which affect our existence in new ways. Merleau-Ponty writes of the temporality of our life in relation to our self-understanding:

My hold on the past and the future is precarious, and my possession of my own time is always postponed until a stage when I may fully understand it, yet this stage can never be reached, since it would be one more moment, bounded by the horizon of its future, and requiring in its turn further developments in order to be understood. My voluntary and rational life, therefore, knows that it merges into another power which stands in the way of its completion, and gives it a permanently tentative look. Natural time is always there. The transcendence of the instants of time is both the ground of, and the impediment to, the rationality of my personal history. . . the lived is thus never entirely comprehensible, what I understand never quite tallies with my living experience, in short, I am never quite at one with myself. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 346–347)

However, the manner in which we conceive of ourselves through linguistic reflection, conversations, or our other activities also continues to determine the manner in which we exist. Merleau-Ponty believes that while speaking it is the act of talking itself "that brings about that concordance between me and myself, and between myself and others" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 392). As was mentioned earlier in Part I, for Merleau-Ponty expression is not something external to our lived facticity. It is something that inhabits things and makes them present for us in a manner that we can comprehend and utilize. Yet, because of the expressive-constitutive nature of expressive gestures and language, to express something through our acts, speaking, or writing also in his view means that the expressed facticity gains a place in our life-histories. He writes:

To say that an event takes place is to say that it will always be true that it has taken place . . . gesture establishes a tradition . . . exactly as a middle class man turned workman always remains, even in his manner of being a workman, a middle-class-man-turned-workman, or as an act confers a certain quality upon us forever, even though we may afterwards repudiate it and change our beliefs. Existence always carries forward its past, whether it be by accepting or disclaiming it. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 393)

Expressing our self or subjectivity in speech and our other acts, then, is a question of forming ourselves and the course of our lives, even if it does not mean that the subject is to be found in his or her individual acts or expressions in any comprehensive way.

However, in relation to the words of the interviewees that this chapter addresses, it is also important to note that it is the other person who throws our distinctness and self-

apprehension into contrast most intensely. It is the relation we have to others that forms our mundane social self. In fact, it might be argued, as Butler seems to suggest, that in addition to the self being expressed and constituted through the acts of the subject, our intersubjective life turns it into a socio-culturally embodied object of belief which we rely upon while dealing with others (Butler 1988, 520). Indeed many of the passages, accounts, and anecdotes that the interviewees constructed while speaking and describing themselves and their bodies take as their starting point a first person perspective or relate to an 'I' in a readily identifiable way, too. They speak about things and situations that others have perceived and experienced as well. This they do in addition to drawing on their more subjectively accessible experiential life-histories. In Zahavi's terms this kind of a self-identification provokes a mundanization of our self-understanding. In such instances we use language, adopt an objectifying third person perspective on ourselves, and consider ourselves to be particular kinds of socially-identifiable subjects. He argues that the true individuality of the subject manifests itself exactly on this personal level. It is through the acts of personal convictions and decisions that we construe and define ourselves. They have a character shaping effect: when they change the personality of the subject changes. (Zahavi 1999, 157, 163)

What the above paragraphs suggest is that, while speaking about ourselves, we draw on our lived sense of the concrete activity that occurs while we embody our circumstances. Being in a situation and concretely entering the world through our embodiment is what Merleau-Ponty considers our self to realize itself through (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 408). But the above paragraphs have an additional connotation. They point out that in attempting to personally understand ourselves, identifying the kind of subjects we are in relation to all other subjects, we demarcate ourselves from others through our acts and also define ourselves linguistically. In relation to our use of language and self-identification it should be noted that, while living in different contexts or spheres of practice and speaking with different subjects, we also define ourselves through the use of different terms. In living in certain traditions or contexts we also have differently formed lingual discourses and practical conventions. Although we aim to do or express something novel we do so through pre-established forms of life and modes of expression and communication that condition the manner in which we at any moment are able to shape and express our lives. Merleau-Ponty notes this by pointing out, for example, that it is language itself that speaks through us:

... expression is a cultural object ... language transcends itself in speech ... To give expression is not to substitute, for new thought, a system of stable signs to which unchangeable thoughts are linked, it is to ensure, by the use of words already used, that the new intention carries on the heritage of the past, it is at a stroke to incorporate the past into the present, and weld that present to a future, to open a whole temporal cycle in which the 'acquired' thought will remain present as a dimension without our needing henceforth to summon it up or reproduce. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 390, 392)

This passage together with the notion that language is both expressive and constitutive of what it signifies I believe to come close to Butler's idea of performativity. With this term she addresses the discursive practices that form and mark our being. She writes that, "performa-

tivity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate “act”, but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names” (Butler 1993, 2). She argues that where a subject, for example, uses self-identificatory language (e.g. the first person pronoun), she or he lends or cites a preceding discourse that enables and delimits the possibilities of this self-identification. For her the personal ‘I’ is something that comes into existence only after being first addressed and thus given a place in speech. Thus, the manner in which discourse forms the subject is two-fold: it offers a delimiting space of discourse and an enabling place from which to utilize this discourse. (Butler 1993, 225–226)

Already in chapter 12 it was argued that story-telling, narrative accounts, as well as naming things and events are something that organize and make our endeavors and life more comprehensible. They cause things and events to exist as something and define our position in relation to the world. According to David Carr (1986, 74) our own identity for ourselves is partly a question of creating such accounts, too, in the sense that such activity, along with the rest of our more voluntary acts, shapes the manner in which we relate to the world and the form our life takes. He points out some additional features of self-narration that are of interest in this chapter: He argues that in telling others about ourselves, the manner in which we present ourselves relates to the select person or group we feel a need to explain and justify ourselves. He takes these to be those whom we mutually recognize and who form part of a group. In his view this group shares common projects or relations to the world. In the case of this study, I believe that the group-subject the interviewees addressed to be formed by that group of people who in their activities share the values, practices, and discourses generally prevalent in the danceworld of contemporary freelance dance. He further argues that self-reflection and reflection on others go hand in hand, since it is through others that we learn to understand our distinct ways of relating to the world and ourselves. The communal stories of a shared tradition or the field of a we-subject could be understood, thus, to be constructed and “de-constructed” while the group members create autobiographical accounts or self-descriptions. (Carr 1986, 63, 162–163)

In the next sections of this chapter I will look into the modes in which the interviewed dance artists create self-descriptions while describing the kinds of bodies they as dance artists have and the kinds of performing artists they conceive themselves to be. Some of the passages and issues discussed here are directly linked to the interpretations made of the roles of freelance dance artists and the manner in which these artists work with their bodies. In other parts, this chapter provides some new insights into the issues that influence the make-up of freelance dance artists. Therefore, this chapter, while it looks into passages of the interview material that are especially illuminative of the manner in which the interviewees relate to themselves as dance artists, continues to unravel some of the constitutive or structural features and some of the norms, values, and practices that mold the existence of freelance dance artists. (This sort of an approach is especially pertinent in this instance, since the interviewees were defining themselves while being in conversation with another freelance dance artist and were well aware that the interviews were conducted in order to analyze the nature of being a freelance dance artist.)

## 14.1 A Dancer's Body as a Locus of Transformation

To start off the discussion of this section I need to clarify the manner in which I use the term 'body-image' in this instance. Here it is meant to refer to an explicit understanding or figurative image the interviewees presented of their bodies in the interviews. Thus, I roughly follow Gallagher's and Cole's argument that the term 'body-image' is most often used to refer to a conscious representation of, image of, or belief about the body (Gallagher & Cole 1998, 132; Gallagher 1998/1995, 226). But it should be remembered that these representations are not something altogether different from the more introspective sense we have of our bodily positions. Our personal understanding of our body, our perceptions of its visual contours, as well as our felt-experiences of it are informative of one another. As Merleau-Ponty demonstrates, the specular image brings along with it a maturation of the body schema. He argues that gaining a sense of the visual appearance of her or his entire body opens a new functional level of consciousness for the child and writes:

With the specular image appears the possibility of an ideal image of oneself. . . . And this image would henceforth be either explicitly posited or simply implied in everything I see at each minute. . . . Thereupon I leave the reality of my lived *me* in order to refer myself constantly to the ideal, fictitious, or imaginary *me*, of which the specular image is the first outline. . . . The mirror image itself makes possible a contemplation of the self. . . . The specular image has a de-realizing function in the sense that it turns the child away from what he effectively is, in order to orient him toward what he sees and imagines himself to be. (Merleau-Ponty 1985/1964d, 136, 137)

In this section, nonetheless, I want to differentiate between the terms 'body image' and 'body schema' in order to underline that what is here discussed is the interviewee's more reflective understanding of the visual and functional nature of their own bodies. Even if this section does relate to some features of the dance artists felt-sense of their bodies and the meanings and values they give to their bodily experience, it is mainly concerned with the manner they have formed a personal conception of their bodies.

In describing their bodies the dance artists gave accounts of what their bodies were like during different phases of their dance education and career. Hence, they show that their bodies, as well as their understanding of the nature of their own bodies, have shifted and involve a historicity. This mode of depicting the nature of their own bodies that the interviewees utilize is closely related to Merleau-Ponty's idea that the body is a historical idea or a historically emergent situation and that the present experiences and understanding we have of our bodies build upon previous ones (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 170, 171). To me it even seems that one of the interviewees directly shares Merleau-Ponty's insight. While describing how he conceives of his body he says that,

. . . /we are the result of the past, and the future is coming and whatever but, in any case, we are here, with these resources, here and now, at this moment, with those resources we are given, so that I am in this body also./ . . . (1M)<sup>412</sup>

In addition to this historically-oriented understanding of their own bodies, as the introduction of this chapter suggests, I generally consider the comments the interviewees made upon the way their bodies have evolved to be indicative of the way in which they have incorporated the practices, values, and discourses related to a dancer's body that are prevalent in the freelance field of dance.

The following paragraphs address the manner in which the interviewees discussed the historicity of their bodies. The dance artist quoted above describes his body and the way he has related to it at length:

.../And how has my body-image emerged? Well it started – it must have gone through all the possible phases you can think of. First I was really skinny before my teenage years. Then I tried to do a lot of bodybuilding. Then puberty came, and as I have these muscles in my genes, I suddenly became this curious lump. Before I learned how to use them – before I did not how to use my muscles and they bulged even more. They weren't long and still aren't. They were more like balls. Then lately what I've thought about is this push towards conformity, that there exist these beauty ideals, aesthetic ideals and all the rest of the conformity stuff, that you should look like something and function in certain ways etc. Then I tried to squeeze myself into that. As I was by no means of model measurements figure-wise, it was quite hard. But then when I came to school, a deeper understanding of the body started to emerge; how it functions and what is connected to what. And now, as a matter of fact, only very recently have I started to find that deeper connection, how the mind and the body are connected. . . / . . . (1M)<sup>413</sup>

He recounts the changes that occurred in his body while he grew up, but also speaks of how training affected the contours and muscles of his body. He suggests that a socially acknowledged body ideal existed related to the appearances and functional abilities dancers' bodies should conform to. Now, after first struggling to adjust to these ideals, he feels that he has learned to appreciate the body more through its functional structures and experiential possibilities. I consider him, therefore, to imply that he relates to his body in a different fashion than before. He seems no longer to take some of the aesthetic ideals he describes as seriously as before, since he later says that,

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412. . . /olemme menneisyyden tulosta, ja tulevaisuus on tulossa ja näin, mut että joka tapauksessa, olemme tässä näillä eväillä, tässä, tässä juuri nyt, tällä hetkellä, niillä eväillä mitä meille on annettu, ja että olen myös tässä kehossani. / . . . (1M)

413. . . /Ja miten se [ruumiinkuva] on muotoutunut? Sehän nyt on siis lähtenyt ihan, varmaan mennyt nämä kaikki mahdolliset vaiheet mitä voi olla. Ensin oli hirveän ruipelo ennen murrosikää. Silloin yritti hirveästi bodata. Sitten kun tuli murrosikä niin sitten, kun nämä on geeneissä minulla nämä lihakset, niin yhtäkkiä tulikin tällainen ihan ihmeellinen mötikä. Ennen kun sitten oppi käyttämään niitä – siis aikaisemmin minä en osannut käyttää lihaksia, jolloinka ne pullistu enemmänkin. Ei ollut sellaisia pitkiä, joita ei vielä kukaan ole hirveen pitkiä. Mutta ne oli kuitenkin enemmän sellaisia palloja. Sitten yritti etsiä just tätä, mitä nyt hirveästi miettinyt viimeaikoina – tätä yhdenmukaisuuteen painostamista, että kun on tietyt kauneusihanteet, estetiikkaihanteet ja kaiken maailman muut yhdenmukaisuusjutut että pitää olla sen näköinen ja toimii sillä tavalla ynnä muuta. Sitten sitä yritti vääntää itseänsä sellaiseen. Kun ei siis yksinkertaisesti ollut mitenkään mallinmitoissa ulkomuodollisesti, niin se oli aika rankkaa. Mutta sitten kun kouluun tuli, niin täällä alkoi vähitellen syvempi kuva ruumiista muodostua, että miten se toimii ja mitkä asiat on kenties yhteydessä. Nyt itse asiassa ihan viime aikoina sitten vasta on alkanut löytää jotenkin sen jotenkin syvemmän sen, just sen fysiikan ja psyykeen yhteyden. / . . . (1M)

.../It [the body] is functional because it still works. It works very well and I continuously find new ways for the body to function./... (1M)<sup>414</sup>

However, in another passage he shows that he still has ambiguous relation between to the concept of an ideal body and how he conceives of his own body. He says:

.../I would like to have longer legs./.../It would be quite exciting, a bit more well-proportioned. I presumably still have a dancer's body-image. I do know my flaws – or flaws and flaws, what I myself consider a flaw. So I would hope that I had a bit longer legs. It would look more proportionate. I don't know what others would think, but I would be more satisfied./... (1M)<sup>415</sup>

So, he tells us that he still holds on to an ideal image of a dancer's body, which he himself cannot attain. I believe that it is quite common for dancers to maintain such ideal images. The appearance of the body is an important means of conveying the significance of one's dancing and the body's structural shape is inseparable from this. In teaching dance or creating choreography, moreover, both dance teachers and choreographers pay attention to the contours and looks of the dancers' bodies as they move. Additionally, dancers often work in mirrored studios in which they themselves can perceive how their bodies execute different movements and what they look like to an extent. Therefore, dancers are often very aware of their bodily appearance. In addition to Foster's suggestion that dancers live with a continuous awareness of the discrepancy between what they can do and want to do, I believe that they often have such a critical awareness in relation to their looks as well (cf. Adair 1994/1992, 16). One of the dance artists has contemplated the mode in which she dances by looking at herself dance on a video:

.../I stared at that video: My weight is well grounded – I'm trying to be positive this time. My weight is well grounded. The body has long extremities, which means hard work. But what can one do? When one does a bit of work the movement proceeds well and bodily control has developed significantly. Sometimes I'm very annoyed that I'm not good enough. My flexibility is quite good./... (4F)<sup>416</sup>

In analyzing her dancing in this fashion she focuses on how her body moves. Even if she is satisfied with what her body looks like, she does point out that she sometimes would like to be better in her performance. In my experience, what the body looks like while executing

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414. .../Sen takia funktionaalinen, että se kuitenkin toimii. Se toimii hirveän hyvin ja koko ajan vaan keholleen löytää uusia tapoja keholleen toimia./... (1M)

415. .../Minä voisin haluta vähän pidemmät jalatkin./.../Se olisi aika jännä, vähän sopusuhtaisemmat. Siis kaiketi minulla kuitenkin on tanssijan ruumiinkuva. Kyllä minä virheeni tiedän ja näin – tai, virheen ja virheen, omasta mielestäni virheen. Niin minä toivoisin, että vähän pidemmät jalat. Se olisi sopusuhtaisemman näköistä. En tiedä miten muut siitä, mutta minä olisin tyytyväisempi./... (1M)

416. .../Minä tuijottelin sitä videota. Paino hyvin maassa – minä yritän olla positiivinen tällä kertaa. Paino hyvin maassa. Ihan on pitkäraajainen niin työtä siinä teettää. Mutta ei voi mitään. Sitten kun tekee työtä niin liike on kulkeva ja hallinta on huomattavan parantunut. Välillä vituttaa kun ei ole tarpeeksi hyvä. Liikkuvuus on ihan jees./... (4N)

different movements reveals its abilities and deficiencies, since in much of contemporary dance what the body can and cannot do when perceived from a third person perspective relies on its visual appearance. This is one sense in which what the body can do and what it looks like intertwine informing even the dancer of the nature of their own bodies when they are able to witness it from a third person perspective through mirrors, photos, and filmed material or how others relate to their bodies and dancing.

Nonetheless, while describing how he has come to conceive of his body, one of the dance artists emphasizes that he learned that he could really transform his body by training and dancing:

.../Transforming one's own body, all of the things that you can do to the body, was dramatically revealed to me during my studies through how fast my body changed./.../It was quite dramatic and hard to keep up with this change. I noticed the change in that suddenly I built (muscle) mass and my muscles lengthened and changed their form. In relation to this the outer appearance of my body changed really dramatically./... (3M)<sup>417</sup>

He tells us, too, that the appearance and structure of his body changed through the training he did during his dance education. He says more:

.../Perhaps I do not have the best prerequisites that one could desire from one's body structure and muscle type. But that I noticed, how much one can mold oneself. And it is a rather exciting process./.../It felt like what I had hoped for. It gave me a feeling of well-being to not be physically incapable./... (3M)<sup>418</sup>

Even if he believes that he might not have had an ideal body to start with in relation to the physical and perhaps aesthetic demands that dance practices place upon the body, he enjoyed the transformation his body underwent. He implies that it gave him pleasure because it proved to him that he was capable of working with the body in a manner that enhanced his physical abilities for dance performance.

Another dance artist describes the changes she noticed to have occurred to her body in the following manner:

.../My body has/.../changed greatly since the time when I started and the time when – if you think of when school started, for example./.../It has become softer. In some ways it breathes more. It is more airy. It is more open. Perhaps it is better aligned./.../I used to have a hollow back and all those things were tight. I simply was really curved, buttocks protruding./... (2F)<sup>419</sup>

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417. .../Oman kehon muokkaaminen, ja mitä kaikkea keholle voi tehdä, niin se tuli aika dramaattisesti esiin just opiskeluaikana, että kuinka nopeasti minun vartaloni muuttui./.../Se oli semmoista aika dramaattista, siis ettei pysynyt itse perässä. Sen huomasi siis muutoksen, että yhtäkkiä tuli massaa ja lihas piteni ja ihan muuttui erimuotoiseksi. Se ulkoinen habitus muuttui todella dramaattisesti sen myötä./... (3M)

418. .../Ehkä minulla ei ole kaikki edellytykset parhaat mahdolliset, mitä voisi ruumiinrakenteelta ja noin lihastyypiltä olla. Mutta sen siinä juuri huomasi, että kuinka paljon voi muokata itseään. Ja se on aika jännittävä prosessi./.../Se tuntui juuri siltä, miltä minä olin toivonutkin. Se antoi minulle hyvän olon tunteen, se että minä en ole fyysisesti kyvytön./... (3M)

She likewise speaks about the fact that working with the body during her dance education and professional life has transformed her body. She gives examples of the visual form her body previously had. When describing how she experiences it to have changed, however, she speaks more of the felt-sense of her current body. Only by saying that it is better aligned, does she, in addition to its felt-sense, imply a change in its visual composition and functional features.

Another dance artist describes an improvement in the manner in which her body has changed and begins by describing what her body was like when she started to dance:

.../Well, if we start from the very beginning, when I everything was wrong. My posture was wrong. It affected everything, my lower back, my chest, neck and consequently my arms, legs, knees somehow were problems because of this. As the posture was wrong my lower back and knees became painful. My weight was distributed wrongly on my feet and all these alignments were messed up. My muscles were too weak./.../It does not function as a whole. Somehow I've been very fragmented. I haven't gained a holistic grasp of myself./... (4F)<sup>420</sup>

She lists the problems she initially had with her body. While doing so, she speaks about how her body deviated from ideal postural alignment and briefly depicts the consequent functional problems and pain she experienced. Thus, I consider her, like the previously quoted dance artist, to relate to her body through an understanding of neuro-musculo-skeletal patterning of bodily functions that are considered to allow for optimal facility and the realization of full potential in movement (Sweigard 1988/1974, 3).<sup>421</sup> She further describes her experiences:

.../I felt terrible, somehow I was not at all at home in my body. It was scattered all over, so to speak. I understood that I should be like something in order to do the things I wanted to do and that I wasn't like that. I did things superficially. This I understood at a very young age. I do things superficially and am injured. I did not like it. For the first time – I must have been eighteen – I did not like my own body. I started to hate it. I thought it was terrible and this lasted./.../I just maltreated and hated it. Well that does one no good. From then one: a slow development in how to accept one's body./... (4F)<sup>422</sup>

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419. .../Minun kehoni on/.../hirveästi muuttunut siitä ajasta, kun minä olen aloittanut ja sitten siitä ajasta, kun ajatellaan koulun alkua esimerkiksi, niin siis älyttömästi./.../Se on pehmennyt, jolloin se on tavallaan hengittävämpi. Se on ilmavampi. Se on avonaisempi. Se on ehkä linjatumpi./.../Minulla oli ihan semmoinen notkoselkä, tiukat kaikki noi. Minä olin siis kerta kaikkiaan semmoinen tosi käyrä, pers pitkällä./... (2N)

420. .../No minulla oli silloin, jos aloitetaan ihan alkuvaiheesta, jolloin oli kaikki. Minulla oli niin kuin 'posture' väärä. Se vaikutti siihen, että alaselkä, rintakehä, niska, tästä seuraten kädet, jalat, polvet niin oli jotenkin tämän ongelmia. Kun se 'posture' oli väärä, niin minun alaselkäni kipeytyi, polvet kipeytyi. Minulla oli paino väärin jalalla ja sitten nämä 'alignmentit' olivat ihan perseellään. Liian heikot lihakset./.../Se ei toimi kokonaisuutena. Minä olen jotenkin ollut hirveän sirpaleinen. Minä en ole saanut sellaista kokonaisvaltaista otetta itsestäni./... (4N)

421. Sweigard argues that, "the capacity of the skeleton for the internal mechanics of movement resides in its structure and alignment. If the mechanical balance of its alignment is good, the chance for efficiency – good movement with minimal muscle work – is increased" (Sweigard 1988/1974, 4). This is a view many contemporary dance professionals share.

She felt that her body was not functioning as a coherent unity. I interpret her to say that, she felt that she was lacking in relation to those bodily and functional ideals she perceived a dancer should be able to conform to in order to dance. Consequently, she was not content with her body. From this time onwards in her dance work she has worked on how to learn to deal with her body in an accepting manner. In another passage, which is presented further below, she says that she feels rather comfortable in her body at the moment. She has managed to create a more accepting and productive relation to her body. This is an issue another of the interviewees also relates to, too. He says:

.../It [dance] has helped me to accept my limited body./.../It has helped me to accept that I am not perfect. Despite a handicap I can still work in this profession./... (3M)<sup>423</sup>

It seems, therefore, that working with the body and investigating it both changes the body and allows dance artists to find new ways of relating to their body. Despite its problems, through exploration and effort dance artists learn ways of relating to it that make it more acceptable and comfortable for themselves.

In the end, what all of the above vignettes on the evolvment of the body emphasize is change. Consequently, I interpret the interviewees, while describing the nature of their own bodies, to relate to it as a locus of transformation. As already implied in chapter 11 addressing the interviewees' relation to dance work, for these dance artists their own body is a time- and work-consuming entity. It is something they mold, or, in fact, make in the sense of constructing or creating something. As if to confirm this conclusion, one of the dance artists notes that:

.../This body is the result of an enormous amount of work. For the most of the time I now experience it as quite pleasing. I feel good in it and it does not bring about any major problems./... (4F)<sup>424</sup>

After a great amount of effort, she is fairly satisfied with her body. What some of the quotations in the previous paragraphs similarly illustrate is that for the interviewees the body is something that they are either dissatisfied or satisfied with. In my view, this shows that

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422. .../Oli hirveä olo, että jotenkin minä en ollutkaan siinä kehossani silleen kotona. Se niin kuin levisi. Minä tajusin, että minun pitäisi olla jonkunlainen, että minä pystyisin tekemään näitä asioita, mitä minä haluan ja minä en ole sellainen. Minä teen pinnalta. Minä tajusin tämän hyvin nuorena. Minä teen pinnalta ja sitten olen vammaisen ja näin. Minä en pitänyt siitä. Minä ensimmäistä kertaa rupesin – minä olen ollut kahdeksantoista varmaan – minä en pitänyt omasta kehostani, rupesin inhoamaan sitä. Se oli minusta hirveä ja sitä kesti./.../Minä vaan räökkäsin ja inhosin. Noh, eihän se hyvää tee. Siitä eteenpäin semmoinen hidas kehitys, miten sen hyväksyisi sen kehonsa./... (4N)

423. .../Se [tanssi] on auttanut minua hyväksymään rajallisen vartaloni./.../Se on auttanut minua hyväksymään sen, että minä en ole täydellinen. Mutta minä pystyn vammasta huolimatta toimimaan ammatissa./... (3M)

424. .../Tämä on mahdottoman työn tulos tämä keho. Suurimmaksi osaksi ajasta minä nykyisin koen ihan miellyttävänä sen. Siinä on ihan hyvä olla. Se ei järjestä suurempia ongelmia./... (4N)

they expect something of the body and relate to their bodies through certain kinds of values. In the above passages some of the expectations they have of their bodies were shown to be those of conforming to generally prevailing ideals of the dancer's bodily being. In light of all the comments the interviewees made on the prerequisites for being a dancer, many of which were already discussed in chapter 11, these ideals could be understood to relate to a multitiered, supple, and slim dancing body. In the above passages, however, the interviewees also referred to some other normative ideals shaping their relation to their own bodies. The most recognizable one was the ideal of good postural and functional alignment. Also the pleasant feelings or experiences, which enhance its capacity for motion, were shown to influence their understanding of their bodies. It could, therefore, be argued that the interviewed dance artists relate to their bodies through similar ideals to those that were discussed in chapter 11. In addition, while considering their body as a locus of transformation, they also relate to it through the three different aspects Shusterman discerns to direct bodily practices in general: namely, the representational perspective, which considers the appearance of one's body, the performative perspective, which considers its functional qualities, and the experiential perspective, which concerns its felt-sense.

What also is worth noting is that the interviewees argue that the effort and time they have put into working with their bodies has empowered their bodies in a more positive and capable direction. In addition to understanding the body as an entity subject to transformation, I consider the interviewees to also be attached to a prevalent value of western theatrical dance according to which it is important that dance artists excel in their physical performance. In the area of western theatrical dance, stories and practices of dance performance are filled with values and norms that correspond to "narratives of achievement" as Angela McRobbie calls them. They present training and dancing as something that are "worth giving a lot up for" and something that "will pay off later" (McRobbie 1997, 210, 216–217). They stress dance as a practice calling for effort and discipline from the dancer as well as a practice of potential transformation that empowers her or him already on a bodily level. In the end, the manner in which the dance artists relate to their bodies through the different perspectives that they take on their bodies is to a large extent something that is informed by values and practices generally prevalent in the domain of contemporary dance. Their bodies could, then, be further described as socio-culturally informed or dependent loci of transformation.

## 14.2 Compassionate, Skillful, and Personally-Oriented Dance Artists

The interviewed dance artists made some further, more random, comments on themselves as dancers and choreographers. The first two dance artists quoted here speak about performing and relate to what I have earlier referred to as an integrated motional style of being. One of them says:

.../I think that my strength is that in performing I stand up to what I perform. I do not perform anything by asking for forgiveness. I perform what I perform fully. Would this be a capacity to inhabit my role well or what? Especially lately I've learned to/. . ./started to trust it./. . ./now I'm starting to feel that the fact that I can put myself into things so strongly is my strength. I perform what I perform and it is true./. . .(1M)<sup>425</sup>

He asserts that he has learned to be fully concentrated on what he is doing and experiencing while performing. Earlier in the interviews he also noted that,

.../I think that as a dancer I am required to be authentic./. . ./To be precise this means that I am myself in my body at that moment of performance./. . .(1M)<sup>426</sup>

Since he is of the opinion that he concentrates on his performance deeply, I view him to also suggest that he conforms to a norm or ideal he appreciates while performing. When writing of an e-motional style of being, Mazis shows that, in addition to both taking a risk and trusting that one can explore the as yet-to-be-known world while being emotionally involved in a situation, it could be understood to involve compassion. He describes compassion as a willingness to sense what one experiences in e-motional events (Mazis 1993, 252–253). Accordingly I interpret this dance artist to say that he is a compassionate dancer who is able to live more and more through his dancing in a manner that he loses himself fully in his performance.

In describing what kind of a performer she is, another dance artist addresses a similar issue. Even if she explains her position through a third person perspective, she does so in the midst of describing her personal style of dancing. She says:

.../At least the goal is that the thought and the movement, thought – I do not think that people can be without their head, their thoughts and their personal dimension – would somehow be a part of the musculature. That is that they function in a manner that the person who performs something that is to be performed is holistic./. . .(4F)<sup>427</sup>

Hence, I consider her to tell us that she aims at an integral motional style of being in her performance, which she qualifies further in the following manner:

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425. . . /Minä luulen, että minun vahvin puoli on se, että esiintyessäni minä olen sen takana, mitä minä esitän. Minä en esitä anteeksipyytävästi mitään, vaan minä esitän täysillä sitä mitä minä esitän. Olisiko se sitten hyvää eläytymistä vai mitä? Viime aikoina varsinkin olen ehkä oppinut/. . ./alkanut luottamaan siihen./. . ./nyt minä koen, että se alkaa olla, on, minun suuri vahvuus – se, että minä kykenen eläytymään niin vahvasti asioihin. Minä esitän sitä, mitä minä esitän. Se on totta./. . . (1M)

426. . . /Minusta minulta vaaditaan tanssijana autenttisuutta./. . ./Se tarkoittaa just sitä, että olla niinkun minä, itseni, siinä ruumiissani, sillä hetkellä, siinä esitystilanteessa./. . . (1M)

427. . . /Ainakin se pyrkimys on se ajatus ja liike, eli se ajatus – minun mielestä ihminen ei voi olla ilman päätä, ajatuksia ja persoonaansa – on jotenkin siinä lihaksistossa mukana, että ne toimii siis sillä tavalla, että henkilö on holistinen joka esittää, mitä esitetään./. . . (4N)

.../In no way am I this kind of a pure movement type, that there should be nothing else than movement. For me the mental content is absolutely important. I want to express clear things, thoughts, and my existence – my experience of the world. This is also revealed in my performance... (4F)<sup>428</sup>

For her, performing is about conveying how she relates to the world which involves a thematic comprehension of some issue she is working on. I interpret her to say that performing in a holistic manner, which involves her personal relation to the world and allows movement and thinking to be intertwined, brings about a way of dancing, that she considers to reveal the particular relation to the world she is going through at the moment of performance.

Instead of speaking about what kind of a performer she is, another of the interviewees describes the movement qualities that she thinks are characteristic of her as a dancer:

.../generally speaking I experience two opposites that are characteristic of me. In some way I experience the characteristics of a powerful dancer, some sort of a tightness.../Then as an opposite there is a liberated me. I clearly enjoy even a rather quick reversal of these two elements. Perhaps an organic quality, in some way the organic nature of movement, its flow, is something, too... (2F)<sup>429</sup>

She enjoys the tight and powerful as well as the freer manner in which she usually dances. In addition, she suggests that there is a fluid or melodious quality to her dancing. While describing her dancing in this way, she is discussing the force and tension her movement arouses in her body as well as the quality of its flow. Another of the interviewees characterizes his dancing and moving in the following manner:

.../As a mover it is important to me that I can trace what I'm doing in an exact manner, that I know the movement circuits and where and how I feel the movement. And timing is important, too. I enjoy it enormously.../I do believe that in dancing I'm capable of precise work, that I have good precision in movement. I think I understand timing. I'm quite sensitive to it.../Still on principle I'm quite a fast person, despite my large size... (3M)<sup>430</sup>

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428. .../Minä ne ole missään tapauksessa tällöinen vain pure movement -liikkuja, että ei mitään muuta kuin liikettä. Ehdottomasti se henkinen sisältö on hyvin tärkeä. Minä haluan ilmaista selkeitä asioita, ajatuksia ja olemassaoloani ja kokemustani siitä maailmasta. Se tietenkin näkyy siinä tekemisessä sitten... (4N)

429. .../yleisesti sanottuna minä koen, että minulla on kaksi – niin kuin nämä ääripäät, mitkä minusta on jotenkin luonteenomaista minulle. Minä tavallaan koen semmoista voimatanssijan ominaisuutta, jotain semmoista tiukkuutta.../Sitten toisaalta jotenkin sen vastapoolina semmoinen vapautettu minä. Minä selkeästi nautin niiden kahden elementin aika nopeastakin vaihtelusta. Ehkä joku semmoinen orgaanisuus, jollakin tapaa liikkeen orgaanisuus – virtaavuus on ehkä joku semmoinen... (2N)

430. .../Siis minulle on liikkujana tärkeätä, että minä hahmotan tarkasti sen tekemisen, eli se, että minä osaan ne liikeradat ja ne, missä ja miten minä tunnen sen liikkeen. Ja ne ajoitukset on semmoisia, mistä minä nautin hirveästi.../Kyllä minä uskon että, minä pystyn tanssimisessa tarkkaan työskentelyyn. Eli se että minulla on liiketarkkuus hyvä.../Minä ymmärrän mielestäni taimauksen. Minä olen aika sensitiivinen sille.../Minä olen kyllä aika nopea ihminen periaatteessa, vaikka olenkin näin isokokoinen... (3M)

Here he pays attention to his capacity to move in ways that are expected of him. He also thinks that he is able to move in an acutely alert or aware manner as well as to respond to the temporal flow of his movements in a sensitive way. He qualifies his dancing further:

.../In my view I'm a multifaceted dancer. It's something I also enjoy myself./.../to be able to use my abilities and potentials in a variety of ways and to do new things. In this sense I do throw myself into all kinds of things./... (3M)<sup>431</sup>

He shows that he enjoys dancing in new and different ways and considers himself to adapt to them easily.

In both describing what kinds of performers and dancers the interviewees consider themselves to be, they again relate to the more general values and norms that the study interprets their understanding of dance performance and bodily motion to adhere to. Their understanding of themselves as performers relates to some of the features of an integral motional style of performing and compassion towards entering such a state as well as expressing one's relation to the world through it. Precision or perfection in movement, which could mean both the capacity to execute movement that is expected of a dancer well as well as a dancer's keen awareness or control of the passage of her or his own movement, were, likewise, addressed. I find this to be partly affiliated with a dancer's need to be certain that she or he is capable of performing a dance in ways expected of her or him. But it also relates to the committed attention the dancer's pay to their body's felt-sense, which has already been discussed on several occasions in this study. One of the interviewees addresses the notion that freelance dancers ought to be multitalented in their skills since he finds that he can use his potentials in a variety of ways.

In the above extracts the dance artists also qualify the mode in which they dance and thus what kinds of dancers they are through what often are considered the thematic and structural components dance movement is made up of. They speak of its dynamic, tensional, and temporal qualities as well as the force of movement. During the last century, these components of dance movement have been outlined on several occasions and named by different choreographers and dance theorists, even if they have not been delineated in a consistent manner (cf. Hämäläinen 1999, 44–69; Preston-Dunlop 1995, 222–317). Despite the difference in the way in which dance practitioners and dance theorists have termed and defined the features and components of dance movement, Valerie Preston-Dunlop generally defines them in the following manner, "The structural components of movement per se are the essentials. They are what must be there for movement to exist irrespective of motivation, its references, its intention. They are seen generally as bodily coordination of all sorts, actions in variety, time and dynamics of the actions, spatial forms made by the actions, relationships within the body and between bodies" (Preston-Dunlop 1998, 77). These, then, are also conventional perspectives laid over the dancing body, which aid choreographers and dancers

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431. .../Siis minä olen mielestäni monipuolinen. Se on yksi, mistä minä itsekkin nautin/. .../että pystyy monipuolisesti käyttämään omia kykyjään ja avaamaan sitä potentiaalia jonkin uuden tekemiseen. Silleen minä heittäydyn kyllä kaikennäköiseen mukaan./... (3M)

in focusing upon details of physical motion, constructing movement sequences, and gaining an understanding of the features of one's own dancing.

What the interviewees' comments above through into relief, moreover, is that they describe their dancing also through what they enjoy doing or are interested in. This perspective on dancing relies on the manner in which the dance artists have previously lived, acquired habits, and through their experiences how they have come to understand things as relevant to their dancing (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 393). Merleau-Ponty writes that decisions we have taken circumscribe the field of possibility related to certain aspects of our lives and limit the things we encounter. He stresses that, when frequently repeated, the attitudes we hold towards the world acquire a favored status in our lives (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 438, 441). He concludes that, the "past though not a fate, has at least a specific weight and is not a set of events over there, at a distance from me, but the atmosphere of my present" (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 442). Consequently, it might be argued that it is frequent exposure to certain kinds of issues and certain ways of dealing with their life circumstances as well as dance tasks that fixes the way in which dance artists take interest in and value certain qualities of their dancing. These are certainly not only those in which they consider themselves to be fully proficient, but also those in which they have experienced some kind of pleasure or which they perceive as valuable and which they consequently want to explore further.

The above paragraph also relates to the descriptions interviewees gave of themselves as choreographers. Two of the dance artists described their choreographic style in relation to the kinds of persons they conceive themselves to be. The first says:

.../I'm an emotional person in the sense that movement arouses states of being in me even if I begin in a very abstract way./.../In a way certain motional states of being carry me somewhere. I have some kind of an emotional charge even if, in the end, I realize them in an abstract manner. Actually, when I now look at my works they are filled with emotion. In my view, I just have attempted to strip them so that they are not pathetic./... (2F)<sup>432</sup>

And the other says:

.../I do believe that./.../I take things seriously but this I do in a manner that I also perceive the funny sides of life. I believe this is part of me and is visible in my works and in my dancing. I'm not inconsiderate of the time and the environment in which I live. In this sense I'm serious and experience things deeply. I think this is clearly visible in my work./... (3M)<sup>433</sup>

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432. .../Minä olen tunneihminen sillä tavalla, että liike herättää minussa olotiloja vaikka kuinka lähden abstraktisti./.../tavallaan tietyt liikkeelliset olotilat vie minua johonkin. Minulla on jokin emootiolautaus aina olemassa vaikka kuinka abstraktisti ne sitten loppujen lopuksi toteutan. Oikeastaan nyt kun katson omia töitani tosi asiallisesti niin nehan on täynnä emootioita. Minä olen vaan yrittänyt karsia ne vaan mielestäni semmoisesta patetiasta./... (2N)

433. .../Kyllä minä uskon että./.../suhtaudun vakavasti asioihin. Sillä tavalla, et minä näen myös kyllä ne hauskat ja huvittavat puolet elämästä. Silteen just uskon, että se on osa minua, se näkyy varmaan niissä töissä ja tanssijan töissä kanssa. Minä en ole välinpitämätön tähän aikaan ja tähän ympäristöön missä elän, vaan sillä tavalla minä olen vakava, vakavamieli ja koen syvästi asioita. Kyllä se minun mielestä näkyy selkeästi, kaikessa siinä, minun työssä./... (3M)

They both describe the manner in which they generally relate to the world and find it to be something that permeates their artistic work. In fact, to me it even seems that they knowingly utilize their more general personal orientation in their work. In the end, the latter part of this section underlines that dance artists become the kinds of dance artists they are through the kind of life they lead and the manner in which they relate to their lives and the world more generally. It suggests, therefore, that their artistic style is dependent on the mode or style of life they lead, as was suggested in chapter 12.

### 14.3 On a Freelance Dance Artist's Relation to Others

As contemporary dance is a participatory art, in the sense that the dancers' performance and dances are perceived by an audience and the process of creating a dance most often is about collaborating with other artists, during the interviews I also asked the interviewees how they believe others to perceive them as dance artists. The interviews provided some material on this issue, which so far has not been addressed. In these passages the interviewed dance artists implicitly reveal that the others they refer to are other dance artists and peers, the audience, and dance critics. In some comments they showed that they were somewhat anxious about what others think of them, in others they said that they had come to terms with being exposed to the opinions of others. Even if the interviewees' relation to other people has been discussed throughout this research, I will elaborate on this issue here since the interview material continues to illuminate the mode in which freelance dance artists are still susceptible to the opinions of others. It also signifies the fact that they basically relate very generously to their audiences.

I consider the relation the interviewees as dance artist had to others and how they felt that others perceived them to be an important feature in defining what kind of artists they are more generally. In this research, however, these relations are especially pertinent to the conceptions that the interviewees had of themselves. Earlier in the introduction of this chapter as well as in chapter 12, it was argued that knowing oneself is the result of a dialogical relation with the other and the recognition others offer us. We comprehend each other through the expressive and communicative nature of our embodiment. Our bodies, movements, and gestures have significance, which is decipherable at least by people sharing the same social and cultural environment. As was suggested in chapter 10, artists need others to recognize their accomplishments in order to have a sense of how their creations affect people and of the meaning they carry and convey. Moreover, when artists open themselves to others through artistic expression, the adoption of this expression by others is recognition of the artists themselves (Busch 1999, 172). In bringing their relation to the world to expression, they add to the shared emblems or signs according through which it is possible to understand reality. If these signs are comprehended and taken forward by others, they contribute to an established cultural understanding, which justifies and makes our life as well as the artist's life meaningful. (Madison 1991/1981, 83)

What the relation of one to another shown above, then, comes down to is that in order

to fully be meaningful subjects, we indeed need the recognition of others. Dance artists can gain a sense of themselves as dance artists through their more subjective experiences of dancing and doing choreography. But they continue to need a dialogue with other people to proceed in the process of becoming which they are and to have a more established conception of the nature of themselves as dance artists. In attempting to understand the kind of dancer he is, one of the interviewees says the following:

.../Of course I categorize myself. I don't know how others do it, but Conrad once told me, that if we compare Thomas, Ronald and myself, Thomas and Ronald are clearly decipherable. [the names are changed] But I'm some kind of an odd bird, who cannot be pigeonholed./.../I did not become a popular dancer, at least so far./... (1M)<sup>434</sup>

With these lines he suggests that he relies on the opinions of others and the way his colleagues relate to him, while constructing an understanding of his qualities as a dancer or even categorizing himself. In this passage he is determining his position in relation to a few other male dancers according to the manner another male dancer perceives him in relation to these others. While defining the kind of dancer he is in this manner, he concludes that, so far, he has not become a popular dancer. As he additionally describes himself as "some kind of an odd bird" I believe that he is also expressing a sentiment that he lacks some features that good or outstanding contemporary freelance dancers are expected to have. He even seems to accept and thus confirm the description another dance artist gives of him.

Sometimes there is, however, a discrepancy between how one perceives oneself and how others perceive you. In the case of a dancer, who cannot fully perceive the outer appearance of her or his dancing and whose later work might be reliant on the manner in which other dance artists relate to his appearance and dancing, this might prove to be somewhat oppressive. One of the interviewees says that,

.../In terror I sometimes listen to some kinds of analyses of my dancing. When they say that you are powerful, monumental, your way of moving is somehow powerful, and monumentally direct and that I'm terribly small, with a long back, short legs and big muscles and that it looks like with such a body one could not move in a nimble manner./.../I somehow do not recognize myself in them./.../Somehow I experience myself to be softer, rounder./... (1M)<sup>435</sup>

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434. .../Totta kai minä niin kuin itse luokittelen itseni johonkin. Minä en tiedä miten muut luokittelee. Mutta niin kuin Conrad (nimi muutettu) joskus sanoi, että jos nyt taas vertaa niin kuin Thomas, Ronald (nimet muutettu) ja minä, niin Thomas ja Ronald on jotenkin hirveän selkeästi luettavissa johonkin. Mutta minä olen sitten sellainen outo lintu, jota ei voi niin kuin laskea mihinkään./.../Minusta nyt ei tullut mitään sellaista hittitanssijaa, ainakaan toistaiseksi./... (1M)

435. .../Kauhulla joskus kuuntelen jonkunlaisia analyyssejä minun liikkumisesta, kun sanotaan, että sinä olet jotenkin jyhkeä, monumentaalinen. Sinun tapa liikkua on jotenkin siltä jyhkeän, monumentaalisen suoraviivainen tapa. Ja että minä olen hirveän pieni ja pitkä selkä ja lyhyet jalat ja isot lihakset, ja näyttää siltä, että eihän tuolla nyt pääse mitenkään ketterästi liikkumaan./.../Minä en jotenkin tunnista niistä itseäni./.../Jotenkin minä koen, että minä olen pehmeämmän, sellainen pyöreämpi./... (1M)

However, he seems to trust his own experience of the nature of his dancing somewhat more than the opinions others have of it, since he says that he does not quite come recognize himself in the analysis given above. Indeed, even if we cannot control the way in which others perceive us or relate to us, we do have the capacity to either accept their opinions or to choose to understand things differently (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 435). Nevertheless, the manner in which other people recognize us offer points of departure in relation to which we might question our acts and understanding. This is how another of the interviewees tells us that he relates to reviews of his dance work.

.../I can't be put down by bad reviews or things like that. Of course they depress me, but I question things. If someone says, for example, that I'm too intellectual or seem too self-assured or something like that, I might think about it and where it comes from, if it's something in me and do I give such signals./... (3M)<sup>436</sup>

He is not offended by criticism of his work. Instead, he seems to view it as something through which he can question and re-evaluate his understanding of himself, his behavior, and performance.

What the above excerpts from the interview material show, is that the interviewees were influenced by the manner in which others relate to them. However, while speaking of how they relate to others and others relate to them as dance artists the interviewees mainly discussed the communication that occurs through their art in relation to the audience. All of them had something to say on this issue and spoke about a keen desire to communicate with the audience. Some of their comments were presented already in chapter 10. There it was shown that they hoped to reach more spectators with their work than they were currently doing. Here are a few more quotations related to this issue. One of the interviewees says:

.../Some kind of a communication with the world and somehow I have a need to experience communion. In some sense the thing about my art is that it is about this communion, that it could really be experienced, or at least that I would experience it while I'm on stage, so that I would experience a connection with the people who are watching [me dance]. Even in this way it is about a very selfish. . . /.../Still there is a communal element which for me is. . . I must say that in this way I am a terrible idealist./... (2N)<sup>437</sup>

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436. . . /Minua ei pysty nujertamaan joku huono kritiikki tai tällöinen. Totta kai se masentaa mutta niin kuin kyseenalaistan asioista. Jos joku sanoo vaikka, että minä olen liian älyllinen tai minä olen itsevarman tuntuinen tai jotain tällöistä, minä voin pohtia sitä että mistähän se tulee ja onkos minussa jotain, ja annanko minä jotain semmoisia viitteitä./... (3M).

437. . . /Tämä joku kommunikointi maailman kanssa ja jotenkin niin kuin yhteisyyden kokemisen tarve minulla on. Tavallaan siis se minun taiteen juttuni olisi jotain semmoista, että tätä yhteisyyttä voitais to-della kokea, tai edes minä kokisin siellä kun minä lavalla olen, niin minä kokisin yhteyttä jotenkin nii-hin ihmisiin, jotka on katsomassa. Ehkä näin päin jopa, että tämä lähtee hirveän itsekkäältä./.../Kuiten-kin joku yhteisöllisyyden elementti minun mielestäni on minulle – minä olen sillä tavalla hirveän idea-listi just taas, täytyy sanoa./... (2N)

Haapala maintains that being directed towards a public through creating artworks is one of the central ways of relating to the world that shapes the existence of an artist (Haapala 2000, 143). This purpose shapes the manner in which they form, perform, and relate to their works. The unified world that choreographers attempt to create is not completely established until a dance piece is performed in front of an audience. One could even say that performing and receiving a performance is the actual event that a dance work is. In performance the performers and the audience share a common world in an immediate fashion. They are in a mutually-experienced situation immediately sensing its nature through their bodily sensitivity despite their more personal expectations, tastes, and opinions. Berleant even argues that the term 'audience' is misleading since it suggests a fragmentation of an event that actually is about continuity. He also points out that performers often claim that they sense the audience and that the audience's responses to their performance transform their actions, just as the performers actions influence the audience. (Berleant 1991, 155) When performing in front of an attentive audience, it often is the case that dancers gain a rather profound experience of themselves. As Merleau-Ponty contends, it is the other person who stops to listen, is engaged with, and open to another who touches and joins the most singular dimension of an individual (Merleau-Ponty 1986/1973, 141). Parviainen addresses this issue in a way that is closely related to the views of the dance artist quoted above. She writes:

Dancers ask a witness to the work of art not only for communication but also to know the very work of art and themselves more profoundly. In this communion a dancer exposes her/himself through the work of art, letting the work exist, while s/he shares her/his own body with the other. (Parviainen 1998, 177)

I believe that it is in this sense that communication and communion are important for the previously quoted dance artist, too.

While they aimed at this kind of communication, the dance artists showed that when creating and rehearsing dance pieces they were aware to different degrees that the piece they were working on would eventually be performed in front of an audience. One of them says:

. . ./It perhaps still is not that I would think about the kind of audience I create a certain piece for in order for everybody to come and see it./ . . .(3M)<sup>438</sup>

His desire to communicate with the audience, then, is not so manipulative that he would first think what the audience would like to see and then create a dance piece accordingly. Rather, I believe that dance artists more often approach creation in a way that the next quotation highlights:

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438. . . ./Se ei ehkä ole minulla kuitenkaan sitä, että minä mieltäisin minkälaiselle yleisölle voisin tehdä jonkun jutun jotta sitä tulisi kaikki katsomaan./ . . . (3M)

.../Yes, I'm that kind of an artist who while compiling a piece thinks about the fact that the audience will watch this. That's how I go through the processes and mold things. I could think about it a bit less, perhaps./.../I try to bring my idea forth as clearly as possible./... (2F)<sup>439</sup>

She thinks of the audience in the sense that she attempts to make those issues that she wants to transmit to the audience as perceivable as possible. She is, thus, making her dances visible in certain ways. In fact, the representational conventions that contemporary dance utilizes and even takes for granted already enhance this kind of perception. They are permeated by customs and values that underline that contemporary dance is a theatre art and that dances are created for the audience. The conventional everyday practices of contemporary dance, be they about training the body or creating actual dance pieces, most often involve an anticipation of spectators. This they do so much so that Sparshott believes that dance artists do not need to explicitly or directly think about their audiences during the actual course of their work. Obviously, they can relate to their work from the perspective of spectators if they so desire. (Sparshott 1995, 367) Merleau-Ponty likewise finds that it is the artist who much more often influences the other than vice versa, and that it is the conversation with the tradition and the situations that the artists find themselves in that mainly motivate their work (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 111).

As a point of fact, one of the dance artist's tells us that he no longer thinks about the manner in which dance works are received and evaluated:

.../Lately I haven't had the energy to think about whether a piece is a success, how it is successful, and why something should be a success./.../Ok, you have to have an audience, or it would be nice to have one and that it would even be impressed. But this cannot happen, or hopeful does not happen through fawning over the audience – it happens in an authentic manner./... (1M)<sup>440</sup>

He acknowledges that dance pieces need an audience to be completed. But he would like the audience to be moved or transformed by a dance in an authentic manner. By this I believe that he means that the audience too would lose itself in the piece and find communion with the performance, just like the dancers expect themselves to do.<sup>441</sup> In not wanting to think about the public success of a dance piece, he also seems to appreciate the ephemeral character of performance, in which "a limited number of people in a specific time/space frame can

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439. .../Kyllä minä kuitenkin ole semmoinen taitelija, että minä siinä tekovaiheessa ajattelen, että yleisö katsoo tätä. Kyllä minä sillä tavalla niitä minun prosesseja käyn siinä ja muokkaan sitä sen mukaan. Voisi tehdä vähemmänkin ajatellen sitä, ehkä./.../minä yritän sen minun ajatukseni siinä aiheessa tuoda mahdollisimman havaittavasti esiin./... (2N)

440. .../Minä en enää viime aikoina ole jaksanut miettiä sitä, että onko se hitti, ja millä tavalla se on hitti, joku juttu, ja minkä takia jonkun jutun täytyy olla hitti./.../Okei, yleisö on oltava, tai olisi kiva että niitä on, ja että niihin tekisi vielä vaikutuksenkin. Mutta, että se ei käy, tai toivottavasti ei käy, yleisöä nuolemalla, vaan autenttisella tavalla./... (1M)

441. My intention here is not to debate what is more authentic and what is less authentic in the sense of what is real and what is artificial. Instead I consider that the above-quoted dance artist is speaking about a committed engagement that spectators might have to a live-performance that they are watching.

have an experience of value which leaves no visible trace afterwards” (Phelan 1993, 149). A particular performance in itself cannot be reproduced and its immediate value is in the performance itself, despite the interpretations and social values related to it beforehand in advertisements, or in its aftermath in reviews and other public discussions. These, in fact, could be understood to distance the audience from personal involvement with the event of performance itself, as they offer ready-made conclusions and interpretations of something to be encountered in a lived moment. Peggy Phelan notes that the draw towards what might be called a secondary reproductive economy in our culture is enormous. According to her, the strength of performance, however, lies in its non-productivity and its independence of economic, technological, and linguistic mass-production. The presence and what might be called ‘now-momentness’ of performance and its simultaneous disappearance is its special ontological value. (Phelan 1994, 146, 149, 164; cf. Steiner 1989; Parviainen 1998, 173–174)

Because the dance artists at this point of the interviews were not too much concerned with how the public evaluates or thinks of their artistic work, I believe that the dialogue that they first and foremost find important to themselves is the one that occurs in the actual performance. One of the dance artists argues that he no longer really thinks about the public impression he makes:

.../I don't think a lot about what kind of an impression I make . . . Some times earlier I thought about what kind of an impression I make of myself on others. But I must somehow have accepted that one can't help it./ . . (3M)<sup>442</sup>

Whilst the meaning of dance largely depends on its choreographic structures and the internal relations of its features, how others value and relate to a dance artist's work, as already suggested by Merleau-Ponty in chapter 10, really cannot be controlled by the artist her- or himself (cf. Sparshott 1995, 387). This dance artist seems to have accepted this facticity as has the one quoted below.

.../I do not know. Some people like it and others don't. For some I am too emotional and for others too constricted, disciplined, and formal. Surely somebody likes the emotion, too. I know people who like it, so to speak. I know emotional people who see the appeal of emotionality./ . . /Then someone likes the drive I have towards form. For some people this works./ . . (2F)<sup>443</sup>

This dance artist, then, is open to the fact that spectators have different preferences as well as tastes concerning the dances or styles of dance they appreciate. She also demonstrates

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442. . . /Minä en hirveästi ajattelle mitään tuommoista, että minkälaisen vaikutelman . . . Joskus aikaisemmin minä ajattelin enemmän semmoista, että minkälaisen vaikutelman minä luon itsestäni. Mutta jotenkin sitä on varmaan hyväksynyt sen, että sillehän ei voi mitään./ . . (3M)

443. . . /En minä tiedä./ . . /Joku tykkää ja joku ei tykkää. Jollekin minä olen liian emootiotyyppi ja jollekin olen liian rajallinen, liian kurinalainen, liian muotoon hakeutuva. Ja varmasti joku taas tykkää sitten siitä emootiosta. Minä tiedän ihmisiä, jotka tavallaan sitten tykkää. Tiedän tunteellisia ihmisiä, jotka sitten kun ne näkee, näkee sen jonkun sitten semmoisen tunteen vetoavuuden./ . . /Sitten joku taas tykkää siitä ja tavallaan sitten siitä muotoon hakeutumisesta. Joillekin se toimii./ . . (2N)

that she is aware that some people appreciate the manner in which she approaches dance and that her artistic work is supported accordingly.

Two of the dance artists make comments on the way they believe the public to relate to their work that show that years of effort has produced a somewhat positive reputation. Consequently, they feel that their artistic work is rather well received and supported by the public.

.../After all these years, the fact that I have dared to search for things in different places seems to bear fruit. It's fun that people say that it's exciting to come and see your work since you can never know what to expect. This kind of feed-back I've received from many places. I find it positive./... (3M)<sup>444</sup>

He shows that he receives recognition that he likes and that empowers him in the sense that he has gained an audience that is interested in and appreciates his work. Another of the interviewees similarly finds that at this point of her career, she is already acknowledged as a skilful dance artist.

.../I think that by now things are transmitted alright./.../I do believe that critical views do not relate to how I do things, any longer. They relate to what I do, or what I'm like – what my history is and what I've manifested. This is what the opinions are about and not about how I do things. I believe no one would, any longer, dispute that I know how to do things, only that they do not like, understand – they 'dig' or then they don't 'dig' and understand and support./... (4F)<sup>445</sup>

Again, she, too, finds that some people like her work and find it meaningful, while others do not. Thus, several of the dance artists imply that while presenting their work to the audience they rely on an attitude of trust. Moreover, in offering their work to the audience in a manner that allows it the liberty of recognition or refusal, the dance artists could be understood to perform with what Steiner calls a courtesy or tact of heart. This is something he describes as a generosity towards the possibility that the audience might refute and disappoint the artist in their reception. (Steiner 1991/1989, 155–156) However, the above-quoted dance artist additionally implies that the more critically people relate to her as a dance artist or her work is due to her personality and the kinds of things she did earlier. This in turn is again suggestive of the fact that an artist's or any person's previous acts continue to influence other people and situations in a manner which they have no direct control over. The influence they have on people and the way people consequently come to relate to them builds a reputation. As

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444. .../Tuntuisi kantavan hedelmää viimein kaikkien vuosien jälkeen, että olen uskaltanut etsiä eri paikoista. Se on minusta hauskaa, semmoista palautetta on tullut monelta taholta, että ihmiset sanoo, että sinun töitä on aina jännä tulla katsomaan, kun ei voi koskaan tietää, mitä odottaa. Se on minusta positiiivista./... (3M)

445. .../Kyllä minä siis luulen, että tässä vaiheessa kyllä ne välitty ne asiat ihan joo./.../Minä en usko, että se on enää se kritiikki siinä, että miten teen vaan siinä, että mitä teen, minkälainen olen, mikä minun historiani on, mitä minä olen niin kuin manifestoinut. Se on siinä se mielipiteen muodostus, ei siinä miten minä teen. Minä uskon, että sitä ei enää kukaan rupea kiistämään, että minä en osaisi muka, vaan sitä että ei pidä tai ei ymmärrä tai ei diggaa tai sitten diggaakin tai ymmärtääkin ja kannattaa./... (4N)

Merleau-Ponty argues works of art to open fields of endless interpretations, so do the acts dance artists enact both in performance and in otherwise publicly speaking and working for their art. In this sense artists live in exile or dispersion – outside of themselves in the world. In relation to this, it is interesting that Merleau-Ponty even believes that we are obsessed by a desire to have ourselves and our acts accounted for in a manner that reveal their true quality. Consequently, he considers artists, in fact, to become responsible for being successful in forging their deeds into historically-accepted facts (even if only to disappoint themselves). In Merleau-Ponty's view this is why the interpretations or the historical transcendence of the artistic accomplishments of an artist obliges her or him to understand circumstances other than his own and to express her- or himself by opening up to the other. (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993b, 109, 112; 1996/1993c, 139; 1995/1962, 407, 456; Steiner 1991/1989, 40) Still all of the last three passages from the interview material illustrate that the interviewed dance artists experience that they have achieved a feasible, even positive, position in the eyes of the public at least. Thus, I consider them to show that they believe they have become established as recognized dance artists in the field of freelance dance.

#### 14.4 On Being a Freelance Dance Artist

In generally describing what dance and being a freelance dance artist meant to them, the interviewed dance artists spoke rather intensely about the freedom that is involved with being a freelancer and a self-realization that occurs through dance work. They felt that they could express themselves in a most intimate or personal manner through dance. They found that dance work involved a process of becoming in which they could learn to understand more about themselves and explore who they are. This study has illustrated many features related to the prevalent values and practices the freelance field of dance operates through that delimit and shape the manner in which this kind of an exploration, questioning, and construction happens. In relation to the freedom and self-realization of a freelance dance artist these are not simply pre-established norms or orders of meaning that they accept and follow. Rather, dance artists learn to understand and form their lives as dance artists through a personal resonance, through which they take on, transform, and even leave unattended shared meanings, pre-established forms of practice, and possible ways of dealing with dance and being a dance artist. (cf. Taylor 1996/1989, 512) However, since dance artists, like any other individuals, are intertwined with the world, the givenness of the socio-cultural field and environment in which they live influences their lives in a very intricate manner. As already mentioned in chapter 10, even if we have the freedom to choose things and construct our lives according to our voluntary acts, we do this in relation to the social groups, institutions, historical conditions, cultural atmospheres, material environments, and bodies we live in and possess. Still I would argue that the general task of an artist to create an expression of her or his relation to the world places a heightened emphasis on the mode in which he or she perceives and understands the issues effective in her or his life. In dealing with these issues and exploring her or his relation to the world, an artist exists in a unique manner or has a

singular style of being. (Merleau-Ponty 1995/1962, 455–456)

The interviewed dance artists were of the opinion that being especially a freelance dance artist instead of some other kind of a dance artist created a relative freedom that enhanced their capacity to deal with dance art in a manner that they desire. In considering things in this way, I believe that the interviewees differentiated being a freelance dance artist from being a dance artist who holds a long-term contract with a steady dance company. Some of the interviewees, in fact, directly address this manner of defining being a freelance dance artist. However, to illustrate some features related to the manner of being particularly a freelance dance artist, I shall start off with a few other passages. One of the interviewees says that he has enjoyed being a freelance dance artist.

.../For me that certain freedom, which is inherent to freelance work, has been wonderful./  
... (3M)<sup>446</sup>

Another shows that at the moment she considers being a freelance dance artist the best way in which she can deal with her art since she can concentrate on things she finds important:

.../How I experience it in relation to my ambitions, my own objects of exploration: Well, at the moment I experience this as very positive, since in a way I can branch out, investigate and contemplate, those things that I experience to be very important. In this way one could say that this is the best possible way. I can really realize this side. .../... (2F)<sup>447</sup>

Another notes that being a freelance dance artist entails more responsibilities concerning one's work circumstances and assignments than does working for a company. He says he can compare the two ways of practicing dance art because he has both been a contracted dancer as well as a freelance dance artist. Still, he appreciates the freedom of freelance work, too:

.../Yes, you are your own employer and are fully responsible for it./.../Some may feel more responsibility for themselves. I don't know. This cannot be generalized./.../But at least it gives greater freedom to develop oneself in the direction one is going towards at any moment./  
... (3M)<sup>448</sup>

He continues to say that,

.../Yes in being a freelancer – you have to carry more responsibility alone./.../But what is interesting is that it has a different kind of freedom. The group cannot decide if you are allowed

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446. .../Minulle se tietty vapaus, mikä tässä freelancehommassa on, on ollut hirveän ihanaa./... (3M)

447. .../Miten minä koen sen minun omien ambitoiden, omien tutkimuskohteitteni suhdetta tähän: no, tällä hetkellä minä koen tämän hirveän mielekkääksi, koska tavallaan minä saan tässä tavallaan nyt puida nimenomaan ja tutkia ja miettiä niitä asioita, mitkä minä koen hirveän tärkeäksi. Tämä on sillä tavalla minulle, sillä tavalla vois nyt sanoa, paras mahdollinen. Minä saan todella toteuttaa sitä puolta. .../... (2N)

448. .../Niin, sinä olet oma työnantajasi ja vastaat täysin itse siitä./.../Jotkut saattavat kokea enemmän vastuuntuntoa itsestään. En tiedä. Ei tätä voi yleistää mitenkään./.../Mutta ainakin se antaa suuremman vapauden kehittää itseään siihen suuntaan mihin kulloinkin on menossa./... (3M)

to attend some course, if you are allowed to work with a choreographer who doesn't belong to the group nor can it disapprove of your interests. . . . /But in its essence a dancer's work is the same. . . . (3M)<sup>449</sup>

He thus illustrates that making choices and following one's particular interests is enhanced when working as a freelance dance artist. However, as this study has already argued at some points, he, too, does not consider the artistic practices of contemporary dance to be much different in either setting. He rather realistically concludes that,

. . . /What is it like to be a freelance dancer? I believe it is one way of being in this profession. . . . /Being a freelancer does not beatify you. . . . /Innovation does not necessarily mean either [being a freelancer or working for a company]. You can be innovative in both units, in institutions or stable companies or with a cohort of freelancers. In the end, the questions are not concerned with structures. Where interesting art is made is not the result of structures only. . . . (3M)<sup>450</sup>

It is very true that being a freelance dance artist is one way of being a professional dance artist. However, as mentioned in Part I, the vast majority of Finnish dance artists work as freelancers. So, it is not unusual to do so. Much of the tradition of modern and contemporary dance, moreover, has evolved through the efforts of individual dance artists who have not had stable dance companies or been financially well supported and able to produce performances in a regular and consecutive manner. Furthermore, both the few steady dance companies in Finland as well as the artists of the freelance field produce dance art that is appreciated and considered complimentary to the development of Finnish dance art.

Nonetheless, one of the interviewees views things a bit differently. She is a committed freelance dance artist and finds that creating art is necessarily linked to independence. She says:

. . . /I am a fully-committed freelancer. I find that it is the only way to ensure honesty in one's work and to be independent. . . . (4F)<sup>451</sup>

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449. . . . /kyllä se freelancerius on siinä mielessä – sinä joudut kantamaan sitä vastuuta tavallaan yksin, enemmän. . . . /Mutta mikä on mielenkiintoista on se, että siinä on sitten erilainen vapaus. Ryhmä ei voi päättää sinun puolesta että saatko osallistua jonnekin kurssille, tai saatko tehdä jonkun toisen koreografin kanssa töitä joka ei kuulu ryhmään, tai eivät paheksu sinun intressejäsi. . . . /Mutta siis perusolemukseltaan, kyllähän siis, tanssijan työ on perusolemukseltaan sitä samaa kuitenkin. . . . (3M)

450. . . . /Millaista on olla freelancetanssija? Minä luulen että se on yks tapa olla ammatissa yksinkertaisesti. . . . /Siis freelancerius ei suinkaan ole mikään autuaaksi tekevä asia. . . . /se innovatiivisuus ei välttämättä merkitse kumpaakaan. Sitä voi olla innovatiivinen molemmissa yksiköissä, sekä laitoksissa tai kiinteässä ryhmässä tai freelanceryhmässä. Ei ne lähde ne kysymykset loppujen lopuksi niistä rakenteista minun mielestä. Missä tehdään mielenkiintoista taidetta minun mielestä, ne ei lähde niistä rakenteista yksinomaan. . . . (3M)

451. . . . /Minä olen siis henkeen ja vereen freelanceri. Minun mielestä se on ainoa mahdollinen muoto jotenkin säilyttää sellainen rehellinen ote omaan työhönsä – olla itsenäinen. . . . (4N)

Even though I do not believe that this dance artist is especially happy, for example, about the lack of financial support that freelance dance artists are offered, she considers freelance dance artists to be able to freely define the manner in which they choose to work and address issues they find personally meaningful. She says:

.../stable support or benefits come from nowhere. There is no stable support-system affiliated with some institution or house, nor are there schedules or an atmosphere one is a part of. This all can be re-defined and one can freely choose where one wants to go and what one wants to do./... (2F)<sup>452</sup>

In fact, she is very critical of the more established institutional organizations producing theatre art:

.../I truly think that it is a still-born impossibility/.../that art would be created in some big theatre house./.../I think it is mumbo jumbo or then it is a pastime./.../It's totally absurd when the question is about creating art./... (4F)<sup>453</sup>

I believe that with this passage she is partly defending the legitimacy and worth of her own approach to dealing with dance as a freelancer. However, it also is true that large institutions, with a large amount of people, function in ways that narrow the relative freedom of their employees. To my understanding, even if dancers in contemporary companies are given chances to present their own choreography and work with assignments not related to the company every now and then, they do also work and perform according to pre-established schedules and with choreographers they themselves have not directly chosen. Still they have chosen to work in some company and at times might even be able to influence the content of the program it performs. Freelance dance artists, however, more often have the chance to define the manner in which they desire to proceed with their careers and in this sense they could be considered to live with a larger amount of (relative) freedom than their colleagues working in dance companies.

In the end, I believe that it is this relative freedom and the possibility to be self-directed as well as oriented towards the cultivation of one's own interests that is the defining characteristic of being a freelance dance artist. As the interviewees demonstrate, this is also the appeal of being such a dance artist. Despite the material and economic restrictions they have to contend with, I still interpret the interviewees to suggest that as freelancers they are able to live in a manner in which they can influence the passage of their artistic path more intimately than do most dance artists working in stable positions in steady dance companies. This

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452. .../mistään ei tule mitään vakituista korvausta, eikä mitään vakituisia etuja, eikä mitään vakituista turvarakennelmaa jonkun laitoksen tai talon puitteissa tai aikataulua tai henkistä tämmöistä ilmapiiriä, jossa on osa. Sen voi kaiken määrittellä itse uudestaan koko ajan tai valita vapaaehtoisesti mihin haluaa mennä ja miten haluaa tehdä./... (4N)

453. .../Minä olen todella ihan oikeasti sitä mieltä. Minusta se on täysin siis kuolleena syntynyt mahdottoisuus, että./.../jossain isossa teatteritalossa voi syntyä mitään taidetta./.../Minusta se on ihan hölynpölyä tai se on ajanvietettä./.../Se on minusta täysin absurdi kun on kysymyksessä taiteen tekeminen./... (4N)

notion, however, is not universally applicable. Different companies operate differently. Some are run by the performing dance artists themselves and their performance program and approaches to dance work are established by democratic decisions. Still from an existential point of view believing in and experiencing the freedom that is inherent to being a freelance dance artist still remains a feature that the interviewees consider characteristic of their mode of participating in the practices of contemporary dance. In addition to describing this freedom, the dance artists spoke about the self-realization that belongs to their work as something they valued a great deal. As previously suggested, in relying on their personal choices and understanding to steer their careers forward, freelance dance artist could be understood to be in communication with the world and taking on the task of relating to things through a personal resonance or taking a subjective stand in relation to them. This kind of an orientation also intensifies the relation a subject has to her - or himself as well. After all, the subject is a field of experiences which are inherent to the world. According to Foucault, when an individual takes her - or himself as an object of knowledge as well as a field of action and potential transformation, the relation of oneself to oneself becomes heightened. With such a relation to their own subjectivity, which I believe that the dance artists interviewed for this study have, individuals direct themselves towards the potentials or the good they conceive possible for them. (Foucault 1997/1994, 225; 1988, 42–43) There is then a morality involved in the manner that the interviewees shape their lives.

Indeed, the interviewees showed that working with the dance gave them the possibility of living a good life in the sense that they could cultivate or care for themselves in a manner that they valued and derived pleasure from. One of the dance artists describes what dance means to him:

.../To a large extent it actually is a way of expressing myself. At some point dance was and probably every now and then continues to be a certain kind of therapy./.../But it certainly is one means of expressing myself./... (1M)<sup>454</sup>

One of the immediate features that self-fulfillment is realized through is self-expression, which according to Merleau-Ponty, in fact, is self-realization. That this also has a therapeutic aspect for the above-quoted dance artist implies that for him self-expression is related to self-improvement, bettering one's relation to oneself. Another of the interviewees has a similar opinion. Especially in the beginning of his career he felt that dance was a kind of therapy for him.

.../Yes, dance was to a large extent a form of therapy in the beginning, definitely./.../To a large extent dance was about searching myself./... (3M)<sup>455</sup>

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454. .../Onhan se suurelta osin myös tapa ilmaista itseäni. Jossakin vaiheessa tanssi on ollut ja on se varmaan aina silloin tällöin nykyäänkin tietynlaisia terapiaa./.../Se on ainakin yksi tapa ilmaista itsenäni./... (1M)

455. .../Kyllä se [tanssi] aluksi oli hirveän pitkälle semmoista terapiamuotoa ehdottomasti./.../Tanssi oli aika pitkälle semmoista oman itseni etsimistä./... (3M)

Another of the interviewees instead finds that doing art and being a dance artist is a compulsion for her:

.../I have drifted into this because of a compulsion and in order to cope in this world./.../ This is a cliché: I can somehow be at my best, be myself on these premises, in the area of the arts. This is how I feel./.../In a way this gives a possibility to work on my self or something like this, in my view./... (2F)<sup>456</sup>

This passage presents something this dance artist attempted to convey on several occasions during the interview. Dance is a compulsion for her. She finds that she has to dance in order to be herself – her best self. For her dance is a means of being what she is, maintaining her integrity, as well as processing the self through working with herself. She says more:

.../What is dance for me? It's my mode of appearing in this world, one of my innermost – my own voice./.../It's my channel of communication and it is exactly that it is my own language./.../Being a dancer is for me such that I want through my body, my inner spirit and outer self to convey feelings, mirror this world and its relation to me for people./... (2F)<sup>457</sup>

For her dance is about the manner in which she appears in the world and communicates her relation to the world to others and this engages her whole being.

Another of the interviewees similarly says that dance is a necessity:

.../Somehow I find that, in the manner that I experience existence, this is the only option to be in the world with my composition./.../For me the interest is the question of all the kinds of worlds I can invent and be in. On the other hand, it's interesting because, in any case, it's me and my world in real life too. So, what's it like now? This is continuously a subconscious process of what, who I actually am./... (4F)<sup>458</sup>

This dance artist, alongside of finding that working with dance is the only form of life suitable for her, tells us that, while creating dance, she simultaneously investigates and becomes aware

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456. .../Minä olen ajautunut tähän pakon sanelemana selvitäkseni tässä maailmassa./.../Tämä on klišeinen lause: minä voin jotenkin olla niin kuin parhaimmillani, oma itseni, tällaisella alustalla, taitteen alueella. Minulla on tällainen tunne./.../Tavallaan tämä antaa mahdollisuuden sellaiseen itsensä työstämiseen, tai joihin tällaisista minusta tämä./... (2N)

457. .../Mitä tanssi on minulle? Se on niin kuin minun ilmenemismuoto tässä maailmassa, yksi omin, minun oma ääneni./.../Se on minun kommunikaatioväyläni ja se on nimenomaan se, että se on minun oma kieleni./.../Tanssijuus on minulle joihin semmoista, että minä haluan kehoni, sen sisimmän henkeni ja tämän ulkoisen minuuteni avulla välittää ihmisille tunteja ja peilata maailmaa ja sen suhdetta minuun./... (2N)

458. .../Jotenkin minusta on, että minä koen tämän olemassa olemisen niin tähän on ainoa vaihtoehto minun olla tässä maailmassa minun kokonaisuudella./.../Tämä on vaan minulle jotenkin se intressi, että mitä kaikkea, minkälaisia maailmoja, sitä voikaan keksiä, missä on ja sitten toisaalta, kun se on niin kiinnostavaa, kun se on kuitenkin minä ja minun maailma ihan tässä reaali maailmassakin. Niin, että minkälainen se nyt on? Tässä on kokoajan – tähän on tällaista piilotajuisia sen kanssa työskentelyä, että mitä, kuka minä oikein olen./... (4N)

of who she is. She considers herself to change over the course of time, and this change even seems to be related to her artistic endeavors. She appears to be saying that the artistic worlds she invents or constructs become her reality. Besides illuminating who she is, one would think that they must mold who she is.

These passages, then, reveal that the dance artists are intensely engaged with dance and that contemporary dance is, for them, so to speak, a technology of the self allowing them to understand and construct emblems of their relation to the world. Foucault considers practices and acts that, "permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality" (Foucault 1997/1994, 225). This, in turn, requires activity, self-examination, and deciphering, as well as knowledge and techniques in the form of practices to endorse in pursuing one's goal (Foucault 1997/1994, 268, 269). The above quotations illustrate that much of the worth that the interviewed dance artists place upon dance is related to the fact that it offers them a sphere and a means of cultivating the self. This cultivation involves exploration, questioning both by doing and reflecting. Still, a complete answer or a final phase is never reached, because as humans we are in a constant process of becoming. Merleau-Ponty touches upon this issue in more depth when writing about a primordial questioning related to human life. He states:

If we are ourselves in question in the very unfolding of our life, it is not because a central non-being threatens to revoke our consent to being at each instant; it is because we ourselves are one sole continued question, a perpetual enterprise of taking our bearings on the constellation of the world, and of taking the bearings of things on our dimension. The very questions of curiosity or those of science are interiorly animated by the fundamental interrogation which appears naked in philosophy. (Merleau-Ponty 1987/1968, 103)

In *Cézanne's Doubt* Merleau-Ponty emphasizes the world's influence on the continuous questioning we live with and argues that the relation that an artist has to the world is a compelling one. It is the world that demands the artists to undertake the production of a certain expression, a certain emblem of the world. The world sets in front of the artist an imperative to answer to an interrogation. Taking Cézanne as a paradigm example he writes, "... it was the objects and faces themselves as he saw them that demanded to be painted, and Cézanne simply expressed what they *wanted* to say" (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993a, 71).<sup>459</sup> He even says that, "although it is certain that a person's life does not explain his work, it is

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459. For Merleau-Ponty painting was a paradigmatic example of perception and human beings' relatedness to the world. In this spirit Alphonso Lingis writes, "The world-imperative commands our sensibility first to realize itself as a praktognosis oriented to things. It commands our sensitive-sensible body to inhabit a world of things with the most centered, integral, and efficacious hold, from which every subsequent kind of comprehension will be derived. It orders our competence. For perception is praktognosis. Perceived things are objectives. To perceive one has to look, one has to mobilize oneself and manipulate one's surroundings. To see a visible thing in real space is to feel how to get to it and to handle it" (Lingis 1991, 99).

equally certain that the two are connected. The truth is that *that work to be done called for that life*" (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993a, 70). However, it should not be understood that this means that Merleau-Ponty would consider an artist's life to be determined already from the outset. In explaining his position he writes that, "in every life, one's birth and one's past define categories or basic dimensions which do not impose any particular act but which can be read or found in all" (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993a, 75). Even if life involves contingency, what Merleau-Ponty is referring to here is the chaining, the interrelatedness, of the features of our lives. He states, "We never get away from our life" (Merleau-Ponty 1996/1993a, 75). (Our past conditions the future and the future reveals a past that affirms to what we are at the present. In this sense one can understand in retrospect that certain works of art are answers to a certain mode of life, but this becomes possible only after the fact.) Thus, not even the demands the world makes on the artist, which must be remembered for Merleau-Ponty is firstly a phenomenal domain, are determining ones. They rather are more like a tacit sense of something to be accomplished and expressed taking different forms in different situations and processes of expression.

Through this study it has become evident that freelance dance artists question themselves, their bodily abilities and its felt-sense, their artistic aspirations, and the nature of the freelance field of dance in which they live, while attempting to accomplish their work. In this chapter this questioning as well as the consequent activities that the dance artists do and the self-realization that they achieve was shown to be of heightened importance for them. Susan Kozel likewise finds that working with dance for the dance artist is about an ever-recurrent interrogation. In this sense, the life path a freelance dance artist follows could be understood as an "attempt to correspond to the paradoxes, enigmas" of the world in which fascination and compassion towards the issues that their circumstances throw in front of them provides a scope for a generative moment of creativity: of constantly re-creating their body, their perception and understanding of the world and field they live in as well as bringing into being new works of art as emblems of their relation to the world (Kozel 1998/1994, 87, 88, 89).

## 15 In Conclusion

This dissertation began by exploring the methodological issues related to interpreting interview material through a phenomenological perspective and argued for the relevancy of the double-analysis conducted by the investigation. The dissertation provides an experience-near descriptive reading of the interview material in order to gain a thorough understanding of the contents of this material. However, since the main purpose of the research was to understand the contents of the interview material through the chosen theoretical perspective it also produced a thematic interpretation of the material. If not earlier, then, through introducing Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology it was argued that one of the goals of this interpretation was to arrive at the constitutive structures, the conditions of possibility or basic premises, for the realization of a freelance dance artist. While presenting and discussing various meanings, values, and practices the life-worlds of freelance dance artists are comprised of, the interpretation of the interview material found in Part III indicates some of these structures.

I believe that the focal constitutive elements that this research demonstrates to shape the life-world of a freelance dance artist are: the existence of a *tradition of dance* and a *local field of dance* in which they realize their artishood, the *artistic roles* through which they perform their profession, the *activity or concrete dance and body work* through which they do the foregoing and continued to sustain their field of dance and their artistic roles, as well as the manner in which freelance dance artists *relate to themselves* and gain understanding of their activities and their manner of being in the world. However, these structural elements are the outcome of a tentative analysis of being a freelance dance artist, since the interview material this investigation is comprised of opens only a limited perspective on what it is like to be a freelance dance artist. Also my interpretation of the contents of the interview material and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology as well as the selected phenomenological dance studies influenced the rather general conclusions concerning the constitutive elements this research arrives at. In fact, they could be determined in a slightly different manner as well.

For example, Haapala, when writing of the ontological structures that shape the forms of life through which the existence of an artist is realized, discerns being in an artworld, facticity, creating, addressing an audience or public, and critical evaluation to be some of the central constitutive elements of this existence. He argues that being an artist is about creating artworks for a public while being thrown into an artworld and its critical standards. (Haapala 2000, 148) The beginning of Part III presents an overview of Haapala's conception of the artworld. What is still worth noting is that, in his view, the tradition of an art form and the roles through which artists deal with their art are features of this world. However, in the interviews these features were discussed in a manner that made me view them as issues of their own. For a freelance dance artist the field of dance they work in as well as the roles or modes through which they concretely deal with their art are not reducible to one another even if they are closely affiliated with each other. I believe that in the life of a freelance dance

artist the difference between them relates to the fact that an artist's activities are not totally determined by the conditions and customs of their field of art. The activities and life path of an individual dance artist are of a particular nature, and the idiosyncratic way they accomplish their profession is determinative of them as dance artists. In contrast, the field is about a realm of shared activities, values, and meanings. Even if both are molded by each other, there is a gap between them, a leakage, that allows them to be understood as orientations or perspectives of their own.

Still, while this research continues to describe the modes in which freelance dance artists are engaged in their field of dance and do concrete artistic work, the values, meanings, and practices through which they do them are shown to involve the creation of danceworks, and a dance artist's relation to a public as well as the critical standards of the field of dance in which they participate. But in light of the questions posed by the interviews and the subsequently formed interview material, in this investigation these features did not become illuminated in a manner that in my view called for a separate analysis. What instead became more emphasized was the work the dance artists do with the basic medium of their art, the body, and the customs and conventions that guide this activity. When viewed from the perspective of a creative artist I think it is understandable that this aspect of being an artist became highlighted. As Merleau-Ponty argues, the principle task of an artist is to explore and mold this medium. However, I do agree with Haapala that without this exploration leading to the creation of artworks, which are presented to a public, the existence of an artist becomes questionable. In this dissertation the work that freelance dance artists do is shown to involve this purpose and these features. In fact, this research shows that these issues condition the kinds of activities freelance dance artist engage in and how they relate to their bodies. Additionally, it describes and interprets what embodying dance and the process of creating dance pieces is like for these artists.

The critical evaluative dimension that Haapala argues to be an important constitutive element in the realization of the existence of an artist is something that, in my view, permeated all of the constitutive structures discussed in this research. It is not only a question of discerning the nature of one dance piece in relation to another and the conventions of dance criticism that relate to a form of art. Rather, I find that especially for freelance dance artists questioning and evaluating the worth of their different activities in relation to their position in the field and their artistic goals more generally is determinative of their relation to the world. This book shows that they question: the tradition of their art, how contemporary dance has been and is currently practiced and the values inherent to these practices; the field of dance in which they are engaged, how it is organized and how it values and supports different issues; the roles in which they work with dance, the customs of dance teaching as well as the manner in which dancers and choreographers are expected to work with each other; the mode in which they themselves work with dance; as well as the way in which they relate to their bodies, themselves, and to all of the foregoing.

Nonetheless, what still needs to be paid attention to is how the constitutive elements relate to being especially a *freelance* dance artist. Obviously the constitutive features this research discusses, like those that Haapala presents, are relevant to all kinds of dance artists and not

only to freelance dance artists. However, the existence of a somewhat loosely organized, local, and specific field of freelance dance was shown to shape the life-world and careers of a freelance dance artist. This research makes evident that the circumstances in which freelance dance artists work and the particular meanings and values they place on their work color the facticity of their lives. Those features that are demarcated to most clearly influence their existence is the lack and insecurity of social and financial support, the variety in the artistic roles and tasks that freelance dance artists work on, as well as the relative freedom they have in directing the direction their careers take.

In the end, despite the fact that through different perspectives taken on the premises upon which the existence of an artist is realized and the difference in emphasis of which structural elements and which practices and customs are more focal than others, the perspectives opened by the examination of constitutive elements are something that intertwine in lived life. Being a freelance dance artist is a network of different structural elements and particular features none of which exist independently of each other. They gain their form and meaning in relation to each other while freelance dance artists attend to the artistic goals they are striving for. However, understanding the nature of these factors, in my view, offers grounds upon which to gain a comprehensive view of what is involved in being a freelance dance artist and to critically assess how the work of these dance artists should be, for example, evaluated and supported.

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## Appendix I

### **The initial questions for the first interview**

Why do you dance?

What does working with your body mean to you?

What kind of mental and physical abilities does a contemporary dancer working in the freelance field of dance need in your view?

What kind of qualities as a dancer do you have?

What kinds of physical qualities have you needed in your work?

What do you think is essential in training one's own body if you are a contemporary dancer working in the freelance field of dance?

What kinds of methods do you use in your training?

When, how, and where do you train?

What are you aiming at with this training?

How have your training habits evolved?

### **The initial questions for the second interview**

What, in your view, is dance?

What kinds of artistic goals do you have?

How do they relate to your embodiment?

How does your physical training facilitate the achievement of your goals?

How do you motivate yourself to work?

What do you feel that is required of you as a dancer?

How do these requirements relate to your body work?

What does the responsibility of your own training and skill development feel like?

### **The initial questions for the third interview**

Tell me, what it is like to be a freelance dancer?

Describe how you view the current freelance field of dance.

Tell me about the events in your life that made you a dancer.

What in your view is dancership?

Describe your personal dance style.

What personal habits do you have when approaching dance-tasks?

What kind of a dancer do you think others view you as?

Describe what your body is like.

## Appendix II

### Phase 4

The following is an example of the meaning transformation done in this study during the fourth phase of the descriptive reading. The numbers in the beginning of the lines stand for the number of each meaning unit. The numbers found in the square brackets mark the lines on which the sentences are found in the transcripts. Here the transcripts of the interview-speech are still left in spoken form.

A2: Ok. No sitten seuraava kysymys onkin jo tällöinen, että miksi tanssit? [28–29]  
Joo no juu sä, nää on aika laajoja kysymyksiä. Jaa-a, mä oon itse miettinyt hirveesti tota asiaa. Mä en loppujen lopuks oo päässyt mihinkään selitykseen. Jossain vaiheessa niinku ihan tällanen hirvittävän konkreettinen ja loppujen lopuks aika ärsyttäväkin syy oli, kun sitä itse ajattelee, niin mä ajattelin yhdistää jonkun tietynlaisen itsensä ilmaisun ja laihduttamisen. Se oli niinku hyvä tapa pitää itseänsä niinku näin, ettei sitä tarte tehdä niinku erillään, vaan se niinku yhdistyy näin. Mut se oli niinku vaan siis se ihan yks sen sivupiirre, mut jossain vaiheessa se oli ihan – [30–42]

Joo. [43]

- merkittävä tekijä. 44

*B2: He has thought a lot about why he dances without finding any final explanation. What now seems like an annoying reason was that at some point he thought dancing was a good way of combining a form of self-expression and dieting*

A3: Mut että, mut ehkä mä tanssin sen takia, koska tanssi, tai niinku . . . Liikkuminen, onkohan se sit itsensä toteuttamista, toteuttaminen liikkeen, liikkeellä, tai näin? Se on ollu jotenkin hirveen lähellä mua aina. Mä, niin kauan kuin mä muistan, niin mä oon, liikkunu musiikin tahdissa eri tavoilla ihan iät ja ajat. Mua on aina kiinnostanut musiikki, ett musiikki on ollu mulle hirmu tärkeä, vaikk mä en niinku itse en oo sillai musikaalinen, ett mä soittaisin tai laulaisin. Mut että musiikki on ollu hirveen tärkeä elementti mulle – [44–56]

Joo. [57]

- ja siihen niinku jotenkin on aina liittyny se liike. [59]

Joo. [60]

*B3: He questions if it is because of a self-realization that occurs in movement that he dances. Although he is not musical in the sense that he can sing or play an instrument, music, which for him involves movement, has always been very important to him. Ever since he can remember, he has moved with music in different ways.*

A4: Niinku joskus, mä muistan joskus ala-asteen aikoinakin mä raivasin olohuoneeseen tilan, että mä liikun ja pistän levyn soimaan ja mä heilun sitten hullun lailla siinä ennen kuin kukaan tuli kotiin. Sai niinku rauhassa heiluu. Ja sitten mä vaan aloin tanssimaan. Jossain vaiheessa se oli Flash Dance, tämä elokuva, joka sai mut sit lähtemään tanssitunneille. Ja siitä se sit, se oli aluks ihan harrastus ja kerran viikossa ja myöhemmin sitten kaks, kolme. Sitten mä pääsinkin vapaaoppilaaks Helsingin Tanssiopistoon, jollonka se olikin jo enemmän työtä kuin varsinainen työ koulussa tai jossain töissä. [60–74]

*B4: During elementary school he used to clear a space in the living room, play a record, and sway around like crazy before anyone else came home. The movie Flash Dance motivated him to take dance classes. First he went to a class once a week and then two or three times a week. Then he was granted a place as tuition free student at a central dance school and dancing became more work than going to school or any job.*

A5: Mut mikä se perimmäinen syy siihen, miks mä . . . Emmä tiiä, se on vaan jotenkin ollu aina hirveen luonnollista niinku liikkua musiikin tahdissa. [74–77]

Elikä sull on niinku kehittynyt näistä alkukosketuksista harrastuksen kautta - [78–79]

Joo. [80]

- eteenpäin. [81]

B5: *Yet the basic reason for dancing remains unclear to him. It has just always been very natural for him to move in the rhythm of music.*

A6: Niin. Ja sitten mä oon niinku itseasiassa miettinyt tätä koko tanssin amm-, tanssia ammattina. Mä en niinku jotenkin koe sitä tietyllä tavalla niinku itselleni ammatiks. Ett mä en niinku koe, ett se on asia, niinku että siis sellanen ammatti, mitä mä teen mist mä saan rahaa. Johtuu ehkä siitä, ett mä en saa siitä rahaa kun mä teen sitä. Mut että se ei ollu nyt se pointti, vaan se, että se on niinku jotenkin . . . Se on jotenkin henkimaailman juttu siinä mielessä, ett mitä se niinku on. Miten se, niin . . . Se on varmaan aina vaan ollu jotenkin niin hirveen luonteenomaista liikkua ja mä oon aina ollu hirveen liikunnallinen. [82–95]

B6: *He has thought about dance as a profession and does not experience it as an occupation. For him it is not a means of making money, because he really does not. Rather it has something to do with the spiritual world, since movement has always been so characteristic of him.*

A7: Siis mä oon joskus nuorempanahan harrastanu näitä yleisurheilua ja pelannu kaiken maailman squashia ynnä muita, [95–97]

B7: *When he was younger he did all sorts of athletics and played squash.*

A8: ja sitten kun alko niinku jossain vaiheessa herätä sellanen syvempi kiinnostus elämään, olemiseen, kaikkeen tällaseen, niin tuli sellainen itsensä toteuttamisen tarve. Tanssi niinku tarjoaa siinäkin mielessä niinkun synteesin siitä, että niinku räökkää itteensä fyysisesti, mutta siinä samalla myös toteuttaa itseänsä niinku sillai henkisesti. [98–105]

Just. [106]

B8: *At some point when he became more deeply interested in the nature of life he also started to need a way of realizing himself. Dance synthesizes two interests: he thinks that while one teases oneself physically one realizes oneself spiritually.*

A9: Niin en kai nyt voi loppujen lopuksi sanoo niin, ett mä tanssin sen takia, kun mä hirveesti pidän siitä, rakastan sitä. Mä tiiän ett vähän aikaa sitten välttämättä en ois voinu sanoo näin. Mut että nytten ehkä voin jo sanoo niinkin. [107–112]

B9: *In the end he thinks he dances because he likes it so much, though he did not think so earlier.*

## Phase 5

The following are examples of transformed meaning units from one interview material, which were placed under the classifying theme 'life history in dance'. This procedure was conducted in phase 5 of the descriptive reading. The numbers in the beginning again point out the number of the meaning unit these transformations refer to.

B1: *Since he finished his dance education, he has worked as a professional freelance dancer for one year.*

B4: *During elementary school he used to clear a space in the living room, play a record and sway around like crazy before anyone else came home. The movie Flash Dance motivated him to take dance classes. First he*

*went to a class once a week and then two or three times a week. Then he was granted a place as tuition-free student at a central dance school and dancing became more work than going to school or any job.*

*B7: When he was younger he did all sorts of athletics and played squash.*

*B55: He became familiar with yoga when he moved away from his parent's home and lived alone. He moved to another city where he knew no one. Doing yoga became a sort of therapy for him. It kept him on track till he found friends and other things to do. He was reminded of this lonely work just lately when rehearsing a dance piece that involved doing yoga.*

*B166: He does not exactly know from where his life history in dance began. He thinks that it has to do with his experience that dance and music cannot be separate, although western dance views them as such. His dancing evolved from the fact that in his heart he is more of a musician than a dancer. He just does not have the gift of singing and he does not know how to write music either. Still music made him move. Or in fact he says that he does not know what the initiator was since dance and music are so integrally combined.*

*B167: He also remembers that he moved around a lot. As a child he used to come home from school and spend a few hours alone before anyone else came home. During this time he cleared the rug from the living room floor, put on a record, and moved around.*

*B168: The next thing he remembers is that he started really to dance. First at the age of ten he wanted to take tap-dancing classes, as at the time some Gene Kelly movies were shown on television. His father did not allow him to dance. But when his mother and father divorced he got to take jazz-dance classes. From this things started to evolve. Nevertheless he did not have a break from dancing for many years before applying for dance-education in a higher-level institution into which he was admitted.*

*B169: Moving, especially moving with music, has been an essential part of his whole existence. He says that his life's biggest tragedy is that he does not have any more gifts so he could pursue a career in music. He can sing, somewhat, and make a sound with the violin, but not much more. He wonders what would have happened if he had been given an instrument when he was a child. Yet he notes that this was not something likely to have happened in his family.*

## **Phase 6**

The next is an example of the meaning network constructed from the above transformations and created in phase 6 of the descriptive reading:

He thinks that he started to dance because of his close relation to music. He would have rather been a musician if he had had some more musical talent and if he had been encouraged to play an instrument as a child. Music has always moved him. In his view the two, movement and music, cannot be separated. As a child, he used to move a lot and do sports. When he came home from school he used to clear a space in the living room, put on a record, and dance to the sound of music. The dance and movie musicals he saw when he was a child motivated him to dance though his father was against it. When his parents divorced, he started to take jazz-dance classes. The amount of dance classes increased from one class a week to intense dancing and he finally applied for dance-education in a higher-level institution into which he was admitted. Now after his education he has worked as a professional freelance dancer for one year.

## Appendix III

### THE MEANING NETWORKS

#### I

He thinks he started to dance because of his close relationship to music. He would rather have been a musician if he had some more musical talent and if he had been encouraged to play an instrument as a child. It has always been very natural for him to move to the rhythm of music. In his view the two, movement and music, cannot be separated. As a child when he came home from school, he used to clear a space in the living room, set on a record, and dance to the sound of music. The dance and musical movies he saw then motivated him to dance though his father was against it. When his parents divorced, he started to take jazz-dance classes. The amount of dance classes increased from one class a week to intense dance training and he finally applied for a dance-education in a higher-level institution into which he was admitted. Now after his education he has worked as a professional freelance dance artist for one year and says he dances because he likes dancing so much. Nevertheless, what was earlier a concrete reason for dancing, is still to an extent true: he finds dancing a good way of combining a form of self-expression and dieting. Added to this dance offers a channel for realizing his deeper interest in life, too. While he exerts himself physically, he is realizing himself spiritually as well. He feels that he needs to strain himself physically to feel right and at times dance becomes a sort of therapy for him.

He does not experience dance as an occupation or as a means of making money. He considers it a great privilege that he is allowed to move, work with his own body, and work on himself in his job. It is important for him that he continuously learns and grows as a person through dance work. Representing a profession, being able to call himself a dancer, gives him a sense of belonging despite the fact that his work is poorly paid and involves tolerating uncertainties and tiredness. Being a freelance dancer means that he cannot be sure if there are any dance pieces to work on, if the pieces he is working on will in the end be performed, or if he will be paid for the work done. Another concern he has is that of the body. If it got hurt he would not be able to dance for while. Also with age he has noticed that dancing has become increasingly heavy physically. This annoys him though he also experiences some advantages to aging. He feels that he has become truer to himself and moves in ways that please him more.

The most rewarding experiences in dance are for him when movement arouses such a state of being in which he feels connected to all other beings. In his view, human beings are creatures in which the dimensions of mind and body mutually affect each other. Without the one the other does not exist. Before the two aspects, the mental and the physical, were more separate in him. Their stronger connection is evident in the way he is aware of his body. Now he feels that his physicality is not a separate substance and that he relates to it through his spirituality. He no longer experiences his body as an end in itself, rather it is a means, as is dance, for him to be connected to a state of being in which he feels part of something larger and stronger. Consequently, he has, as it were, experienced a disappearance of his body and dance. They both have become ambiguous.

Although he finds defining dance and especially contemporary dance difficult since they can be so many different things, he gives some descriptions of dance. He thinks that dance is a fine and fragile art form, which communicates in a non-verbal way. As movement is the first medium humans communicate through he finds physical communication to be primordial. Added to this dance is also originated in the subjective; the basic power of art. For him dance is philosophy in which dancers reveal their inner selves in a deep and sensitive manner. Consequently, he thinks that dance is able to deal with things that are difficult to verbalize, with things that are merely felt. He says that experiences arising from dance surpass rationality. He thinks dance a great way of communicating because in his view our world is overly rational. This state of affairs has also been influenced by the fact that non-

verbal communication is unfamiliar to western people. Thus, dance has not been very appreciated and has even revealed things people are unwilling to perceive. Dance in his view is an outsider in society. Yet making dance more public is difficult. Although he himself would not know how to verbalize his dancing, other dancers have nevertheless attempted to speak about dance and make it understandable to people outside dance. In spite of this he hopes that a certain amount of mystery is left intact in dance. He does not want everything to be explained.

He finds that in western countries in general humans and their movement are understood objectively instead of dealing with what the body means as internally experienced. To his dismay he has listened to descriptions of his own way of moving which state that his movement is direct, massive, and monumental. He has also been told that he is small, with a long back, short legs and big muscles. So he looks like he could not move in a nimble manner. As a dancer he is aware of his body image and what he considers its faults and indeed would be more satisfied if he had longer and more proportionate legs. Yet otherwise he feels that he is softer, faster, stronger, and nimbler than the above descriptions reveal. He tells that his relation to his body has evolved through phases. First before puberty he was very small and skinny and so he started to lift weights. In his teens his muscles grew larger and rounder. He thinks his body is relatively massive. He says he tried to live up to beauty ideals despite the fact that his body was not one of ideal model measures. This was disappointing to him. Now he has nevertheless found a more satisfying relation to his body. A more profound image of his body, which is concerned with how it functions and also with the relation of the body and the mind, started to evolve when he began his dance education. At the moment he feels that he has a well-functioning body. In his view, the body is a tool dancers should keep in good condition to achieve the things they want in dance. Although he perceives a stronger dance style, which requires skillful and versatile dancers, to be popular at the moment, he no longer thinks that dancers should necessarily be versatile in their physical skills. Dancers should rather find their own way of working with the body, which feels pleasurable. Dancers need not restrict their training to any specific technique either. Yet doing what feels comfortable does not mean a dancer's progress or interest in other areas is stifled.

He thinks that dance technique is basically concerned with body alignment. In concentrating on dance technique, he works on his own knowledge of his body and his ability to adapt to ways of moving. He learned to delineate his body posture by practicing what he calls "sinful" ballet. Yet as he thinks that training for a technique is a matter of thinking, he feels that in taking ballet classes he is in fact practicing contemporary dance. However, he has not taken dance classes for a year. During this time, he has freed himself of the formal constraints of dance classes which he experienced as an oppressive emphasis on forcing a dancer into a form or another. He feels, then, he would like to attend classes again. He enjoys the fact that he no longer is tied to the programs involved in his dance education and that he has greater freedom yet is simultaneously responsible for what he does. He feels more motivated when he does what he finds necessary for himself. Still he is somewhat anxious about the responsibility of developing his dance skills. He feels he does not yet know enough and so would need stimulating experiences from others. Though he tries to avoid becoming fixed in his understanding he suspects he does and therefore needs someone to question it.

In his personal training his main focus is staying open. By openness he means a state in which his muscles are not blocked and instead are elastic. It also means that that he is in a state where he moves as smoothly and painlessly as possible. In such a state his creativity is released as then he does not have to fight against his body and has more energy to direct to other things in dance rehearsals. Therefore, he works with relaxation and elongation in his movement training. Also good respiratory endurance is important to him as when he is fit he feels well and does not hate himself.

He thinks he has had a chance to indulge and be lazy in life. So every time he enters a dance studio he wants to improve himself. This means that he sees difficult things as challenges and does not get depressed about not knowing how to do something. In fact, he thinks that dancers themselves demand the most of themselves. He believes it a necessity to be able to cope with all the endless styles and ways of dancing simply because he is a dancer. Although he acknowledges that no dancer is able to know how to do everything, it has been a tough thing for him to be reminded by the mirror that he does not

know how to make every movement yet. He says it is important, then, that a dancer is able to face him- or herself and is able to make a distinction between being an individual in general and being a dancer. Not knowing how to do something in dance does not make one an unworthy person. Dance rehearsals are for learning to do a dance. Yet he thinks that dancers should be diligent and have high standards in working

He does not like to see the same dancers performing in a lot of dance pieces if they are not able to transform themselves. He calls dancers who do not transform themselves "odorless and tasteless dancers". They mechanically repeat choreographed movements without problematizing and contextualizing what they are doing. He, on the contrary, needs to problematize things. Since in his view doing dance art is not easy he needs to question his work relating it to bigger frames of reference than that of the merely aesthetically beautiful. Questioning also means that he learns how to relate to the world depicted in the dance pieces he works in to himself. He thinks art should be connected to and touch the artist doing it.

For him being a dancer is a combination of existence and performing. What he gives and what is visible when on stage is what he considers as his dancerhood and he really stands by and puts his soul into what he is performing. Especially lately he has started to trust this strength and the fact that he performs in a dedicated way. He can do this because he has a strong psyche and can experience a wide variety of emotions. He wants to be what he calls an authentic dancer. This he thinks is expected of him. Being an authentic dancer means that he is present in his body and is attuned to the present moment of performance. He also wants to find the roles, which he dances in himself. He does not want to interpret movement from the outer surface. This is one reason why he likes dancing to be physically demanding. He needs to overcome his good physical condition, overcome his inhibitions, so he can make a more subtle interpretation of the work.

He feels that it is important that he does not accept demands that contradict what he is trying to achieve as a dancer. He even turned down an offer to dance in a dance piece because he felt the choreographer had such an approach to dancing which he would not have agreed with. Yet he still fears that he might be thought of as a stubborn dancer because of his opposition to working with that particular choreographer and wonders if he was wrong about the choreographer. He has worked on the basis of the belief that the right way of performing and being credible on stage is to be physically present in oneself. Yet he is no longer sure what this view means and if it is enough to dance accordingly. His questioning has started from the fact that he has found working in a dance piece extremely difficult. The choreographer of this piece emphasized that dancers should be present in and live the part they dance. Yet after a deeply reflective rehearsal period of three months he did not understand what the piece was about. On stage he felt like the choreographer's marionette. Consequently he would like to investigate the credibility of being on stage and the connection of movement and thought. He, like in his view most dance artists are, is looking for exactly this connection. Currently he feels lost in this respect. He is afraid that he might even be regarded as a dancer who does not quite understand what he does. He would above all like to be perceived as a dancer who on the level of thoughts and emotions understands dance and the dance pieces he works in.

During a rehearsal period he needs someone to talk with. He does not keep a journal since he is afraid that it would be a rational processing which would imprison his work. In the concrete rehearsing of a dance piece he first forms a rational image of what he is dancing as he practices the movement sequences. If the sequences involve difficult parts he reflects on them to help direct the movement to evolve smoothly. He also tries, but does not always succeed in a way that satisfies him, to find different emotional hues or qualities in his movement. After this part is done and the dance piece is processed further, he stops thinking rationally and does not try to remember the dance. He merely follows what comes out of his dancing. When performing he thinks rationalizing does not help. He trusts his intuition. He says that he has even become somewhat superstitious. He does not want to think about the order of dance sequences before he starts performing. So far he has not had any major black outs on stage.

In his view a professional choreographer should be demanding enough for things to evolve but no more or less, since demanding too much or too little of a dancer can be destructive. Nevertheless, he

has experienced some unrealistic demands. During these moments he has been very frustrated with himself, the choreographer, the dance piece, and everything else too. He thinks a choreographer should understand that there is no such thing as a finished piece. When the piece is about to be premiered, it is finished to the extent the rehearsals have allowed for. Usually the choreographers are content with his dancing. Still, he likes to have comments on his performing that help his dancing evolve. He always tries to develop his dancing.

He thinks the audience too is demanding. Though he really thinks a choreographer should be given his or her artistic freedom, he realizes the demand of the audience mostly through the choreographer's assumptions of what the audience wants. Nevertheless, he has lately lost interest in following what is going on in dance. Earlier when he still followed what was happening he found that there was a pubescent atmosphere generally dominant in the dance field. This is the consequence of not concentrating on dance as art. He thinks that the western tradition has imposed on us a superficial and objective way of understanding movement. This he thinks has not been overcome in the field of freelance dance in Helsinki. Instead of dealing with dance as art, the dance field has produced a lot of dance pieces processed as a part of a survival strategy. They have been created bearing in mind what the public likes and what will sell. However, he does name a few dance artists who have the capacity and desire to familiarize themselves with the questions of what dance means as an art, what dance really is and through these insights create art works.

His expectation of his place in dance society has changed. He thinks it is a backlash reaction to his not being chosen to dance in a piece, which he feels would have made him a popular dancer and which he feels he is not. Now he thinks that being on the margins gives him a good perspective on life and requires him to remain in a state of openness. In the mainstream one stops thinking creatively and just follows what is fashionable. Still being on the edge involves a tiring struggle for existence. He represents a marginal way of doing contemporary dance, which in itself is already a marginal art form. Despite this he feels that his dance interests resonate with the audience, since the few dance pieces he has so far performed, one of which he solo-choreographed, have been well received. Nevertheless, he has to search for reasons that give him and his art the right to exist and defend his position. He is a tolerant person and is not defending his position as the only acceptable one, but is defending its right of equality with other views. What upsets him for example is that in opera new, young, talented singers equivalent to him get contracts with large salaries. He says that it is impossible, though, for an individual freelance dancer to demand higher wages since then one would simply be pricing oneself out of the dance market. He also recalls other events that have made him anxious: a dance company's audition which was purely a political act, a positively reviewed dance piece in which he did not perceive the things it was praised for, and an evening of new contemporary dance choreography which was written a lot about in the papers. He is bitter that dance pieces which are performed in prestigious surroundings and supported by well-known people become a success even if when performed in a different setting would be uninteresting dance pieces. Though he tries to avoid it, he admits that he thinks about how his colleagues or the critics perceive his dancing. He thinks he shouldn't allow the opinions of others to affect him and tries to follow his own intuition and thinking. But when he thinks how reviews affect people who are not well-acquainted with dance he is influenced by the critics. He is depressed about the fact that critics do not seem to act professionally. He is also anxious about the politics involved in reviewing dance. The interests of theatre institutions and of the media play a big role in how dance art is viewed and this decreases the flow of money to the freelance field because it is neglected in the reviews.

He has become very tired of the general lack of appreciation of dance which is shown in material and circumstantial ways, such as how money and rehearsal space are distributed and furthermore in the size of the audience, since these factors affect him too. He feels that he cannot do what freelance dancers should be able to do: that is, handle public relations. To survive in the freelance field dancers, have to cope with competition for money and many other things. This is controversial for him, since it requires that a dancer should be tough and dance again is an art form which requires dancers to be very sensitive. He also sees that dancers have a tendency to undermine their work, to let the dance

pieces they work in speak for themselves, instead of asking people come to see the good work they have done.

Added to this in his life he does not have that many people around him and none of them are dancers. He has realized that dance people spend time together in their private lives, too. But he does not and so feels an outsider in the dance field. Actually, at the moment he does not even feel very committed to the dance field. He feels like telling the whole system off. He is currently working on a new solo dance piece and views it as his farewell performance. He intends to take a break from dancing afterwards and suggests that he might even become a cafe owner instead of continuing as a dancer.

## II

She became involved with dance very late; at the age of twenty. During her school years she was good at physical education and enjoyed various sports. Though doing sports never became a calling for her, she thought she would become a teacher of physical education. When she took a course on this subject, she was also given a two-week dance workshop, which inspired her to dancing. She realized she did not want to go to the university she applied for and she was not admitted to anyway. From then on she went to different dance schools. Before being admitted into an institution of higher education in dance as the oldest applicant accepted, she nevertheless pursued studies in nursing. During this time she also went abroad where she worked in hospitals and took a lot of dance classes. By that time dance had already engulfed her life. Up until now, she has worked as a professional freelance dance artist for eight years.

She dances because she experiences dancing as the most important and compelling event in her life. This compulsion is not a "choke chain". On the contrary, it is what enables her to cope with the world. She would become sick if she were unable to be an artist. Doing art allows her to free her energy instead of locking it inside her and gives her a chance to work with herself in her own fashion. She says she can be at her best, be herself, in the area of the arts. She says dance is her manner of being in this world. It is her channel of communication; her very own language. She thinks she has become an artist both through natural selection and through seeking for her own path. She believes that her life was given a direction according to which she has searched for well-being and something which brings her life together. She thinks that humans are tied to what she calls a "basic lump", which is a collection of everything from an individual's history and is characteristic to that individual. She is sure that some things become rooted and remain influential throughout the course of people's lives. She likewise has a certain way of being which is familiar to herself. This way of being she experiences as the foundation on which she stands and from which her art evolves.

In working with dance art she has traveled along her own path and developed spiritually. Exploring dance on her own has been a natural choice for her. She says she can be more directly in touch with what she is interested in when working on her own. What being a dancer means for her is that she wants, with her inner spirit, outer self, and through her body, to convey feelings, mirror the world and her relation to it to other people. Her choreographic work and teaching deals with the same message, as well. In fact, she feels that she is not really a freelance dancer, because she has not danced a lot. At least she has not danced as a dancer should, that is by constantly dancing. When she has not danced at all, she has nevertheless taught dance and created choreography. This has kept her tied to the dance field. She regards all the things she does; teaching, dancing, and doing choreography as parts of one and the same package of being a dance artist. However, she has wondered why she never committed herself to any steady dance position. The freedom that is inherent to being a freelancer has been something she has greatly enjoyed. She also fears that if she had signed contract with a large theatre institution she would have been too weak to continue her own path. She has trouble dancing in other people's dance pieces. In them she feels that she has to contradict herself. When she dances in other choreographers' dance pieces she has a humble attitude towards the choreographer. She wants to execute the ideas of the choreographer as well as possible and it is from this attitude that problems arise. She is not satisfied with her own work and becomes nervous. Her body becomes tight and it starts to rise off ground. So she says she has a problem with being open, which she views as an

important quality for doing dance. She thinks she is not open enough, so she has started to look for ways of being more open. But being really open is something she is only on her way to achieve.

She thinks that freelance dancers should have a broad range of skills, both mentally and physically. Freelance dancers might find themselves doing many different kinds of jobs and so they need a variety of skills. Consequently, she thinks that dancers should be open in perception and know themselves. In her view being open in perception means a tolerance and a sensitivity to situations. These more mental characteristics allow for other things to happen and allow the body to be open and tolerant, as well. She does not want to make any judgments on what a dancer's body should look like as one's image of what a dancer should like can be so many things. Instead, she thinks that dancers should understand their body, which means that they are capable of analyzing it and using it in ways that their tasks require. She does not really believe that dancers can get by with knowing only one dance technique. She thinks rather that the body needs to be provoked in different ways for movement to flow through or even pierce the entirety of the body and not to be performed in a mechanical way.

To find a connection between the mind and body, which she thinks is necessary for a dancer and which is the basis of her work as well, she somehow has a way of tuning herself into whatever she is dealing with. These connections are not always easy to find. When doing her own artistic work it is easier for her to achieve it. She admits that she can train, nevertheless, in a detached or superficial way but she still has to have a general understanding of the vital integration of the two. The affinity between the mind and the body is a process she cannot completely forget. It is through her intuition that she is aware that there is a bridging between the body and the mind. She thinks that the connection has to do with becoming more sensitive and aware of one's sensations. What she is convinced of, though, is that if the mind is not open, if there is something blocking one's thoughts, then one is also blocked in one's body. This she has witnessed in her teaching. In fact, it is the first things she pays attention to when teaching, since she finds it futile to push for things where there is a blockage. When the body is not blocked, she says it dares to fill its measures. Then it is as broad as it is.

Working with her own body means that she cannot forget about it at any moment. It cannot be put aside like a musical instrument. She needs to pay constant attention to it and it in return keeps her awake and aware. The body sends her messages and pulsates with a speech. The body tells her if something hurts or not, if something is tight or not. She experiences the body both as a fetter and a liberation. When it is a fetter, she finds it difficult to analyze her mind, feelings, or what she is doing. Then she does not know what is connected to what as the body is such a complex thing. Sometimes in these confusing situations she becomes very annoyed but she also realizes that the body is not a thing she can deal with only a little or in separate pieces. It is a total entity in which everything is present. When she admits that things do not emerge smoothly, she calms down. In fact, she finds that the richness of the body is a reason why dance is a great art form. When the body is a liberation, she jokingly says it is like having wings and flying. For her liberation has to do with intuition, with feeling right about what one is doing, and being in touch with what is important. It is something which one is only able to feel. It is a state in which she is one with what she is doing. This feeling she trusts and believes in. If she did not experience this state of oneness she would have to work in a different way.

Her own body she describes as strong. It does not break easily and she does not experience a lot of pain. The premises she works on are such that her body is strong but her spirit is weak. This dichotomy has nevertheless changed a lot from the time she began her dance education. She has become softer, more open and breathes more. Her body is now also better aligned so she feels better placed around herself. She thinks her earlier posture problems had to do with a mental tightness she used to have and the way in which she used to work. At the moment a change in her thinking has made her feel stronger with her body than she felt before.

In her training she aims to enhance her capacity to distinguish between the different moving muscles and to keep alive the sensitivity of the body, which is lost if she does not use her body. Training too much might create the same problem, though. When she loses her bodily sensitivity she feels that her body is a big mass of flesh which is difficult to articulate. There are also just times when she does not get enough exercise. When teaching she sometimes is too tired to move along with the students and

anyway she experiences that in teaching moving is different from moving while training one's own body. Nonetheless, when rehearsing a dance piece, she does not need to do anything else exercise-wise, except perhaps a bit of stretching. She does not intuitively grasp how to take care of her body. She simply needs to set her body into motion to find out what it needs. Sometimes she has clear feelings of needing to work with a specific dance technique to be able to gain an articulate sense of her body. She occasionally takes different dance classes to pick up new ideas and give her body a warm-up. She keeps herself in good condition by jogging and going to the gym. She was not interested in going to the gym before, but now she goes there quite often to improve coordination of movement and endurance. When she trains for herself she tries to address and search for things that help her with what she is working on now. Often she works on specific problems through a fairly set basic warm-up of her own. She has different phases of doing things and says that her training is not very regular, partly because of laziness. At times she is too tired to go to a dance class and at others she feels like doing something else not even always knowing what. This problem is solved when she starts to work on her own dance pieces. Then she goes to a dance studio and does her own things, which varies from situation to situation. She doesn't know where the way she rehearses a piece or trains emerges from. In fact, she is amazed how unmethodical she has been and nevertheless has coped. Still she sees some organization in the fact that the body sometimes requires empty spaces, too. She perceives her training to be like she herself is: irregular in the sense that she does this and that and at times she even picks up loose ends of things which she has worked on before and works some more on them or finishes them off. Despite her lack of the organization, when working on her own dance pieces she gets things done and does this in a way that quickly becomes charged with intensity. At times when she is not able to find a connection between her skills, her own motives, and ambitions she becomes tight. She feels responsible for improving her skills and if at one moment she isn't bothered about this, the next moment she is. Though she tries to see the process of finding answers as a challenge, she sometimes feels that everything just collapses and that things just do not work.

She describes her working attitude as introverted. She tries to eliminate outer things and create a space within. When she works, she operates with both bodily spaces and the space surrounding her body. This is the easiest way for her. It is easy for her to close her eyes and go to the core of her being. This core is like a nest she likes diving into. The qualities of movement she works with are soft, slow, organic, and fluid. The use of two opposite styles is also characteristic of her dancing. She distinguishes a quality, which she calls the dancer-of-strength in herself. It stands for the tight and bound qualities in her dancing. In contrast to this there is also a freer side to her. She enjoys a fast tempoed shifting between these two elements of her dancing.

Her technique classes have been created in conjunction with other people and with where her own path has taken her. The basic physical things she works with in her teaching are organizing and strengthening the body. With this framework she proceeds towards a loose and open space which perhaps tends to go from the body towards the mind and the core of one's being. By this she means that the physical has an affinity with the psychic. This again is connected to the capacity of finding movement in oneself and implies an increase in awareness. She also concentrates on searching for organic movement with her students. The word organic is important to her and for her it means allowing natural bodily lines to run thoroughly through the body. She tries to prompt her students to understand the qualities she works with. Where strength is concerned she tries to show that it can be grasped and condensed in a way that is releasing and makes the body breathe more instead of becoming tight. This nevertheless does not imply powerlessness. She is searching for something in which strength is still articulated yet has another quality as well. She thinks that often working with strength leaves different levels of qualities unexplored. She wants to find out what the journey from tighter, more restricted bodywork, to a looser way of working is. As she works with dance students, she also questions where it is good to start from in this respect and how strength is experienced. She thinks that if one does not experience strength, one cannot experience anything light either. She also asks why dance students find it hard to acknowledge work which does not directly deal with strength as a way of working in dance training. She wonders how to dismantle technique training and found a new

way of being. She also questions what dance work and training in fact are. Nevertheless of all her different ways of realizing herself as a dance artist: as a dancer, a choreographer and a teacher, in teaching she mostly thinks of what is expected of her. She says she thought about this more acutely earlier. Now she is better able to combine what she wants to do with these requirements. In the teaching position she currently holds she has to do a lot of thinking concerning her teaching. Yet the whole tenor of her teaching has become sounder, and it is related to what she herself is investigating and this keeps transforming. She is pleased with her working circumstances and she describes it as a laboratory in which she does her experiments. But even in this position other things intervene and make her question if she has enough time for everything.

In her choreography she does many things, yet they evolve from the characteristic ways she deals with movement; they evolve from the fragile, nuanced, and articulated yet also the powerful and space usurping movement. However, in her choreography she concentrates more on bodily space than environmental space. She thinks of movement as states of the body and of its space as an inner space. To find her inner space the simplest method she uses is to close her eyes and try to forget the surrounding world. She tries as it were to listen to her own voice. Hearing her own voice comes about in levels. When the outer dimension disappears an awareness of stillness or quietness steps in. For her this is already a connection between the mind and the body. In an unavoidable way this silence moves the things occurring in her in the same direction and brings them together. In concentrating on this silence the feeling of weight is important to her. In her thoughts she notices how the energy currents of her body move. She tries to direct them inwards and drop them downwards. This is a journey in which she first puts down 'roots' for what follows, that is the transposition of those existential states she is experiencing. She says that during this journey the flesh starts to disappear. It is as if the concreteness of the flesh is transposed into a new dimension which she experiences as a basic power element equivalent to the elements of the air, earth, fire, and water. The sifting of existential states she lives through at these moments is important and she considers it a sort of entrance through which she passes into a place where she can create choreography.

Movement arouses in her, regardless of how abstractly she deals with it or if it is accompanied by music or not, different states of being. The connection of her interior state to her environment carry her somewhere as these motional states occur. She lets them take her forward in an obscure and absurd way. Intuition is the basis of this approach and she thinks there is a constant emotional charge in it. Sometimes she is more logical and sets out to work with certain ideas, which she searches for. In the intuitive process, movements start spontaneously to go in towards some direction, this tells her that they make some sense. Then a movement sequence involving certain kinds of movement, related to certain thoughts and contents is formed. The sequence gradually becomes a refined and settled version of the initial motional motif. Or another option of arriving at a set sequence of movement is that she immediately and automatically decides to fix the emerging movement in some manner and does so. Sometimes, however, things do not seem to work. Then she just repeats and repeats a movement sequence trying to add something to it by using different exercises and so find a solution to the problem. She says that she has no clear system of working. She thinks it might be helpful if she invented one, since improvisation does not always work. Turning to a combination of movements at these moments might be a good thing. However, she does use some breathing exercises and movement meditations to find inspiration.

All the pieces she has created have involved an extremely difficult process even to the extent that she has had to question why she ever came to the point where she was and if she was obliged to finish the pieces. She still questions this obligation. She thinks that the necessity for going through these processes is to prove to herself that she can go through them, make something out of them and create logical dance pieces. She has no ambition to become internationally successful. She would enjoy such success if it came to her, though, since it would give her the chance to perform in different forums and share her artistic aspirations. However, she is, for better or worse, extremely ambitious in her own work. What her art deals with is a communication with the world and a need to experience a sense of community. She is selfish in the sense that when she is on stage she would like to sense a connection

between herself and the people watching her. She hopes that through her performance a circuit of non-verbal communication is built between her and the audience. She tries to touch people somewhere beneath the conscious and to provoke a sense of what it is basically to be human. Trusting her own experiences, she is sure that it exists in everyone and is the reason why she does art. Though she thinks that experiences of this sort occur in everyday life too, she admits that she has an idealistic and romantic notion of the artist being capable of inspiring it in others as well. She wants to do it without making her work appearing educational. She strives instead to create a rich experiential event. She wants to share an experience of the basic qualities of being human in a collective manner. This is the underlying reason for what she does. Even in the way she approaches the body or deals with the world in her choreography, she tries to keep an element of human touch intact. She supports humanity in a communal way.

She has not created a dance piece bearing in mind audience expectations. In every new dance piece she works with she is investigating something new which she wants to clarify for herself. She is concerned with the audience in another way. She sees herself as an artist, who tries to mold her processes and thoughts concerning the issue she is dealing with in a way that her ideas are made as perceivable as possible. She admits that finding a connection with her thoughts and to understand how they can be turned into a dance piece is nevertheless difficult for her. However, even her tendency to turn inwards when doing dance work is a stylistic method she uses in performance. She assumes it helps the audience to experience something inwardly too. Her approach works as a reversal. She feels that she is able to open a new channel, which operates in an opposite direction through focusing her energy inwards. Instead of addressing things directly which she experiences as blatant and halting she works in a different way. Through the craft of choreography she creates a form she thinks of as approachable, which someone might even find easily approachable. She does not know, however, if her choreography is easily approachable. A dance piece she made was reviewed as being difficult to approach. She in fact does not know what people think of her as a dancer either. She says some might like her and some might think she is too emotional, restricted, disciplined and overly concerned with form. Yet she knows some emotional people who find the emotional side in her dancing appealing. For some the formal side in her works better.

She sees the current dance field as a rich one. Compared to what was happening twenty years ago it is very large. A radical shift occurred after the emergence of the Dance department at the Theatre Academy. She says it will be interesting to follow where this will all lead as new dancers are continuously produced. Though people are concerned about an overproduction, she wonders if the increase in the number of dancers will open the dance field more. In her experience, each dance artist in Finland explores her or his own thing. For her the dance field is one big research lab and she finds it interesting when the people in it communicate and speak about dance from differing points of view thus revealing in how many ways dance can be perceived and consequently enriching dance. Of herself she says that she obviously sees herself as a part of the dance field as she is working in the position she is. She views it as an important position and feels she has some influence over matters. She feels responsible, then, and hopes she can develop dance and help make it more profound and open. This is no easy task, she admits. Despite this, at the moment, she feels comfortable in Finland. She is able to communicate and get feedback on her work which she finds important.

Although her life has had a clear direction and she has a curriculum vitae which tells her that she has done things and reassures her that she has not lived in vain, she feels something is lacking. She says she lacks a family. She is living on the verge of a relationship crisis. Her working and family life do not always connect. But she cannot stop working, since it is the most essential part of her life. She struggles with joining what she calls a normal life including other people with her life in work, which she believes should be possible.

### III

When he was a child he dreamt that in the future he would dance. However, in his youth he became handicapped and his dream was destroyed. For many years he did not enjoy his body or his physicality.

He was ashamed of his body, and felt he had to hide it. Nevertheless, while he was working in amateur theater, he attended courses on physical expression. There he began to realize that he could do things despite his handicap. At the age of twenty he started a rehabilitation program through which the handicap got better. He began to take dance classes. At that time dance was a form of therapy for him through which he searched for his self. With the encouragement of his dance teachers and dance acquaintances who told him he was not too old to dance, he decided to give it a try. When he was a third year university student and had danced intensely for a few years he stopped studying because he received a trainee position in a dance group. A foreign choreographer working with the group auditioned for more dancers. The choreographer wanted him for the production as he [the interviewee] was eager to experiment with everything concerning dance. After working with the group and being surrounded by professional dancers for a year, he understood that he would only be able to develop slowly in the group as he lacked a strong foundation in dancing, which the other dancers already had acquired. He left to study dance in England.

The initial reason he started to dance was that he found it brought spiritual content to his life. In his view one is usually propelled into dancing by a powerful experience related to dancing. From this an interest continues to take one into learning more about dance. As a matter of fact he believes dancers to live in a world rich with experiences. He considers art in general to be a spiritual resource that empowers his existence. Through it he can reflect on his life, his feelings, the surrounding environment, and society. He thinks that art reflects what is going on in real life and finds that such art, which makes him think in new ways, excites him. He thinks that with dance societies tolerance and understanding of marginal things, for example of the negative image of the body and sexuality, can be developed. In such matters dance and art can be very political and influential. This he thinks is a great power for good in society which should be strongly supported. Sometimes he is annoyed by the fact that dance is so marginalized and continues to be difficult to understand. He is very irritated that people believe that it is only emotions that can be expressed through it, when he thinks that it can express anything. However, he suspects that dance is difficult to understand because we have become so estranged from our bodies and dance expression. After western theatrical dance separated itself from social dances, it evolved rather quickly and developed such a large range of ways of expressing itself that it is impossible to stay knowledgeable about it unless one is really interested. He thinks that also an interest in the other arts might open a way to understanding the difficult forms of dance.

His dance education was many-faceted even though it was mainly concerned with traditional modern dance techniques. It also, amongst other things, included tai-chi, body conditioning, and studying choreography. During his education he realized he could mold his body, even if he might not have had the best body for dance. His body and looks changed so quickly and dramatically that he had a hard time keeping up with the change. Nevertheless this was exactly what he had hoped for. It made him feel good to no longer be physically incapable. Furthermore he thinks that everything he learned was useful in some way. In his professional life he has made use of even the more rare techniques he learned. He remembers a performance in which he stood outdoors in one position for two hours in chilly weather and wearing very little. During this performance he went through all the possible teachings he learned, especially those of his tai-chi teacher who had talked about people staying in one position for hours. Through concentrating intensely on breathing and relaxing himself, he found that the pain of tired muscles vanished, and that he could have stood in stillness for many more hours. As he is generally quite an active person who finds being still oppressive, he feels it was an achievement to find a way of keeping his muscles alive in this performance.

Since completing his formal education in dance he has worked as professional dance artist for six years. During his career he has worked in many different kinds of productions; in near-balletic pieces, experimental contemporary dance pieces, well-paid musicals, and performance-art performances. After he moved back to Finland in 1990 he worked in a dance company for a year and a half. Since this time he has been a freelance dance artist and has worked as a visiting performer in different dance theaters and groups. When he became a freelancer he felt very proud. He thought he was strong to be able to do what he wanted and not to deal with what he considered unworthy. He no longer has such

defiance. As the support of a company, expecting him to take classes, rehearse, and be on tour, vanished from his life he had to start being responsible for his own work. He fell into, what he calls "the pit of freelance dancers". But he became active again and started to pay attention to his own work and training as well.

He thinks that being a freelance dancer is simply one way of being a dance professional. Despite this he believes that the precondition for being a freelance dancer are that one is strong, has initiative, and perseverance as well as an extreme belief in one's abilities. Freelance dancers are self-employed and are responsible for everything concerning their work. Freelance dancers lack obligations. Nobody sets such demands that a freelance dancer does not want to answer to unless one works for money. Furthermore, no freelance dancer is irreplaceable. There is always someone else who can step in. In a dance company one can be sick, not as a freelance dancer. It is also not enjoyable to work production by production, which is done increasingly in Finland. Yet being a freelancer does give one greater freedom to develop in the direction one is going. However, in the end he thinks that the work of a dancer is basically no different whether working in a group or being a freelancer. He thinks that one can be innovative both as a freelance dancer and in a regular group. The creation of interesting art is not entirely dependent on working structures.

In his view, freelance dancers need to be versatile to earn a living, even though lately dancers have started to decline work as they do not want to do certain kinds of dance. He also thinks that, along side of basic bodily potential, a capacity to learn and transform oneself is important for dancers to be able to throw themselves into the world of a choreographer, to develop and adapt to the material danced. He emphasizes the importance of dancers lending themselves and their creativity to a choreographer. By this he does not refer to an exploitative instrumentalization, but to the dancers' ability to use their body and skills with someone. He also thinks that a dancer should give the choreographer a chance to see movement and search for it.

He says that one of the burdens of being a dancer is insecurity about remaining healthy. It is something one has to confront every time someone is injured. Another negative thing dancers confront is that they are to a great extent expected to remain the same. If they have performed in a certain piece dancing in a certain way they are expected to dance and be like that all the time. Also a dancer speaking out and having opinions about something is not welcomed. It is thought that a dancer should not think independently. He himself has dared to say what he thinks on many occasions and has suffered from this. What more is tedious is that though dancers have good-looking bodies they nevertheless try to express something that does not primarily relate to how they look. Yet dance is experienced so physically and erotically that dancers are not given a chance to demonstrate their intellects. Though he too enjoys the erotic nature and sensuousness of dance he thinks that there are many sorts of intelligence and has fought to support this notion. Another thing which is a bore, is that dancers never make money. As they like what they do they are underpaid. As making a profit is emphasized now, politicians think that what dancers do is not worthy of support because dance artists do not make enough money from the performances to cover expenses.

He sees himself as a versatile dancer. He has the prerequisites for a variety of expression and movement and enjoys the fact that he is able to use his potential in many different ways. He throws himself into all kinds of things and is a person who can adapt to new situations with new people. It is important for him to figure out and feel precisely what he is doing. He enjoys and is quite sensitive to the timing of movement. He characterizes his movements as having plasticity, linearity, and he is able to combine movements well, too. He also likes to play with the freedom in dance and thinks that spontaneous improvisation is fun. But he is too timid take such dancing on stage. Furthermore he likes to move in ways that make clear use of body weight and space and to witness the changes of directions in which a play of weight is occurring. In exploring space with movement there is a feel of a drawing and pulling he enjoys. Also pure kinetic movement, which is an outward continuation of the body's basic anatomical lines, is something he finds enjoyable at times. There is something universal in this kind of movement. Though he does like inward expression in dance, too, he thinks his basic nature is more outgoing. Furthermore he feels a (wonderful) cosmic connection when he

opens himself to space.

He takes his dancing tasks very seriously. He tries to learn by doing first. He has a natural advantage in being very fast despite his size, having a good memory, and learning quickly. When someone gives him a movement sequence to do, he works with it in a personal way. However abstract the movement it is processed and transposed by him while he works it into his body. He makes sure he has no doubt about it and that it will be easy to execute. The more he has adopted the movement the better he can express himself. Also when performing for example an abstract dance sequence of his own, he feels it is deeply personal because he has worked through and molded the movement material so thoroughly that he becomes one with it. This he believes is transmitted to the audience too.

Nevertheless, when he has a problem and does not find a way for his body to run through the movements, he asks for help. He might also give suggestions on how things could be done to the choreographer. This is a way of making his work more pleasurable. If a choreographer does not direct him, he thinks he is given freedom of expression which he makes full use of. If he is directed to do something he always tries it out first. If he feels that he cannot agree with something, he will definitely say so. But if the choreographer still sticks to his or her opinion, he will do what the choreographer wants. He knows that he might learn something from the things he would not himself normally do and so always surrenders to them. In the end he gets paid for doing what the choreographer wants. Furthermore, he does not have a problem with maintaining his integrity when working with a choreographer. He willingly works according to someone else's views. In situations where the choreographer no longer regards him as a person, he reacts and tells the choreographer so. Once in Denmark a choreographer treated him like that. He grew anxious and reacted to it with aggression. They fought and endured the situation for a few days. Then they became friends again and the choreographer gave him more space. He also thinks that if a dancer happens to work with a very bad choreographer and feels ashamed of this, he or she still cannot go on stage looking like that. The dancer has to proudly try to "carry the curse" as he says.

He does not work because of a compulsion to accomplish things or to show what he can achieve. What is important for him is that he perfects himself in various ways as a dancer and a choreographer. For him being a dance artist means that he can remain himself while shifting from the role of dancer and dance teacher to choreographer and back. He has realized, too, that work is an important thing in life. Nevertheless he has noticed that he has enjoyed the times when he had no work and was able to concentrate on his relationships and seeing his friends. Still, in the end he started to need work. He thinks that one gets many things from work and without it one is at a loss. Dance has brought him fulfillment through making him find his own resources of power and take responsibility for himself for many years. Since being a dancer takes up a lot of time and is associated with living a healthy life he views it as way of life. Being a dancer is an integral part of his personality which others can perceive as well since he simply always carries it with him. He has also realized that he would lose his self-confidence if something concerning dance would stop working in his life. However, even though he finds dancing to be holistically engaging he nevertheless has lately tried not to make it the center of his life. Last year he was extremely tired. For five years he had performed annually approximately a hundred and fifty times. Consequently he had no motivation to dance and stopped training. Instead he has done his own choreography, which has been his emphasis lately. In fact he has lived through a crisis questioning why he still wants to dance.

For him it is obvious that he no longer enjoys the physicality of dance as much as he used to. Now he enjoys performing for the audience more. He says that this has kept him a dancer all these years. In performing he can forget his personal problems and move into a "new world" through dancing. What he also finds extremely good about performing is the contact he has with the other performers. He finds it amazing that during a performance the dancers do not utter a word to each other and they still have an intense contact. This non-verbal communication has many layers and shades to it. He also enjoys the state of euphoria that follows performing. This euphoria might occur after taking a dance class as well. In this state he feels fantastically well. In some way these experiences are like a drug for him. However, he says he does need to have an inner transformation to continue dancing.

The biggest problem he is facing now is that he feels ready to take on a lot of work – he has a lot of ideas through which he expects to plunge deeply into choreographic work – yet he no longer wants to create his own working environment. Before he always produced as well as choreographed his own pieces. As this has been tough work, he would now like to concentrate on artistic work itself where the working environment already exists and is secure. With age he has also grown to need continuity in his work. Though he does not consider the dance field here to be too large for Finnish cultural life, he has realized that despite the fact that there is space for him to work he cannot work continuously. Earlier he even contemplated quitting dancing as he did not want to work only on one piece a year and be unemployed the rest of the time. Though it took time to trust himself after being depressed he pulled himself together and started to organize work. For a year now he has been his own secretary and producer and has never done so much office work in his life. However, through his efforts he managed to arrange for work abroad and this gave him strength to work again. Now he has one upcoming production in Finland and then work abroad. This arrangement he thinks works fine in terms of his work but as he wants to be in Finland where he has a home and speaks his native language it is still a questionable issue.

At the moment he is living through a peculiar phase as he trains seventy percent less than he normally does. When he danced full-time and had on-going performances he has attended dance classes regularly. He says that in the classes he has taken the teachers seldom get involved in teaching and it is up to each person to develop themselves. As the teachers of these classes also often change, one should decide for oneself how to work and what to concentrate on. He even thinks that if one engages oneself fully in such a dance class, taking them five times a week is too much, as after class there are many hours of rehearsals and performing, too. What he thinks is ridiculous is that just as a premiere is about to take place, the pressure of work and amount of rehearsals increase. He finds this is very bad for the dancer's physique and notes that even statistically the last day before a premiere is the day when most accidents occur. Injuries do happen. In fact, he feels that dancers themselves have an excessive enthusiasm about training, too. They should allow themselves to rest too. For him it is also important to have some variation in a routine. Even the muscles of the body get used to the same routine. He needs to feel too that he has some extra physical resources left in him when working as a dancer. He finds feeling insecure of being capable of making it till the end of rehearsals oppressive. A lack of stamina would weaken his mental belief and trust in himself, so he needs to do differing and extra exercises to endure the repetitions of movements done in rehearsals. This makes dance work very heavy on him.

As he perceives the body in a holistic way he thinks that when working with his body he is working on himself. Working with the body means that he has to question everything he does daily as the bodily state changes from day to day. Thus he continuously listens to his body, fights to retain his capacity to learn new things. He has not had a lot of problems with his body after he became adjusted to dance. He used to have some back and hip troubles as he has the tall person's problem of trying to make himself seem smaller than he actually is. However, he has been quite capable of taking care of himself, though it took some time to learn to do this because he did not receive enough personal instruction in this matter. He would have liked his dance education to have included better teaching in how to plan a personal training program. His own training methods have evolved gradually through the work he has done and problems he has faced. Though he has not been injured, the feeling of tiredness has pushed him to learn. He does his own training and exercises because he is aware that he has to be ready to do his work. Still, he says he does not want to go to extremes with his awareness of the body. It gives him a freedom not to have to think of his body at times

What motivates him in his choreographic work is his interest in new challenges. Choreographic work involves a lot of problem-solving. His interest in working with dance derives from his interest in human beings, in what happens between them, what peculiar things they invent, and what odd situations they encounter in daily life. What excites him in choreographic work is how all the different people working on a dance piece come to move towards one goal and how he, as the choreographer, can express what he is looking for. For him it is important to perceive how dancers live, relate to their

bodies, and move as well as interact with other people. He thinks these reveal a dancer's attitude towards life. When he was younger, he was not mature enough to encounter dancers. But he thinks he is learning to do so increasingly. Nevertheless, although he thinks there is a place where a dancer can speak, he finds too much talk often hinders the rehearsal process. If he cannot see the movement sequences, he cannot feel if they are proceeding in the right direction or not. He cannot listen to every dancer's personal problems, too. Yet he evidently sometimes ends up pondering all sorts of philosophical questions with the group and does try to develop his understanding of people.

As a choreographer he creates worlds. While creating choreography the time and surroundings he lives in influences his choices. He does not only think of movement. He thinks of where the dance piece occurs, what the piece itself is, what style it is in and so forth. Also the visuality of his dance pieces is important for him. This it is to such an extent that some people think it is emphasized to the detriment of the actual dancing. In his dance works he neither wants to give any moral instructions or comment on life in a preachy manner, because he thinks life is better endured with a bit of humor. He is not a black and white person. He thinks he is an optimistic person and that this shows in his work. To describe his style he gives examples of two extremes of his choreography. One was a clearly dance theater styled piece which combined speech, movement, acting, and dancing. He even wrote a script for this piece himself, which was a new challenge for him. He thinks he succeeded in transmitting his message and contacting the audience with this piece. Another of his choreographies was a more abstract work consisting of three parts. The first part was made up of the dancers' personal style of movement. The second consisted of a more serial (sarjakuva) and theatrical-styled movement and the third was concerned with spatial movement and figure formation. In the end there were no personal traits left and the dancers' relation to space brought about what he calls "a universal atmosphere". He found that this piece was not well-received by the audience. People would rather have perceived one unified sequence from beginning to end. Nevertheless, through these two very different pieces he thinks he could be viewed as a choreographer who works through many differing styles which he is obviously interested in. However, he says he cannot help being affected by his schooling. As he knows the tradition of modern dance quite well, the resources he draws from are in this tradition. As he feels he is still young, he thinks he can try different styles of working and through such work in the end find a more personal way of creating dance than at the moment.

In his work he has started to think more about reaching the audience. He wants to influence and say something to the audience and is always disappointed when he does not reach more people. He would like the audience to have better concentration and a broader mind about dance. He notices that there is an expectation of him creating things in a similar vein to the work he has done before. He has instead aimed for an artistic openness and worked with very different kinds of dance pieces. This has created problems, as he has been difficult to pigeon-hole. He even suspects that working without creating a clear artistic image has been a mistake. But he isn't crushed by bad reviews. Of course such reviews make him question things. But as he is by no means perfect, he does not take critical comments too seriously. At the moment he feels that following his own path and daring to search for things in different places for many years is finally bearing some fruit. He has enjoyed the fact that lately he has received comments from people who said they find it exciting to come and see his work because they never know what to expect. These people have however been different from those who write about dance. In fact, he thinks if we had dance critics who would write more analytically or if we had dance researchers who would come to see dance and give feedback to choreographers he could speak/understand more about his own dance style. In the end, though, he finds that, at least where dancers are concerned, both the audience and critics have stereotyped opinions. Sometimes he has wondered why he does not write to reach a larger audience. As he is an aesthete and thinks we should be surrounded and affected by more things designed by artists, he says he could even be a painter. But he couldn't stand, what he calls, the "tinkering" it involves.

He views the freelance field of dance in Helsinki to be quite active and finds it interesting that there is such a broad spectrum of dance here. There are lot of interesting dance artists working in the field. He labels himself to belong to the field as a productive artist. For him this belongingness means

that he follows his art. He goes to see other dance artists' performances and sometimes meets them to discuss, exchange opinions, and to try to solve common problems. In this way he thinks he learns about dance art and comes to feel that there is a common interest he shares with other dance artists. Furthermore, he feels he is committed to the freelance field of dance through sharing the same problems with other freelancers. However, in his view the atmosphere of the freelance field is restrictive. Even though the dance union has tried to create a common place for dance artists to train, the field lacks a common meeting place. Thus the field is dispersed and no natural interaction or discussion emerges. He thinks that one place where a morning class would be held and where groups could continue to rehearse would bring about interaction. He has experienced this in Copenhagen where he worked in three different groups. He got his jobs because of training and rehearsing in the same place as others did. This was an easy way of networking. In Finland networking is still difficult. Everybody is so self-sufficient and lonely. He also finds that when one does not have a strong feeling about one's dancing, for instance, it is difficult to keep up one's dancerhood here. He even feels that being responsible for his own training and development is difficult. The problem in Helsinki is that being a dancer is not a natural everyday thing. Instead one has to push hard, have perseverance and discipline as there is no support. Doing this in London, Paris, or Copenhagen where he has been is easier as the training possibilities there are numerous and dancers are more open. He enjoys the fact that people there want to train and keep themselves in shape and simultaneously they support each other. But he thinks things will change here too as more dancers evolve.

Even though everybody speaks of the fact that the freelance field of dance should unite and some co-operative dance artist associations have emerged, he does not know why he should be united with some people and handle mutual production, marketing, and such. He has noticed that by working on his own he has a better chance of getting through to the press with his artistic work. As an example of current dance, the media finds and represents only one interesting dance artist at a time. It does not talk about the whole range of dance, which is a difficulty of the freelance field. However, with his lack of interest in unification that does not mean that he would not get together with other people he feels a need to work with. Yet this joining together needs to be spontaneous and grow out of an inherent need to work together. He says he does not "philosophically belong to any club". He finds autonomic work more motivating. It gives him a sense of working with his own projects, which he enjoys.

Nevertheless he feels he has not found his own community to work with here in Finland and misses his colleagues elsewhere in the world. During his weak moments he feels that community-wise he is on the periphery and would like support. In London he had a richer community to communicate with. There he also realized that though dance is a common denominator amongst people it does not mean that they are mentally compatible or kindred spirits. It is the work that brings the connection. Furthermore he is not the type of a person who is involved with the social circles of dance. He is a social person but he is not willing to have his private life utilized by the dance society. He likes to have his own close circle of friends a few of whom are dancers and with whom he can talk. He says that searching for a community that supports one's identity is natural. In the area of dance this kind of empowerment is something he has not received. He thinks he is not the only dance artist who experiences this lack.

#### **IV**

Her decision to dance was a passionate one. As a child she wanted to go to a ballet school. Then she also played the piano, did some play-acting, and used to dance for her grandmother. Her grandmother appreciated her dancing a lot. She [the interviewee] enjoyed this and so wanted to dance. She thinks that people decide what they do with their lives by drawing conclusions from their surroundings. Her father was very physical and managed to create a successful career in the business world. Her mother, like her grandparents, was into music. This made it easy for her to choose an artistic career. Now she thinks that there is no other way of being for her than being an artist. Her interest is in investigating different worlds through dance as they have to do with herself and the real world she lives in. Her work tacitly deals with the question of who she actually is, and she says she is a dance artist because of

deep personal reasons and contradictions. In the end she thinks that people who choose the arts live with a contradiction related to receiving attention and love.

The fact that she works with her body is very important for her. She views the most central thing in human existence to be the perception and experience we have of our body. She says that in her early teens she did not enjoy dancing as she realized her body was changing. Later after her body became more stable she began to enjoy dancing once again. Consequently she was in a rush to make up for lost time because of the previous lack of interest. Although she questioned why her body looked like it did, she began to understand that only through accepting her body would she be able to develop in dancing. Then she was granted a place as a tuition-free student in a dance school. Now her aim of becoming technically skillful came to somewhat hinder her enjoyment of dancing. She soon realized, though, that to continue her education in dance she would have to go abroad as there was no place in Finland to do so. She went to England. This is the time when she started to feel uncomfortable with her body again. She realized she was working only superficially with her body and this insight continued to trouble her throughout her stay in England.

Her education in dance up until the end of her studies in England was rather forceful. This resulted in a slow backlash when she became acquainted with softer ways of moving. From here a slow process of once again accepting her body began. Initially she felt that she had to discard all dance style movement to purify herself. She began to jog a lot and questioned if dancers should work together in a group or not. She thought not, since one is not able to become aware of the blocks one has while working together with others. With a few of her colleagues she claimed that it was not worthwhile being involved in mutual activities such as dance classes. Now she views their negative reaction as silly and understands that the reason why she wanted to work alone was because she was afraid, felt unsociable and a need to protect her emerging work. She views her discarding dance movement as an attempt to invigorate her bodily memory since nothing can be simply cleared away. Now she is interested in combining a rather classical and strong style of modern dance with more freely-flowing movement. She feels happy that during the past few years she has felt good about her body and she focuses on the questions of what to do with one's body and where will the body take one after one has accepted it.

She is a person of extremes, and thus she still has days when she gets very annoyed with her body. At these moments she feels the posture problems and weaknesses her body has. On good days these things do not bother her or hinder her dancing. Breathing, though, is something she has had to struggle with. She almost drowned as a child and during difficult performances she has to push herself hard to make it through and not to panic. Sometimes she does not dare to throw herself completely into movement. She is afraid that she might hurt herself as her body is so tall. However, with effort she can make this fear vanish. In fact, she has acknowledged her troubles with her body since an awareness of them helps her overcome them. Still she thinks that the body is never ready. Working with the body is extremely difficult and even though one can proceed quite far in working with it, one never comes to know it completely. She also sees the reality of her body deteriorating in the future. But she says that dance artists need not stop working as young as has been the custom. On the contrary, her prognosis is that the age of dancers will rise almost twenty years in the future. It is only a question of practically overcoming prejudices about a dancer being a "goner" at forty-five.

She has quietly been trying to construct a philosophy about what the art of dance in itself is and why she has chosen it. She thinks the purpose of art is connected with the idea of a transcendence and the production of some sort of pleasure. In her view dance has not existed in a significant form of art until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She thinks one of the reasons why dance did not evolve earlier was linked with the rejection of the body in many religions. Nevertheless she foresees great potential for dance in the future. In the body everything is combined. It is a form of personal self-expression. In her view the best thing about dance is the fact that the body moves us. It is by surrendering to the body and not dictating what the body does with the mind that the body can generate motion on its own. As she is easily dominated by her thoughts, she is interested in investigating how it is possible to make thoughts function on bodily premises. For her the mind and body are one, and she believes that all previous

experiences are stored in the muscles. When working with her body she is looking for what she describes as a suspended and holistic experiential state. She does this by first directing her attention on her body in order to activate her muscular memory from which movement then flows. She describes these states as something she longs to experience. However, she surprisingly finds similar experiences in exceptional geographic places which are reached through physical activity. She portrays them as transcendent, as such that in them one desires to be carried somewhere higher.

She thinks that bodily motion derives from the fact that humans are alive. Humans are always in motion and movement already exists. In her view the easiest way to get in touch with this movement is by concentrating on and observing one's pulse or one's breath. She believes that concentrated breathing releases the memory of the muscles since it enhances a relaxed state which is not disturbed by thinking. She experiences the opening of muscle memory as a holistic event. In the process of breathing what occurs in the body and our awareness of it are united. In the end, although she is a rationalist and thinks that western reason is a "wonderful invention", she finds that dance combines the powers of the body and death over rationality. This is so because the body is born into this world and through its functions life exists. Then it simply dies. This makes dance closely related to the problem of existence. This existentialist view of the body is demonstrated by the fact that just as dancers start to be successful they begin to age. After a slow process of development and a short peak, dance artists are confronted by the degeneration of the body. Thus existence is dependent on the "good will" of the body and contradicts the idea of an omnipotent western rationality.

She never thought of exactly wanting to create a training program for herself but she was obliged to do so as she chose not to attend dance classes. Her training methods have evolved through a slow process of investigation. It wasn't easy for her to find a balanced way of working. She has had to struggle with fatigue and her obsession to work too forcefully. It was easy for her when someone else told her what to do and then to do it. It is only lately that she has found a pleasing way of relating to bodily exertion. Furthermore she thinks it is a complicated thing to combine all the things she does, speaking from the viewpoint of a choreographer as well as a dancer. She would become confused if she went to a dance class and then started to work on her choreography. If she were only a dancer she might understand such a routine. She is no doubt also a dancer but her training is connected to everything she does and therefore to her choreography as well.

Her main interest in training is to keep a motional state alive. The exercises she uses in her warm-up are relaxed, moving from simple to more complex and vigorous ones. She repeats them for a long time to work up a comfortable sweat. Through them she has a chance to make her body feel good, even if it felt bad before. As movement is a continuous transferal of weight, she concentrates on this. It is what takes her forward and makes her feel she is in motion. Through the motion she tries to activate the muscles and to simultaneously be alert. So she can be aware of her whole body as she directs her attention to a specific area of it. During the different phases of her warm up she also opens up her breathing. The inhalation starts a lifting movement. She inhales fully and softly stretches her ribs and chest upwards and to the sides to increase her actual lung space. The elongation of the body is only one part of breathing as it also involves a flowing release. While exhaling she lets her body melt towards the floor. The purpose of breathing is to calm down, let the body weight drop and make the body soft and spacious. This breathing technique also clarifies her thinking. While doing her breathing exercises and dropping her weight, when she starts to feel whole then she knows she is ready to let herself be moved by her body. Then motion is released in an intuitive manner and what follows is basically an improvisation.

In her view her choreographic works are worlds which clearly express an opinion she has on a certain subject. She first pays attention to the form of her choreography by pondering in what sequence things happen, who does what, how many people are doing something, and where they are doing it. The subject and the form define the space, the music, and the visual elements to a great extent. After this she starts the concrete creation of her work through creating movement. Only then does she concentrate on the nature of expression. When a sequence of movement is created, she starts to fill it with a suitable state of being which would direct the motion of the sequence. To find a logical

connection between the form and state of motion requires a lot of effort and concentration on her part. She says that only when the choreography is finished, can dancing it bring the same enjoyment as a totally freely-flowing motion.

While creating a dance piece, the main thing for her is that she succeeds in her aim and the world created becomes a whole. She thinks it is dreadful if the performance space or the costumes do not complement the world of the piece. She says she always knows exactly when clothing is right. Then it starts to come alive and imagination becomes reality. As an example, she remembers performing in a villa. The rehearsals, which were held elsewhere, were not going well and things only became better when she could rent the villa for rehearsals. Her imagination began to work again and the villa became another home for her. In the end, she found it difficult to leave it. She also remembers that she used to become so attached to the costumes used in her dance pieces that even after the performances were over she could not put them aside. She had to have them close by until mourning of a piece of dance accomplished was over.

For her, the reasons why she performed were not always apparent. She had a difficult time one point in her life when she no longer understood why she performed and others watched her. Now she could not imagine she herself not being a part of such meaningful thing as a dance piece she has created. She definitely wants to live through it too and be part of creating its spirit as a dancer, since she knows best what should be aimed for. She also has an inner logic and reason to perform. She sees her own performance as a journey which involves a changing from an awareness of everyday activities to a different state of being. This involves a transcendence she pursues and reveals to the audience. In performing, the positive side of body-work, which she calls a suspended state of being, cannot be interrupted – one has to stay connected to it. Consequently she believes that after performing one is certainly a different person than one was before. Though she is quite a realistic person she says that the suspended state she strives for is related to imagination and questioning in what different ways humans can realize themselves. Through performing she questions what happens in time, what happens in relation to other people, and what does this state mean in general. She thinks that the suspended state is complex, and consequently it might change with time, with performances, or even with rehearsing.

When thinking of herself positively as a dancer, she says she is well grounded, has long limbs which make working hard, that her movement flows well, and furthermore that her range of motion is good. Sometimes she is annoyed, though, because she doesn't think she is good enough. She is not a pure movement type of a dancer. Nevertheless she does not underestimate the importance of movement. She trusts it and knows that even the face is made of muscles. Thus she does not understand why she should not use them, especially since she has a need to express something more than just movement. She expresses her existence and thoughts in a way that could be categorized as expressive dance. She does not know how people perceive her as a dancer. She imagines that some think she is really great and others think she is quite hopeless. Still, she thinks that she communicates what she intends. She does not think that criticism is directed to how she does it but more towards what she is like, what her history is, and what she has manifested. Opinions are formed because these things. No one would say anymore that she wasn't capable of doing things. She thinks it is more a question of not liking, not understanding or liking, understanding, and supporting what she does.

She believes there is a general understanding of what kinds of abilities a dancer should have to be perceived as a dancer. She lists some of them. Dancers' bodies should be elastic for them to move freely. They should have muscular stamina. But the most basic feature is that dancers should be motional in their nature. She thinks that some people, even some dancers, just are not. This motional quality she says is connected with movement-mediated self-expression. In her view it is necessary that dancers really want to express things through moving and therefore her opinion is that dancerhood is most of all an agreement to express things physically. No length of studying dance brings this about unless a dancer willingly uses their body. This is important since dancers must allow their body to be used by the choreographer and of course use it themselves. Dancers should also try to understand and be able to follow the directions given by a choreographer. In fact, she thinks that being a dancing

artist is all about a willingness to obey the will of another person. She thinks the whole interest in being a dancer, in working out dance tasks, is how she or he will accomplish what the other person wants. This is the point where art is born and it is expressed through the dancing person. Although she thinks a dancer should have no physical handicaps, she does not choose her dancers on the premise of good looks or have exact criteria of what they should know how to do. She is interested in the personality and individual traits of a dancer. She likes a dancer to be autonomous, yet open enough to enter a mutually creative process. When doing choreography or dancing with another dancer, she needs the other's body to merge with what she is doing. She also appreciates an analytic approach to dancing, a capacity for self-criticism, and social skills in a dancer. She does not get along with very emotional people. Nevertheless, she would make an extra effort and continue working with someone she considered very gifted even though they were personally difficult.

In her view the difference between a dancer's and choreographer's understanding of dance lies in the fact that a choreographer needs to have sense of responsibility and be more autonomous than a dancer. She says that assuming the position of choreographer requires that a choreographer thinks and acts in a way that is not symbiotic. A choreographer needs to design a mental and bodily state of autonomy to be a choreographer especially if one is a woman as women are not given many chances in this world. She finds it totally different if you are working and creating because you want to instead of hoping what you have done will at least be acceptable. The attitudes affect the artistic end-product, and even the audience relates to the piece differently. The choreographer needs to take on the responsibility of other people and of the whole work process of a dance piece, all the way until the end. She struggles with this idea. Earlier she thought that everybody should be responsible for themselves and that she didn't need to be in charge of others and the working atmosphere. But she has changed her mind since being responsible for others brings about better results. This she thinks has had to do with age and phases of life. When one is young, it is difficult to handle heavy responsibility. In fact it must be learned. In her view a healthy expression of authority is taking charge of the situation but maintaining an appreciation of the dancers. In a teaching situation this responsibility is heightened. The teacher should not suppress personalities and should be explicit about the manner in which she or he works. She is not interested in being a guru. Nevertheless the responsibility that is part of teaching makes it draining.

What motivates her to work is her inner drives but also a desire to increase communication. Wisdom and skill are the ability to communicate things in a way that as many people as possible understand, for her. She considers it a milestone in an artist's development when an artist has this insight. It creates a foundation for the continuation of development. If one stubbornly sticks to a particular way of communicating, one is left alone. To be able to communicate in an understandable way, which she finds a necessity in today's world, it is important to remain in touch with what is going on now and try to understand it. She herself has observed that new phenomena emerge in culture from the young. She wants to understand why they do what they do and even tries out what they do so she is not merely an outside observer. She also looks at elderly people to see where they stop trying to understand new phenomena and withdraw. Consequently, she knows where the gap between the generations is, even though she would like there to be none. She does not see herself as old, but she cannot understand all the things fifteen-year olds do. Even older people she can only understand to an extent. Nevertheless experiencing the things they do, makes understanding possible and gives her new insights. Her approach to communication means that she continuously questions what, how, and why she does something, so it is also a communication between what happens to her and what she feels.

In fact she thinks her ability to communicate through art has developed, but she would like to become even better at communication, to become more autonomous, thus more original as a person and unique in her artistic message. As her skills have developed her wish to communicate with more people has also increased. This desire for a larger audience could easily be taken only as an outer goal, but for her it relates to a healthy desire to go forward and strive for more as her career has already reached a certain phase and she is still young. She has an urge to have an audience outside of Finland. She thinks it is natural for her to connect with people of different nationalities.

Despite the fact that she concludes that some things in the dance field are not good, at the moment she feels this country is a peaceful and good place to work. Since the beginning of her professional career in 1983, she has never worked under contract. A lot has happened since then. Now there is a dance department at the Theater Academy and the amount of dancers has increased a lot. The change is exactly what she desired, and she finds the current situation a challenging one. She senses that the generation change has been going on for the past five years and so also the quality and style of work are also undergoing a change. Nevertheless, she still thinks that something more interesting was occurring during the late eighties and early nineties. Then an atmosphere of experimentation and of investigating the body was prevalent. Now everybody is concerned with status and a power struggle has surfaced. Dance work has shifted to being interested only in how successful one's work is. The word trend was adopted and people have started to analyze their work to see if it is trendy enough or not. Now dance artists work in various ways while creating dance pieces but she is annoyed that people search for the tidy and trendy in their work. The dance field no longer encourages a search for original thinking and work. She says that it is as if the freelance field of dance had fallen ill. In fact the shift from experimentation to searching for a status came as a shock to her. She had participated intensely in creating a new dance, a more personal style of dancing, in Finland. As a consequence of the shift in attitude she felt neglected. Still she feels she can play with the trend and surpass it. She thinks that as an artist she can affect what is going on. In the eighties she was not aware of affecting things though she did. Now she feels her work communicates and so is received positively in the dance field. But as there is a tough struggle going on in dance as a woman choreographer she is sometimes told to get lost. As in all fields and all countries there are power structures in which things are taken for granted and sometimes she does not like that. Thus she has to put in some effort to make things work.

One of the things which is not good about the dance field is the system of reviewing. In her opinion it is wrong that there is only one critic working in the main newspaper. In her view the critic of this paper is not skillful enough, but she concedes that in Finland dance is observed in an emotional manner in general and not intellectually. A dance performance is taken to be about expression and fun movement. Another thing that is problematic in the dance field is the distribution of grants. The decisions are controlled by too few people. She recognizes that Finland is a small and secluded place. As there is no direct contact with other countries, people here become trapped in their own small communities and interpret things narrowly. This affects employment, the distribution of money, and all kinds of activities quite generally. The central thing, creating dance, its development, and the investigation as well as communication of dance is no longer important. In her view it is an atmosphere which breeds mediocrity and simplicity of understanding. If something more original, something more difficult to understand emerges it is rejected more easily. This atmosphere creates a drone-like consensus. Everybody starts to fear that they will be neglected so they act in certain ways to gain approval.

She finds it hard to work without any security. As an independent artist, she needs to find solutions to ensure continuous work and questions what kinds of possibilities for that exist. For freelance artists there are no safety nets to rely on. This means that freelance artists do not get any regular compensation for their work or have any other kinds of steady advantages. On the other hand freelance artists are not subject to an institutions schedules or its atmosphere. They can also freely choose where to go and what to do. In practice, freelance artists are more easily able to explore things which interest them. In her view dance is not a profession for clock-watchers. Working with dance involves a different mental state. She thinks this affects a persons actions and position in society to a large extent. They affect how one experiences one's relation to others, how one thinks in general, and how these two start to be perceptible in what one works on. Being a freelancer is a different way of being and viewing the world compared to having job somewhere. She is a committed freelancer.

In her view the spirit of independent entrepreneurship has been devalued. People think everything should be organized or institutionalized as it is a time of large conglomerates. Yet she thinks that art is lost when large bureaucracies are created. Institutional art has a different purpose from what she sees as art. It is entertainment, a substitute for art. Though she finds it good to work both alone and in groups, she does not understand how artists working in institutions can perceive themselves as

artists. In her view institutional systems are created by bureaucrats and politicians and in these systems artists are told to produce things, which these officials think artists should be producing. In addition to theatre institutions, the contemporary culture alike emphasizes productivity not creativity. She feels that as a choreographer she is required to renew herself in an increasingly hysterical manner. She thinks it is a global phenomenon that one has to fight and tolerate brutal competition to cope in this ever more commercial and stupefying society. She thinks a choreographer needs an ever-deepening capacity to perceive things both mentally and physically so they can tolerate and endure. She thinks that the world is by no means becoming an easier place to live in. She believes that there are more and more undesirable things and that those values connected with the development of humanity have become neglected. She finds it interesting in this context to think how the world and the humankind might develop if we paid more attention to the notion of dance and embodiment as being part of everything. But the European war now taking place is dragging us in the opposite direction which she finds depressing. She chose the theme of death for her current choreography because of war. She thinks that in our time death is present in a peculiar way, as if it was simply wiped away. She thinks that soon it might not even exist in graveyards and that dead people will just be dumped in the garbage. They will be said to merely have vanished.