

A Dream Journey to the Unknown

Searching for Dialogue in Dance Education

Eeva Anttila

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Eeva Anttila
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Searching for Dialogue in Dance Education

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Helsinki July 14, 2003

Eeva Anttila

BEFORE TAKING OFF

Considering alternative destinations

Most trips, I guess, begin with a desire to travel somewhere, and some diffuse ideas about where to go. First there may be just a lighthearted thought, a wish that gradually starts to occupy more and more space in the mind. Then, growing anxiousness results in browsing through brochures, glances to the calendar and troubled calculations as to how the trip would appear on the bank account. Of course, every person does this differently, depending also on whether the purpose of the trip is business or pleasure.

The trip I am about to describe in this report started just like that. I found myself thinking about where to go. It was clear that I wanted to go – I had an urge to travel. So many times before in my life this urge had taken me into its power.

I considered the most feasible options. A short and easy trip would not have taken too much effort, resources and planning. That option would have saved me time and money – an effective and conservative way to see a little bit of the world, not anything really new, though. Another choice would have been a more courageous trip, an escape from everyday life to a more exotic atmosphere. Costly, yes, and very appealing, and a little bit risky. Maybe it would have changed my thinking about the world and myself and altered my identity.

Thinking back now, slightly wondering what made me reject either of these plans, I realize that I did not really have a need to escape or change; neither did I have a desire for an easy trip. I actually wanted to know myself better, and to understand my life and the world that I am a part of. I did not need a break or a vacation. So I chose a working trip into the close neighborhood.

This trip turned out surprisingly exciting. Looking closely, my surroundings showed many faces to me; the picture became more complex the more carefully I looked at it. Making sense of the familiar, as Kincheloe and McLaren (2000, 286) have put it, makes the familiar seem strange.

These alternative destinations are metaphors for alternative ways for me to go about writing my dissertation. The first option, safe and easy, would have been to continue on from my licentiate's thesis that was related to teaching

dance to 5–9 year old children. The lack of challenge made this option seem unappealing.

The second option, the more exotic one for me, would have been take my study into a context where artistically challenging questions would be the focus of the work. For example, I could have related my study to questions of teaching advanced dance students. This option might have helped me to make the educator-label on my forehead a little less explicit, a label that I truly deserve, having been a dance teacher for children and youngsters for over 20 years. Improving my standing in the art world, a desire that sometimes has been very tempting to me, would perhaps have given a fortunate turn to my career in dance.

I considered still other topics and contexts for my dissertation. There were so many fascinating areas to study! So, how, on earth, did I find myself again researching dance education in a school context? This choice could without doubt be characterized as “a bad career move.”

There was, indeed, a time when I thought I would never again do research on my own teaching in an educational context. After all, joining the so called “teacher research movement” was not a conscious intention in my case although this movement has been gaining momentum in educational research since the 1980’s (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999, Tsangaridou & Siedentop 1995). This movement on teachers researching their own work was greatly supported by Donald Schön’s (1983, 1987) work on reflective practice, which is based on the idea that a practitioner’s competence is generated through reflections on and in lived experience. Although teachers’ research on their practice was not initially welcomed as formal research, i.e., research that would contribute to the general knowledge base, it has shifted the view of teachers as “recipients of and consumers of research to the current view of the teacher as producer or mediator of knowledge” (Richardson 1994, 5).

As a visiting dance teacher I felt isolated from a larger educational community, and as such my work and research seemed to have little significance for others. Doing teacher research without a supporting community was taxing. Moreover, since dance as a subject lacks a status in the Finnish school system, my position always felt more or less marginalized. Since teaching dance in schools is arduous enough itself, due to the slow progress in gaining visible results, disciplinary issues and lacks in students’ motivation, I often had feelings of apprehension towards working in a school context. Furthermore, teaching dance in schools is often considered as being more about education than about art. Certainly it

was not a way for me to go if I was to develop a more versatile professional profile in the dance field, where feelings of speaking from the margin were not at all unfamiliar for me. But then this project, called "Taikomo" (an abbreviation of Finnish words for Art Education in a Multicultural Context) just walked into my life, without my asking for it, and took me off guard. This project was initiated by Department of Art Education at the University of Art and Design, Helsinki, and supported by the Helsinki City Departments of Education and Culture. Situated in an elementary school, the project brought together classroom teachers and artist-researchers from art universities (the Sibelius Academy and the Theatre Academy) and from the University of Jyväskylä. In this project, classroom teachers and artist teachers were to work as partners with a specified class. As I considered joining this team of classroom teachers, artist teachers and researchers, altogether about 15 persons, I was uneasily aware that I was about to turn around to something that I thought I already had left behind.

I cannot think of any other validation to my decision than my deep, inherent interest in the well-being of children, and my curiosity about the role that artistic experiences, especially in dance, play in that well-being. This interest traces back to my personal experiences in dance, how dance has changed my life, and my background in humanistic education and the idea of self-actualization.

Tracing the past: My path as a learner, teacher and researcher of dance

It is a mystery to me where my deep commitment to dance originates from. My only exposure to dance as a child was my sister taking ballet lessons when I was still too young for it. Later the ballet school moved away, and I had no place to go for lessons. I just knew that some day I would start dancing.

Some years later we moved to another city that had a dance school. I finally started to dance. I still remember the atmosphere in the classes like it was yesterday. The room was packed; I concentrated tightly in picking up the fast and complicated movements. I remember the reflection of my bony figure on the mirror and my inner frustration of my movements not looking right. Not a single personal gesture, correction or comment from the part of teacher comes

to my mind, nor do I recall feeling personally connected to the teachers.

Despite this formal and impersonal approach, my inner frustrations and the dullness of endless repetition of the same movements, I persisted with dancing for five years. Then, at 16, my perseverance was rewarded. As I spent a year in the United States as an exchange student, I got a chance to be a true learner of dance, studying ballet in a small private studio. I got personal attention and careful, gentle corrections. I got acquainted with my body, I felt that it could move gracefully, stay in balance, stretch and become stronger. Every class was a learning experience. Instead of a struggle, dance became a challenge for me.

Back home I continued studying dance with my parents' silent approval. There was no professional education in the field of dance at that time, and having been gently pushed towards an academic profession, wondered what ever will become of me.

My diffuse career plans got a new turn when I heard a child psychologist's lecture on creativity. She mesmerized me by her talk about children, their creative power and art! I felt that she was talking about me as a child. Having spent a good deal of my childhood making up stories, drawing pictures about my stories, playing them out, making up plays and dance performances with my friends, I now treasured those memories even more, realizing the significance of creativity in child development. Before long I found myself studying to become a kindergarten teacher.

I also continued studying dance, and soon I was asked to teach dance. Remembering my early experiences as a learner of dance I felt an obligation to be a different teacher. I had been critical even towards my school teachers. I had kept my criticism to myself but, as many young people do, dreamed of a better world – and better schools. Although I contently had done the things a nice girl is supposed to do, I silently had cursed the mindlessness of the school world.

As I studied education I encountered humanistic psychology. Abraham Maslow's idea of self-actualization resonated strongly in me, as I recognized my self and my creativity willing to be actualized. Maslow writes,

To talk of self-actualization implies that there is a self to be actualized. A human being is not *tabula rasa* . . . He is something which is already there. (1972, 44)

The idea of self-actualization became a significant impetus for my personal and professional growth; it meant to me that the choices that I make should stem from within my self; that as an autonomous and unique being I can be my own authority. This also meant a lot to me as an educator. I realized that each student was unique and creative, and that every student had a right for self-actualization. Supporting their self-actualization process became a central part of my pedagogy. I wanted to understand creativity and support my students' creative growth.

I continued studying education and dance, and kept on teaching dance. Making other people realize the importance of dance for every child became my mission. Making my critical stance more overt now, I also started making judgments, both oral and written, about traditional way of teaching dance, wanting to make a difference. Young and idealistic, I believed I could change the world. Now, after 20 years of work in dance education, I have to admit that making a difference is not as straightforward as I then thought.

I felt increasingly dissatisfied also with my own teaching, as I saw some of my students as much lost and bewildered in my own classes as I had been as a young dance student. I started developing a more holistic approach and established experimental classes that included technique, improvisation and composition. The performances developed into longer productions instead of short technique-based numbers. I continued this work in an art center in Helsinki, where I explored different ways of making performances with my students; gradually the students took more initiative and responsibility for composing and creating movement and stories for the dances.

To my surprise, I found it satisfying to work with school children who had little previous dance experience but who were creative, authentic human beings, full of life. Breaking the reserved mood of a dance class became important to me. The reminiscences of an unresponsive and stiff atmosphere had been deeply embodied in me during my experiences as a young dance student. I now realize my feelings of discomfort related to traditional dance training probably originate all the way from those early experiences.

As my studies in education proceeded I encountered the world of educational research, and something else to be critical on: quantitative research methodology that seemed to bring about results boring at the best and biased at the worst. The way the original data was modified through the statistical analysis seemed to even out a lot of individual differences and make the results distanced

from the people from whom the data was gathered.

Around that time, the late 80's, I discovered daCi (dance and the Child international), a community of dance teachers and researchers. I encountered new ideas about teaching dance and about doing research. Research started to interest me as a way of understanding dance education and affecting its practice. For example, Sue Stinson's conference paper titled "Research as art: New directions for dance educators" resonated greatly in me, as she talked about how scientific methodology rejected the world of imagination, feelings and intuition and separated it from the real world of observable things (Stinson 1985, 219).

I was greatly fascinated with the idea of imagination being a part of reality. A seed was thrown into a fertile ground; imagination still was the dearest place in my mind, despite the rationality that schooling had brought into my thinking. Exchanges like this with colleagues around the world made me increasingly curious; I wanted to learn more. I traveled to the United States again, to study dance at University of California.

Having already started a research project that eventually became my licentiate's thesis, I knew that I wanted to understand what really happens in dance classes. I decided that trying to prove that dance experiences would affect development would be out of the scope of my interest and I wanted to omit all traces of experimental research from my work.

Training in qualitative research methodology was very limited at that time, and I was quite alone in designing my study. I got a lot of mental support from a textbook by Peter Reason and John Rowan, a book called *Human Inquiry: A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Research* (1981). The book led my way and made me believe in my work. They say that,

Through our balanced cool appraisal there comes an undercurrent of hatred and horror about what traditional research does to those it studies, those who do the research, and about the dreadful rubbish that is sometimes put forward as scientific knowledge. (Reason and Rowan 1981, xii)

I wanted to get into the moment, into the encounter with my students. Reason and Rowan's (1981, 113) question, "How are we to move from theory and ideas to our encounter with our subject, and back again?" seemed very valid to me. I decided that I would record our encounters so that I would be able to return

to them afterwards. The videorecordings worked, indeed, as an extension of my memory and my perception. I noticed that it was not only the actual events that I could relive; viewing the videotapes vivified also my memories about my thoughts and feelings during the original events, almost as if I was living them again. As James B. MacDonald (1995) suggests, the movement from thinking to practice, or inner to outer, can be also conceived as a "dual dialectical process," where "a dialectic exists not only between the individual and his environment but also within the individual himself" (1995, 79). Thus, by encountering the lived moment once again, it was possible for me to reflect upon the consequences of my actions and upon the values that led to my choices. Through viewing the videotapes I was able to reflect retrospectively on my pedagogical choice making process, and simultaneously see how the dynamics of the situation developed as a whole, from an outsider's perspective.

During my studies abroad I had a need to connect what is known, to build a picture that would be the background for my teaching and research. I had noticed discrepancies between researchers' educational thinking and their choice of methodology. Through writing my MA thesis I became fascinated with the idea of connections between educational and scientific worldviews, and the concept of paradigm became very meaningful to me. I felt it was necessary to be aware of both educational and scientific paradigms when studying dance education:

The questions of educational orientation and paradigm choice are related and essential to both dance educators and researchers . . . Without clear theoretical and philosophical background both teaching and researching remain in a state of confusion . . . If the educational orientation and the research paradigm do not match, the reality of the dance education situation easily becomes distorted . . . (Anttila 1992, 84)

Meanwhile, I also worked on my videotapes. I found Laban Movement Analysis and with the help of it developed a tool for analyzing the material. At a daCi conference in Utah 1991, I presented some of my findings, appearing as a researcher for the first time. Admitting the subjectivity of the study I stated that my perceptions were very likely affected by my personal experiences, having lived those situations myself and by my knowing each child personally (Anttila 1991, 140). I wrote,

This experience has given me insight about the dynamics of a teaching situation and deeper understanding of the children involved in it, and also about myself as a teacher. So far it has proved to me how extremely individual each child, each group and each class is. (Anttila 1991, 144)

My interest in encountering people sustained. I still was curious about the possibility of extending the moment of encounter by looking at it repeatedly, combined with the memory of the original personal experience.

After graduating from UCLA I kept writing, researching, dancing and caring for my two children who were born close to each other. I tuned into new developments in dance education in still another daCi conference, in Sydney 1994, where I encountered the embodiment of a qualitative, critical research approach in dance education that I had been waiting for to finish my research project. Sue Stinson's presentation on feminist pedagogy for children's dance and Sherry Shapiro's, Isabel Marques' and Sue Stinson's research panel gave me support that I was not alone feeling uneasy about traditional research.

I needed this influence and some more maturing time to understand the limitations of my own approach. As I finally finished the study, by fall 1996, I was ready to disclose the weaknesses and to propose further issues. As I defended my choice of using observation as my main method, I admitted that this approach did not tell about the experience of the students. I reflected on using observation and the tool I had developed the following way:

There is no need to search for words to describe what is seen, to engage in anything else than seeing. The observer is free to relive the once experienced situation, the encounter with the children. To some extent it felt like going back in time, back to the original experience . . . The weakness of this study is that additional methodology was not used . . . It would have been very interesting to find out how the children themselves experienced the different movement activities . . . Observational study should always be supported by gaining feedback from the subjects themselves. (Anttila 1996, 123-124)

I did not dismiss the value of observation and using videotapes in research, although my study ended in realizing the limitations of this approach alone. I wanted to continue researching, but I was ready to move on and explore something else. I thus rejected the option of polishing this work into a dissertation,

like I was encouraged to do.

Besides my growing zeal for research, I still wanted to dance as much as ever. I also wanted to be a teacher, a mother and a wife at the same time. Getting back in a "dance shape" after giving birth to two children demanded a lot of work, and there seemed to be too little time in one day. Since I was way past my 30th birthday, I realized that I could not have it all; I would have to make choices. Leaving serious dance training for the first time in 20 years meant letting go of a secret dream of being a dancer; a dream that I probably had feared to make a reality, after all. My self-actualization process had come to a turning point. What would become of me?

Having spent a lot of time alone, sitting and writing, I had begun to miss the vitality of dance work increasingly. Other dance educators and researchers seemed to have a similar desire, a desire that may stem also from the shared conception about a vital connection between art and research, and of imagination and reality. I was fortunate to become closely affiliated with an international community of dance educators who think in artistic terms about their research. This community of critical researchers in dance education seems also to share an idea that the world of research in dance education does not need to, and cannot be, rigid and lifeless. Neither can it be a void; an opening out to influences from other arts and sciences as well as an intensifying dialogue among diverse ideas characterizes this development.

In her paper "Research as Choreography," Sue Stinson (1994) talks about principles that she shares with other feminist researchers. One of those principles is revealing one's own subjectivity, where one is coming from, and another is pursuing questions of meaning instead of questions of truth. (Stinson 1994, 3) These principles fit perfectly in my thinking, and encouraged me to follow my own path, realizing that subjectivity would not entail permission for erratic interpretations or acceptance of personal bias. Subjectivity in research must be coupled with critical examination of one's own values and choices, and openness for others' critical scrutiny. As Roman and Apple say, subjectivity can be seen as

... something to be acknowledged, understood, and learned from in the process of constructing the relations and representations of cultural selves and others. Its significance lies in the recognition of the joint construction of meaning in all social and scientific inquiry. (1990, 38)

Moreover, Roman and Apple say that subjectivity is not merely an individual's psychological state of mind; it is defined by multiple power relations and conflicting interests that set limits upon our range of choices and actions. Disclosing the political questions related to research methodology raises questions like "for whom is research or inquiry conducted?" (Roman and Apple 1990, 39). Or, as Richardson has put it, "Who owns the knowledge on teaching practice, and who benefits from the research?" (1994, 5).

According to Stinson, all researchers are involved in interpretation, and "we bring our passions, which determine what parts of the world we look at and the lenses we use to look at them" (Stinson 1994, 4). Moreover, Kincheloe and McLaren (2000, 285) say that not only all research is an act of interpretation, but also that perception itself is an act of interpretation. What the centrality of interpretation thus entails for research is "making sense of what has been observed in a way that communicates understanding" (Kincheloe & McLaren 2000, 285).

Personal connection to and ownership of research and knowledge became important ideas for me, and I became increasingly opposed to disinterested, alienated and disembodied modes of knowing. Being personally connected to research made it more appealing, and more akin to art-making. Stinson has compared doing research with doing choreography, saying,

For me, starting to write a scholarly paper is just as much an act of faith, and the process is just as messy. Initial drafts are like improvisation with words - - a time of trying out, false starts, unfinished sentences. (Stinson 1994, 9)

Because I was familiar with choreography and the pains in putting a piece together were something I knew about experientially, it was a relief to me to realize that in doing research I could be as personally involved as in artistic work, and that I did not have to deny the world of imagination and creation that had been so dear to me all my life. Doing research was just another extension of that same passion, the desire for personal meaning making that had taken me in different places in my life.

Time was really ripe for me to start looking into truly qualitative methodology, a methodology that was not only learned from books but was created in my inquiring mind, with help and encouragement from mentors and colleagues

that I have been privileged to work with. In 1997 I participated in a research course led by Sue Stinson and Karen Bond, and have been lucky to be able to continue discussion with both of them, and many others who took part in that course.

Through the international community of researchers and educators I have also encountered intellectual impact and stimulation that has strongly influenced my work. Ideas related to critical and feminist research and pedagogy have found a place in my soul, and have started a dialogue with my own values, my own history and my teaching. This dialogue is going on as I write this. The beliefs and values that are the basis for my work and for my life are constantly under scrutiny: my paradigm is never final, it is ever changing and incomplete, it is constantly being challenged, keeping in mind Bohm and Peat's warning that "a paradigm tends to interfere with that free play of the mind that is essential for creativity" (1987, 52). In a similar vein, Lather (1992b, 89) proposes an idea of "post-paradigmatic diaspora," making movement across paradigms possible. The values that endure after each round of testing and retesting are to me the essential cornerstones of my life and work.

In 1999 I participated in another research course that was led by Patti Lather. She told us "we are freer than we think we are." The themes of that course still pound in my head: alternative forms of representation, blending art and science, deconstructive practice, doing it and troubling it, writing poems and other wild practices. According to Bond and Stinson (2000, 55) poetic representations are still rare in qualitative research. In their study on young people's experiences of the superordinary in dance they used different ways of presenting and responding to their data in a mesmerizing way that illuminates the lived experience of dance. Bond, Stinson and Lather have helped me to follow my inclination for innovative writing and convinced me finally that as a researcher I have a permission to be imaginative, even a little wild. So, my self-actualization process was led back on track again: playful curiosity with a critically inquiring eye is the attitude to life that is truly about me as a person. That is the attitude with which I am carrying out this study.

Preparing for the journey

So, I have become a humanistic dance teacher and a critical researcher. Along the way my reminiscences as a learner of dance have reminded me about the importance of personal contact and recognition. A teacher is responsible for each and every student in the class whether they are overtly talented in dance or not. There might be a potential dancer in each and every student. There might be a silent, secret dream in every student's mind. While avoiding giving rise to unrealistic career plans through false promises, treasuring these dreams, instead of crushing them, is what dance education means to me.

I want to see the dancer, the artist in every student. I want to tap into their creative power; I am curious about the whole person, the individual. I am fascinated with the richness of expression and imagination of every individual, their private and secret worlds and dreams. I see myself as a child in my students, waiting for approval, contact, closeness and recognition. I see myself, my clumsy body and shy appearance, but my inner world wild with ideas and a will stronger than teachers' oppression. American Indian dancer Jamake Highwater writes:

There is an artist in all of us. . . The existence of a visionary aspect in every person is the basis for the supreme impact and pervasiveness of art. Art is a staple of humanity. (1981, 15)

Highwater's words resonate in me as they tell about how I have experienced art in this profound manner. At the same time, I am very conscious about the nature of my experience as subjective and not shared by everyone. I have other experiences, as a teacher and a researcher, that tell me the contrary: not all children enjoy dance. Further, I must note my awareness that dance will not cure people from various deficiencies. Dance is not the only answer to problems in schools. This study is not about dance and personal growth, it is not about dance and improved social skills, and it is not about healing communities by dancing.

This study is a personal journey, situated in a certain time and place, in a culture and in history. During this journey, I, bearing my history as a learner, teacher and researcher of dance, met and worked with people bearing very different personal histories. This report tells about encountering, about

crossing paths. Thus, this journey is not solely mine.

Very early in the research process I felt an urge to reject the traditional research format and write this study in a form of narrative. This choice was supported by my peers and colleagues. Thus, based on the way I have constructed and written the study, it may be seen to belong to an emerging genre of "critical personal narrative and autoethnography in education," following Burdell and Swadener (1999, 21). They characterize this genre as multivocal and post-structural in form. Studies falling in this genre also question previous assumptions of empirical authority and interrogate the construction of subjectivity. Their content draws from critical theories and embodies a critique of prevailing structures and power relationships. Thus, Burdell and Swadener justify adding the marker "critical" to personal narrative. Autoethnography, on the other hand, is a form of personal narrative that places the self within a social context.

According to Burdell and Swadener, a renewed interest in personal narrative can be seen as "a movement away from distanced theoretical writing to writing that details the individual and imaginative aspects of agency" (1999, 22), or as a resistance to "othering." Although they caution against possessive individualism and even narcissism that this kind of writing can generate, and encourage questioning whose perspective or voice is represented, they argue that the personal can evoke the political over time, and create a space for conversation, reflection and critique (1999, 25). In writing this story I am strongly committed to including voices of others and contributing to an increased understanding of a shared world.

Thus, I have found myself increasingly attracted to this way of writing. Carolyn Ellis and Arthur B. Bochner describe their idea of autoethnography as if telling about it to someone:

I start with my personal life. I pay attention to my physical feelings, thoughts and emotions. I use what I call systematic sociological introspection and emotional recall to try to understand an experience I've lived through. Then I write my experience as a story. By exploring a particular life, I hope to understand a way of life . . . (2000, 737)

They define autoethnography as an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness connecting the personal

to the cultural. Shifting focus, autoethnographers look both outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience, and inward, exposing a vulnerable self. Revealing the researcher's feelings and personal reactions is an essential quality even in ethnography and in all qualitative research. Harry F. Wolcott, a prominent ethnographer, says that qualitative research has brought researchers back into the research setting, and that has been "healthy for all" (1990, 131). In autoethnography, the shift of focus from personal to cultural may blur distinctions between these areas. Autoethnography is usually written in first-person voice and in a variety of forms. Ellis and Bochner add that these texts are composed of concrete action, dialogue, emotion and embodiment. (Ellis and Bochner 2000, 739)

Although there are many characteristics that connect my study to autoethnography, it certainly is not the sole methodological basis for this study. I was not even aware of autoethnography when the Taikomo project got started in 1997, and originally, had different plans in mind: This study was to involve questions of students' identity development and empowerment through art education. These questions arose from the Taikomo project that was committed to an action research approach. The tasks of the project included supporting children's cultural self and identity; the project aimed at supporting cultural encounters for children and families from different cultures. (Sava 2000, 10–11) More consciously than in my previous study, I launched this project as a form of researching one's own practice, or reflective practice. This kind of research has been conspicuously popular in pedagogical research done in Finnish art universities. It seems correct to note that there has been an inclination towards reflective practice in research concerning art pedagogy in Finland compared to such research in the United States. (Anttila et. al., 1999)

Initially I wanted to see if children could become empowered by dance, i.e., become stronger actors in their own life and in their community, and become more conscious of their life situation. These aims are related to critical pedagogy and to an action research approach that aims at social change in a community. So, my starting position, or paradigm, was emancipatory and critical. (Lather 1992b, 89)

Quite soon after becoming involved in this project that took place in an elementary school in eastern Helsinki, a school that has about 35% immigrant students (the average for Finland being about 1.5%), I realized that these larger questions were impossible to grasp because of their proportions and because

of their idealistic nature; idealistic in a sense that if this kind of a major shift in consciousness was to happen, it would need the whole community to work towards these aims. Despite being a part of a larger project, I still was a visiting dance teacher, and had to become modest and humble and chain my desire to be a savior. I met the class only ten times during the first year. Also, my classes were clustered together, forming two short periods, one in the fall and one in the spring, leaving a long pause in between. The second year, especially the spring, was more comprehensive as it included ten more movement sessions that were more spread out, storytelling sessions and other additional work towards a performance. Still, the total time I spent with the class was modest. I also understood that "education for empowerment" is much more than a benevolent, helping relationship that according to Sleeter (1991, 3) characterizes much of education. Because empowerment can be defined either as individual's power to achieve his or her own goals, or as transforming the social world in order to serve the interests of all its members better, I realized that I could not make this happen by teaching dance on a "once-a-week" basis.

Later, I have come to meet critique of critical pedagogy (Ellsworth 1992, Lather 1992a, Stinson 1998) and have learned about the limitations of critical pedagogy in promoting equality and justice. Although I think that hearing student voices and helping them become conscious of their life situations are crucial in meaningful learning, I now see that these processes are very complicated for an individual and for a community. Thus, the idea of children's empowerment faded to the background but remained as an undercurrent throughout the project.

This study became, however, an emancipatory, self-reflective process for myself. Instead of empowering my students it has empowered me by enhancing a critical awareness of my values, my choices for action and my relationship to the community that I was a part of. Employing the method of "dual dialectical process" again, now in a more conscious way, I have investigated and revealed my personal values realizing their power over my actions as a teacher. As MacDonald (1995, 81) points out, values, indeed, are personal and surpass one's biology, culture and society. Critical awareness of my personal values has also necessitated and organically shifted the focus of my research towards deconstructing, because it leads to questioning constructions of mind: concepts, relationships and beliefs (Lather 1991, 153-154).

This awareness also made clearer for me what it is that I really want to know.

It helped me to stay true to my interest and passion, to follow the path of self-actualization that I had long ago decided to follow. I turned my focus back to the very moment of encountering others in a context of teaching and learning dance. What goes on in my mind? How do I express myself? How do I respond to students? How do they address me? How do they interact with each other? How does tension get created? How do peace and tranquility develop? How do we get into a mode where artistic experiences can happen? These questions reveal that my interest in the encounter, the moment when I meet the students, was still prevailing.

All these questions are related to something that Max van Manen refers as “the interactive reality of the pedagogical moment or situation” (1991, 107). As van Manen claims that teacher’s immediate acting in the ongoing flux of pedagogical moments is little understood in educational theories, I realize that this has been, and still is, the precise point of my interest.

Becoming increasingly aware of the nuances in the moments of encounter has become a way to learn about myself, my students, and about what goes on in between us, in other words, to understand the pedagogical moment. This awareness may result in a kind of sensitive responsiveness that according to van Manen (1995) allows a person to perceive and read the other person’s actions and presence. He speaks about this facility as pedagogical tact, meaning “an active intentional consciousness of thoughtful human interaction” (1995, 44). Pedagogical tact is a practical, improvisational ability to instantly act in a way that promotes the good of the other (1995, 44).

The thoughtful action that the teacher displays in a pedagogical moment is different from reflective action that other practitioners, for instance, medical doctors, do when deliberating on a patient’s symptoms and possible choices of action. Van Manen says that thoughtful action is “thinkingly attentive to what it does without reflectively distancing itself from the situation” (1991, 109). He describes, however, the modes of immediate acting that range from intuitive thoughtfulness of immediate improvisational acting to a more self-conscious thoughtfulness of mediated improvisational action (1991, 113).

Thoughtful action, or pedagogical tact, thus requires thinking while acting without taking distance from the moment. Distancing oneself from the moment leads to a different kind of thinking. Van Manen reserves the term “reflection” for this distanced thinking. Reflection may be anticipatory, like in planning, or it may happen afterwards as reflection *on* action, or “ex post facto reflection.”

Jack Mezirow (1990, 6) distinguishes another kind of reflection, critical reflection, that is, reflection on one's presuppositions. Mezirow's notion of critical reflection is akin to questioning constructions of mind: concepts, relationships and beliefs that I mentioned above; critical reflection may lead to deconstructing mind's conceptions, as Lather (1991, 153–154) suggests.

Brazilian educational reformist Paulo Freire sees reflection and action still differently from the above. For him, reflection and action must always be connected as praxis. Praxis means unity of reflection and action; it leads to conscientization, a critical consciousness that implies action and thus, changes reality. (Freire 1972, 60) Freire claims that reflection lacking action results in verbalism that is empty and alienating. Action lacking reflection, on the other hand, results in activism, that is action for action's sake. True unity of reflection and action aims at and results in transforming the world. Action, on the other hand, is an authentic praxis only if its consequences become the object of critical reflection. (1972, 41)

Freire created his pedagogical ideas working with adults, and critical pedagogy is mostly applied in adult education. Also Mezirow (1990) speaks about critical reflection as central in adult learning. Thus, the emphasis in this realm of critical pedagogy and critical reflection is clearly in adult learning.

Indeed, what I originally thought the children in this project would gain, transformed into a learning process for myself. Critical reflection on my beliefs, values and presuppositions has resulted in something that may rightly be termed according to Mezirow's ideas as transformative and emancipatory learning, a kind of learning that he encourages for adult learners. Interested in the pedagogical moment that involves thoughtful action, I have studied this phenomenon by the means of *ex post facto* reflection, which in turn has called for critical reflection, and eventually, resulted in emancipatory learning; questioning my values, concepts and presuppositions, and, in the Freirean sense, in praxis, that means also change in my pedagogical practice.

What then, did the children gain from the process? I will approach this intriguing question by asking another question: Aren't education and teaching inherently and essentially about promoting the good of the student? One main impetus for this study is to understand how to teach in way that the good of student is truly promoted, in other words, how to act thoughtfully as a teacher? Or, I may pose the question as follows: If education is about promoting the good of the student, what actions of the teacher can truly be labeled as education?

Do teachers sometimes do something else than educate, when they think they are educating?

In this light, the underlying premise of critical pedagogy, respecting the students' life situation, their interests and needs, still seems a valid and sound pedagogical basis for students of any age. Interestingly, in Sweden Freire's ideas have been applied also in preschools. According to Ojala (1984, 141), Swedish "dialogue pedagogy" is based on a view of children as active, curious, responsible, independent and equal to adults. It aims at active participation, critical exploration and creativity, openness, equality, solidarity and respect for others. Moreover, in Freirean terms, it aims at connecting theory and practice and encountering the surrounding reality. Education must be based on children's needs, interests and previous life experiences, on their curiosity, feelings and will. (Ojala 1984, 141–142)

It may well be possible to implement critical pedagogy with children in a context where the entire community would work towards common ends. Even then, however, I would carefully question whose interests are served by implementing critical pedagogy. What really are the children's interests and needs? Do adults infer their interests and needs without truly asking the children themselves? In the case of this project these questions were not tackled from the onset, and I soon realized that my possibilities to impose change that would better these children's lives would be very limited, indeed.

However, my interest in children's life situation and their needs, as well as interest in the pedagogical moment took me closer to my students' world. Their world, energetic, irrational and wild, felt familiar to me, and very akin to the world of art. According to Kincheloe and McLaren (2000, 282–283) critical researchers are encouraged to dig more deeply into the human psyche, and become sensitive to the role of fantasy and imagination. Encountering the children's world led me to understand that equality between adults and children means more than faith in the child's power to understand and reflect on his or her life situation, which I believe is a very suitable notion. Equality between adults and children means also that adults, having once been children, can restore their capacity for imagination, play and irrational thought. This capacity may help them understand themselves better, and it may help adults to understand and interact with children and with each other better. It is a capacity to imagine and experience otherness, or readiness to thrust oneself into an open relationship with the world.

After all, then, capturing the fleeting nature of the present moment remained a challenge for me to work on in this study. In *Human Inquiry*, John Heron writes,

The fullest encounter in space and time is when something is encountering me with its presence. Being an onlooker and experiencing a face to face encounter are different levels of experiential knowledge. . . . face to face approach is primary, for only then do I encounter a presence encountering me. (1981, 30)

This citation has been meaningful to me for a long time, but only lately has its meaning become more crystallized to me. It explains to me the focus of my work: It is not in me, and it is not in the other, but in the space between me and the other. The space between me and the other is where the pedagogical moment happens. This brings me right down to the concept of *dialogue*. Martin Buber's dialogical philosophy has become central for my work.

From Buber's ideas I have been able to take hold of a basic premise for my work: I am not a person without a relationship to the other and to the world. In his renowned work, *I and Thou* (1970, originally published in 1923, first translated into English in 1937) Buber writes:

In the relationships through which we live, the innate You is realized in the You we encounter; that is, comprehended as a being we confront . . . Man becomes an I through a You. (1937/1970, 78–79, 80)

Buber explains how becoming a person happens through relating and associating; in contrast, becoming an ego happens through separation from others (1937/1970, 112). Reading Buber has brought the feelings of alienation in a dance class back to my mind and elucidated that I am looking for what I have been longing for ever since I entered the world of dance: *relation*.

This is how my original idea about focusing on empowerment shifted to focusing on dialogue. One task became *to understand the theoretical and philosophical roots of dialogue*. I am working on this task throughout the study, and attempt a synthesis in the ending chapter of this work (p. 290 onwards). Martin Buber's work is, naturally, foundational for my study.

Another important theoretical foundation for my study is critical pedagogy that at first may seem distant from dialogical philosophy. By taking a closer

look at Buber's philosophy, it is not so distant after all: Buber, in his own way, was certainly critical of traditional pedagogy; he was more than a philosopher, he was a reformist and activist. In his prologue to the 1970 translation of *I and Thou* Walter Kaufman, the translator, refers to Buber as a radical (Buber 1937/1970, 32). He also points out that the book speaks about problems of modern society forty years before others started to do so, and is significant to those people to those whose primary concern is social change, rather than religion (1937/1970, 38).

To reiterate, my original position for this study was critical and emancipatory. Although my interest in the pedagogical moment and dialogue has softened the emancipatory nature of this study and brought a more interpretive or heuristic nuance into it, a critical underpinning remains alive. A constant interplay between moments of insight and of dimness in constructing my position and its justification create constant fluctuation along the continuum from understanding to emancipating to asking new questions, which again lead to deconstructing.

Through this cyclical process something essential about dialogue, education and teaching may be illuminated, in a spirit of heuristic research. According to Clark Moustakas heuristic research starts with "a personal challenge and puzzlement in the search to understand one's self and the world in which one lives" (1990, 15). Heuristic research refers to internal search and dialogue with others that lead to a process of discovery and understanding of the nature and meaning of human experience. In this kind of inquiry the researcher is personally and creatively involved throughout the course of research, and the process leads to growing self-awareness. Heuristic research is autographic but the issues almost always bear considerable social significance. (Moustakas 1990, 9, 15)

The essential features related to the meaning of dialogue in education that my study illuminates will, however, continue to be challenged. I probably can never be totally free from critical awareness again. Awareness of the essential nature of dialogue for human life makes one realize the lack of dialogue in life, and the consequences of this lack. Thus, understanding dialogue inevitably leads to a critical standpoint in relation to research and pedagogy.

Becoming familiar with Paolo Freire's pedagogical thinking has helped me to understand that humanist and critical aspirations are intertwined. In his landmark work *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (1972), he states that the problem of

humanization has always been central to mankind, and that concern for humanization leads to the recognition of dehumanization. Dehumanization, according to Freire, affirms humanization:

Dehumanization . . . is a distortion of the vocation of becoming more fully human . . . Because it is a distortion of being more human, sooner or later being less human leads the oppressed to struggle against those who made them so. (1972, 20–21)

For Freire, denying people their autonomy takes away their humanity. However, oppressors also lack humanity. Freire claims that, if the process of regaining humanity is to be meaningful, the oppressed must work to restore the humanity of themselves and their oppressors:

Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both. (1972, 21)

By this Freire means that only those who have experienced oppression can understand it and the necessity of liberation, and thus,

Freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift. It must be pursued constantly and responsibly. Freedom is not an ideal located outside of man; nor is it an idea which becomes myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion. (1972, 23–24)

This is where Freire brings in pedagogy, a pedagogy that must be created with the oppressed, not for them. He says,

. . . while no one liberates himself by his own efforts alone, neither is he liberated by others. . . The correct method lies in dialogue. (1972, 42)

The task of liberating, critical pedagogy, then, is to restore humanity, and restoring humanity happens through dialogue. This is how I see Buber's and Freire's educational ideas closely linked to each other. Both see dialogue as more than a method. For Freire dialogic relationship is fundamental to human nature and democracy. He claims that,

Dialogism must not be understood as a tool used by the educator... Dialogism is a requirement of human nature and also a sign of the educator's democratic stand. (Freire 1998a, 92)

Buber also describes dialogue as something greater than a method that brings people into a communicative relationship. Dialogue is fundamental to human beings; it precedes all conceptualizations about humans. (Buber 1937/1970, 76)

The concept of dialogue, essential for this present work, ties together its method and aim. Dialogue is the means, maybe the only means, by which education can truly be about promoting the good of the student. Dialogue, I propose, is the key for preventing the teacher from imposing her values over the student, assuming that the teacher is conscious about her values. But dialogue, relation, is also an essential quality of human life, thus dialogue inevitably is also the aim of education. Moreover, dialogue is the means by which teachers may become free to search for humanity and meaning in their lives.

My search for dialogue extends from understanding it theoretically and philosophically to *describing it in practice*; how it appears in real life, particularly in dance education. In other words I am trying to discern qualities of interaction that may be related to dialogue. This is another task of this study, a task that I am approaching by describing real life episodes. I am telling a story about a journey, a two-year process with the elementary school class I worked with. I have constructed this story with the help of my journal and actual videotaped material of the whole process, and through my ex post facto reflections while viewing the videotapes. Also, several accounts of my students and other teachers are included in it. I am presenting the story in five chronologically running segments.

This story is quite detailed. Following Wolcott's (1990, 130–131) advice on reporting fully, I have not been eager to omit events from the actual process before making sure they are not significant. Wolcott encourages including comments and observations that do not neatly fit the picture, and may provoke possible meanings and interpretations that the researcher does not quite understand. Recording accurately and reporting fully and are among his suggested lines of action in trying "not to get it all wrong." Although "getting it right" in qualitative research is impossible in a sense of scientific accuracy or correctness, he suggests that there are ways to make sure that qualitative researchers are not getting it all wrong. For him, seeking validity does not

capture the essence of qualitative research and thus, validity is not the quality that qualitative researchers should seek. (Wolcott 1990, 126–127, 136)

The story is interrupted at times for deeper, or critical, reflections that are supported by accounts from people who have been involved in this project, and by theory. These reflections are metaphorical “islands” or stopovers during the journey. They represent an interpretive function in the study, tackling questions of meaning: ***What does dialogue mean for me and to others who have been involved in this project?*** Answering this question is another task of the study. My understanding of this third task and the first task (understanding the theoretical and philosophical roots of dialogue) are woven together in the ending chapter.

I gained the accounts by interviewing all students individually twice; the first interview occurred after the first year, and the second after the whole project. The classroom teacher conducted small group discussions with the children after the first year. During the first year I also had the children write two essays (one about their class, and one about friendship). During the second spring I conducted storytelling sessions with the children in pairs. I also discussed with the teachers and the musician who worked with me, as well as the principal of the school. I audiotaped and transcribed all interviews and discussions. Other people talking to me about their experiences, thoughts, feelings and imagined ideas are a part of a complex web of meanings and ideas that are related to dialogue.

Being a novice in using other people’s accounts in research, I soon realized that I should not attempt to interpret their words in a phenomenological, or any other methodologically orthodox sense. Their words are to me a window to otherness, an escape from my own head, or a shift of focus. I have taken the liberty to reflect on their words, to reveal what happens in my mind when I hear them. I humbly remind the reader that these reflections are mere suggestions of what their words might mean for them.

Letting the readers see for themselves as Wolcott (1990, 129–130) suggests, has been a way for me to suspend the rightness of my interpretations. In his own research Wolcott includes primary data, erring rather on giving too much rather than too little detail, providing the readers access to the data themselves.

Instead of attempting to arrive at a correct interpretation, the process of searching for meaning has resulted in a new phase of emancipation for myself. I now see myself differently as an actor in this world, empowered by knowing from the other side. As I have shifted and moved across paradigms, inter-

preting others' accounts has fueled critical reflection on my beliefs and values; thus, interpretive and deconstructive phases in this research process are intertwined.

Originally I thought that I would, in the concluding stage of my research, return to the critical position and aim at changing practice. This would have happened by suggesting practical courses for action that a teacher desiring to enhance dialogue could take. Making value judgements, i.e., statements containing words like *should* and *ought*, following Wolcott (1990, 132), has become increasingly problematic for me. This difficulty stems from my current supposition that learning to teach dialogically cannot be a prescriptive process and thus it is impossible to tell others how to teach dialogically. Instead, I have learned to think about teaching, and to think about how to think. My search for dialogue has resulted in ***deconstructing teaching***. This turned out to be a task for this research in itself; a process that I will review in the second to last chapter of this work (from p. 265 onwards).

As Sue Stinson puts it, consciousness is more about complexity than clarity:

To become wide-awake is to move beyond yes/no and right/wrong, to recognize that every choice has consequences, both positive and negative. (2001, 28)

She believes that consciousness, the ability to think about our thinking, is one key to living a human life (2001, 32). For me, consciousness has become a way for personal growth and empowerment, a way towards emancipation. Anyone who desires to be free has to become aware. But freedom, as Freire says, is frightening because it requires rejecting outer authority and replacing it with autonomy and responsibility (1972, 23–24).

A glimpse of past connects my quest for freedom to the present day. I realize now why Maslow's idea of self-actualization was so meaningful for me even as a young student of education. He speaks of "growth choices" and "fear choices," and says that making growth choices is a way towards self-actualization. Fear choices are choices towards safety and regression; growth choices are progressive and courageous, and true to oneself. He says,

Making an honest statement involves daring to be different, unpopular, nonconformist. . . To be courageous rather than afraid . . . (1972, 46)

This study is about daring to be myself. That is why I embarked on this trip into my own close surroundings and rejected traveling to an exotic destination. I realize that it demands courage to be “just a teacher,” and moreover, a kind of teacher that I can live with, even if that means giving up some benefits of being a more fashionable and admired teacher.

Although I feel hesitant to make recommendations for changing practice, I hope that by telling this story I can encourage other teachers and researchers to look at their close surroundings, and to see the strangeness in the familiar. I hope that anyone who reads this story will become encouraged to see how interesting and rich their work and life is. I would like to say to anyone who is willing to stop and reflect on their practice that this process is demanding but worth the trouble, and wish to encourage other teachers to tell their story. I strongly believe that this can lead to deeper appreciation of ourselves and our students, and the teaching profession.

Respecting the fundamental nature of dialogue throughout this work has been a challenge for me. This is something that I value greatly, and I hope that the readers will do so, too. It has meant that I have had to learn a new way to write, a new way to do research: a way that does justice to its target, the target being greater than any attempts to chain it in words. Doing research dialogically is doing research in an I-You relation; it is different than looking at the world in an I-It relation, where the I is the carrier of sensations and the environment is their object (Buber 1937/1970, 74). Doing research dialogically means that the barrier between subject and object fades away: I am a part of what I study, and what I study becomes a part of me. Instead of separation there is relation. I do hope that I succeed in conveying this message to others, and in this way, maybe add to understanding the nature of dialogue and appreciation of the significance of dialogue in human life.

In all, I hope that we as educators, researchers and artists, would dare to respect what it is to be human. I suggest that respecting humanness is maybe easier by letting go of trying so much. With a curious, playful and inquiring mind, it is possible to get very far, taken that the aspiration of this mind is humanization, and that by being authentic and honest the mind is able to be critical and prevent itself from falling into traps of self-deceit. This is supported by deconstructive practices that entail cutting oneself off from pressures to excel and to stand out from others. So, because the nature of dialogue is such that it cannot be made an object, described and chained, it may reveal some-

thing of itself just by letting it happen. Buber says,

The You encounters me by grace – it cannot be found by seeking. . . The You encounters me. But I enter into a direct relationship to it. Thus the relationship is election and electing, passive and active at once . . . (1937/1970, 62)

With these words in mind I embarked on to my journey; with this attitude I went on to meet my new students, in the fall of 1997 when they were 9 years of age. This attitude is also the essence of my actions as a researcher since my pedagogical and research endeavors are intertwined in this process.

For the reader

In the story you are about to read, normal text font is description of events, mostly transcribed from videotapes, but it includes some remembered events as well. The text runs chronologically and includes events from each meeting with the group during the two-year project. Our 20 movement sessions produced about 30 hours of material on videotape (the sessions lasted about 90 minutes each). I have taken out events that did not seem relevant in terms of repressing or building up dialogue. I have also taken out isolated episodes that did not trigger me to reflect on issues related to dialogue. Otherwise, the story includes a large proportion of the actual course of our project.

Bold and italicized text is direct citations from my journal, written right before or after the classes. I kept a journal through the whole process, sometimes more accurately, sometimes more haphazardly. I have included those reflections that seem relevant to my trying to understand what dialogue might be and reflections on my feelings that reveal the nature of my personal search. The citations from my journal flow chronologically, as well. In translating my journals from Finnish to English I have naturally have had to make grammatical adjustments.

Smaller font is my "inner talk" that has mainly arisen while viewing the videotapes. I did not view the tapes while the project was going on, except for choreographic reasons (I looked for and recorded movements that the children invented for later work). All viewing in research terms happened after the project. I transcribed the tapes class by class, in the order they actually had occurred. As I viewed and transcribed the tapes, I paused and rewound the tape for more careful viewing whenever I noticed something significant. This more

focused way of viewing was coupled with writing down my thoughts (“inner talk”) as originally and accurately as I could. Recognizing and giving time and space for these moments of reflection was essential in my methodology. Choosing not to view the tapes during the project grew from my desire to devote time and space for this kind viewing and reflection, and to immerse myself completely into this phase of research. Some of my inner talk occurred later as “reflection on reflection.” I have not edited these reflections afterwards except for grammatical adjustments when translating them from Finnish to English. For coherency, I also changed the tense from present tense to past tense when referring to something I saw on the videotape.

Italicized text is children or other people talking (interviews and children’s essays) and my suggestions on what it may mean. This material is not presented in chronological order, but inserted in the chronologically progressing story when it seems to relate to something that happened in the classes. I have given all children and other people pseudonyms; no one except me appears by their own name. I am referring to the principal of the school as the Principal.

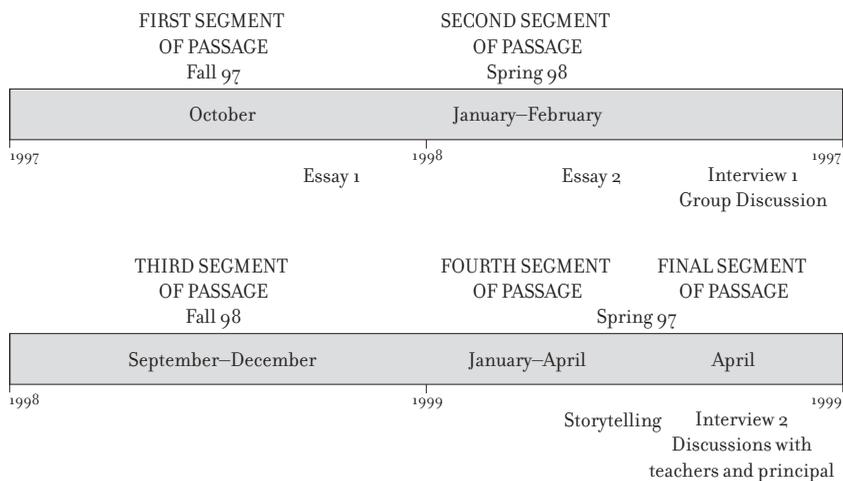
I have included the original accounts in Finnish as footnotes when directly citing someone else speaking in an interview situation. I have not included such footnotes for my own reflections and spoken accounts transcribed from videotapes.

The story, or journey, is broken in five segments. These segments are periods into which our work actually was divided into: fall 1997, spring 1998, fall 1998 and spring 1999. The last period, however, made two segments because the final part of the project, preparing a performance, stood out as an intense period of its own.

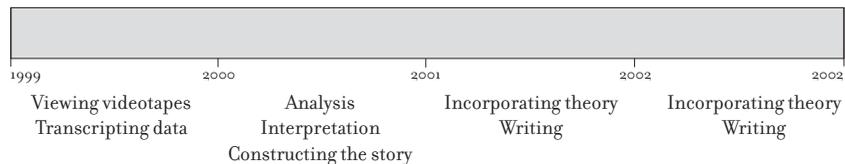
In between the segments there are chapters or “islands” that represent meaningful themes that I encountered during the journey. These themes incorporate theory with additional material from the interviews, as well as pull together some episodes and reflections from the chronological narrative. They aim at building up understanding of dialogue. I will tie the themes together in the ending chapters. These chapters are thoroughly written in normal text font, even when citing other people talking and include repetitions of my “inner talk” (in normal font) for more thorough interpretation.

The following timeline illustrates the course of the whole project. I welcome you to join my journey that started in October 1997.

PROJECT PHASE 1997–1999



RESEARCH PHASE 1999–2002



FIRST SEGMENT OF PASSAGE:

FALL 1997

On clear waters

Before the first class I had met with the classroom teacher, Anita, a couple times. Anita had an extensive experience in folk dancing. Because of her interest in dance the Principal of the school had asked her to be my partner, and she had agreed. We had discussed the hopes she had for my teaching, and set aims for the class together. The aims were centered on creating a better classroom atmosphere, developing trust and respect in each other. We thought that this could happen by getting to know each other better, and developing courage for self-expression. In the long run Anita hoped that boys and girls could learn to get along better. The class had 21 students, 13 boys and 8 girls. Four children represented immigrant families; children's family backgrounds in general were very varied. Many children came from single parent families; unemployment and social problems were common, as was the case in the entire school. Anita hoped that we would concentrate on everyday life, on concrete issues on how to live together and interact co-operatively.

I wanted to support these areas through my teaching and thought that they were sound starting points for an art education project. However, I told Anita that I hoped to be able to go on from these aims onto encountering oneself and others through dance, and that a challenge for me was to see if I could help the children throw themselves into experiencing their bodies and movement in a more conscious way. I hoped to help them unleash their creativity and their expressive powers, and to find a more sensitive and sensuous way of being in the world, and in this way to change their consciousness about themselves in the world.

I had also wanted to make sure that there were no problems in videotaping the classes. I had told about my previous experiences with videotaping; that it does not seem to bother children. I explained to Anita that I would be looking at myself to improve my teaching. I would tell the children the same thing, that I wanted to become a better dance teacher, and that the children would not be judged or evaluated.

October 8, 1997

I arrived to the school early and went to the teacher's lounge to find out where the video camera was. To my surprise Anita had already taken it out and asked another teacher to help me set it up. I felt warmly welcomed and important – compared to my previous experiences with setting everything up by myself this felt great.

Before the class I was anxious, but in a good way. Now begins something new, not experienced before, unpredictable chain of events. I was in the gym ready, well prepared, enthusiastic. I was waiting for the children. They came in the gym in fine rows, peacefully; I felt a touch of curiosity from their side. I did not feel any advance expectations towards me; at least not negative expectations.

We started in a circle, as I usually start classes. I asked the children: "What do you know about me?" I did not get an answer, but a series of questions about me, like, "Do you have children?" and "Where do you live?" And I told them, and asked them the same questions: they told me how many brothers and sisters they had, how old they were, if they had pets, etc.

I wasn't in a teacher's role for them, but a human being. I told them about myself and asked them to tell about themselves. It seemed to be important for them to tell about their family and pets, for instance. A basis for a dialogical relationship was created on its own, without planning. It happened. The starting point was interest in human being, curiosity. Senses open, in this moment.

I experienced this brief discussion as an encounter with these children in a personal, very human and open level. I was a little tense, however. I was probably a little nervous about the first class, so that I was not quite myself. It is important for me to be as openly as possible just me, not making myself fit into a role of a teacher.

The discussion continued into the topic of dance, when a child asked: "Are we going to dance here?" I told them that we are going to move, play, invent new ways to move, and that we can invent a name for this class.

The beginning discussion was open, free and genuine. The children were wonderfully genuinely curious, and willing to tell about themselves and their families. They did not seem to have prejudices about the word dance. They seem to know very little about dance.

The first interview with the children (spring 1998) confirmed that very few of them actually had any previous exposure to dance. Some girls had taken dance classes; for instance, Clara told that she took ballet when she was four years old.

A few boys remembered having danced in a school disco, or, in Sebastian's words, "probably when I was small." Quincy had a clear picture about his dance background:

When I was three, in Joensuu, in my aunt's wedding . . . and then in school disco when I was in second grade.²

Some children vaguely remember doing something like this in kindergarten, or as a baby. Most said that almost everything in my classes was new to them, and that they had never done such things before.

One boy, Matias, had dance sports as his hobby. Some children knew about dance a little bit through Matias, and referred to him when talking about dance. For instance Nathan, who told me that Anita had told them that this will be dance, said that,

First everybody was like no no no we don't want anybody we don't want to dance no Matias also said so . . . he is probably as shy as I am because he does not want to show in front of others . . . maybe he is used to showing.³

Sebastian also remembered that Anita had used the word dance before I started my classes:

There was not much dancing although the teacher said that there will be dancing . . . there was not just that there were other fun things as well.⁴

Our first activity was a name game, where one child was in the center with a paper roll, and touched a child whose name was said as fast as possible. The child who heard his/her name should say another name before she or he was touched.

¹ oon mä varmaan pienenä.

² 3-vuotiaana Joensuussa mun tädin häissä . . . ja sit koulun diskossa tokalla luokalla.

³ ...ensin kaikki oli ei ei ei haluta ketään ei haluta tanssii ei Matiaski sano niin . . . se on varmaan yht ujo ku mä et se ei viitti muiden edes näyttää ku ... niin ehkä se on tottun näyttämään.

⁴ Ei siel paljoo ollu vaik ope puhu et siel tanssitaanki...ei siel ollu sitä pelkäästään kyl siel oli muitki kivoi juttui.

Then we continued with statue tag: the one who got caught would freeze, and could be saved by others. As the children got more active and a little restless, I asked: "Can I talk now?"

During the tag the children were very active and loud! In the end, they all were frozen as statues, and I asked them to melt slowly. This did not work too well. They seemed to be unable to calm themselves. I said: "We cannot continue before it is quiet here. You must let each other work in peace." Then they quieted down easily; I did not have to raise my voice. This was a reasoning argument – I treated them as persons with the ability to understand and reason. It seemed to work well this time. It created a democratic atmosphere, from my perspective. It made me feel good. From here, it felt possible to build a ground for understanding.

We continued with "package": I asked the children to imagine that ropes tighten around them, and to make a tight package of themselves. When the ropes would "break," the package would fall apart. Again, relaxing did not work so well. We did the third and fourth package in silence. There was no talking; it was quiet. Good. Silence feels good. To see how far it is possible to go without talking, to let them lead themselves, to hear the silence, to sense more. The teacher should not be the center of focus all the time. The center of focus in concentrating/centering exercises should be the self.

We shifted quickly into the next activity; I asked them to imagine that a string, hanging from the ceiling, would attach to a body part and pull them up. The children suggested body parts that led upwards. Everybody was engaged in this activity, but a little loudly. Quick transfer was pedagogically correct. This was very typical creative dance methodology: I had planned a series of activities, and smooth transitions so that the children did not have a chance to get distracted. In this kind of pedagogy the teacher holds the control although the activity itself gives certain freedoms and even initiative.

Here, as so many times again and again, I noticed children having difficulties in managing and directing their bodies. The children vocalized haphazardly as they moved; their movements appeared uncontrolled and limp. How could I have helped them to concentrate? I think the first problem really was this difficulty in directing and sensing their bodies and the noise level in the space.

Next we moved around the gym with one body part leading. I asked them to suggest body parts that lead. Now, I talked over the class: "I am losing my voice soon!" and, "Hello, wake up!" This hollering is something that I completely want to get rid of. By hollering I mean a tense, quite loud tone of voice. I dislike myself hollering! It must have felt unpleasant and authoritarian for the children. It created an authoritarian atmosphere, from my

point of view. Maybe the children were so used to being hollered at that they did not even notice me doing it.

Another reflection here is: could I have been more involved, more alive or “magical” – would this have helped the children, drawn them into a different mode of working and being. I tend to be quite “dry.” Here, I talked in an ordinary tone, and the children’s movement was quite ordinary, too. I have resisted this “teacher as a magician” approach for a long time. My style has been more held back. But, I am now asking if some magic might have helped the children to take a step from ordinary to extraordinary?

Next we did shaping statues with partners. Seeking partners took a little while, but everybody found one. Again, some hollering! I was telling them what to do. Traditional creative dance jargon, like my advice to a couple that made fists and fighting statues.

I said: “Try to invent something that has not been seen before!” I circled around the pairs. The atmosphere was busy, nice, there was babbling, which was fine. Then I asked the children to “stop moving and be silent . . . Oh, wonderful,” I praised them as they quieted down.

We continued with statues in groups of four. Matias suggested that one could shape the others. I did not accept his suggestion: “This way we get this done a little faster- can we do that next time?” The class was almost over. Someone suggested tag again. I said, “You have good suggestions, but now we have a lack of time.”

The atmosphere was concentrated, but I told them that there was “a terrible noise every time you change statues!” In the end, I asked them to melt again.

The last activity was “across the floor.” I directed the children to form lines. I put the music on – the children started to move their bodies rhythmically immediately, the mood was joyful. It seems like the children had a thirst for rhythm and dance. In the very end we gathered in a circle and stretched out a little.

The issue of time became important throughout the project. More about this later! Also, their love for movement games was very apparent from the beginning. Maybe tags and other movement games are children’s own communality, interaction in their own terms, their game of life.

This class was a structured, thoroughly planned and over-pedagogical class. My starting point was, however, to include exercises that I knew would work, and to take a strict pedagogical approach first. Maybe I could have been more spontaneous and relaxed. I did not take on their suggestions, but kept to my plans rigidly. The use of the class time was very efficient and structured.

But the children seemed to have fun. In all, this was a good start. I got a nice touch to the group in the beginning – the “dialogue.” But I think the children were being nice to me as a guest, they

did all the activities surprisingly nicely. Now, after the project I know them much better, I wonder about this successful beginning a little bit. What in the world may belong in their lives?

It is exciting to see oneself two years ago. I have changed during this process. I wonder if I could be as pedagogical as I was any more.

The biggest problems seemed to be the childrens' inability to be in command of their voices and their bodies. This problem I had with them from the very beginning. I never could really solve it. Empowerment... that is where I started, it soon became too big goal. I see now why. A dance class here and there cannot help if the rest of their lives is unsupportive to the task of building inner authority.

A goal for the next classes: to concentrate on oneself. Follow up, how they experience this: is it a positive or negative feeling? Can we get rid of the fists etc. in statues? As a whole, the energy is positive. Dialogue started, and the children had suggestions. I felt myself secure, open and energetic; I was present (despite my headache in the morning).

The acoustics of the gym are really tiring. There are many children, more boys than girls. A lot of work to keep in control. But, at least for now, this is ok.

October 9, 1997

We started the class by talking about yesterday's class. They remembered tag, jumping across the floor, melting, statue shaping and string in the roof. I asked them if anything had been difficult, they said no. I also asked if there was anything they would not want to do again. Wasn't this quite open and brave of me? They mentioned string in the roof. When I asked why, they responded, "It was boring." And I said, smiling: "I almost guessed this!"

I offered to modify it so that they could decide themselves where the string would attach. They started to suggest activities. Someone asked that we would play "rounders" (polttopallo). I said that I thought this game was more like sport, and belonged to physical education classes. The children were disappointed. I asked, "Can't you play these games in P.E.?" The answer was no.

Many children told me in the first interview, that in physical education they do not get to play movement games a lot. Movement games were something that many of them really wanted to do. Comparing their regular physical education classes and dance classes, they said that one difference was that in my classes we played more games, and that in P.E. they have to run a lot and really fast. I also asked

what they didn't like in school, and Julius, who had soccer and hockey as hobby, said,

*P.E. classes because we have to always run so much there.*⁵

They also said that the best in physical education classes was when they sometimes played games.

The atmosphere was intimate and intensive, but time was running. I noticed that we had already used ten minutes of the class, and that we only had half an hour left. Time for children... when is it? We started the name game. There was some competitiveness in the atmosphere. The children's voices were sharp and quite loud; they did not relax and enjoy the game fully.

Next, I divided the children into two groups. Some children changed places, apparently thinking that this way they could get in the same group as their friends. The "teacher-me" stepped in: "Hey, no changing of places!"

Here I could have asked them how we could solve the problem. I had this idea that statue tag could work better in two groups, each group using half of the big gym. But the difficulty in getting into groups ruined my idea, at least temporarily. Probably the children would have come up with a better idea to start with! Now, the result was a moment of no dialogue at all, when I one-sidedly used my position as a teacher to tell the children what to do. Why could they not be in the same group with their friends? And, how could I know WHY they wanted to change places if I didn't ask them?

The game got going; it was joyous, a little restless and limp. There were little screams of joy. I stayed close to the children, touched them, and some children touched me.

Gabriel bumped his head and I went to see him. I stayed with him for a while. I like being able to give extended time to just one child. The others were doing fine; they did not need me. I would hear if something went wrong. This has to do with trust in the children, and trust in the process: the teacher does not have to be overlooking the action all the time.

The game ended well. I told the children: "Actually you should take care yourselves that things go well." This was a "democratic" comment, I think.

We continued with "the package" and "string in the roof"; now the children decided where the string was attached. Then we did "body parts leading" and statue shaping. I had to holler my instructions because of the noise, but the

⁵Liikkatunnit siel joutuu juokseen ain kauheesti.

children calmed down soon; the mood was busy. Is it sometimes better to just go on, not wait for everybody to quiet down to give instructions?

Kia had an opinion about the structure of my classes. Comparing my classes to their regular P.E. classes she thought that I had too many things in one class:

Well, [in P.E.] we run and play rounders when we are inside and all that but with you we did much more . . . we managed to do three-four different things we did that rolling and everything . . . we could do a little less.⁶

I asked the children to form four lines. There was some babbling, but the atmosphere was relaxed. I put the music on, they responded to it with movement; there was joy. We added a freeze to the combination, and in the end everybody froze and formed a big statue. Then I asked them to melt, and try to be quiet for a little while. We stretched a little with the image of a rubber band. I talked calmly; it was quite silent.

The teacher-me was still taking a grip on me. There was no dialogue here. Where is the true encounter? Well, there were no big problems either. In the beginning of class there was a dialogical moment.

The second class was more restless. I did not get such a direct contact to the group. In statues there was a good feeling and WORKING! Across the floor is always so exciting!

October 15, 1997

I feel sick, I have the flu. Although I am tired I still feel excited. This is a challenge for me. The children are here and now, ready for action. What do I have to offer for them? I think over, how to get them to concentrate on themselves. This is a challenge. How can it be so busy! I guess it is typical for this age group. But I could swear that food additives, violent TV-programs, video games etc. make today's children more restless.

⁶No me juostaan ja otetaan polttopalloo ku ollaan sisällä ja kaikkee mut sul tehtiin paljon enemmän ku meillä me chittiin tehä jotain 3-4 juttuu me tehtiin sitte sitä kierimistä ja kaikkee...vois tehä vähä vähemmän.

The children were running in the gym happily, with little screams. I hollered, "Get down from the wall bars!"

We started with stretching in the circle. Then we played "follow the leader." The girls formed their own line, and the boys theirs. I put music on. First, there was just running. The children were energetic, on the move. In the end there was quite a hassle going on, but it really didn't seem to bother anybody or anything.

Which is more important, to offer the children a chance to move spontaneously and to be together in a manner that comes easily from them, or set goals for them from above? I believe that goals are for the good of the children, but how much can come from the children themselves if they are given time and space for interaction? Creative dance and movement demands many things from children that are not so typical for them. For example, lying on the floor, or moving slowly.

Next activity was "straight and bent": I played two different pitches; the lower one meant bent, and the higher meant straight. This was very teacher directed, again. In two years my thinking has changed, or I have changed really a lot. I can't really even bear to watch this anymore... the children are working well, but...

Then we just rolled on the floor. There was laughter. Enjoying bodily sensations: how the floor massages the body. How to help the children feel these fine tuned sensations? Where did this thought come from? Maybe from my own longing for these sensations, my recollection of the enjoyment of rolling on the floor.

Forming lines was as difficult as it was last time. I hollered, "Now silence, or I'll lose my voice!" Why didn't I ask the children figure out how to form the lines quickly and easily? Developing a dialogical atmosphere takes time. Remember, here I had met the children just a week ago.

We did rolling across the floor with a soft music. The children made sounds, which blurred the music and distracted the mood. But soon they quieted down. They waited eagerly in lines. In the end some children complained being tired. Closing circle was a little bit restless; we practiced being silent again.

This class, again, was a typical creative dance class. The pedagogy was typical, as well. But maybe it was safe to start this way. Where does this go from here?

October 16, 1997

We started with the name game again. It did not work too well now. The children got caught deliberately, etc. I said, "There is no sense in this." Then we started a new tag game, the crocodile tag. This was Fred's suggestion from previous class.

Fred remembered this game still in the interview. When I asked what he would want to do again he said,

Maybe the croco was maybe the best thing, right.⁷

Julius remembered this also. When I asked about possibility of influencing the class content he said,

Mm-m, when Fred said the crocodile tag.⁸

Many children said they did not want to influence the class content; they said it is fine that the teacher decides what to do. Vincent, for instance, said that he never really wants to suggest anything, and Kia said that she does not influence the class a lot, and would not really want to. But some children seemed to appreciate this possibility. For instance, in a group discussion with Anita Sebastian and Nathan said that dance classes were more fun than regular P.E. classes because often the class could decide what to do. Nathan said this again in the interview with me, although he said he is shy, he would like to "influence a little"; he said it is a good thing that children can suggest what to do.

This hesitant attitude towards influencing the class content was a surprise to me. Maybe they were so used to being told what to do that they did not really know what it is to be in charge – it seemed to not to be important for them. It seemed more like passivity was the prevailing attitude towards school life.

During the crocodile tag the children were screaming happily, and the whole situation was quite cluttered. Irene did cartwheels in the middle of all others running.

I am trying to make sense out of this way of being in the world. They seem to be happily immersed into the "web" of noise, movement and freedom. Nothing else than being there seems important. How much time is there to be; how much space for freedom? Recess, yes, but is it enough?

When children are "free" like calves in the field, what happens? How do they experience it? Is it important? Does the activity always have to be directed? What is the sense of community that rises from the children's own subculture, and is created on their own terms? How do children experience adult directed sense of community – is it phony for them?

⁷ Ehkä se kroko oli ehkä se paras, justtiinsa.

⁸ Mm-m, ku Fredkin sanoi sen krokotiilihipan.

In “follow the leader” I told them to use just a little running. The game went quite well. Sebastian, especially, invented nice movements. Movement was joyful, the others were also inventive, and I said, “Very well invented!”

Then we did the “straight-bent” exercise. It was peaceful in the room. I was peaceful myself. I gave them time. I walked around and gave directions. We continued into movement with straight and bent bodies and body parts. I praised them again, “You invent a whole lot!”

Then we gathered in the circle to get ready for a new activity, “Crossing the marketplace.” My way of giving instructions was now again easy and relaxed, not teacher-like. How to give instructions without over teaching? I was one of the group; like a friend who invented or suggested a new game. The children were laughing; this went well.

We continued with across the floor. Someone complained being dizzy. I responded by changing the order, so that we did the running and jumping part first and then rolling. Those who did not want to roll could rest. Is this being responsive, dialogical or is it yielding?

We finished the class with stretching. I praised them and then asked them to try to be silent for a while.

Should I take risks next time? Try to make boys and girls work together? What is dialogue, again? It is not just making creative self-expression possible. The individual's active participation in the group, and then empowerment. Some children seem already empowered. The armor should be broken down. Where is sensitivity? Courage to encounter oneself, why? To broaden oneself.

October 23, 1997

Beginning circle was peaceful. We did soft and slow rolling to the backs and up. Here in this beginning there was some dialogue. Mastering the body! The children were actively trying to direct their movement, like they were interested in the mechanics of this movement and knew exactly what they are supposed to do. It seems to be easier to be conscious about body movement in a simple, structured movement than in a creative movement task.

We did some more stretching. Zachary asked where the arms should be held. I responded that they could be in many places. The mood was nice and peaceful. There was no “teacherliness.” I was more like a guide, or co-learner. We threw toes behind the head; someone suggested a summersault. I responded, advised, and some children tried to do it.

Many children told me in the interview that there was more slow movement in

my classes than in physical education. Tiina said that the difference between physical education classes and dance classes is that in my dance classes we relax quite much. Matias said that,

Well, for instance, in boys' P.E. there is no jumping and such but there we do real push-ups and running all the time and movement all the time and going and there is no calming down . . . there is movement all the time . . . it is not fun and it is tiring sometimes . . . and in your class we can calm down then and it was very good.⁹

Some children said that calm, slow movement was a little odd and difficult for them. Quincy said that it is very difficult for him to be still, that he is wilder, and that he likes to move all the time. Walter said that slow movement is not so much fun because he was used to moving fast everywhere. I asked him if he thought it was good to learn to move more slowly; he replied that yes, when you cross the street you need to move peacefully.

Nathan said that slow movement was not difficult, but that sometimes it was irritating. I asked him if he knew why we did slow movements, and he said:

So that we could relax a little and otherwise too be a little while more calm.¹⁰

Also Gabriel said that these exercises help you learn not to be always so wild. From my perspective my classes were quite active. It seems like an adult perspective into this issue is different from children's experience. I was bothered by their apparent lack of mastery of their bodies in slow movements, like melting. Still, children seem to be very skillful in mastering their bodies in fast movement, like in tag, shifting directions and stopping. Maybe the question is, how to make it interesting, meaningful to move in dynamically different ways? The question for the teacher is then, how to help children find meaning from slow movement? Why is it important for the children to learn to move slowly, and enjoy slow movement?

Then we started "rounders." The children were excited, there was screaming. Julius got mad when he got caught. The mood got more excited and tense. The

⁹ No, esimerkiksi meidän poikien liikunnassa niin sielä ei niinku hypitä ja sillai et siel aletaan ihan kunnolla että punnerruksii ja juoksuu koko ajan ja liikettä koko ajan ja menossa ja et ei yhtään rauhotu . . . siel on vaan liiket koko ajan . . . se ei oo oikein kivaa se ottaa voimille välillä . . . ja tossa kui sun tunnil saa rauhottuuu sitte ni se oli ihan hyvä.

¹⁰ Niin et vois vähä rentoutuuki ja muutenki nii vähä aikaa rauhallisempi.

teacher in me jumped in. "Put the ball in the game immediately!" I hollered twice, and then, "No one runs a single step with that ball!"

Julius screamed, arguing, "You got caught – no I didn't." There was fighting over the ball, yelling, the mood was competitive. I stopped the game and we sat down to discuss what went wrong. I concluded, "I really do not like it when there is a lot of screaming and yelling." The discussion was good, although I could have given more responsibility to the children in figuring out the problem.

The class continued peacefully with "straight and bent." Someone commented, "We always do this!" I responded, "Now we just concentrate on ourselves." It was peaceful and concentrated! I was not talking. There were just the sounds. Nobody talked. There was dialogue with the self and the sound?

Moving with straight and bent bodies generated some nice movements and a pleasant mood. I asked, "Who wants to show their own movement?" There were many enthusiastic volunteers. Everybody was immediately engaged in these straight and bent movements. There were lots of ideas. I was not giving much time for each movement – there was a feeling of haste!

Next I divided the class in two groups and said, "Do not change places!" and "We are losing time here." There must be time, space for absorbing...

We did "crossing the marketplace." The mood was a little restless, and the children were limp, but they advised each other nicely, saying, for instance, "Now, change." Then the mood got calmer. I was silent for a long time. There was just a little babbling by the children. This feels dialogical – there was respect towards others and listening, being responsive. They seemed to be in connection with each other in a relaxed manner, not trying to affect each other but being interested and attentive.

Then I said, "Come here quickly..." and "...we are losing time." Again, a sense of haste and teacher-me stepped in. I know how to control time efficiently and structurally... but it is not dialogical. Why did I have to push this exercise in? Wouldn't it have been better to let the peaceful mood to continue, to let it carry the rest of the class?

Closing circle. I said, "Let's not move; let's not make sounds," calming down. I thanked the children for these five classes and wished them a great fall.

Anita's peacefulness seemed to transfer to the children. She was a motherlike, safe figure for them. There was respect. The teacher has to be ready to give space for students' talk etc. But it demands self-discipline from the children... was Anita's presence a strong factor? Is self-discipline a prerequisite for dialogue?

Could this five-class period in fall 1997 have been a first phase in a transformation of my pedagogy, or a transition stage; a transition away from a model of a "good and efficient" teacher?

Or was this kind of a stage necessary in the beginning? During the first five classes there were no real crises; it was very smooth. Sometimes the atmosphere was a little restless, sometimes really peaceful. Everybody was well engaged most of the time. I was satisfied and confident about going on, but eager to steer the course towards more risky, more challenging areas.

First stopover: Visiting play

The first issue that started to puzzle me and seemed to bear significance in the process of our journey was play. Not really understanding what play had to do with dialogue I intuitively felt that I needed to look at play more deeply and give it some serious thought.

In the first interview I did not ask any specific questions about play or playing (see the interview questions on appendix, p. 311), but still, the children referred to play and movement games often. They spoke about play and movement games always as something fun, something that they wanted to do more. They did not seem to have enough opportunities for play in their lives.

I collected all responses that were related to play in the first interview. These responses came out of many different questions. I asked, for example, general questions about their school life. These questions were intended for warm-up questions. For Vincent, recess was best time in school. He told that they played a new spying game during recess. This game was their creation and seemed very important to him. Fred also liked recess, telling, "We always play all kinds of things there".¹¹

I also asked the children what they thought about physical education. By this question I intended to lead the discussion into more specific topics about dance and my classes. Fred, who was a big and a little bit clumsy boy, said he liked physical education, but especially when there were games. Many children said that they liked physical education indoors better than outdoors, just because indoors there were more movement games, like rounders. Nathan was very specific about this, saying that,

Outdoors P.E. is such that we have to run all the time and do this and do that and we have to take part in everything and all that ... and then there [in outdoor P.E.] we don't play so fun games as in indoor P.E.¹²

¹¹ No kaikkee me aina leikitään siinä

I also asked them to tell what they thought was the difference between physical education and my classes; my classes replaced their physical education classes and happened in the same space, and I was curious how this was reflected in their experiences. My intention was not to make them judge which one they liked more, but to see if they had experienced any difference, and if they had, what kind of difference. Olivia said that the difference between my classes and regular physical education classes was that in my classes there were much more games. She told that she disliked physical education, but that she liked my dance classes because "there were all these fun games."¹³ Julius also said that the difference was the games, and that games are more fun than running. Ringo described the difference in the following way:

In your classes we played [games] but in P.E. we played [sports] and ran and all different things.¹⁴

Almost the same words said Vincent; to him dance classes were different from P.E. because there were all these games, in P.E. it was almost all sports.

When the children's responses are translated into English, it becomes more difficult to discern when the children are referring to play, and when to sports, since the word "play" has so many meanings in English. Analyzing the nature of "play" Kari Kurkela, a Finnish music educator, says that it is not a coincidence that in many languages the same word refers to playing games, playing an instrument, or playing as acting (Kurkela 1993, 48). Also Johan Huizinga, a Dutch philosopher who has explored the cultural significance of play, says that the word play has been used interestingly in different languages (Huizinga 1938/1984, 40). The difference between play and sports seems, indeed, sometimes very subtle.

The children talked mostly about movement games, but they still used the word play when they talked about these games. They seemed to reserve the word play for self-initiated movement games (e.g., the games they played during breaks) and for social movement games intended for warm-up or recreation,

¹³ Ulkoliikunnas nii se on semmosta niin ku että pitää niinku koko ajan juosta tehdä sitä tehdä tätä ja se on pakko osallistuu kaikkeen ja kaikkee muuta ...ja sit siel [ulkoliikunnassa] ei oo niin kivoi leikkeikää ku sisäliikassa.

³ No, siel oli kaikkii hauskoii leikkejä.

¹⁴ Niil sun tunneil leikittiin mut liikuntatunneil taas pelattiin ja juostiin ja semmost erilaist.

like tag and rounders. Many activities that I included in my dance classes, for instance, making statues, fell into the category of play for these children. They seemed to be able to make a clear difference between sports and play. For example, baseball and soccer were sport, not play, for them.

Kurkela has analyzed this difference by bringing in concepts of everyday reality and play reality. In play reality the players become free of everyday reality and live in another kind of reality, where the game or play is less dictated by the rules of everyday reality. The magic of play and games is created inside of an imaginary circle, where the play and game are true. Then, playing is an alternative and a very real way of existing. Play reality is play, but it has its own very real reality. Play reality and everyday reality need to be quite independent from each other, and children usually are good in keeping them separate. (1993, 40-43)

If a game is "disturbed" by everyday reality, for instance by rewarding the winning team by real prizes as a sign of better skills, the game becomes part of that reality, and losing becomes a real defeat (Kurkela 1993, 43). This tendency to look for gains in everyday reality was evident in the rounders game we played during the last class of the fall. Winning or being the best, or being individualistic was the main focus, and the game became competitive. The play reality was destroyed by insensitivity to others and by lack of community.

One possible interpretation for the children's separation between play and sports, then, may be, that the children think that movement games are play when everyday reality does not dictate the game, for instance so that the winners would get to leave the gym first. I now realize that I very rarely give prizes of any kind in my movement games. The game itself is always in the focus, not what happens after the game. Maybe this is significant in creating a play reality.

In her study on the development of play culture in Finnish society, Marjatta Kalliala (1999), following Roger Callois (1958), describes forms of play. Callois' classification makes it easier to see how games belong to the sphere of play. Different types of play include games (agon) that involve competition, chance plays (alea) that involve an element of luck, e.g. lottery, games that involve "dizziness" (ilinx: physical sensations, breaking taboos or order), and imaginary play (mimicry). These forms may become combined or mixed; some combinations are essential, some occur haphazardly, and some, e.g. agon-ilinx combination, are impossible: in that combination rules and chaos would outlaw

each other. Agon and alea may mix because both involve rules; likewise a combination of mimicry and ilinx is possible, because imagination and improvisation happen simultaneously. (Kalliala 1999, 47–48)

Types of play can also be seen on a continuum from enjoyment, spontaneity and freedom to commitment to rules and aims (Kalliala 1999, 48). During the first fall, and first year, movement games that were initiated often by the children, were the most common play type. These games had clear rules, and sometimes a competitive element. A form of play that could be classified under mimicry came in later, during the second year. Those activities were often initiated by me and included movement improvisations, storytelling and other activities that lead into a performance. I will describe these events in the later segments.

As Kalliala's analysis suggests, play, games and sports may have something in common. Rules and aims as themselves do not necessarily exclude the element of play. Kurkela also discusses games and team sports that involve problems of winning and losing, living and dying, surviving or being destroyed. He says that games teach survival in a lighter context as real situation would, and serve a certain learning function as such, but "most essential is the deep passion of life that can be experienced in limited sense in games" (Kurkela 1993, 40, my translation).

According to Kurkela life and its expressions are purposes in themselves. Understanding why we are alive precedes understanding play as an expression of life, a way of living and expressing oneself. This is where he anchors the significance of play: play makes it possible for life force to be channeled into a feeling of satisfaction, and that play makes it possible to live happily. Being happy is an expression of life, it is a way of life, and play is then a manifestation of life. Kurkela says:

Play that produces happiness is a good way of existing. (Kurkela 1993, 34; my translation)

In her study on adolescent engagement in dance, Stinson asks a question related to Kurkela's view. She wonders: "Why is it practically universal to celebrate play on the part of young children . . . but not for the rest of us" (1997, 61). She also notes that adults often consider having fun to be childish and unimportant, secondary to achievement and work (1997, 61–62). Playing

and having fun seems to be something accepted only for children. Stinson conducted her study with middle school students (6th and 8th graders); even with this age group play and fun seem significant in learning.

Indeed, almost as inescapable as play, seemed to be the notion of "fun" in these children's lives. Before trying to make sense out of play and connect it to dialogue, I'll look at this notion of fun, that is clearly connected to play, but not only to play. The children talked about very different things being fun or not fun or boring. It was one of the most common expressions in their everyday talk. They didn't use words like interesting, useful, challenging. Sometimes they talked about things being easy or difficult, familiar or odd, but fun appeared most often.

Fun or nice are the words that the children also used all the time in their writing. During the first fall we worked together I asked them to write an essay about their class, just to get an idea about their everyday life in school. They seemed to relate most issues in their school life to fun or nice, for instance:

It is fun in our class . . . P.E. and math are fun Finnish is not very fun our class is quite fun. (Walter)

It is quite fun . . . P.E. is fun and orienteering. It is fun in our class. Reading is fun. Swimming is fun. The end. (Zachary)

It is fun in our class . . . in my group it is really fun. My most fun subject is math. There are always fun tasks in math. (Gabriel)

All science studies and math studies have been fun and exams. It would however be more fun if exams – could be more and math games. In summer and in winter in school is fun. (Nathan)

In our class there are always nice tasks. I think it is really fun in this class. I did not know that this class is so nice . . . We at least have a nice teacher Anita. (Belinda)

In her study Stinson also found that "the word most often used by the students to describe their dance classes as well as particular experiences within them was fun" (1997, 53). Stinson discusses and describes different meanings of fun and relates play into this discussion. The distinction between work and play,

as well as achievement and fun, is not as straightforward as it seems. Denying the value of play or fun in school world seems to bring forward boredom and disengagement, while extrinsic motivation becomes more important than intrinsic enjoyment as a boost for learning than intrinsic enjoyment in learning. Stinson, following Carolyn Thomas (1983), suggests that play can be more than an activity with certain objective characteristics; it can be an attitude towards any activity. As an attitude play involves choice, freedom, intrinsic rewards and heightened focus. (Stinson 1997, 62) She concludes that dance educators need to enhance the playful attitude so that students are motivating themselves, rather than depending on teachers to make dancing fun (1997, 65).

I would like to suggest that the experience of fun might make schoolwork feel more like play even though the activity would not ordinarily be categorized as play. I am wondering if an "imaginary circle of play reality" could be created around tasks that are not really play and games. If for example, math tasks are fun to do, does math actually become like play, satisfactory in itself, without rewards from everyday reality?

In another study on dance education, Gunilla Lindqvist (2001) noticed that children loved playing in their dance classes and that they thought that there was not much difference between dance and play. The word fun appears in her study, as well. Lindqvist asserts that dance and play should be linked together and that dance education for young children should originate in children's play. She argues that it must be meaningful for the children to dance. She bases her argument on Vygotsky's theory on play. According to this view play creates meaning:

Children's play includes themes which relate to fear/safety, weakness/strength, restrictions/freedom, power/quality etc. . . . Play ought to be considered as an interpretation of children's experience in order to create meaning. (Lindqvist 2001, 43)

This idea of play as meaning making gives another layer to the significance of play. Lindqvist contemplates the nature of dance education that is in her view too separate from play, but also from drama and other art forms. She thinks that Rudolf Laban's influence on dance education has resulted in a quite strong emphasis on pure movement sensations, and that this kind of movement may not always be meaningful for the child. (Lindqvist 2001, 48) Isabel Marques

(1998, 177) also sees Laban's universal movement principles as problematic, and holds Laban's work not as the sole foundation for dance education, but as a starting point for open-ended possibilities for contextually, locally meaningful learning experiences. I reflected on this very same issue while viewing the third class. I wrote: "Creative dance and movement demands many things from children that are not so typical for them? For example, lying on the floor." At this time I became a little uneasy about the content of creative dance, based on Laban's all embracing movement possibilities. I began to wonder about the meaning of dance for children.

Is fun, or a playful attitude, then, a prerequisite for engagement, enjoyment and intrinsic motivation? Or maybe these qualities make up the experience of fun. Either way, it seems that these issues are closely related: children truly seem to enjoy a fun or playful activity for its own sake. These kinds of activities seem to be self-sustaining. I am inclined to think that they can involve a lot of purposeful, meaningful learning although I am not suggesting that all engaging activities lead to such learning. For example, video games seem to be really engaging, but I doubt the quality and meaningfulness of the learning they may trigger.

In the first interview I asked the children if they thought that they had learned something in my classes. They said that they had learned all kinds of things and mentioned new games and new movements. Their responses to this question were quite general and concrete. The issue of learning did not seem to arouse much interest in the children. Some seemed almost reluctant to speak about learning, as if they had difficulties in perceiving their learning or as the meaning of learning was not quite clear for them. Maybe in Finnish educational culture individual accomplishment in terms of learning is not very clearly emphasized. This may be more so in the lower grades, where teachers may even be cautious about emphasizing individual achievement, fearing that it may lead to excess pressures for children.

Interestingly, children's verbal accounts related to dance in Bond and Stinson's study (2000) appear more articulate. Although this study draws from data from children in different countries, the authors note that they have only been able to look at material that is produced in English and that an extension of the study to children speaking other languages would be valuable (2000, 54). I tend to think along these lines, as well, as I have also earlier caught myself thinking that English speaking children seem to use

the kind of verbal expressions that I rarely hear from Finnish children. The accounts that Bond and Stinson categorized under "It's hard to say" -category seem most similar to how children in my study expressed themselves (Bond & Stinson 2000, 71).

The children's responses related to learning were, thus, quite meager and limited. Clara, for instance, said that my classes were more like recreation than about trying to learn something. After the second year I asked what they had learned in school during the past year; then many children, especially boys, mentioned accomplishments in mathematics and some mentioned languages. Regarding our project, the learning they perceived was related, again, to movement and games, and playing instruments, as well. Girls mentioned performing skills and also getting to know each other. One boy (Leonard) said:

Well, I haven't learned much of anything, I have just gotten a good spirit from it and then encouragement and friends.¹⁵

I also asked the children if they thought my classes were dance or not. I got very different responses that seem to tell that dance, movement and play are easily mixed. Some children thought that my classes were dance, some said they were movement, some thought that they were some kind of mixture of different things. Some children said my classes were some kind of play: Vincent said that it was "some kind of play and all such,"¹⁶ and Walter said it was "something like play . . . we did everything."¹⁷

Anita, their classroom teacher, said that the children did not really grasp what my classes were about; even she thought my classes were a mixture of dance, movement and games. She also told that they constantly asked for drama games, that they really loved social games. She reiterated that she thought that playfulness was important for them. Whether or not she thought that the children got to play as much as they should, we did not discuss, as I was not yet aware of the question of play becoming significant in this process. I recall being a little uneasy about including so many games in my classes, and

¹⁵ No emmä siit paljo mitään oo oppinu mä oon saanu siit vaan hyvän mielen ja sitte kannustusta ja kavereita

¹⁶ jotain semmost leikkiä ja kaikkee semmost

¹⁷ semmosta leikin tapasta... tehtiin kaikkee

being anxious about getting into more “dancelike” activities. Later in our project I tried to include fewer games in the classes. The children protested and I felt like I had betrayed them.

Maybe the question of an activity being dance or not, is secondary to the question of an activity being intrinsically satisfying or not, in other words, if there is an attitude of play towards an activity. Or, when contemplating the meaning of dance for children, it could be more fruitful to start with the question of what makes learning and life meaningful for children. In her study, Stinson (1997) found out that in adolescent dance students’ view, learning and having fun did not exclude each other, and that choice, freedom and a sense of control were significant in making life and learning meaningful and intrinsically motivating. These elements seem to appear in an “ideal” play situation as Kurkela describes it. At this point, I am beginning to wonder if playfulness or “fun” is a prerequisite for meaningful dance experiences, or any meaningful experiences, for children. On the other hand I am wondering how and when children could find more “serious” work, like slow movement, challenging, meaningful and intrinsically motivating? Moreover, does this have to do with a growing sense of agency? It may be that children with a diffuse sense of agency have difficulties in finding many tasks meaningful. Could a lack of agency and lack of meaning be connected, so that intrinsic motivation for activities involving “work” instead of play becomes difficult to find?

Kurkela’s analysis of play explains to me the deep involvement in playing and its great significance in children’s lives. The children’s accounts seem to imply that school life does not have enough space for play that is free from everyday reality. Stinson’s study points towards the same direction. It also seems that dance education could be more closely connected to play, as Lindqvist suggests. The winning and losing, the real rewards of school games and sports spoil the magic power that self-initiated play has for children.

An intriguing question to pursue further is whether self-initiated play or games that are free from pressures of everyday reality are basically dialogical in their nature. Such play, an essential manifestation of life, may be a direct and satisfying way for children to relate to others and to the world. I am asking, could play be a key to education being about promoting the good of the child? Maybe education that negates playfulness is not true education?

It is clear to me that I will need to visit “play” again later.

SECOND SEGMENT OF PASSAGE: SPRING 1998

More risks, more challenges and what follows

January 19, 1998

I had decided that I would like to work with smaller groups in order to give more individual attention to the children, and so that we would have a quieter atmosphere and more opportunity for concentrated work. I asked Anita if we could split the class into two groups. She agreed, but the first classes would be quite short, since she could not find space for a double lesson this week.

I wanted to move on from safe exercises, from those that I knew almost always would work, into more challenging ones, and to move on towards our aims, for instance helping boys and girls to get along better.

The class started with chatting in a circle. I spoke softly. There were suggestions, and I said: "Another time, today we have a short class." We did "touch relay": I touched the child next to me, for example to the shoulder, and he/she forwarded the touch to the next child, trying to pass on the "message" without altering it.

Julius escaped when a girl was about to touch him. He came back after some begging. The boys slapped each other; they did not touch each other nicely. Self-discipline! Time! And there was a gap between boys and girls. What is it? Normal, age related, or something else? The beginning of this class was more demanding than the classes before. I was taking risks with a smaller group, and with knowing the children, and so I was more demanding.

After a short discussion about our common rules we continued with walking and stopping. When drumming would stop, the children were supposed to find a partner who was closest to them. Julius was escaping again! There was the boy/girl gap again. It seemed to appear more strongly when there were fewer of them in the class. I seemed to be in haste, I talked over the group, with a tense voice.

We continued talking, I "moralized" and then began a shilly-shally over who is partner with whom. The girls found their partners; the boys kept negotiating. Finally, the groups were ready: two boys, four boys, three girls, two girls, and

one boy (Aaron), who wanted to work alone.

What should I have done here? Friendship seems to be about selecting. Here I gave them time, but this took a lot of time. This was really odd. It took almost five minutes to form the groups. Their classroom teacher's absence affected their behavior. They did not seem to care about how to behave so much when she was not present.

It is difficult to even start to work together towards any artistic aims when basic social skills are not present in the group. Yes, one of our goals was to create a better classroom atmosphere, and to develop trust and respect towards each other. But a lot of time had to be spent here on basic things that I think should be a part of the general school curriculum. It is amazing to me that school children are so handicapped in social skills. Then it falls on me, or any art teacher in the school, to start from these skills, since it is impossible to start creative work together without these skills. It seems to me that basic social skills that are learned in school are related to academic work; thus the children may be able to do group work together in a normal classroom setting, but they seem handicapped to work creatively and in a physically active way together. A highly structured task may succeed, but a task involving choice, freedom and responsibility seems to be too challenging for them. For example, choosing partners was something that they apparently had not "practiced" in school. Choosing partners is something that I quite self-evidently include in my dance classes as a basic social skill.

In the first interview I noticed that choosing partners was indeed difficult for many children. The following dialogue with Elisa is an example of the feelings that are related to this.

Eeva: Was it ever difficult for you to find a partner?

Elisa: Yes, a little

Eeva: Yes, what kind of situations came up when you could not find a partner?

Elisa: A bad situation

Eeva: Bad . . . did it feel bad?

Elisa: Mm

Eeva: Did it happen so that you would have wanted to be someone's partner and she did not want to be yours?

Elisa: Right...

Eeva: ...Whose partner would you want to be the most?

Elisa: Ulla's

Eeva: Always?

Elisa: Mm...

Eeva: ...Is it not fun to be somebody else's partner sometimes?

Elisa: Yes

Eeva: Yes? You always want to be Ulla's partner?

Elisa: Yes'

There was a lot of selecting, disliking and liking going on in the class. Clara, for instance, told that "sometimes I just want to be with Kia and sometimes I again loathe her."² It seems also that girls, at least, were keen in noticing who was left alone. Tiina had noticed that Kia had not found a partner for herself, and Belinda said that "Clara did not have a partner many times"³ and that "my friend did not want to take Clara."⁴ The rest of the girls also told about the difficulty of choosing partners. Olivia said that it was not easy to find partners, and that "... sometimes I was left without partner and sometimes not"⁵, and Irene told that often when she wanted to be somebody's partner she was already somebody else's partner. Kia also told that it is difficult to find a partner; she reasoned it was because there were only eight girls in the class, and girls don't want to be partners with boys.

Boys did not tell about problems in finding partners so much. Julius told that he always found a partner; Quincy said the same. Both told they were almost always partners with each other. There were other pairs, too, who almost always worked together. Vincent was very tolerant, he said that anybody is fine for him, and that he rarely had problems in finding partners. Gabriel was one of the few boys that mentioned that he had had some difficulties: he said he was generally the last one to find a partner, but on the other hand he said it did not bother him. Fred was the only

¹ Eeva: Olikos koskaan vaikeeta löytää pari?

Elisa: Oli vähän

Eeva: Joo minkälaisii tilanteit sit tuli ku ei löytyny parii?

Elisa: Huono tilanne

Eeva: Huono... tuntuks se ikävält?

Elisa: Mm

Eeva: Käviks sul sillail et sä oisit halunnu olla jonku pari ja se ei halunnu olla sun kans?

Elisa: Nii...

Eeva: ... Kenen pari sä haluaisit mieluiten olla?

Elisa: Ullan kaa

Eeva: Aina?

Elisa: Mm...

Eeva: ... onks se sun mielest keljuu et joutuu oleen muitten parii?

Elisa: On

Eeva: On? Sä haluaisit vaan olla Ullan pari?

Elisa: Niin

² ... mä vaan joskus halunnu olla Kian kaa ja joskus mä taas inhoon sitä ja...

³ Claralla ei ollut paria aika monta kertaa

⁴ Mun kaveri ei halunnut ottaa Claraa.

⁵ ...joskus jäi ilman parii ja joskus ei

boy who clearly admitted that it was difficult to find a partner.

We started statue shaping. The mood calmed down and got lively and energetic. Julius still had problems in concentration, as he had had since the beginning of the class.

We continued in a circle with "old paint jar," a children's rhyme: one child went around the circle brushing each child with a paintbrush according to the rhythm of the rhyme. The child with whom she/he finished became her/his partner. The next group was peeking in, making noise and distracting the activity. There was a sense of haste. However, this seemed to be a good idea even though some children talked about it in a terrified tone in the interviews! Time!

In the end everybody calmed down when they wrote about what we did during the class on little notebooks that I gave them. This was an odd class. I was tense, not in the beginning, but something happened. Julius was spreading restlessness.

The next group came in. During the beginning circle Nathan fooled around with the camera. There was a little wrestling going on. I said, "If we get all the things done that I have thought that we will be doing, we can take some suggestions!" Anita's absence was affecting the situation clearly. They were testing me now!

Touch relay. The boys were slapping each other. I talked softly. They calmed down. Good! Then again, "Soon I have to send you out, my temper has limits too!" They changed the spot in purpose. "Continue, continue!" I told them that we were wasting time. There has to be limits. I have my rights too. I have a right to work in peace. But whose ideal/goal is working in peace? Do the children lack time and space to vent something out? Do they need time and space for that or more self-discipline?

We did walking and stopping, I played the drum. There was noise; the acoustics were terrible!!! This sound was terrible. What message did it convey? Could something be done to the acoustics of school gyms? What kind of surroundings or environment is calming/soothing? I gave directions in command style. Why didn't I ask, suggest, "Could you...?" or "How could you...?" This was too efficient, too much content to learn too quickly: directions, levels, etc.

We did statues. There was a little laughter, but somehow the atmosphere was tense and there was a sense of haste. We need to stop the hassle of everyday life. There must be something extraordinary. Now, I was falling into problems when leaving the security of traditional creative dance pedagogy.

I talked to the children about their own teacher being absent. Then I asked them about things that are important for them. I tried to lead them into a new theme. Things that they mentioned were P.E. class, little brothers, classmates,

animals, life and family. But then they started making jokes. I introduced the friendship theme.

Old paint jar. My voice was soft and tender. It was like a magical power. They painted each other's backs. Anita came in. The atmosphere was just then quite peaceful. Then they took their notebooks and wrote. Some children fooled around with the camera. Writing did not seem to interest them. They became wilder again.

The first more demanding class went totally into the woods. How could I have gotten somewhere from here? In this kind of situation it did not make sense to try to get at anything deeper. I had my plans – why did I hold onto them?! Why could we not try to find a theme together? There should have been more time to talk about this.

A feeling of failure. My goals are too high. Am I able to reach these children, their world? In such a short time we cannot get anywhere. But I guess I have to try something. Inequality seems to be really deep. It is sad.

Good things: I did not get nervous/lose my temper; there were moments of peace. Maybe after all we moved an inch to some direction.

The children need time and space. The lives of these children seem to be hectic. Fists, raging, fooling around, and senseless tricks are all too common.

I believe anyways, that next time the touch relay works better. Even today it was quite good in the second group. The statues were restless, lots of senseless stuff. There is no sense in doing it again. Maybe we'll do the group statue next time.

My attempt to introduce the friendship project (second group) failed. It was naïve from my part to attempt this. The painting was quite exciting. It worked partly well.

January 26, 1998

Empowerment. Reaching a primary bodily experience. An opportunity to concentrate on one's own body without distraction. How could this happen?

In the very beginning of the first group's session the children played a little tag. Then we sat down in a circle. It was peaceful. I told that we would start with statue tag. The children yelled, "YEE!" I asked if they wanted to have one or two children catching. There were opinions, we discussed. Good that I asked!

Dialogue!

Julius wanted to give up catching; the children came close to me. Ulla touched me. Dialogue continued. I was calm, cool and not teacher-like. I said, "Find a partner... come a little bit more to the center...let's not make choosing the partner as big a problem as last time!"

Clara did not want to be in a group of three. Boys were doing fine, the girls had problems, slight changing of partners, but it went quite well. I got a little more tense. Dialogue almost disappeared, then the peace continued.

Statues, there were groups of two and three. Laughter, good poses that stayed well. I praised them, "Really great statues!" I was calm. There was excitement and peace (!). Good reactions, laughter. Melting was a problem again.

We did the rubber band stretch. I was involved; it seemed to help the children; they became involved, too. Peace. Someone asked, "Is this some kind of gymnastics?" and I responded: "This is a little bit like gymnastics..." Julius suggested something, I declined, but his suggestion was nice and relaxed in its tone midst working; his manner of addressing me was friendly and open.

I asked if they remembered rolling. "Can you try this...?" This style of suggesting sounds good. I put music on. There was some noise, giggling. "Let's do this without sounds." There was not enough time for this.

They found partners well; this happened with instruction, "Roll onto someone, and that person becomes your partner!" We did leaning away from each other holding hands. A little restless, but fun. There was laughter. We continued with back against back. I got more tense, there was restlessness, the peace was gone.

I lifted Julius on my back. The energy level went up; everyone was engaged. Julius lifted me up. I carried Ulla, Belinda and others. Belinda lifted Julius up, and he let her do it contentedly! Julius was then working with Ringo: they worked amazingly well together! Julius was lifting Ringo, who was quite relaxed on his back; then Julius carried him around on his back, turned him around, etc. This work was intense and very important to me. Could this be one way to reach a sense of the body, practicing weight giving and bearing with a partner?

Now I started to reflect on the whole two- year process, its aim and significance. It seems

clear that, some way or another, I wanted to give the children an experience that was extraordinary, different from everyday life... we were looking for a path or way towards it, I did not know how it could happen... in the end we created a performance, which as an experience was different, unique and personal for everyone... There was something "odd cooking here." Is that what art is about? Daring to be different, doing something that has no obvious reason or "objective learning outcome"...

In a circle there was a nice feeling at first, when we were looking at cards I had made. The cards included some key words related to what we had done: for example alone, together, close, far. First the children seemed to be curious, but soon they became more restless, and I could not keep the discussion together. I got more tense, and said something about time running. This went into the woods. I was trying to manipulate them into discussing the friendship theme. Dialogue did not work. Manipulating the discussion is not dialogue! When I chose the friendship theme, I did not ask the children. It could not have worked.

I told the children to go to the wall bars for one minute and then come and write. Anita came in. The writing time was quite peaceful; there was time.

In the beginning of the second group's session Anita was present. There was some hassle in the beginning. I talked with her. Gabriel was telling us something, quite long. The children were calm, and I was calm. I talked to the children like to adults, in my normal tone, not teacher-like. The situation carried itself. Good.

Nathan and others made sounds restlessly; I did not pay attention. Because I did not pay attention, this did not become a problem. It was not dialogical, but not its' opposite, either. Dialogue can be of different intensities, I guess. Now it was neutral: I did not get tense, even when the situation was not peaceful, but restless. Can a restless situation be dialogical?

We started the statue tag. "Listen now so that we do not lose time." My voice was a little bit loud, and I talked fast. There was laughter; the statues did not stay. The melting did not go too well. It was restless and my voice was tense. I guess the teacher needs some magic, being like a magician, to spread something extraordinary, something different from everyday reality.

We were running out of time, and couldn't do the suggestions. "Fred! Now get down!" We were not going anywhere. This was hopeless! There was noise and movement. "OK, now stay there lying down..." We did rubber band. There was some buzzing noise. "Please cut it out!"

What should I have done now? Given up plans? Change things? I was going through the exercises fast, being tense as if I were afraid of something. Where could we have found the core of self-

discipline? I was not trusting the situation. Haste and anxiety were reflected in my being there.

I put music on and we did rolling. The class ended with writing. Someone asked for “who is afraid of the lion” – we did not have time.

Again, not a very lifting experience. It is really difficult to get “under the surface.” The children are in a hurry all the time – it is restless, there is no stopping. How could I get them to quiet down for even a little moment and concentrate on themselves and then on the others so that the work would be absorbed, deep?

This is a new goal, I guess. I may have to give up the goal that everybody could be everybody’s partner.

In a tag the touching comes naturally. Next time we could try guiding and falling, and group statues. Maybe a class after class, we move an inch forward.

Carrying was fun. Next time I will fall myself, and they catch me.

There was some sulking in girls; life is tough.

Aaron would have chosen Fred to be his partner.

The cards interested both groups at first, but then the discussion was clearly naïve for them. Friendship? What can happen in friendship?

February 2, 1998

This class, with the first group, started with some kind of tag, initiated by the children themselves as they arrived in the gym. Boys and girls seemed to interact spontaneously in this game. I came to stand close to the action, and asked if they have played enough. Unanimous “no” was the answer, and I gave them one minute to continue. A dialogical moment started from here. As if I were asking the children permission to enter their world, knocking on the door. I was not intruding, but waiting to be invited.

We sat down in a circle. There were some suggestions, and I reminded them that one person would speak at a time. I talked in a soft voice. The children wanted to vote which suggestion was best. This was a dialogical situation.

I asked the children to lie down on the floor, and to try to focus on themselves.

We did the rubber band on the floor. Olivia and Kia were playing around, and someone was yelling; some time went by. In quiet concentration exercises, it seems, teacher's "tricks" or "magic" is needed, at least in the beginning. It doesn't come by itself.

I tried to get everybody quiet at the same time – it did not quite work. Then we did body half and rolling with music. Boys tried it in groups of four. Dialogical moment!

Giving and taking weight was difficult! Carrying... I tried these in the corner with some children. Some children were working on the task; some were not. I lifted and turned the children around. The atmosphere was nice, free and positive.

Next we played "Who is afraid of the lion", a movement game that was voted for in the beginning. To end the class the children took their notebooks and wrote.

This class was mainly positive. I stayed myself and calm, the teacher - me did not step in. There were dialogical moments, but some problems as well, like Olivia's and Kia's "tag" –this was a small problem. However, how should these kinds of situations be dealt with?

In the beginning circle with the second group I asked the children, "How are you today?" I did not sound interested; my voice was quite dry. I told that we would start by another tag game, where the one who gets caught has to stand with spread legs until someone goes under the legs. The children yelled: "YEEEE!" and appeared clearly excited.

Next we lay down on the floor, in a big X-shape. My instructions about "one minute concentration" were quite loud, the tone of my voice was commanding. But then, I was more involved. I told them to try to forget about the others for a little while, and to close their eyes. The atmosphere was calm. There was some exchange of comments with the children, which was nice.

Next we did rolling with music, two boys rolled over each other – I told that they could do it gently. This was good! We continued with contact work. Julius lifted me, I lifted Belinda, and she lifted me. Quincy and Patrick worked well! Julius waited for me to lift him. I did, and he seemed to enjoy it! Again, all of this seems significant – it is related to sensing and mastering the body in relation to others. Maybe in partner work sensing the body becomes more concrete?

We continued with falling. The children kept falling. The atmosphere was nice. The process was now carrying itself – trust in the process. There was a hint that I did not have to watch over everyone all the time.

We got into groups of three to do "the pendulum." Patrick, Vincent and Ringo

touched each other in an un-dialogical manner; they pushed each other. Then it got better. Julius also pushed his partner with one hand. Quincy received his partner well. The girls were getting restless. I did not interfere. Should I have? What to do? Ringo pushed Vincent. I concentrated on one group; the others were working on their own. Julius yelled, "Eeva, look at us!" I went over to them, they showed how they were doing it, I helped, and it went really well.

We got in a circle, and I gave everyone a number for group statue. Suddenly it was quiet – until Julius had his turn. "I do not dare to do this," he exclaimed. Then, separate statues for boys and girls were forming. I went in the statue with them. It still did not quite work. Giving up, I stated, let's quit this. But the children asked to do it once again. I agreed, luckily! A dialogical moment!! The second statue worked much better. The class ended with writing.

Julius appeared to be openly hostile towards girls in general. He told me that he did not like to be in the same group with girls – by third grade boys and girls have P.E. separately. He systematically followed this attitude: he said he accepts everybody else as his partners except girls, and that it is ok if someone touches you as long as it is not a girl. He even said that dancing is not fun because it is "girls' stuff."

Some other boys shared Julius's feelings towards girls. Quincy, for example, said that he would not accept a girl to be his partner and that "it feels stupid, then I don't do anything."⁶ Most boys, though, were more moderate. They said that it does not matter that girls are in the same group in my classes, but still would not accept girls to be their partners, or that touching girls is not fun. Sebastian said that there is one girl whom he might accept to be his partner, and Ringo specified that it is not a problem if a girl touches him, but if someone he does not know does it, then it is a problem. Walter said it does not matter a lot if a girl is his partner, but it does matter a little. Matias, whose hobby was dance sports, said that he is used to being partners with girls. Vincent was the most tolerant: he said that it is the same for him whether a boy or a girl is his partner.

But this was only one side of the picture. Two boys, Nathan and Sebastian, talked about shame and embarrassment related to working with girls:

Sebastian: Everybody starts laughing always when you are with a girl it has not happened to me but to others, like Matias for instance has had to, so everybody has started to laugh that he had to be with a girl.

⁶Tyhmältä ...silloin mä en tee mitään.

Eeva: What if nobody would laugh so what then?

Sebastian: Then it would be a different case.⁷

The following dialogue with Nathan also reflects the same concern:

Eeva: What if a girl happened to be your partner?

Nathan: Well ... that would be a bad thing.

Eeva: A bad thing?

Nathan: Ye-es.

Eeva: Well, why is that?

Nathan: Well, I don't really care for girls.

Eeva: Aha, why?

Nathan: They just are so stupid.

Eeva: Stupid? In what way they are stupid?

Nathan: They always irritate me, that's why.

Eeva: Can you say what about girls irritates you?

Nathan: They tease.

Eeva: Aha, how?

Nathan: Well, they call you names and so on and then sometimes they did so that they teased me when I had colored my hair a little with carnival colors ... ugly ugly ugly ugly I did not care about it a lot but then I took the color off because it would have come off any ways.⁸

⁷ Sebastian: No ku kaikki alkaa nauramaan aina ku tytön kaa niin ku on ei mulle oo tapahtunu niin mut muille on niinku Matias esimerkiks on joutunu nii kaikki on alkanu nauramaan että se joutuu oleen tytön kanssa.

Eeva: Jos kukaan ei naurais niin mitäs sitte?

Sebastian: Sit se ois eri asia.

⁸ Eeva: No, mitäs jos sattuis tuleen tyttö pariks?

Nathan: No... se ois paha juttu.

Eeva: Ois paha juttu?

Nathan: loo-o.

Eeva: No, minkä takii?

Nathan: No, mä en nyt niinkää välitä tytöistä.

Eeva: Ahaa, mikäs siinä on?

Nathan: No ku vaan ne on niin tyhmii.

Eeva: On tyhmii? Millä lailla ne on tyhmii?

Nathan: Ne aina ärsyttää, sen vuoks.

Eeva: Just, osaatsä yhtään sanoo mikä niis tytöis sua ärsyttää?

Nathan: Ne kiusaa.

Eeva: Ai jaa, millä lailla?

Nathan: No haukkuu ja niin edespäin sitte joskus ne teki sillee et ne haukkuu mua ku mä värjäsin vähän tost hiuksii karnevaalivärillä ruma ruma ruma ruma emmä kyl paljoo niist välittäny mut sit mä poistin sen ku se ois kumminki lähteny.

When girls talked about boys this same issue turned up. Ulla, for instance, said,

A boy usually is afraid to be a girl's partner . . . they don't dare anything.⁹

Clara stated that "boys are terrible, they are so awful when they always act hard."¹⁰ Olivia shared the same kind of mutual dislike to boys as Julius had towards girls. When I asked what she would do if a boy happened to become her partner, she said,

I tell the teacher that I don't go to a boy partner, I don't want to . . . boys are so irritating."¹¹

Other girls were not so definite about this. Ulla said it would be nicer if the partner would be a girl, but it is almost the same. Kia said that she would be baffled if a boy would be her partner. Tiina said that "it does not mean anything if it is a boy or a girl who touches you."¹²

To me these brief comments tell about a power struggle between boys and girls in this class. An indication of "girl power" can be tracked here. This is the time when Spice Girls were at the peak of their popularity among girls of this age.

I can almost track a sense of helplessness and weakness from the side of boys. Weakness that the boys cannot show, but that girls already know exists, and that can be used to hurt boys. These girls are not afraid of boys – they despise them, or ignore them.

Important things/interview themes (drafted in my journal between February 2 and 9)

Fair play

Being a good friend

Co-operative learning

Fairness

Being just

Being equal

Being a good sport

⁹ Poika ei yleensä uskalla olla tytön pari ... Ne ei uskalla mitään.

¹⁰ Pojat on hirveitä, ne on niin kamalia ne aina leikkii kovaa.

¹¹ Mä sanon opelle et mä en mee poikapariin, mä en haluu . . . pojat on niin ärsyttävii.

¹² Ei sil oo mitään merkitystä kumpi tyttö vai poika koskettaa.

Playing fair and square
Boys and girls
Who can be touched?
Who can be a partner?
Group member
Rejecting one
Someone is left outside – why?

February 9, 1998

Today I worked with the whole group; it was also the last class this spring. Anita was present and talked to the children. I promised that we would play rounders in the end. My voice was calm; everyone was quiet. Respect – is it different than fear of authority?

We started with touch relay. There was some babbling after the first round, I raised my voice a little. Then the atmosphere softened again. I praised the children. The world of concentration has to be pleasant, it has to feel good, so that it will tempt children to take part...

We did a new activity, "the magnet," avoiding each other and coming together as pulled by a magnet. I put on music; it generated happy and rhythmical movement, and also some noise. After a while, a group of boys started to move together rhythmically with music. They continued "dialogically" a long time, traveling around the room. This was their own type of dialogue, interaction on their own terms. New form of dialogue: an idea that started within a group, which grew without teacher interference. They were in their own world, which I did not quite understand. But it seemed to be fun, and even though it is against the instructions (avoiding each other), I did not interfere.

Belinda tried to join the boys' group; Walter rejected her. Moving together, boys were trying to create some kind of movement in a circle.

We did the pendulum in groups of three. There was noise, restlessness and pushing. Un-dialogical! The situation got better as I walked around and helped them. I did not holler.

We did turning around with partners, hand in hand. It worked quite well and there was excitement. Then we did falling in two groups. There was a conflict in the other group: I did not see it start; apparently Walter said something to Fred about him not knowing how to do this. Fred got really upset, and went to the side. Someone tried to comfort him, and someone else came and said: "Fred is not taking part." At this point I was not aware what was going on. Anita went to Fred. They discussed in a corner about what happened. Fred is a big and clumsy

boy, whom nobody named as their best friend, according to Anita. It is heartbreaking to see the ruthlessness of children's world of selecting and excluding.

Being in a group situation not knowing how to do something can be scary for children, if the community is not supporting. Fred told me that he thought that my classes were easier than regular P.E. classes, where "then always with Pentti there was some baseball that was more difficult to hit when you can't do it."¹³

It is easy to make fun of someone who appears not so skilled or otherwise "different." Many children spoke of their fear of being in front of a group, showing movements to others. Gabriel described his feelings the following way:

I am afraid there when I have to be [the leader] that I will do some silly tricks sometimes . . . in the beginning I was afraid but then towards the end the fear started disappearing and then I was not that anxious anymore when I knew that sometime I will get away from this . . . to the end of the line.¹⁴

Kia's experience sounds similar:

I was quite nervous and I did not really dare to do it . . . it was scary when others look first and then begin to do the same.¹⁵

She continued saying that she would rather just follow others. Some children prefer to follow and not be leaders. Even Julius, who usually was seen and heard throughout the class, said that he did not like to show movements to others, that he dared not, afraid of becoming embarrassed. When I asked why, he said he could not do any movements. This was despite of him being very agile in sports. Elisa said she was afraid that someone will laugh.

Sebastian was frustrated about the leader situation because "when I was allowed to invent nothing came to my mind but when everything was said so then it came to my mind what I would have wanted to do."¹⁶ Another problem was that sometimes

¹³ vaan helpompää oli ne sun tunnii ja sit aina ku Pentin kaa oli jotain pesist et vaikeempaa lyödä ku ei osannu.

¹⁴ Mä pelkään siinä ku mä joudun olemaan siis et mä teen jotain typerää temppeja joskus... aluks pelotti mut sit tota noin niin loppua kohti niinku alko vähenemään se pelko ni sitte enää jännittäny niin paljo ku ties että joskus tästä pääsee ki pois... jonon vikaks.

¹⁵ No mua aika paljo jännitti jä mä en uskaltanu oikein tehdä sitä ... Pelottaa ku muut katoo eka ja sitte ne alko ite tehdä sitä samaa.

¹⁶ ku sai keksii nii ei ikinä tullu mitää mieleen mut sitte ku oli kaikki sanottu ni sitte tulee taas mieleen mitä ois halunnu tehdä.

*"when if like I had figured out something ready and then someone else does it . . . then I had to think."*¹⁷ (Walter).

*Nathan, another boy who was often loud and seemed like a strong person in the class said that he would not want to show movements to others. When I asked why, he said, "I am just so shy . . . for some reason."*¹⁸ He also said that he feels odd when he has to show.

Vincent seemed to be content with his quiet and shy character: he said that he did not want to be the leader, and explained that,

*Well, when I usually when if I go to my friend's house if there is a game machine I never usually want to play I usually want to watch.*¹⁹

*He also told that he never wanted to sing or play an instrument. He said that he liked the exercises that were done alone, because "usually when I'm at home so I am always almost alone and do everything alone."*²⁰ For him, too, knowing how to do something is important. He said that he does not like baseball because "I have never really known how to play it."²¹

Following others was difficult for some children because some movements, for instance cartwheels, were difficult for them. Some children seemed to have no problems in being in front of the group, even making fun of themselves. Quincy, for instance, said that it was easy to "just run around and do crazy things . . . I did such crazy things that the others could not follow."²² He also did not mind others making fools of themselves: "It is fun if they stumble and then I can fall myself too . . . or then I do things wrong in purpose."²³

Security seemed to be really important for these children. I am surprised how vulnerable they seemed to be from the inside: their appearance seems so self-confident, strong and even hard sometimes. It also seems to me like security is connected to being skillful, knowing how to do things right and well, and being alike others. Difference

¹⁷ kyl se välillä tuli jos vaikka mietti jonku valmiiksi sitte ku toinen tekee sen niin ... sit joutu miettimään.

¹⁸ Mä oon vaan niin ujo ... jostain syystä.

¹⁹ No ku mä yleensä ku jos mä meen mun kaverille ni jos siel on joku pelikone niin mä en yleensä ikinä halua pelaa mä haluun yleensä aina kattoo.

²⁰ yleensä ku mä oon kotona ni mä oon aina melkein yksin teen kaikkee.

²¹ Mä en oo ikinä oikein osannu sitä.

²² juoksee vaan ympäriinsä ja tekee jotain pöhköö... Mä tein sellasii hullui ettei muut pysyney perässä.

²³ Hauskaa jos ne kompuroi ja siin voi itteki... tai sit tekee tahalleen väärin.

and individuality in expression seem not to be values that this community supports. It is a huge task to reach a state where these children will dare to be openly themselves, to show their individuality . . . or then, we could just let them be shy and conform to similarity with others. It depends on what we value.

We continued on the floor. "Now, one minute by yourselves." We did the rubber band stretch. It was quite calm, some giggling. I was involved. "Do it a couple more times in your own time." More time to this! I was rushing to rolling. Rolling with music.

We did group statue. Walter and Fred were talking still over their conflict. I reminded that we were using up time for rounders. I asked the children to calm down a bit, and reviewed the rules of the game. The game went well; it was happy and constructive. Some children wanted another go; those who wanted, could continue. Others took their notebooks and wrote. Most children continued the game. There was a happy noise, not burdensome.

Anita was present, which had a calming effect. She thought it was restless. She said it is good that I can tolerate chaos. Touch relay went well. In magnet, the children initiated their own things, dance. They had no inhibitions. This is a first step.

Belinda is trying to get in boys' groups. There was something going on between Tiina and Walter. Rounders was much better. There was no screaming. Teamwork. Walter praised Fred.

This was the first year. To summarize: I cannot stand "teacherliness" in me. On the other hand, I keep a too low profile. More involvement would probably help. I should not avoid throwing myself in the activity. Obstacles to dialogue: lack of self-discipline, haste and lack of time that results in my being tense. Trust the process!

Parting for the time being: A solitary visit to friendship

Because the goals for this project included improving the classroom atmosphere as well as helping boys and girls get along better, I had pondered about ways to reach these goals tactfully. Although the issues such as concentration and the children's need for movement games quite fully occupied my mind, I was

committed to add this level to our work. It was obvious that this class was like any other third grade class with boys and girls disliking each other and acting in (stereo)typical ways, boys roughing around and girls behaving overtly more nicely, but still, capable of conspiring and gossiping among each other. Moreover, the fact that from third grade on boys and girls are separated for physical education classes probably did not ease the tension between the sexes during my classes; indeed, they were no longer playing and moving together in any settings other than my classes.

For a long time I have wondered about this gender issue in dance. It seems to be a constant and significant problem, generating practical questions like how to encourage boys' dancing and whether to teach dance to boys in separate groups or not. Without getting into this issue here (this would undoubtedly be a topic for a dissertation in itself), I will point out some observations of my own, and substantiate them with a few other researchers' remarks. My observations are based on my earlier research (Anttila 1996) as well as on my experiences as a dance teacher.

I am compelled to start out by plainly stating that in terms of movement qualities, boys and girls indeed, are different. Whether this difference is inborn or learned, it is there. In my observational study among 5–9 year old children I picked up quite many differences in boys' and girls' movement qualities, although my main conclusion was that individual differences in movement qualities and preferences were greater than group differences according to age or sex. This means to me that each child is unique and that dance education has to be based on this uniqueness. However, I observed, for instance, that boys seemed have a greater to desire for physical contact with each other than girls. I also noted that boys' movement was often more vigorous and more assertive than girls'. They moved with self-confidence and often had original ideas about movement, whereas girls often concentrated better and seemed to have more awareness of their bodies. (Anttila 1996, 86, 89–91)

My findings seem to be consistent with findings of another observational study with 5–8 year old children by Karen Bond (1994a), despite the difference in cultural context between these two studies. Bond conducted her "Wild Things" study in Melbourne, Australia with children from various ethnic backgrounds; in my study all children were Finnish. The Wild Things project was a 13-week dance education program that culminated in a performance. Bond describes her early visits to this class:

I was struck by what appeared to be an extreme polarization of genders: boys kicking, girls skipping; boys jostling, crashing, and falling, girls twirling and flitting. Boys and girls did not pair together and they avoided close proximity . . . The term "dance" was met with boyish guffaws. (Bond 1994a, 29)

When the children were asked to perform movement solos, the differences in movement preference sustained. Boys' solos consisted of running, sliding collapses and jumping. Their solos demonstrated speed, explosiveness, weight and free flow, as well as competitiveness as to who was the fastest and most daring in crashing. Girls' solos, on the other hand, consisted of skipping, hopping and running along with arm gestures and spatial pathways. Bond writes, first describing girls' movement qualities and then comparing it to the boys' movement:

A quality of hushed lightness, even delicacy, was evident in these measured displays, whereas the boys' presentations were full of the sound of feet and bodies in contact with the ground. (Bond 1994a, 29)

In more analytic terms, boys' movement "had an overall flow-driven, stop-start quality, a lack of clear spatial focus, and a sense of sudden urgency," as well as a resistance for slow movement (Bond 1994a, 30). Bond speculates that children have a preference towards "same-sex similarity" that instigates imitating their peers and rejecting the movement qualities of the opposite gender. She observed martial arts style movement and competitive, sports like movement in boys, as well as exclamations like "yuk" towards girls' skipping and hopping movements. The boys also displayed ridicule for boys who explored such movements, calling these "stupid movements," thus exerting peer pressure towards each other. Moreover, Bond noted differences in preferences for percussion instruments: when given a choice, boys selected drums and girls chose the xylophone. Most boys refused to try the xylophone when asked to do so, but girls did try playing the drums. (Bond 1994a, 30)

Later in this present project I also witnessed boys' preference for playing drums (see p. 123). The Wild Things project succeeded in "taming gender distinctions" through performance and, moreover, through using masks. I will return to this issue later when I describe how our present project proceeded (see p. 227). A common feature to make note of now in the Wild Things project

and in this project is that, from the onset, the gender differences were so great that they created difficulties in managing the dance class. It also made me realize how difficult it would be to help girls and boys to interact more constructively with each other, and how much there was to do in improving the classroom atmosphere.

Not only boys' and girls' movement qualities differ; there also seem to be distinct qualities in the ways they interact with each other. According to Hopearuoho-Saajala and Keskinen (1998, 62) boys tend to form larger, hierarchically organized groups with an acknowledged leader. The leader may have several close associates, or central members and several more peripheral members, who are associated with the group through one or two central members. Girls prefer having just one best friend and try to maintain a relationship where both have an equal status. They aim at avoiding conflicts and try to solve disputes by negotiation.

On the other hand, not all boys can be leaders or are willing to become leaders. Boys also learn to accommodate and withdraw, and accept a lower status in the hierarchy. Boys also are more flexible than girls in including new members to their groups; they are not as wary as girls in judging who is a friend and who is not. Moreover, not all girls are willing to defend and support others. According to Hopearuoho-Saajala and Keskinen (1998, 63) girls can be mean to others and use a lot of time in judging and gossiping on girls they do not like. Rejecting and excluding others also belongs to girls' world. This kind of meanness and gossiping was clearly evident in this class among girls. Boys, although rough and tough, indeed, seemed to be more flexible in, for instance, choosing partners to work with (see p. 59).

Sociologist William Corsaro (1997) tackles the gender issue by first noting that gender segregation begins in preschool and becomes quite dramatic by elementary school. Observations that different researchers have made all seem to point towards the same direction:

The boys valued competition and toughness, while the girls were mostly concerned with affiliation or establishing best friends. (Corsaro 1997, 149–150)

However, Corsaro notes that although instances of boys and girls playing together are rare, they do occur. He pays careful attention to such factors as age

composition of children's groups and suggests that gender segregation is more apparent with same-age social grouping. Corsaro also points out that although gender segregation largely exists, it does not mean that masculinity and femininity were inherent properties of individuals. They may rather be structural properties of society that children learn as they construct their gender identities. Positioning oneself rigidly as male or female can be constraining, and children "soon realize that minor refinements and even genuinely different positionings are possible and even desirable" (Corsaro 1997, 151).

According to Corsaro there is a growing debate about whether or not girls and boys have different peer cultures. The view for different peer cultures is supported by research that is akin to the findings that Hopearuoho-Saajala and Keskinen reported:

Boys' focal concerns revolve around a cult of masculinity or being tough, around physical contests, autonomy and self-reliance, and around a culture of coolness or detachment. Girls' focal concerns, in contrast, centered around the valuing of compliance and conformity, a culture of romantic love, and ideology of domesticity that favored intimacy and emotional expression . . . (Corsaro 1997, 167)

Corsaro challenges the "two cultures" view and bases his doubt on the fact that most studies have been conducted with white, middle- and upper class American children. He refers to a few cross-cultural studies that contend the universality of this view:

. . . the separate culture view implies that there is something about the *very nature of being male of female* which leads to these differing values and social relations by gender. The implication is, therefore, that the pattern should be universal. There is little support for such a claim. (Corsaro 1997, 168)

According to Corsaro (1997, 174) there is evidence, for example, that certain children's games have as much to do with their developing relationships towards the opposite sex as they do with the content of the game itself. He also describes so-called "borderwork" that refers to activities that mark and strengthen boundaries between groups, for example cross-gender chasing. In these games, children experiment with their growing concerns and desires regarding the

opposite sex. Corsaro (1997, 186) concludes that spontaneously occurring peer interaction reveals a lot of gender mixing in preadolescent peer relations, and that gender relations in preadolescence seem quite complex.

In her study on change in play cultures, Kalliala (1999, 194) also tackles the gender issue. She thinks that there is similarity and as well as difference. She asked six-year olds to describe boys' and girls' plays, and the children told her that boys and girls play differently. The ideal masculine picture was reflected in boys' accounts. Girls, on the other hand, pictured their play world as beautiful and peaceful. Both seemed to enjoy describing their gendered play worlds, and communicated a desire to act according to their gender in their play. (Kalliala 1999, 195–196)

Kalliala also discusses the impact of TV, movies and videos especially on boys' play:

Boys, who especially need images of heroism, autonomy, the combat between good and evil, force and use of power for building their identity, collect them from the real world as well as from different stories that especially television, videos and movies tell. (Kalliala 1999, 200; my translation)

She thinks that some boys receive "an overdose" of excitement and violence, and notes that a majority of 5–6 year old children named TV as a cause of fears for them. Vivian Gussin Paley, a renowned narrator on schools and teaching, says that the impact of television on boys can be seen by anyone who watches them play, and that "superhero play" begins at an earlier age than before (1986, 108).

I am inclined to think along these lines. Not only have I seen the change in children's behavior in 20 years of teaching dance to children, I have also come to close contact with cultural change as I am struggling to be a decent mother; in these days it sometimes seems to be an impossible task. The impact of mass media is just one problem; I am even more worried about the values of our society that seem to accommodate to a global market economy's needs. Just this year the national curriculum of Finnish schools was altered so that art education has even less space in the curriculum than before, although Finnish children already are on the top of the world in writing, reading and mathematics skills (Väljjarvi & Linnakylä 2002).

According to Holmes (1998, 44) school culture reflects values of the society.

School culture is the character of the school that consists of values, beliefs, traditions and customs as well as rules of interaction in social and formal relationships. There is a wealth of ethnographic research on school cultures, and based on this body of research Holmes claims that school culture is mainly a reflection of the adult world, where adults exert control over children. Moreover, she says that,

Children also come to learn that the power embedded in relationships is not confined to relationships between adults and children. Child-child relationships also possess this ingredient. (Holmes 1998, 45)

Peer culture, however, seems to also have values of its own. Undoubtedly it is affected by the society, but it is not controlled by adults. According to Holmes, peer culture exists outside the realm of adult world. Although adults maintain school as an institution, children manage to sustain and transmit cultural knowledge to their schoolmates. Holmes sees school recess as a place where peer culture thrives:

This is the children's domain, and it is one area where children's cultures and the transmission of cultural knowledge flourish. This is the time of the school day when children engage in mastering their culture and exerting their power in their world. (1998, 49)

Holmes mentions children's rhymes and songs with altered lyrics as examples of peer culture. The following song is similar to so many I have heard my children singing in the back seat of our car. I have listened to these songs unable to be angry with them, remembering myself and my friends singing songs just like them:

Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream.
Throw your teacher overboard and listen to her scream.
(Holmes 1998, 50)

Indeed, Holmes suggests that the process by which children pass along this knowledge to their peers has remained relatively stable over time. This passing happens largely through oral transmission and sharing among siblings, peers and friends and thus, "children are able to sustain their own peer culture and

maintain some control over their own behavior” (Holmes 1998, 51). She reminds us, however, that children do integrate material from the adult world into their culture, and mentions media as one source for such material.

Thus, what emerges from the rhymes and verses produced by children’s cultures is their commentary about and attempts to make sense of the adult world. (Holmes 1998, 51)

Corsaro (1997, 155) holds a similar view. Moreover, he claims that children also attempt to resist the adult world by challenging adult authority. He speaks of secondary adjustments to adult rules and “an underlife,” referring to activities that contradict, challenge or violate the official rules. The underlife exists in reaction to those rules that impinge upon the autonomy of children and is, thus an essential part of children’s group identity. Secondary adjustments, i.e. getting around rules in devious ways in order to achieve personal needs, are a part of underlife. They are innovative and collective responses to the adult world. (Corsaro 1997, 133)

Corsaro says that preadolescents see adults as having ultimate power over their everyday lives, and with their increasing sense of autonomy, often find themselves at odds with adults. He claims that they enjoy getting the upper hand with teachers and parents, and often mock adult rules and exaggerate adults’ communicative styles. Moreover, preadolescents are especially sensitive to what they see as adult hypocrisy and injustice. Defying adult authority is often valued among peers, and earning a reputation as troublemaker can result in a higher status in the peer group. (Corsaro 1997, 185)

The significance of an underlife for children is that it strengthens the communal spirit of peer groups. Corsaro (1997, 134) claims that through secondary adjustments children come to see themselves as part of a group and become aware of how communal values can be used to address personal interests and goals. This is a way for children to gain control over their lives. (Corsaro 1997, 140)

When I thought of bringing in the friendship theme, my noble but rather naïve idea was to build a bridge from children’s own culture to our class. Already by now, I had become quite fascinated about their culture. For instance, I was mesmerized about their free flowing, recess like game in the beginning of the February 2nd class (see p. 64). As they played a self-initiated tag game, I was

waiting and in a way, “asking the children permission to enter their world, knocking on the door. I was not intruding, but waiting to be invited.” I felt there was something in their world that I did not have a right to disrupt, but that I could somehow witness it and, thus, understand them and their world better. I still think that my starting point was sound; the reality of these children’s lives had just not appeared to me in all of its shades. I was not familiar enough with their own culture although I was becoming increasingly sensitive to their views, wondering, for instance: “How do children experience adult directed sense of community – is it phony for them?”

I became inspired by the friendship theme through two main impulses. One was a choreography project with my teenage dance students elsewhere; I had worked with them using an approach a little bit similar like Freire’s “generative theme” approach (Freire 1972, Marques 1999). We came up with the theme of friendship and made up a dance about friendship. Each student had something to contribute to this theme! And their experiences were unique and touching. So, when I read about the universal nature of friendship from Ananya Chatterjea’s (1995, 151) article on multicultural art education, I thought that this is a great theme to work with: it is something that everybody can relate to, it can be related to multiculturalism, to dialogue, and to the aims that we had set for the class. So, blinded by my enthusiasm, I rushed into exploring the theme, forgetting how important it would be to find the theme through a process of negotiation.

Their disinterest in the friendship theme made my enthusiasm and inspiration fade and turned it into disillusionment. I now realize that my conception of friendship was all too idealized, romantic and abstract; it did not match the reality of their lives. As I became so baffled about the friendship issue in this class, I asked Anita if they could write an essay about friendship in their normal class time.

First, it seems clear and self-evident that friends, or mates, are important. It also seems very important to be a good friend. They evaluated themselves and judged how well they do as friends:

I am in my opinion a good friend. (Vincent)

I would like to be a good friend. (Quincy)

I am often nice to my friends. I don’t want to be mean. (Walter)

I want to be a good friend to others and tender but sometimes it slips

and my friends are tender but they sometimes ... (Tiina)
I am not a really good friend but I do not tell secrets. (Clara)
I am a bad friend. (Julius)
Sometimes nice but sometimes mean. I want to be nice. (Gabriel)

Literature related to child development supports the significance of friendship for children, and for their sound emotional and social development (Hopearuoho-Saajala and Keskinen 1998, 58). Karlsson (2000, 55–56) points out that educators frequently forget the significance of peer groups for children's learning, and that there are experiences children can only go through with other children. Peer group is a place where communal learning can happen.

However, not all peer relationships are friendships. A friendship is a dyadic and reciprocal relationship, whereas comradeship is more about belonging together as a group. Friendships, moreover, are voluntary and demand continuous and reciprocal enforcement. (Hopearuoho-Saajala and Koskinen 1998, 59) Corsaro (1997, 165) points out that dyadic friendships are fragile, and that children often display jealousy when their best friend plays with others without them. Best friends often try to protect their friendship from intrusions, but as children also often try to expand their friendships, conflicts arise. For children, friendship seems to embrace conflict and continuous testing of solidarity.

Although children did not clearly define friendship as a dyadic relationship, it seems quite clear that they, indeed, do refer to dyadic relationships. Clara was most clear about this; she wrote that,

Friendship is such that for example two people are really close to each other.

Others, like Zachary, wrote about friendship the following way (In translation I have naturally omitted mistakes in spelling and grammar, except errors in punctuation):

I play with Vincent because he is kind to me Anita is nice because she is friendly towards others Matias is nice sometimes but not always I play with Matias often because Matias is so nice because he is sometimes kind sometimes Matias is excited too much but calms down with time Fred is a nice friend because he helps others and is a nice mate otherwise Nathan

is sometimes a nice mate because he does not tease anyone Gabriel is a nice mate because he plays with others and jokes around sometimes Gabriel is quite nice and makes others kind Walter is sometimes nice and jokes around.

In this essay a quality of kindness comes through in various ways. Friendship, here, appears as a relationship that is characterized by gentleness and consideration. Another quality is related to playing and fun; it seems that being with a friend is associated with having fun. Playing together and a quality of gentleness come through also in Kia's essay:

I play and take dogs out with my friends. Happy dear and sometimes sad. Nice does not quarrel and swear that is what a good friend is like.

Playing together was mentioned in many other essays, as well, and reinforces the ideas that I discussed in the play chapter (p. 48). The following excerpts are examples of play related ideas of friendship:

I play with a friend and perform. (Irene)
I think that good friends play with me. (Aaron)
I think that friendship is playing. (Elisa)

Many children expressed their ideas on friendship through negation, by naming what friends do not do. Teasing was one such thing. Sebastian wrote,

One of my best friends is Walter because he does not tease. And he is a good mate. And Lasse is a good friend even though he is younger than me. Nils is also a good friend it does not matter that he is Finnish-Swedish.

Sebastian was the only child who related friendship with age or ethnic background. His account of being friends with Nils, a Finnish-Swedish boy, was one of the very rare comments on ethnicity during the entire project. It made me think that ethnicity was not a major issue in these children's lives although their school had more immigrant students than most schools in Finland.

Also Patrick brought up the importance of having fun with a friend. He wrote about friends not teasing and fighting in more graphic words:

Friendship is that one does not fight with the mate and tease the other. A good friend is such that he plays with me and does fun things. A good friend does not kill me and surprise me from around the corner with a bloody knife in his hand. Ringo is the best of them because he invents fun things for example watch TV and eat chips. The End!!!!

To reiterate what friendship seems to entail for these children, I collected the following list of out of their words:

A FRIEND
plays with me
helps and defends
is a lot with the other
makes me laugh
makes the other glad
does everything for the other
is not mean
does not hit
does not hurt
does not irritate
does not quarrel
does not swear
does not fight
does not let you down
does not tease or discriminate

But, the simplest and probably the most shared definition of friendship is written by Gabriel:

Friendship is to be mates.

The first interview revealed also something about their conception of friendship, although I did not specifically ask questions about friendship. For example, many children expressed that they wanted to choose their friends as partners: "In fact, it [who is your partner] matters a little I would want the mate who I play with but I don't always get to be her partner,"²⁴ said Olivia.

²⁴ No oikeestaan sillä [kuka on parina] on vähä väliä mä haluaisin niinku sen kaverin kaa jonka kaa mä leikin mut joskus mä en pääse sen pariks

Comments like this reinforced the basic idea that being friends and having friends is a cornerstone of life for children.

Teasing and other conflicts among the children came also up in the interviews. Many conflicts happened during breaks, and some children told about having been teased, or having teased others. This is consistent with Holmes' notion about child-child relationships as possessing the power ingredient, as well as Hopearuoho-Saajala and Keskinen's analysis of power hierarchy in boys' groups, and girls' capability for meanness. The following discussion with Nathan is an example:

Eeva: How does it feel when they tease you?

Nathan: Quite dull but mostly a classmate of ours Julius teases me.

Eeva: Aha, how does it feel when Julius teases you?

Nathan: Stupid because he knows the kind of words that irritate me really much.

Eeva: Aha, what do you do then?

Nathan: Then I go away or go to tell the teacher if I get really nervous . . . sometimes I might get into a fight with Julius, most of the time I leave.²⁵

Kia told about another form of teasing. She had told me about her lonely feeling when a teacher had gotten mad at the class.

Eeva: Do you have a lonely feeling in school any other times?

Kia: Yes, for example today I felt quite lonely.

Eeva: What was the situation?

Kia: When friends were whispering something to each other all the time.

Eeva: . . . what did you think about that?

Kia: I thought that maybe they tell me at some point.²⁶

²⁵ Eeva: Miltäs sust tuntuu ku ne haukkuu sua?

Nathan: Aika tyhmält mut isommaks osaks yks meidän luokkalainen Julius haukkuu mua eniten.

Eeva: Ai jaa... no miltäs se tuntuu ku Julius haukkuu?

Nathan: Tyhmält ku se osaa sellasii sanoi mis mä oikeen ärsyynnyn kunnol.

Eeva: Ahaa mitäs sä teet sitte?

Nathan: Sit mä lähen pois tai meen kertoo opelle jos mua alkaa hermostuttaa tosi paljo . . . Joskus saattaa tulla Juliusn kaa jopa tappelu, useimmiten mä lähen pois.

²⁶ Eeva: Onks sulla muulloin koulussa yksinäinen olo?

Kia: On, esimerkiks tänään mul oli aika yksinäinen olo.

Eeva: Mikäs se tilanne oli?

Kia: Ku kaverit kuiskii koko ajan jotain.

Eeva: . . . mitäs sä siit ajattelit?

Kia: Mä ajattelin et kyl ne varmaan mulle sit jossain vaiheessa kertoo.

The origin of children's exertion of power over each other is a difficult issue. In literature children have been portrayed as villains, almost as animals, probably most notably in *The Lord of the Flies* by William Golding. It has often struck me how cruel children are towards each other. It is a small wonder to me how children deal with these hurtful situations and handle them so that they often come out as "winners."

Interestingly, Corsaro sees that children's conflicts have significance in strengthening interpersonal alliances. According to him, peer interaction and play routines often contain oppositional talk, i.e., playful teasing and confrontation that maintains and transforms social order in children's groups. Alongside a dynamic of affiliation that leads to sense of "we-ness" among children, there exists a competitive dynamic that leads to the emergence of subgroups and status hierarchies. Corsaro says that,

Children frequently compete with and attempt to control one another using a wide range of interpersonal and communicative skills, and status hierarchies are often fluid and constantly changing. (1997, 154)

Referring to cross-cultural studies Corsaro insists on a Western bias in child research, and claims that in many non-Western societies attempts to control other children are most often prosocial rather than egoistic, aiming at maintaining group cohesiveness instead of attaining individual desires. Corsaro maintains that if values like goal-directedness and individual achievement are present children's lives, they clearly affect the nature of peer relations. (Corsaro 1997, 156–157)

Corsaro also says that middle-class American adults (I suggest this applies to Finnish adults as well) are often uncomfortable with disputes and conflicts among children, and that there is wide variation in the nature and evaluation of conflict across cultures. Moreover, research documents many positive aspects of conflict in children's everyday lives. Corsaro (1997, 178) concludes that cooperation and competition are not mutually exclusive and often coexist within the same activities.

There seems to be a lot to do in adults' understanding the dynamics of children's peer relations and friendships. Preadolescent children's teachers are, in my opinion, facing a great challenge in both supporting constructive cooperation and respecting the dynamics of children's peer culture. Ignoring

it seems to lead to alienating practices and to children's contempt for adults. The great question is how to work together for better school communities. To me it seems clear that the starting point cannot be a conception of a child that views a child as lower than an adult, as someone to be socialized, cultivated and developed, a view that for a long time has dominated developmental psychology and education.

I am inclined to agree with Karlsson (2000), who, along with a group of Finnish child researchers is a strong advocate of a new paradigm for child research. Their work is strongly influenced by Corsaro's (1997) thinking. Karlsson speaks for a change in the conception of a child that has been, and still is conflicting. On one hand, the child is seen as something positive, arousing agreeable associations; on the other hand, the child is seen as incomplete, as a problem, as a burden, as someone to be cultivated, developed and disciplined. In education and in social institutions the child has been thought of as a passive target of various measures with minimal amount of active agency. However, literature is ample with child rearing advice that is based on a diffuse idea of "child-centeredness."

Karlsson introduces a new way to think about the child. For her, the child is an active subject, multitalented and resourceful, and a competent expert about issues related to his or her own life. According to this view children have a lot of knowledge and skills that adults have lost, and that as learners, children excel over adults. Reversal of the locus of expertise has brought about interesting revelations and implications for working with children. (Karlsson 2000, 40-41)

Reversing the view of the childhood as adaptation to society, Corsaro introduces a notion of interpretive reproduction. He explains that,

... children are active, creative social agents who produce their own unique children's cultures while simultaneously contributing to the production of adult societies. (1997, 4)

He stresses the importance of children's contributions to their own childhood, a thought quite forgotten in educational discussion.

In this light the issue of children's apparent lack of consideration for each other and poor social skills can be seen in a different light. Maybe the problem is not that the children have not been taught how to be social ("socialized").

Maybe the problem is that they do not have enough time and space for social interaction in their own terms, less regulated by adult rules. It is evident that children play together less than before, and that increasing time is spent with the mass media and e.g., the internet. I also seriously question the superior quality of adults' social life as a model for children to adopt. This influence may have growing impact as more and more time is spent watching television than playing with peers. Television series hardly can replace the void in actual, physical interaction among peers.

Hopearuoho-Saajala and Keskinen (1998, 63, 65) suggest that at least girls use cues from the adult world in their interaction. Children may also pick up female and masculine styles of communication from adults, and thus, for example, girls learn to be less dominant than boys in their interactions. As girls and boys grow up in segregated social worlds, they learn a style of interaction that works well with a same-sex friend, but not with the opposite sex. They may withdraw from situations where communication with the opposite sex is called for, because they do not manage it, or they simply do not like it. Thus, gendered interaction styles are reinforced through our educational system, and the effect of mass media hardly is there to balance the picture. The models of companionship, or living together in this world, that TV dramas portray may have an effect on the construction of children's value systems. The effect of violent TV programs is discussed and studied widely, but I have become growingly worried about the "human relationships" dramas that are available in the early evening hours for young children to watch.

Kincheloe and McLaren speak of hyperreality, referring to an information society socially saturated with ever-increasing forms of representation. They claim that these have had profound effects on the construction of cultural narratives that shape our identities, and that,

The drama of living has been portrayed so often on television that individuals, for the most part, are increasingly able to predict the outcomes and consider such outcomes to be the "natural" and "normal" course of social life. (2000, 292)

They also say that the ways our cognitive and affective facilities are shaped by these representations are insufficiently understood, and that "our emotional bonds are diffused as television, computers, VCRs, and stereo headphones

assault us” (2000, 292). It is now more important than ever to pay close attention to the emotional bonding and social lives among children. I strongly agree with Karen Bond, who, on her keynote address in the 8th dance and the Child international (daCi) conference proclaimed:

I, too would be happy to see the planet slow down its technological thrust and focus on global implementation of the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989), which recognizes the right of young people to participate freely in play, in cultural life and the arts. (Bond 2000, 11)

A vast majority of children of the world are deprived of basic rights. According to Bond (2000, 5) 130 million children are growing up without any access to public education, out of which 60% are girls. Meanwhile, in Western, developed world children are increasingly subjected to another kind of deprivation. Instead of play, art and culture their lives are becoming increasingly affected by technology and media. Bond states: “As we proceed into century 21, it seems likely that technology will continue to influence the destiny of our children . . . In the extreme scenario, technology becomes equated with annihilation of the body . . .” (Bond 2000, 10). She calls for a culture of caring for children worldwide, a quite touching notion also from the viewpoint of Finnish (school) culture.

When I tackled this issue by introducing the friendship theme, I was not aware about the complexity of children’s social life. In a way, I benevolently tried to “help” the children to become better friends. Now I see that my thinking was based on an adult-as-an-expert -approach: I thought that I could socialize the children, make them better adapted to society by disguising the work as being about their own lives.

Looking more carefully at the children’s conception about friendship I see that they understood a lot about it. Corsaro says that “friendship processes are seen as deeply embedded in children’s collective, interpretative reproduction of their cultures” (1997, 149). For these children, friendship seemed to mean, first of all, acts; thus, their conception of friendship was very concrete and embodied. It consists of doing certain things (like helping, playing, making the other laugh) and not doing certain other things, like hitting or teasing. On the other hand, their conception of friendship also consisted of certain qualities: kindness, helpfulness, supportiveness, trust, consideration and caring.

Referring to studies with first graders, Corsaro maintains that children may

have an internalized concept of friendship, a reflective awareness of what a friend should be, and by acting in accordance with this concept they are able to control their friendship processes. Interestingly, having this awareness does not necessarily ensure close friendships. The closest friendships seem to be formed when “local circumstances” of play and peer relations support types of play the children enjoy, and when being friends is verbally marked and agreed on. These relationships seem to be maintained over time and thus, children consider themselves as friends with each others. (Corsaro 1997, 164–165) Corsaro’s analysis strengthens the significance of self-initiated play for children, as it is the context where friendships are formed and maintained.

The fact that many children described friendship through negation may reflect the general “tone” of their lives among restrictions or conflicts. Moreover, even though they intuitively understood a lot about friendship, this understanding did not automatically transform into general social skills. Freire’s (1972, 60) idea of praxis, i.e., uniting reflection and action, may help to grasp how important it is to embody ideas through action. Thus, to me it appears that these children lived in a social turmoil, at least at school, and reinforced my earlier idea on the importance of time and space for play. Play seems to be the context where social relations are formed, reinforced and where social skills are really “put to play.”

Thus, the goals for this project were quite demanding. How to foster a constructive classroom atmosphere, to transform this instinctive social understanding that children seem to possess into constructive *interaction*? Is it possible to respect children’s dyadic friendships and friendship processes and still support a positive the classroom atmosphere that seemed now be saturated with power struggles and feelings of rejection and selection? Understanding children’s peer culture and the meaning of friendship for children became crucial for this task.

I will now turn to Buber in trying to understand the special and demanding nature of friendship. This discussion will also tie the friendship issue to dialogue. For Buber, friendship is a very special kind of relationship between two people. Friendship is a dialogical relationship, an I-You relationship that is characterized by ***complete mutuality and mutual inclusion***.

Inclusion, a central but complicated term in Buber’s philosophy, means “experiencing the other side” (Buber 1947, 96). Inclusion makes the other person present to the other:

Inclusiveness is the complete realization of the submissive person, the desired person, the "partner", [sic] not by the fancy but by the actuality of being. (Buber 1947, 97)

Buber specifies the elements of inclusion as following:

... first, a relation, of no matter what kind, between two persons, second, an event experienced by them in common, in which at least one of them actively participates, and, third, the fact that this one person, without forfeiting anything of the felt reality if his activity, at the same time lives through the common event from the standpoint of the other. (1947, 97)

Buber makes a clear distinction between empathy and inclusion. Empathy means "exclusion of one's own concreteness" whereas inclusion

... is the extension of one's own concreteness, the fulfillment of the actual situation of life, the complete presence of the reality in which one participates. (1947, 97)

To reiterate, friendship, by its very nature, involves *mutual* inclusion. Thus, friendship is an extremely demanding relationship, since friendship entails inclusion from both sides. This means that *both persons experience from both sides*. The meaning of this may be difficult to grasp at first. However, when I imagined what this might mean and tried to get a hold on my personal conception of friendship, memories of childhood occurred to me. I recalled deep involvement with my best friends: this involvement and commitment was very profound and all-encompassing, as if it formed an imaginary circle around us, as if two became one.

It is necessary to understand the meaning of inclusion in order to understand the nature of dialogue, since Buber bases his definition of a dialogical relationship on this concept of inclusion, saying that

A relation between persons that is characterized in more or less degree by the element of inclusion may be termed a dialogical relation. (1947, 97)

It is also crucial to understand that not all dialogical relationships consist of mutual inclusion. Relationships that are characterized by *one-sided inclusion*

have not lost anything of their dialogical character. To prevent misunderstandings Buber confirms that there are many I-You relationships that “by their very nature may never unfold into complete mutuality if they are to remain faithful to their nature” (Buber 1937/1970, 178).

To reiterate, not all dialogical relationships entail mutual inclusion, but friendship does. To crystallize Buber’s idea of friendship, I once again cite him:

We call friendship the third form of the dialogical relation, which is based on a concrete and mutual experience of inclusion. It is the true inclusion of one another by human souls. (Buber 1947, 101)

Here, Buber brings in the idea of concreteness, a very important notion for dance education that I will return to in more depth in the following chapter. Also, concreteness seemed to be present in children’s accounts on friendship. Before discussing concreteness I will continue a little bit more about friendship, since Buber’s idea of friendship raises a number of questions for me as a teacher. Are there any traces of this idea in the children’s accounts on friendship or in their actions towards each other? Are Buber’s ideas idealistic and romanticized, or does this kind of friendship belong to adult world? Are we adults capable for this kind of relationship? Are children capable of inclusion, or is inclusion an idea that has significance in children’s lives? What is there to do for the teacher wishing to support the social life of children?

Without knowing if it is enough, I think the least the adult, the teacher can do is to practice inclusion in his/her relations with children. In fact, for Buber the relation in education is based on *one-sided* experience of inclusion. This means that the educator

. . . experiences the pupil’s being educated, but the pupil cannot experience the educating of the educator. (Buber 1947, 100)

Later (in his afterword to *I and Thou*, written in 1957) Buber introduced another term for describing what he means by inclusion: embracing (or *umfassung* in German). This term he reserved for inclusion in a relation in education. Embracing, thus, means one-sided experience of inclusion. This idea of embracing seems very special for Buber’s educational thinking:

He [the educator] must practice the kind of realization that I call embracing. It is essential that he should awaken the I-You relationship in the pupil, too, who should intend and affirm his educator as this particular person . . . (Buber 1937/1970, 178)

Thus, by practicing inclusion in education, the teacher may be able to nurture and awaken capability for inclusion in students. This does not mean, however, that the teacher should attempt to become friends with his or her students. Quite the contrary, Buber explains that,

. . . the educational relationship could not endure if the pupil also practiced the art of embracing by living through the shared situation from the educator's point of view. Whether the I-You relationship comes to an end or assumes the altogether different character of a friendship, it becomes clear that the specifically educational relationship is incompatible with complete mutuality. (1937/1970, 178)

It is significant to realize that the educator ceases to be an educator, if he becomes a friend with the pupil:

In the moment when the pupil is able to throw himself across and experience from over there, the educative relation would be burst asunder, or change into friendship. (Buber 1947, 101)

This idea has a lot of bearing on what it means to be an educator, a question that I will also look at later (see p. 265). Becoming acquainted with friendship made me also realize that it is not exactly friendship that the teacher should look for when supporting children's growth in social skills. I started to wonder what kind of relationship towards each other, if not friendship, children could be encouraged to build towards each other. How could children who are not friends with each other live, work and play together in a more wholesome manner?

Somewhat downhearted, I now turn around and bring this lonely and fleeting visit to friendship to an end. In searching for dialogue in education, this island turned out to be different than I had expected. What I initially thought to be a happy and beautiful place turned out to be a difficult terrain, a swamp with few directions where to go. It is easy to get lost there, and easy to become disappointed and frustrated. I learned that friendship is a complex

place that cannot be neatly organized and controlled. I encountered more questions than answers.

I found, however, an idea to take with me and to examine deeper. That idea is concreteness, or actuality that Buber often links to dialogue, end even to friendship. What might that mean? It now feels tempting to search for dialogue in concrete, actual bodily happenings, and in sensing. Corporeality someone else might say, is what I will next turn towards.

Contemplating sensing: The body as a medium for dialogue

Throughout the first year I kept telling myself that I needed to help the children to master their bodies, to concentrate and focus. Why is this so important to me? It is something that I sense in my own body as a state of focused presence, being right there and now, being open and ready to move, to react, to dialogue with inner and outer impulses, be it bodily sensations, sounds, visual or tactile impulses, thoughts, images, words.

My struggle may, in fact be a demonstration of a dance teacher's frantic effort to prove that the Cartesian idea of body-mind split is wrong. It has drastically affected the way we think and teach, as a number of theorists have noted. In her article "Body of knowledge," Sue Stinson (1995, 45) lists some of these scholars; I am surely not alone making this judgment. As a person with a lot of experiences in dancing, I feel the truth about wholeness of a human being embodied in my bones and flesh. But as I looked for it in my students, I could hardly see a trace of it. How to make sense out of this discrepancy?

I was looking for a way to reach a state of wholeness at least momentarily by including many different ways of moving in a concentrated, sensitively controlled manner. A focused presence where everyday haste and hassle would be wiped away was amazingly difficult to reach.

Instead, I was faced with children "unable to calm themselves", "vocalizing haphazardly as they moved" and "uncontrolled and limp." Also, a constant problem was "the noise level in the space." Children's "inability to control their voices and their bodies" was a problem I kept tackling with, never being able to solve it except for short, fleeting moments. I asked myself, "How to help the children feel these fine tuned sensations?" I tried to help them to reach "a primary bodily experience" and wanted to give them "an opportunity to

concentrate on one's own body without distraction." I asked, "How could this happen?"; "Where can we find the core of self-discipline?" and "How could I get them to quiet down for even a little moment and concentrate on themselves and then on the others so that the work could be absorbed, deep?"

I discovered that through simple, structured movements it might be easier to focus on one's body. A creative movement task may be confusing, "feel odd" in the beginning, because this kind of work was new to them. I sometimes also asked them to actively try to forget others around them, and to close their eyes. That seemed to help a little bit, too.

I also reflected a lot on the teacher's task here, because it seemed like my voice sometimes was like "magical power" for the children, supporting focusing and relaxation when I used my voice in a more involved, imaginative, suggestive way. My involvement seemed to transfer to the children. I thought that "I guess the teacher needs some magic, being like a magician, to spread something extraordinary, something different from everyday..." and "In quiet concentration exercises, it seems, teacher's "tricks" or "magic" is needed, at least in the beginning. It doesn't come by itself."

For a long time I have been quite hesitant to use my person as a strong influence, at least in the long run, and especially with children. I feel like I am manipulating them, and this feeling makes me uneasy. Buber's ideas help me understand, once again, the problem in this approach. He talks about how, before schools existed, and before teachers existed there were masters and philosophers, with whom "apprentices lived with and learned, by being allowed to share in it . . . without either their or his being concerned with it, they learned, without noticing that they did" (Buber 1947, 90). Buber admits that there is no return to this "paradise of pure instinctiveness," that education has been transformed, and that "education as a purpose is bound to be summoned" (Buber 1947, 90). Still, Buber insists, that the master remains the model for the teacher. He explains:

For if the educator of our day has to act consciously he must nevertheless do it "as though he did not". [sic] That raising of the finger, that questioning glance, are his genuine doing . . . doing out of concentration has the appearance of rest. (1947, 90)

By concentration Buber means a "selection of the effective world" that the educator carries, in other words the knowledge, skills and understanding of the world that is concentrated in the educator. Education as a purpose means just this: that a selection of the world is presented to the student through the teacher. But, Buber reminds, the world itself influences and educates the child, as well. For Buber, the educator is just one element of influence, and this influence must proceed from the educator's integrity in order to be an integrating force. (Buber 1947, 90)

Buber warns that the will to educate, a new phenomenon that has been created by the educator's replacing the master, may degenerate into arbitrariness. He explains:

. . . the educator may carry out his selection and his influence from himself and his idea of the pupil, not from the pupil's own reality. (Buber 1947, 100)

This stance quite clearly is a basic premise of critical pedagogy. According to Freire (1972, 65–66) the content of education should be neither a gift nor an imposition, but should be based on the things about which the students want to know more. The starting point for critical pedagogy is students' present, existential, concrete life situation and their awareness of it that reflects their aspirations. Freire says,

It is not our role to speak to the people about our own view of the world, not to attempt to impose that view on them, but rather to dialogue with the people about their view and ours. (1972, 68)

As Buber formulated his educational stance back in 1947, his ideas precede the basic premises of critical pedagogy. I see here a significant link between dialogical philosophy and critical pedagogy, and I see Buber as a significant educational reformist.

Buber also discusses educator's power over his pupils although he does not use the word power. He says that if education means letting a selection of the world affect a person through the medium of another person, the question is about influencing of the lives of others with one's own life. Very easily, says he,

. . . even with the noblest teachers, arbitrary self-will is mixed up with will (Buber 1947, 100).

He claims that this mixing up is almost always due to an interruption of the act of inclusion, that is, experiencing from the other side that I described in the previous chapter:

The man whose calling it is to influence the being of persons that can be determined, must experience this action of his . . . ever anew from the other side. (Buber 1947, 100)

Imagining child's individuality is not enough, says Buber. The educator must feel how his educating affects the other human being. This is how the act of inclusion creates an atmosphere instead "an alarming and edifying event" (1947, 100).

In my teaching, atmosphere has become a more and more crucial element. I have tried to carefully sense the mood of the class and respond to it. This may be an effort towards inclusion, or it may be an effort to practice "pedagogical tact" (van Manen 1991). It has resulted in softness and a kind of "backing up" from being the center of action. I have tried to make the pupils the center of action, and hoped that what happens in the class is not solely my doing, not completely dependent on me. Sometimes this has happened, but often it has been extremely difficult. Among the most difficult moments to sustain this approach have been the moments when I have tried to introduce activities that involve slow, concentrated movement, movement that the children are to do by themselves without interacting with others.

This is the place where I become especially puzzled. My own bodily experience provides me with a belief in the wholeness of the nature of human being. It is the basis of my life and work, even when I write and think. As Stinson (1995, 43) suggests, lived experiences of the body through dancing influence even scholarly work. I carry this knowledge within me; it is concentrated in me. When I teach, I hope this idea of the wholeness of human being will influence the children through the act of inclusion, or through pedagogical tact. I have tried to make sense out of this intricate question: Why has this influence failed to carry on to the children?

It may be that these children, having experienced strong interference through

an educational order that is based on Cartesian duality, have already been detached from the bodily basis of existence. Another interference, a “corrective movement” may thus be the only way initially to help them momentarily reach a state of awareness of their bodies. Is purpose here more important than the means? Should I sacrifice the act of inclusion for pushing over a limit, by seducing the children into a world of sensation? If there were a way back from interference to influence, I would probably choose interference. This means manipulating the children by my voice and by my bodily actions.

I also discovered that “the world of concentration has to be pleasant, it has to feel good, so that it would tempt children to take part.” It demands sensitivity to subtle bodily experiences to be able to enjoy this state, to stay in it without falling to boredom. It is exactly this sensitivity to bodily experience that I cannot trace in these children, no matter how hard I have looked. The apparent absence of this sensitivity makes me very puzzled about the nature of human existence, and even more puzzled about the nature of education, that evidently should take the nature of human existence into account.

The Cartesian body/mind split has been strongly opposed by philosophers over recent history. Perhaps phenomenologists have most strongly argued for the case of “the lived body.” For instance, Sondra Fraleigh states that the philosophy of phenomenologists is “opening up new vistas of organic being, mapping our way back to our body, our body to the natural world” (2000, 54). Natural scientists of our time, perhaps most notably neuroscientist Antonio Damasio (1994, 1999), have worked their way towards the same direction, in fact close to proving that the body/mind split is a false theory, and that there is no such thing as the body/mind split. It is interesting that today philosophy and science are connecting in order to understand the human nature, as Fraleigh suggests:

Today phenomenology has a more confident reach into consciousness than ever before as it extends into cognitive science, neuroscience, and developmental psychology with new understandings how science and philosophy can blend. (2000, 55)

Interestingly, Buber had an insight about these issues, as well. Back in 1923, when *I and Thou* was first published, Buber discussed the natural, or primal man, and the way memory has a bodily basis, and how the preservation of mankind is based on bodily knowledge. He writes,

Memory, educating itself, constructs a series of the major relational events and the elementary upheavals. What is most important for the drive for preservation and most noteworthy for the drive for knowledge . . . stands out most clearly and gains independence . . . The original drive for "self"-preservation is no more accompanied by any self-consciousness than any other drive. What wants to propagate itself is not the I but the body that does not yet know of any I. Not the I but the body wants to make things, tools, toys, wants to be "inventive." (Buber 1937/1970, 72-73)

When Buber refers to "primitive" people, he means people who are poor in objects but whose lives are constituted on acts that have a strong presence. Their language designates a wholeness of a relation, and the wholeness denotes a genuine original unity from where elementary, spirit-awakening impressions and stimulations are derived from. A primitive man lives "with one who confronts him" (1937/1970, 70). Buber tells an example:

About the moon which he sees every night he does not think much until it approaches him bodily, in his sleep or even while he is awake, and casts a spell over him . . . What he retains is not the visual notion of the migratory disk of light . . . but at first only an image of the moon's action that surges through his body as a motor stimulus; and the personal image of an active moon crystallizes only very gradually. (1970, 70)

These relational appearances are natural and real for primal people but have been designated as supernatural and magical by scientists that have for long tried to understand the spiritual element of primitive life. These appearances, or elementary relational processes "stimulate his body and leave an impression of such stimulation in him" (1970, 71), thus the world of a primitive man is created by his bodily experiences. This is how, Buber says, the primitive man says You in a natural manner in the relational event (1937/1970, 73).

Similarly Damasio (1999, 183) explains that when we recall an object from memory, we do not only recall its physical structure (form, color, sound, smell etc.) but also our motor involvement and our emotional reactions to it at the time of apprehending it. Thus, thinking about an object results in similar bodily processes as perceiving it. Furthermore, Damasio (1999, 184) claims that even planning movement causes similar events in the body, and thus our capacity to represent past, present and future actions through "somatosensory maps" gives us means for constructing the primordial narratives of consciousness.

Parallel to Buber, Damasio describes how our preservation is linked to bodily events and emotions that “are part of a bioregulatory device with which we come equipped to survive” (1999, 53).

What makes Damasio’s view about the importance of emotions significant for education is his notion of the body being the main stage of emotions, that “feelings are largely a reflection on body-state changes” (288) and thus involve both the body and the brain. Damasio explains,

. . . we only know that we feel an emotion when we sense that emotion is sensed as happening in our organism. (1999, 279)

Damasio introduces concepts of proto-self, nuclear self and autobiographical self, and says that,

. . . the proto-self, feelings of emotion, and the feelings of knowing feelings emerged at different points in evolution and to this day emerge at different stages of individual development. Proto-self precedes basic feeling and both precede the feeling of knowing that constitutes core consciousness. (1999, 280–281)

Without going into any more detail about the scientific basis of the primacy of the body in human existence, I think that it is fitting to draw a connection between Buber’s and Damasio’s ideas. Buber claims,

And even in the primitive function of cognition one cannot find any *cognuso ergo sum* [I know, therefore I am] of even the most naïve kind, nor any conception, however childlike, of an experiencing subject. (1937/1970, 73)

Buber speaks about the “primitive mind” that has not yet recognized itself as an I; to me it seems parallel to Damasio’s proto-self. The relational event, an I-You event, happens here in a natural, unformed manner. This basic I-You event later splits into I and You, thus it exists before “I.” The relation is primary, meaning, before human being knows being an “I,” s/he is in a relation. But the “I” is included in this primitive relational event:

For by its nature this event contains only two partners, man and what confronts him, both in their full actuality . . . (Buber 1937/1970, 74)

Again, Damasio speaks about a similar event, only that his way of expressing this happens in different words. Damasio describes the relationship between an organism and an object. An object, in Damasio's words, may refer to anything outside or inside the organism, abstract or concrete, and thus, not referring to object that is separate from the organism, but something that it is in relationship with, thus parallel to Buber's notion of "what confronts the man." Damasio suggests that consciousness arises

. . .when the organism's representation devices exhibit a specific kind of wordless knowledge-the knowledge that the organism's own state has been changed by an object-and when such knowledge occurs along with the salient representation of an object. The sense of self in the act of knowing an object is an infusion of *new* knowledge . . . the sense of self is the first answer to a question the organism never posed. (Damasio 1999, 25)

Damasio claims further that,

. . . the simplest form in which the wordless knowledge emerges mentally is the feeling of knowing-the feeling of what happens when an organism is engaged with the processing of an object-and that only thereafter can inferences and interpretations begin to occur regarding the feeling of knowing. (1999, 26)

This is, for Damasio, how consciousness (meaning a part of mind concerned with the apparent sense of self and knowing) begins: It is a feeling that accompanies the making of any kind of image within our living organism. Images are dynamic mental patterns, they may be visual, auditory or somatosensory (this modality includes varied forms of sense, like touch, muscular and pain) and as we "feel what happens" within our bodies, the image becomes marked as ours and "allows us to say . . . that we see or hear or touch" (1999, 26, 318).

This "imaged account" that is created through the relationship of the organism and the object informs the organism of what it is doing, or answers the question it never posed, the question of what is happening. In a more precise form the question reads: "What is the relation between images of things and this body?" that will result in the feeling of knowing, and moreover, it is "the beginning of the freedom to *comprehend* a situation" (Damasio 1999, 182).

Furthermore, according to Damasio, the imaged account triggers more wakefulness. Some wakefulness is necessary for this process to begin, but the increased wakefulness results in more-focused attention to the object:

Consciousness results in enhanced wakefulness and focused attention . . . The organism's engagement with an object intensifies its ability to process that object sensorily and also increases the opportunity to be engaged by other objects—the organism gets ready for more encounters and for more-detailed interactions. The overall result is greater alertness, sharper focus, higher quality of image-processing. (Damasio 1999, 182–183)

This process leads to a sense of individual perspective and a sense of agency:

Ownership is hidden, as it were, within the sense of perspective . . . if these images have the perspective of this body I now feel, then these images are in my body—they are mine . . . Therein our sense of agency—these images are mine and I can act on the object that caused them. (Damasio 1999, 183)

Thus, Damasio traces the origins of a sense of agency to bodily feelings. Going back to Buber, there seems to be a striking similarity in his account of how the sense of self, or the “I” emerges. According to Buber the body, as the carrier of its sensations, learns to know and discriminate itself. As the “I” of the I-You relation has emerged,

. . . it somehow etherializes and functionalises itself and enters into the natural fact of the discreteness of the body from its environment . . . Only now can the conscious I-act, the first form of the basic word I-It, of experience by an I, come into being. The I that has emerged proclaims itself as the carrier of sensations and the environment as their object. (Buber 1937/1970, 74)

This is how the basic word I-It, the word of separation, comes into being, and the “crucial barrier between subject and object” emerges. (Buber 1937/1970, 74–75)

The question remains: should we, as educators understand and preserve this primary relational event as something of value, as something that promotes

the good of a child? Is the idea of agency of significance here? How far back do we need to look in order to find our sense of agency? Maxine Greene (1995, 73) writes about our prereflective days and "primordial landscapes" as something that we cannot return to. Her conception about the birth of consciousness (heavily influenced by phenomenology) is much akin to Buber's and Damasio's:

We are first cast into the world as embodied beings trying to understand. From particular situated locations, we open ourselves to fields of perception. Doing so, we begin to inhabit varied and always incomplete multiverses of forms, contours, structures, colors and shadows. We become present to them as consciousnesses in the midst of them, not as outside observers; and so we see aspects and profiles but never totalities. We reach out into the world – touching, listening, watching what presents itself to us from our prereflective landscapes, primordial landscapes. . . . Before we enter into the life of language, before we thematize and know; we have already begun to organize our lived experiences perceptually and imaginatively. (Greene 1995, 73)

Understanding the bodily basis of our existence, and the primacy of the relationship between the body and its environment in the development of a human being, may bear significance in understanding how to educate, i.e. to promote the good of the child. Greene suggests that it is possible to become present to our prereflective experiences, but

. . . if we make the effort to reflect upon them we become far more present to our enmeshed and open-ended selves. (1995, 73)

The idea of educating towards incompleteness, i.e. towards a local and specific relationship with the world that a bodily perspective generates, may at first seem paradoxical. This is, however, exactly what Greene suggests: an active insertion of one's perception into the lived world (1995, 74). Thus, building education on the idea of primacy of bodily existence may lead to educating a perspective, ownership and agency.

By looking at recent literature related to somatics and body politics, the case for basing education on the idea of "the conscious body" becomes stronger. According to Jill Green (2002, 5) the term somatics refers to body-mind practices that tend to focus on an inner awareness and use the proprioceptive sense or an inner sensory mode. Referring to Thomas Hanna (1988), she says

that "soma" refers to a "living body" that is observable from the inside out, from a first person perspective, and somatics, then, is the study of the soma as opposed to studying the body as an objective entity.

Similarly, Sherry Shapiro (1999) discusses how, as a result of Cartesian duality, the human body has been excluded from the process of knowing. The desire to control nature and the quest for universal reason and knowledge that transcends time and place has led to negating the body as a source of knowledge. Shapiro points out that feminist and postmodern scholarship aim at affirming the body as integral to the process of knowing:

In fact there is no escape from human presence and position in the world. From this perspective there is no escape from the body. (Shapiro 1999, 146)

According to her, this turn to the body is part of a broader epistemological and political shift towards the specific and the local, a shift towards temporality, particularity and ineffability. Writing from the body, for Shapiro, means that "the flesh becomes, both substantively and metamorphically, a place of engagement with a life's pain, aches, desires and ecstasies" (1999, 146). Thus, emotions, that reside in the body as Damasio suggests, may become vivified; body memories may be awakened and our bodily existence may become reinforced.

According to Green, somatic theory and practice tend to focus on inner experience. There is, however, a body of literature that she calls "social somatic theory," where the influence of culture and society influence our bodies and our somatic experiences. This sphere of study, once again, leads to questioning the body/mind split and our culture that favors the mind over the body, and tends to separate them. Moreover, our culture's obsession with the body as an objective, mechanical entity results in disconnecting us from our inner proprioceptive signals and our somas as living processes. (Green 2002, 6)

Both these spheres of literature suggest that the body by no means is innocent and natural, as we, in and through our bodies, inhabit a culture. I suggest that educating "a conscious body" means first, preserving and understanding its inner signals: a dialogue within our bodies. Directing our bodies consciously and intentionally may lead to a sense of personal agency and to a sense of ownership of the body. This inner dialogue, listening to our bodies, should go on while

we relate to the world, the culture and other bodies around us. This may lead to a bodily understanding, of, for example injustice and oppression, and thus, towards appreciation of our bodily integrity: we should learn to hear what our bodies tell us about such sensations as pain and discomfort, and relate them to our feelings, and eventually, to understanding of what is right or wrong. Moreover, sensing and dialoguing with our own bodies may lead to sensing, understanding and respecting others' bodily existence and their bodily integrity. Thus, somatic practice entails much more than solitary work and closing out the outer world (Green 2002, 8).

During the second segment of our journey I realized that this level of bodily work, becoming bodily involved with other bodies through touch and contact work, was significant. Tactile sensations and giving and taking others' weight may be a way to reach a focused, intensified bodily state. I described earlier (p. 57) how "I wanted to move on from safe exercises –those that I knew almost always would work- into more challenging ones, and to move on towards our aims, for instance helping boys and girls to get along better." We did activities involving touching and small group work, and gradually moved into weight giving and taking. For instance, I said to the children: "Roll onto someone, and that person becomes your partner!" and introduced activities like leaning away from each other holding hands, and moving with back against back, and moved on to lifting and carrying each others. On these activities I reflected:

This work was intense and very important to me. Could this be one way to reach sense of the body, practicing weight giving and bearing with a partner?

And, a little later, the same thought kept coming back to me as I watched the carrying and lifting on the videotape:

Again, all of this seems significant – it is related to sensing and mastering the body in relation to others. Maybe in partner work sensing the body becomes more concrete?

These activities triggered different responses, sometimes they created chaos and even protest, but most often the children were quite engaged in them, and the restlessness that was created may have been a result of the newness of these

activities, as the children were still practicing them, not yet knowing how to do them.

In the first interview I was curious to find out how the children had experienced all this. Recalling and verbally describing these experiences is a complicated matter. The connection between a bodily experience and its verbal account is something that has puzzled me for a long time, and thus, I did not expect to gain a direct access to the children's original experiences. Despite their meager verbal appearance the descriptions of bodily experiences that I gained denote to some ideas that do have their own silent message to convey.

I asked them, for instance, how various activities involving slow movement, like melting, felt for them. Their responses were quite diffuse, like: "Mm it feels like relaxing like that"²⁷ and melting "felt quite ordinary."²⁸ Tiina was a little bit more articulate in her describing feelings and bodily sensations. She said,

I think it [string in the roof] is fun and it feels fun, too.²⁹

It [showing movements to others] is like fun and otherwise feels so funny.³⁰

When I asked her how relaxing feels, she said "it is so that when you relax then you feel like good and otherwise like fun too."³¹ Tiina was also able to localize some bodily sensations. We talked about "string in the roof" exercise, and she said,

Tiina: It is quite funny when we go that way that you stretch all over and then it stretches so.

Eeva: It is funny?

Tiina: Mm

Eeva: From where does it feel funny?

Tiina: Here.

Eeva: Arms?

Tiina: Yes³²

²⁷ Mm se tuntuu sillee ihan kun rentoutuu tämmöseltä

²⁸ tuntui ihan tavalliselta.

²⁹ Must se [naru katossa] on ihan kivaa ja se on kivan tuntustaki.

³⁰ Seki [toisille näyttäminen] on sillee niinku kiva ja muutenki ni hassun tuntust.

³¹ no se on sillee ku rentoutuu ni tulee semmonen kiva olo ja muutenki ni hauskaa.

³² Tiina: Se on aikaa hassuu ku mennään sillee et venyy joka puolelt sit se venyy sillee.

Quincy, also, was able to describe himself in relation to his body. First of all, he identified himself as someone who needed to move all the time; that he couldn't stay still. Slower exercises felt "odd" and "strange" to him, and difficult, because he is "wilder." He also said that partner work was too slow for him and that he wants to rough around. Inventing movements was "odd" too, but fun. He described a movement that he invented: "I put my knee here behind the knee and then it stretched . . . it was fun."³³

The feeling of stretching seemed to be something that the children could distinguish a little bit more clearly. Walter talked about "tightness":

Walter: In the rubber band it was a little 'cause I am not really flexible.
Eeva: It felt tight? Yes, how did it feel when you don't really bend, how does it feel?

Walter: When you don't bend? I don't really know – it is a little bit like if you try to do some splits or stretch then it feels a little bit in the leg it somewhere it hurts when you have to stretch some place.³⁴

Gabriel also talked about stretching and pain: "Sometimes it might feel if some place is sore."³⁵ Bodily feelings of dizziness when turning and tickling in statue shaping or painting others' backs were mentioned, as well.

Walter was the only one who connected body, or movement to feelings. He described his dear hobby, soccer, the following way:

If you are in bad mood then you can put your anger in the ball when you kick it really hard.³⁶

Eeva: Se on hassuu?

Tiina: Mm

Eeva: Mist kohtii se tuntuu hassult?

Tiina: Täältä.

Eeva: Käsivarsista?

Tiina: Mm

³³ Mm-m mä pistin polven tänne polven taa ja sit se veny . . .se oli kivaa.

³⁴ Walter: Siin kuminauhas oli vähän ku mä en oo mikään hirveen notkee.

Eeva: Vähä kiristi? Joo,justiin - miltäs se tuntu ku venyttelee eikä oikein taivu nii miltäs se tuntuu?

Walter: Aiku ei oikeen taivu? Emmä oikein tiedä – se vähä niinku jos yrittää vaikka tehdä jotaki spakaattii tai venyttelee nii se tuntuu vähä jalassa tai jossaki sattuu ku pitää jotain paikkaa venyttää.

³⁵ Välillä saattaa ehkä joskus tuntuu jos on joku paikka kipee.

³⁶ Jos on vaikka pahalla päällä niin sit voi purkaa sitä kiukkuu siihen palloon ku potkasee sitä oikein kovaa.

The children seemed to prefer fast movement and physical contact with each other. They also had very limited experiences in dance or creative movement, and activities involving melting and relaxing were not familiar to them. Earlier (p. 46) I described their conflicting feelings about slow movement, and wondered about the meaning of moving slowly for them. Although they mentioned some benefits in learning how to move slowly, they did not seem to connect slow movement to personally meaningful experiences, enjoyment or a sense of agency.

Could the problem be in the context and manner these movement experiences were presented to the children? Looking more carefully at children's play and movement games, they do include a wide range of dynamics, fast movement, conscious directing of the body in stopping and changing directions, as well as slow, sustained movement. For example, in a movement game called "mirror," one child faces the wall and others start from a line, moving carefully towards the wall. When the child facing the wall turns to look at the others, they must freeze. These kinds of games seem to involve excitement, dynamic range and conscious directing of the body. Again, I am tempted to think that children's free play needs more time and space. Imposed from above by the teacher, these movement activities do not seem always intrinsically motivating.

I also asked the children how they felt when they touched someone or someone touched them. Nobody said that they did not like it or that it felt bad or scary. Kia, who in lifting and carrying activities was stiff and afraid of falling, told that "I am quite much, I was like tense"³⁷ and that it was difficult to be a statue when others were molding her. Quincy said that it felt stupid when someone touched him, and that it was odd to touch others. Vincent used similar words, odd and strange, to describe how he felt about touching. Ulla said that it felt nice when someone touched her, but not so nice when she touched someone else.

Sebastian was more specific. When I asked how it feels when someone molds him he said that "it feels quite nice, nice, but not always, it depends on how they touch me."³⁸ Gabriel said that touching is quite nice, and that "sometimes it feels even good when someone touches."³⁹

Boys, in general, touched each other readily, but they had sometimes great

³⁷ Mä oon aika lailla niinku, olin niinku jännittyny.

³⁸ ihan kivalta, kivalta, ei se aina, riippuu miten koskettelee.

³⁹ joskus se tuntuu kivalenta ku koskettaa.

difficulties in gentle touch, and in touching girls. In all, these children seemed to have a quite open attitude towards touching. It did not seem that touching was a taboo for them, but it did seem that they had not experienced this kind of thing before. Their attitude reflected more a surprise or wondering what this new thing was. It leads me to think that touching is something that did not belong to their life. Based on my experiences as a dance teacher with numerous groups of children other than this group, I would dare to suggest that touching each other is not something that is valued in our culture and in our education. Touching, at least gentle touching, is probably something that is considered to belong to the sphere of family life, not to school. Most odd seems to be a situation where a boy touches another child, girl or boy, gently.

Sensitivity to bodily sensations seems to be a requirement for gentleness in touching and also in other contact work or slow, concentrated work. A gentle, sensitive and responsive touch is one manifestation of a dialogical relationship. It may lead to an embodied act of inclusion, experiencing from the other side. In touch, feeling the contact from two sides is possible, with "the palm of one's own skin," and also with the other's skin, as Buber describes:

For the space of the moment he experiences the situation from the other side. Reality imposes itself on him . . . The twofold nature of this gesture . . . thrills through the depth of enjoyment in his heart and stirs it. (1947, 96)

On another instance Buber describes an encounter with a horse he recalls from his own childhood:

When I stroked the mighty mane . . . and felt the life beneath my hand, it was as though the element of vitality itself bordered on my skin, something that was not I, was certainly not akin to me, palpably the other, not just another, really the Other itself . . . (1947, 23)

Are young children drawn out of this kind of relation too early and too harshly? As a mother I often feel that my own children are never content with the amount of physical contact and closeness that I can give them. A morning hug should last forever, but as the clock inevitably ticks ahead, we must part and rush on to our chores. They seem to crave closeness as they crawl to our bed at night, and my own response when I caress a sleeping child is one of immense happiness. I often wonder how they experience their long days at school, drawn out of the

safety of parent's physical shelter. They have told me that they often feel lonely in school. All this makes me wonder about the nature of our formal education that seems to send a message to even very young children: you must be brave, you must survive by yourself, while the task of the teacher seems not to relate, but to alienate. This also makes me wonder whether this is really education, promoting the good of the child.

Probably the relative lack and novelty of these experiences of touching, moving slowly and focusing on the body, is one source of the children's difficulty in forming verbal accounts of these experiences. Damasio suggests that concepts "consist of the nonlanguage idea of what things, actions, events, and relationships are" (1999, 185). Words and sentences denote these, but concepts precede words and sentences, that do not come out of nowhere. Damasio explains:

The narrative of the state of the proto-self being changed by the interaction with an object must first occur in its nonlanguage form if it is ever to be translated by suitable words. (1999, 186)

When he speaks of narratives or imaged accounts, Damasio means a "non-language map of logically related events" and uses film as a comparison. He also reminds that we convert these nonverbal narratives into language immediately. A verbal version is generated automatically; the will cannot stop this generation:

Whatever plays in the nonverbal tracks of our minds is rapidly translated into words and sentences. That is in the nature of the human, language creature. (Damasio 1999, 185)

To reiterate, in order for this translation to happen there must be a nonverbal concept to be translated, i.e., an imaged account of an encounter with an object must precede language:

So when my mind says "I" or "me," it is translating, easily and effortlessly, the nonlanguage concept of the organism that is mine, of the self that is mine. If a perpetually activated construct of core self were not in place, the mind could not possibly translate it as "I" or as "me" . . . (Damasio 1999, 186)

Damasio suggests that this uninhibited verbal translation is probably the source of the notion that consciousness would be explainable by language alone, a notion that is based on the idea that “consciousness occurred when, and only when, language commented on the mental situation for us” (1999, 185). This view reserves the capability for conscious states only to humans with substantial mastery of the language instrument, and leaves animals and human babies “just out of luck, forever unconscious” (1999, 185). Damasio holds a different view:

The nonverbal nature of concepts is what accounts for the improbability of the language explanation of consciousness. (1999, 185)

The nonverbal narrative creates core consciousness that, in Damasio’s theory, is the foundation of consciousness. Its verbal translation makes possible an extended consciousness, and the autobiographical self. Damasio argues his case of this nonverbal basis of consciousness that has been denoted as being below consciousness, by the not so reliable nature of this translation:

. . . although verbal translations cannot be inhibited, they are often not attended, and they are performed under considerable literary license—the creative mind translates mental events in a large variety of ways . . . the creative “language” mind is prone to indulge in fiction . . . I find it unlikely that consciousness would depend on the vagaries of verbal translations and on the unpredictable level of focused attention paid to it. (Damasio 1999, 187)

Thus, verbal accounts of what happened do not always correspond with what happened. Damasio argues that the consistency of the “primordial story of self and knowing” results from core consciousness that, as soon as we wake up, is turned on, processing images in a constant flow. He says,

I believe the imaged, nonverbal narrative of core consciousness is swift, that its unexamined details have eluded us for a long time, that the narrative is barely explicit, so half hinted that its expression is almost like the emanation of a belief. (1999, 187)

He goes on to claim that worldless storytelling is natural, and explains why we humans make up stories, create drama and movies, and write books. The

question that human beings ask about how these images come to being is a mind-blowing one, and basic to understanding human existence. Damasio cites the first line of Hamlet: "Who's there?" and sees in this question "the bewilderment of humans regarding the origins of their condition" (1999, 189).

The ideas of Buber and Damasio lead towards seeing the nature of a human being as whole. This implies significance of bodily experiences in forming the sense of self, a sense of agency, in feeling emotions and in comprehending life and the world around us. The process of becoming an "I" is dialogical; it happens in a constant flow of interaction with the world, much of which is non-verbal. I am arguing that education that negates the nonverbal, bodily basis of our existence by relying heavily on language and reason, simultaneously denying the basic need for human beings to relate to each other by encouraging separation, is counteractive for the development of whole human beings. This contemplation gives me even stronger impetus to search for dialogue in dance education.

The next segment of our journey reveals that the search became even more difficult, as unforeseen circumstances and events crossed our path.

THIRD SEGMENT OF PASSAGE: FALL 1998

Looking for a new course

Before the first class after summer my thoughts were circling around the question:

Where are we aiming at?

I tried to get a hold of the direction where I thought we should be heading. My initial answers were:

***Courage to throw oneself in, courage to experience
Contact to oneself (body percussion), to others, to ground and gravity
Rhythm and drumming***

I was aware of increased social problems in the class, as well as the fact that there were only 8 girls in the class, and 16 boys; four of the boys were new to the class.

Also, their beloved classroom teacher Anita had left the school. The new teacher was Johan, a young male teacher, specialized in music, with a quite different touch to teaching. And to make the situation even more unstable for them, they had moved to a new building; their classroom was no longer situated in the main school building, but in a building close to the school, upstairs of a grocery store where the school had rented more space to accommodate the growing number of pupils.

For Olivia the change of teacher seemed to have been the most significant event of the whole year. In the second interview she shared with me her feelings about Anita's leaving and about the new teacher:

It was so nice to be with Anita, she never yelled or nothing . . . I think the best teacher of the school when Anita was here it was Anita.'

¹ Anitan kaa oli niin kiva olla, sillee et se ei huutanu ikinä eikä sillee . . . mun mielest koulun paras opettaja sillon ku Anita oli se oli Anita mun mielest.

Also Belinda remembered the change of teacher and the change of class space as a significant event of the year:

It was really tough when we had to change classrooms and then we had to change teachers it was really tough.²

Also boys admitted that they missed Anita. In his indirect manner, Quincy told about Anita's visit to the school after she had left:

Well, she came last when she came to get her old things from here . . . we all, the whole class almost stayed right there.³

It must have been difficult for Johan to build trust with the class after such a special relationship with Anita. I, too, was baffled: I had planned on a two-year project with her, and my feelings about this sudden new situation were certainly mixed.

However, I was confident that I had a secure enough relationship to handle the whole class: I wanted to meet everyone together. I had arranged so that we could have the dance classes happen in a real dance studio, in order to avoid the noise level of a big gym and to have the activity more contained, and to also create a different atmosphere and experience by changing location. Also, I wanted to bring in an accompanist to give an added experiential element for the students. The acoustics in the school gym were so bad that live accompaniment would not have worked there. So, the whole group arrived to the dance studio on one afternoon in September. This is what happened.

September 21, 1998

The children came in one by one, running around the room. I asked them to come sit in a circle, but settling down was difficult. I reminded them of our agreement from last year, that we should talk one at a time so that no one needs to speak so loudly.

I talked calmly introducing Ike, the musician. Then I asked the children

² Se oli kyl hirveen rankkaa ku me jouduttiin vaihtaan luokkaa ja sitte me jouduttiin vaihtaan opettajaa se oli ihan hirveen rankkaa.

³ No viimeks tuli sillon ku se kävi tääl koulus hakee vanhoi tavaroita . . . me kaikki, kaikki meiän luokkalaiset suunnilleen jäi siihen.

what was different about this space in comparison to their school gym. They mentioned many things including the mirror, the musical instruments and the size, shape and height of the room.

Someone suggested tag. I replied that in this room it would be difficult to play tag. Then I told what else could not be done in this room, e.g., because of the mirrors. Someone said, "We cannot play rounders here." I replied, "Yes, there are no circles on the floor here." Was this a beginning of a negative attitude towards the dance classes? They must have expected games since we did so many earlier. I wanted to move away from games; did I betray them?

The atmosphere was pleasant, and the discussion seemed to interest them. I told them that this was a real dance studio. But the children said that the space was bad and too small. They said, "We can't do anything here" and asked, "What are we going to do?"

In the interview later some children complained about the space being too small. Nathan said that the most difficult moments of the project happened at the dance studio, as if he somehow placed part of the blame on the place. Apparently, then, the dance studio was not such a great choice after all. Just that I felt better working there did not make it better for the children.

The first exercise was "echo," where I gave a simple rhythm (body percussion) and the children repeated it. The children listened to my instructions quietly, but Nathan was making noise. Also Leonard, one of the new boys in class, was not following the group in echo. I told him that we are supposed to clap together. I also told him that now everyone had to wait.

After few simple patterns I asked if anyone wanted to be the leader. A few children wanted and everyone followed them well. There was noise in between the patterns, but I stayed calm. Now it feels that I was giving too much time – we should have gotten in action faster! We sat on the floor too long.

Finally we moved into a new activity. I said, "Let's see if you can do this: when one stops, everyone has to stop." I asked Ike to play while the children were walking, and stop when they stopped.

Johan approached Leonard, who was constantly making noise and disturbing others. Then he asked Nathan to come to him. In a while I said, "This is not working at all now" and asked Leonard to come sit on the side. I continued giving instructions calmly; it was now quiet. The children were talking while walking, but they seemed enthusiastic. I praised them: "Good, it went quite well!"

I then asked them to lie down into a shape of a big X. There was noise. I tried

to stay calm. Then I said: "Hey, we are wasting your time now...Oh, God almighty!" I continued to Ike, shaking my head but smiling: "This is like a different group compared to last year..." There was some whining noise again.

I walked around the children calmly, thinking what to do next. I explained to Ike that I wanted some freezing and melting sounds. This worked somehow, although there was again talking and noise going on. Now, Ike asked them to be quiet, saying that it was not nice to play music when they were not listening. Ike's talking had a huge effect on the children; they were very quiet now.

I told them, "The goal for the next freezing is to be able to move your body without making sounds at the same time." It went better now. This worked somehow, but I could not say that they were concentrating or that the situation was dialogical.

I told them to find partners. A lot of noise! Leonard and Fred were wandering around. I said, "Hey hey, now we are waiting for some, when it is quiet we can start!" There was mixing and matching with partners. Leonard did not want to be Fred's partner. Someone called me, complaining: "They do not belong to our group..."

Meanwhile I had started the exercise for others, and kept settling the partnering problems for others. Elisa had a problem with her partner. I tried to sort it out, nodding to Ike to continue freezing and melting.

The children were restless from the onset. I was very calm, I tried to be positive and constructive, trying to really work with individual children, giving them attention and time. I was avoiding an authoritarian attitude.

I wonder if I should have taken a traditional teacher role here? What would it have changed for the rest of the project? I believed that we had already passed this stage where strong external authority was needed. I expected certain maturity – readiness for a dialogical relationship. The children were not ready for it, but I was, and I kept my relationship towards them as dialogical as I could. I was not letting the situation go out of hand, but I was very deeply committed to stay non-authoritarian.

I said, "Now, we are taking a risk. Let's put two groups together. Really, this was a mistake! Choosing partners and excluding others began again.

Julius, Quincy, Patrick and Vincent waited very calmly as the others tried to form groups! Something had been accomplished last year! These boys were quite rascals usually, but they all were there last year. They knew me, my way of working; they knew what kind of thing to expect. They seemed to be willing to make the class work.

I tried to negotiate so that Aaron would be accepted to a group. It didn't work, and Aaron walked away. The statues were created somehow, but the melting

was more like crushing.

Then I asked the children to come sit around Ike. He introduced the instruments. The children were quiet! They seemed interested. This seemed new, different, interesting – the atmosphere was nice. Ike told the background about the instruments and everybody listened.

After a while someone said: "Let's play tag!" It was a demanding voice. "Let's play earth, water and ship!" Another voice. First, I tried to say no, but gave up soon. I agreed to play tag in two groups. Good! "Everyone to a circle, quickly then!" I said. I tried to have them do a split in two groups, but there were again great problems!

I said firmly this time: "Not one soul who cannot make a split in two plays tag!" Nathan said: "I don't have a soul." Johan approached the circle. Finally we managed to make the split and started the game. After the first round I said, "It went quite well." I was calm and friendly. Leonard was making sounds, yelling. During the second round the children got more excited. Leonard kept disturbing others and Johan took him to the side.

I told them: "Now it is such a case that no one gets out of here before they can be silent and quiet for 30 seconds." My voice was firm, but not tense at all. I let children out even though Leonard was babbling constantly. He started making burping sounds but I did not notice him. He was the last one in the room. In the end, I just stood there staring at him. I knew I had to find another way to connect to him.

I did not know what to do with him. I couldn't even think. Just watching this class made me tired and depressed. But – my teaching had clearly changed compared to last year. There was no more tense voice. There was calmness, "no-teacherliness." I wonder how much the change of space had to do with my less tense voice? Here, in a smaller studio I did not need to holler.

The problem was that the children were in a different place than I – almost like they had "fallen out of the sled" during the summer, while my own journey had continued. Can I get them back on the ride?

A shock. Everything that we accomplished last year (if we accomplished ...) was in vain... This does not seem to make any sense. Why do I need to hit my head against the wall? The change of teacher has upset the class. There is no inner authority in the group. I need to carefully consider what can be done and what should be done. Many exercises that I had planned were left out.

This class was about me trying to steer the boat into one direction, when the wind was pushing towards another direction. Later, I when discussed with Ike, he recalled the first class being quite a shock for him, too:

Well, the beginning situation was, just the first time when they were all together there and. . . as I sometime mentioned there were those cases like directly from some psychology textbook . . . like when you were supposed to choose a partner then someone went sitting in front of the mirror and showed that this is my partner in the mirror and. . . then this other guy closed himself off everything and the only way he could take contact was . . . when he was supposed to touch someone with a paper roll then he hits others although he looks like he doesn't want to hit anyone but this is the only way he knows to take contact . . . or has such moments that he cannot take contact in any other way. It feels like that do I have the right to come and work with this kind of a group when I looked at it the first time.⁴

Later Ike developed a special relationship with Leonard. He paid attention to him from the first class on, and made a special attempt to connect to him whenever he had a chance. He said,

Well, there were for instance those cases that I in my mind classified, this one for instance, almost like an autistic case.⁵

I was lost with Leonard; his arrival to the group was a difficult challenge for me. I knew I somehow just had to find a way to try to include him, but the first attempt was a failure. This boy could not be ordered to behave or to participate. He did just the contrary.

⁴ Kyllähän se alkuasetelma oli, just se ensimmäinen kerta ku ne kaikki oli yhdellä kertaa mukana siinä ja . . . niinku mä joskus sanoinkin että siel oli niitä tapauksia ku suoraan jostain psykologian oppikirjasta . . . piti valita pari nii joku meni istumaan peilin eteen ja näytti tää on mun pari täällä peilissä tää . . . ja sitte yks sulkeutu kokonaan kaikesta ja ainut tapa millä se osaa ottaa kontaktia niin . . . ku sen pitäis kosketta toista jollain paperitötteröllä niin se lyö toisia niinku vaikka näyttää ihan siltä et se ei halua lyyä kettään mutta se ei osaa muulla tavalla ottaa kontaktia ihmisiin . . . tai niinku sillon sellasii hetkii et se ei pysty muunlaiseen kontaktin ottamiseen . . . tuntuu ihan että onko mulla oikeutta tulla tämmösen porukan kanssa töihin ku mie ensimmäisen kerran katoin sitä.

⁵ No siel oli esimerkiks niitä sellasia sellasia tapauksia niinku mie mielessäni luokittelin tän henki melkein niinku autistiseksi tapaukseksi.

October 5, 1998

Before the class. I feel insecure. I am worried. Can I plan at all – do I dare not to plan? What if I would just let go and trust my intuition. But planning creates security. Does it limit dialogue? All these people coming to watch. What follows from that? Maybe they want to show off? Trust yourself – trust humanity.

This time the class was divided in half. I had listed some activities in my notebook, but had not decided the order. The children came in, running around, playing tag. After a while I said, "All right, one more minute." As they settled down in a circle, I said, "Let's see what you remember from last time." My talking was very casual. We talked about last year's activities. My manner of being there was relaxed, I had a non-imposing attitude. I was like one of the group, not an authority. My teaching had become less structured. Here again, I was letting time pass abundantly. There was no sense of rush. To me, this feels dialogical.

I said, "Let's talk more later!" Now I wanted to get the activity started, but there were interruptions. I said, "We are wasting time again." When we got started, the activity went well: we tried to roll from sitting to lying very quietly. Then we reached to the ceiling, and fingers to toes. I reminded them that last year everyone was able to touch their toes with straight knees.

We continued with "one stops, everyone stops." After a while I asked them to make the stop and go clearer and sharper. This was difficult, and did not work. I said, "This turned into a sort of porridge." Was this about mastering the body? It seems like the body just kept going, the will was not strong or clear enough to make it stop. As if the body was detached from the mind.

Next, I asked the children to show different ways to travel. Quincy started immediately with a fast, short step with straight knees. He named it the penguin walk. Zachary continued from there with a hop with one leg extended in front. Everyone took part, following him, and Ike played. A direct exchange of ideas, movements, and names for them. There was a sense of immediacy in this moment. Strong presence. The feeling was intense, and dialogical.

Ulla continued with a fast, winding walk, Elisa skipped, Olivia jumped around. I had asked them to finish with a statue, and as Olivia stopped I said, "What a great stop!" Next it was Sebastian's turn. He made a wild run and dived to the floor, with noise. Then Aaron wanted to show, but he just ran around. I gathered the children around me saying, "I think we need to leave this and move on."

Everyone sat down and was quiet. I talked softly: "We are going to do something quite new now." I explained that Ike would be playing different sounds, and asked the children to listen carefully and move like the sounds make the body move. I gave them an incentive: if they concentrated really well, they would get to go and play with Ike one by one. This was the first real dance improvisation that we did. It demands courage to throw oneself into movement, and concentration. This is the basis for dialogue. Quite brave!

I reminded them about the need to concentrate. They stayed calm, as they got ready. The music started with soft quiet sounds. They looked around a little baffled, smiling a little. It was quiet. There was hardly any movement.

Matias began with an up-down movement that evolved into a rhythmical bouncing. Fred lay on his side, bending and extending his body. Aaron was bouncing his knees. There was some jumping. I let Zachary go and play, then Fred and Sebastian. Zachary came back to dancing. He did a big circling movement with his head leading, very relaxed and free. Aaron made sharp, interesting arm movements.

It is difficult for me to understand Zachary's overt attitude to dancing when seeing him dancing. He seemed to enjoy, he was relaxed, free and indulging. But when he talked about dancing nothing of this comes through. He told me already after the first year that he liked sports and math. After the second year he repeated that P.E. classes were better than my classes, because "there is all kinds of things, we take games . . . like soccer and basketball . . . it is much more fun"⁶ and he said that there was something to do all the time. He explained that they fooled around in my classes because they couldn't "persist." Since dancing may demand more concentration, it may be taxing at times. As it is difficult to for many children to move in a more controlled, conscious way that dancing sometimes demands, it seems clear that fast action entails a different kind of attitude and focus. The lack of concrete focus and clear meaning in some dance activities may make children give up trying and concentrating and thus, trigger a mode of not being able to persist. Still, Zachary's apparent engagement in dance movement makes me wonder, if he did not let himself admit that he sometimes enjoyed dancing.

After everyone had played, Ike praised them, saying that it sounded good. I said, "Now, let's try to remember one thing." As someone banged an instrument

⁶ : no sillä lail siel on kaikenlaisia, otetaan pelejä pelataan ja . . . vaikka futist tai pelataan koripallo . . . niin, siinon vaan, se on paljo kivempaa

as I talked, Ike said that for a musician interrupting him playing feels the same as for a taxi driver, if someone who took a taxi ride suddenly would jump on the brakes and grab the wheel. I agreed, and talked about the importance of listening. And they listened. My tone was friendly, casual, not moralistic or teacher-like. I was myself. I was not playing a role. A dialogical moment was created again.

I explained the next exercise, "leap across a ditch." It took a while to get settled again. I let time go, there was no rush. My use of time has changed from last year.

There were expressions of joy on their faces as they ran and leaped. Zachary did great leaps. Aaron made a stunt in the center. I told that now they can do their own movements across the floor. They did great movements, cartwheels, somersaults, etc. Then I asked them to take partners, and to put their backs against each other. Everyone found partners! I was moving quickly into the next thing.

I told them to rock back and forth. Everyone was involved, but loudly! I asked them to work with less noise. Then I asked them to hold their partners wrist, and to lean away from their partner.

Ike came amidst the children to play berimbau. We started turning around holding wrists and turning on the floor. The feeling became quite intense. I was turning them around, many children wanted me to do it for them. Dennis and Matias wanted to show me how they did it. Ike went and played to different couples as they turned. They seemed to be excited about his coming to play.

All this time, Fred was sitting in the side.

Already last year, I had tried to include Fred, to make him part of the group and to make other boys take him as partner. He, to me, seemed always to be left out or then he stayed out. I was worried about his situation in the class. In the second interview I delicately asked him if there was anything that had made him feel bad about the classes. He decisively said no, he did not admit that anything bothered him. Or, maybe he was not conscious of his situation, or it really did not matter to him. On the whole, his accounts of the whole project were positive.

We finished sitting down to the floor, close to each other. Even the boys were squeezing to come closer to me. It was quiet. Matias suggested that we would do the "waking up" thing. I said that those who wanted could lie down, others could stay sitting. Everyone lied down, except Aaron, who sat leaning against the mirror.

It was completely quiet. I let Sebastian go, and told him to wake up the next one. The boys touched each other using their foot. I told them to wake each other up, as they would want themselves to be woken up.

An enormous amount of things happened during this class. Very many positive things, I did not have to raise my voice at all. I stayed myself. The children just had a hopeless amount of noise and concentration problems.

My way of working was now less structured than before. I was giving more time and freedom. Was this a conscious choice? I do not really believe that; I do not remember making any decisions about this. Had there been an internal growth/change?

Unfortunately the children had meanwhile changed to a different direction. What if we could have grown together and had more time together? This really makes me think about the importance of the classroom teacher and other educators. A dance teacher meets the children just for a few classes here and there; it is impossible to really have an impact alone.

Good, relieved feeling. The children were still very active, but the situation was manageable. I did not feel nervous or frustrated. I felt that I encountered the children, at least momentarily. The activities seemed to reach them, not all the time, but everyone was involved at least momentarily.

Gathering in the end was an exciting experience. Even the boys squeezed themselves close to me; there was this exciting feeling of encounter, belonging together.

A new theme is evolving: listening...

In the beginning, waiting for the class to start, the children played tag – as in a miracle, they did not scream! Magnificent.

Then we did the stopping – the stops were not very sharp, but “creativity” started to appear, from that emerged a sidetrack of different ways to move in space. My new approach worked!! Here I feel success!

Partner work: YES, there was a taste of action, construction! Partner work, giving and taking weight, has opened the way to encounter, to dialogue.

This is going somewhere... ideas are developing in my mind

Rain trees
Listening
Peace
Silence
Magic

October 26, 1998

Before the class: A thousand thoughts in my head. Where is this research going? What am I looking for? What ever will I find?

I am trying to concentrate, to focus on this moment, on encounter, openness. Like last time, I have to have the courage to let go of plans...

Now I had the other half of the class working with me. The class began by a tag game. I encouraged everyone to save everyone. There was just a little noise. Boys were saving girls. Everybody took part. The atmosphere was happy, child-like. I noted: "What speed!" The noise level got lower, even though the speed got faster. They were full of zeal.

We gathered to the circle. I asked them to roll down quietly, and to close their eyes. Then I asked them to find their heartbeat and to put their hand over their heart, following their breath. On breathing in, we did a reach up sitting, and on out breath to we rolled down. Leonard was doing his own movements and making noise. I asked him to respect others' work peace.

We made a big circle, legs wide apart with soles of the feet facing each other. We tried to reach each other's hand, and said hello. We tried to close the circle of arms. Everybody else held hands except Leonard. Ike played quietly, Leonard was making sounds. Someone started rocking the arms, we all did it, someone started singing, and so everyone sang. The atmosphere was mellow.

The next activity was one stops, everyone stops. They asked if they would get to play. I replied that "First you have know how to listen and then you can play..." My tone was a little bit moralistic. It annoys me now a little bit, the way I looked at the children with my head tilted, preaching.

I praised them for not talking at the same time. It was very calm. The walking started. Leonard and Yuri, both new boys in the class, were sitting on the floor. I tried to get them to come along; they refused, saying, "I'm tired," and then I asked them to go to the side.

I said: "This is going quite well." I praised Quincy: "I think Quincy's movement looks so fun that we could all try it!" I asked if anyone else wanted to show and Julius did. Next, Quincy wanted to show again. As he had this enormous spree of energy, the others were watching, surprised and laughing. Julius was also on the move! Then, everybody could move in their own way. Everyone else was moving but Leonard and Yuri. Then I asked everyone to come sit down in a circle, and asked if it was easy to invent movements. They said it was. Quincy and Julius were still moving.

I said: "Now this is an important thing..." and continued to explain the next activity, reacting to different sounds. I also said that they might get to play also. It was quiet, calm. I continued: "Everyone must now try to concentrate on themselves..."

We found starting places, it was still quiet." Try to move just like the sounds makes you to move ... what kind of a movement the sound creates." It was very quiet and calm now.

The movement started right away with music. There were many kinds of movement and no one was imitating others. No one was disturbing. Leonard and Yuri watched; I sat next to them. Vincent was making Tai Chi -type movements! Julius was moving slowly with his eyes closed. I told Quincy to go and play. Ringo and Vincent were creating some rhythmical steps. Then Julius got to go and play.

Leonard fooled around with the camera; Johan dragged him away. Leonard and Yuri started moving, but made noise at the same time; Johan took them out. The movement went on; concentration was not constant, but there were no disturbances. Different players distracted the intensity. It would have been better to first have everyone really get the movement improvisation going, and add the playing later.

The activity shifted to just sitting and listening to others' playing. Leonard and Yuri came back to the room again, standing and listening. This free flowing, informal situation lasted for quite a long time. The music the children were creating was tolerable, not very loud. The atmosphere was listening. Clara and Patrick played the conga together.

Then Ike gave instructions: he wanted them to play together, first quietly, then louder, and to stop at the same time on a mark. Everyone was playing, it sounded exciting, not noisy. The instruments really seemed to interest them.

For some boys, playing the music was a really important part of the project. Julius and Aaron were especially inclined towards playing music. Julius, who disliked

performing and being filmed, but otherwise generally participated really well, emphasized playing music as the most fun thing in the project. Aaron, who was quite reserved and difficult to get into contact with, told me that everything was "ok" about the project, but became involved in the conversation when we talked about playing, mentioning especially "drums" as something he remembered and liked. Quincy said that he would have played all the time if that had been a possibility. Drums, indeed, seemed to fascinate these boys.

Then I asked them to start rocking with backs against each other. I directed them by touching. I was a little tense and talked faster. Two boys began turning around with holding one hand – I took it from there, and asked the others to do the same, leaning away from each other. There was some dragging, using too much force and noise. I asked them to stop and then to try to do it quietly.

The turning worked better now, but there was still noise. We tried to start slow and accelerate. The beginning was good, we concentrated a moment, took a breath in. It was quiet now, but the leaning was missing. We went on and Ike came to play amidst them. Nathan lay on the floor, I asked him to come try it with me; he did. This was wavering. We were not really getting into action, and stayed in a confused state of trying and trying again, but never quite getting there. I could have demanded more. I did not acknowledge Ike's effort to support the movement with playing.

I asked them to come rest for a moment, and explained: we would do rolling across the floor. It was quiet. I told them to roll softly, one at a time. It went beautifully. Julius and Quincy were really relaxed. I said: "Let's add some speed to the end – do you remember galloping?" Yuri, who had been watching all this time, came closer, it seemed like he would like to take part. Also Leonard came closer, following Yuri.

The galloping was happy and energetic! Yuri and Leonard were leaning to the mirror – I did not notice them. The action went on with more energy and flow! The activity ended, and I just asked them to rest on the floor. Julius complained how sweaty he was. Yuri and Leonard were now sitting on the window, Johan asked them to come down. I asked everyone to take a comfortable position; everyone was sitting or lying down, except Yuri and Leonard, who were wandering. Johan went to them. There seemed to be a silent agreement between Johan and me that he attended to these two boys, while I worked with the rest.

There was soft talking. I said, "This class has been relatively nice. I still would like you to learn to make less noise when you move. How could we make it happen? Or does it bother you at all?" Someone said "no." I continued, "If

everyone together would decide to move quietly it could feel quite different. Or what do you think?" I was suggesting, not imposing – I left it to them to think about this. It was their choice; there was openness and freedom. This was, for me, a dialogical moment. There was some nodding, not much response, though.

Vincent raised his hand, and suggested that could we would do the name game next time. They got excited. The atmosphere was friendly and warm; it was wonderfully soft and relaxed. We talked about rain trees (instruments) that they were making in craft. The atmosphere stayed calm. I was myself. Ike took part.

I asked them to describe the sound of a rain tree. Peace. Yuri sat in a corner; Leonard was lying in another corner. We talked about a "piece" with rain tree, that might become a performance, maybe a rain dance (I suggested). I said that we would not need to perform to anyone; we could just put together something for ourselves.

Vincent suggested that we'd do lying on the floor and then waking up one at a time. Everyone wanted to do it, so we did it. It was completely quiet! I woke up Tiina, and whispered to her to wake up a boy, she woke up Patrick. I whispered to him to wake up a girl etc. They left the room quietly.

I did not have to raise my voice during this class either. I could have been more demanding – where is the line between free will, spontaneous producing, self-directing and outside directions? Now I seem to foster positive atmosphere, free will and not focus on "outcomes." I believe that with a little effort I could have made them demand more from themselves. Now the feeling is a little bit careless (*laizzez faire*). It is not enough that we did things through. Somehow, the respect of the quality of work is lacking – well, not totally. Now the most important thing was to maintain the positive atmosphere. Did I get too scared of the first class; did I not believe that they could reach the next level of work?

The mingling around Leonard and Yuri must have taken some effort and energy out of me, although I did not show it.

After class Ike and I planned how to continue the project; the idea of using the rain trees, and the theme of listening feels good. A small dance piece out of the elements we have now.

The beginning of last class was quite restless; playing went fine. (Listening!) Showing different movements did not work, and partner work was not as concentrated as with the group that was here last week. There was still a lot of noise and excess energy, e.g. too much tugging in turning around with a partner holding wrists. The ending discussion

calmed down (me? the children? everyone?). Dialogue, being together happened again. To be there and ready, vigilant, inside the group. Letting dialogue happen...

There was also a hint of progress in the contact between boys and girls.

Today I talked with Johan on the phone: he said that the pupils have taken dance classes well, they have liked that they have been able to influence the content, that they have been allowed to do those same things they liked last year.

We planned the rest of the fall with Johan too, so that we could create a little dance piece with half of the group playing, the other dancing and vice versa.

The elements of the "piece":

Partner work: turning around, backs against each other, more

Rolling on floor

Reacting to sounds

November 9, 1998

This class, with half the group with me again, started with the name game. It was a little rough. Then we did walking and stopping and I said, "Now let's use different ways of moving – you do not need to just walk." I asked if anyone wanted to show a way of moving from place to place, and asked Ike to follow the tempo of the movement.

Ulla started with a simple jump; everyone followed her. There was enthusiasm: "me, me!" Elisa went, Zachary went – there was speed and joy. Olivia moved with joy, speed and in a childlike way; Gabriel moved on his back, sliding.

I asked them to come sit in a circle and started telling that I had a plan, but then, someone said "Let's play tag!" I replied that we had already played the name game, and that we will be doing statues later. Then I said, "Hey, I had a completely different thing to talk about." We were in a different place. The children hoped for more games, I had something else in mind. According to whom we should have gone? How flexible should the teacher be? Is it giving up or taking the children hopes into account? What is important here after all? I explained,

My plan, or actually it is Ike's, Johan's and my plan, and you can tell what you think about it and maybe we can change it if you want, is that we would make a very small piece for the last class this fall, when some people will come to watch the class. You could both play and move, and use the rain trees you are making in school.

I talked about listening, moving with the sounds. Someone said, "I want to play!" I replied, "We cannot play if you cannot listen to talking!" I praised them for the previous exercise and said that it seemed like their thoughts were somewhere else now.

We started reacting to sounds. Olivia and Elisa were in their own worlds. I waited for silence. Olivia was still fooling around. I waited quite long; finally it was quiet. Ike started with a loud sound, very nervous and sloppy movement came out. At least it was free! Many children were doing bizarre movements. There was giggling. The girls were nervous and sloppy. Olivia's hysterical behavior spread around.

Getting into groups was difficult; the girls were so hyper. Each group was to work with one instrument at a time. The task was to study the sound and find at least one movement to go with it. There was still shifting in groups, now some boys wanted to change groups. Olivia was making noise. Now I was strict: "Hey, now this is really impossible, you are ruining the whole class!" This time I think my tone in this situation was acceptable. It was about time to stop the nonsense. Despite my repeated kind efforts to make her stop her distracting behavior, she seemed not to respect the other children's right to concentrate and learn. As Ulla did not want to work with Olivia (that I did not wonder) the situation was hopeless. I realized that the class would not go on if I let her continue this.

When I asked Ulla if she had any negative memories of the school year, she remembered that some girls in the class had really bad arguments in the fall. She told that the arguments usually were started by Olivia and then everybody had to take sides. She said that she did not understand about taking sides. When she and Irene usually were good friends it often happened so that other girls took their side and then Olivia started calling them names.

The situation had gotten so bad that Ulla's mother had told her that she was not allowed to have anything to do with Olivia because she had talked about Ulla and her mother so badly to others. I knew nothing about this at the time of my classes. Had I known, I would not have tried to make them work together. It is very difficult for a visiting teacher to understand children's complex life situations.

With a little bit of persuasion I got the groups together, and finished giving

instructions. Ike worked with one group, I was helping another group. Ulla and Elisa worked well by themselves; Olivia sat and watched. It was peace and quiet, finally! I like this kind of working. It was self-directed, I was not in the center of action, there were many centers.

Henri and Dennis got to change their instrument. Henri was demanding: "Teacher! Teacher!" Dennis was playing, Henri showed a movement, and vice versa. I said: "This reminds me of some animal." Was this where our animal theme got started?!

Then I helped another group. Zachary did a wave movement, very typical for him! Gabriel was doing a rocking movement shifting weight from leg to leg, with an exquisite hand movement. I said: "Look what a great movement Gabriel has!"

Matias and Zachary were doing a big jump with a big movement in upper back and arms. The girls were showing a turn under the arms with a partner. The atmosphere was productive and industrious.

Then the groups showed and taught their movements to other groups. My voice was a little loud and tense now, I was a little anxious in organizing this and keeping everyone on task.

I asked Gabriel to show his movement. Matias was making fun of him, and Gabriel got very upset, chasing and trying to kick Matias. This was over very fast, and we did Gabriel's movement in a circle, ending it with melting.

Then Gabriel drummed, Matias and Zachary were doing a big jumping move. This move was later named as the "Africa jump." Gabriel did not stop drumming although I asked him to. I said, "Thank you," and again "Thank you" – he still drummed. I said with a friendly tone: "Now your motor keeps just running." Then he stopped. I did not tell him to stop. He stopped himself, using his will and choice. I think children should be let to make more choices for themselves, not to be always told what to do. They should be agents of their bodies and actions. That way would they learn to direct their bodies and actions considerately and constructively.

Olivia, Elisa and Ulla were showing next: everybody followed silently and was concentrated. I said: "Really great, really good!" Dennis and Henri refused to show. I offered to help, saying that their movements were really good. I showed their movements, the boys played. The new boys seemed shyer about showing. The children who worked with me last year had no problems in this.

Although Henri was new to the class, he was tentatively getting involved in the process. I never got really to know him as well as some other boys, he seemed a little

distant, and so I did not have a clear picture about his experiences of this work. Afterwards, he surprised me by telling me that he had really liked the project. When I asked him what he had enjoyed during the past school year, he told that he had liked "maybe that, that project, that Taikomo project."⁷ I asked him what did he like about it, and he said "it was always fun to come there."⁸ I also asked if there was something he didn't like about the project, he declined firmly. I still asked if he had done anything like this before. He said,

I have played in some Kindergarten some police.⁹

It strikes me that they kept connecting our class to play, and that there seems to be so few opportunities for anything like this for them in other classes and in their lives.

Of the newcomers Dennis was also getting the hang of it. He was more reserved, though. He also mentioned "the project" as something that he remembered of the school year. He did not tell what he thought about the project, but he did not mention anything else, telling, "nothing else comes to my mind."¹⁰ I asked what he remembered about the project, and he said "all the things that we did."¹¹

We continued with rolling from the corner. Gabriel and Zachary bumped into each other. Gabriel had a really angry expression on his face, the same expression when Matias made fun of his movement. They started wrestling, Zachary playfully, Gabriel seriously. I said, "Hey, now this is too rough, it is enough." I asked everyone to find partners and hold hands. Gabriel and Zachary continued wrestling. I said, "Hey, it is not wrestling time." The wrestling went on even rougher. I said, "What happened with you? Everybody, come down sitting! Hey, stop, stop! Zachary!"

Now Zachary tried to get away; Gabriel was chasing him. I went in between them, asking what happened. Meanwhile I told the others to start turning with their partner. Gabriel went and sat on the side.

I asked everybody to lie down to rest. Everybody was silent now. I walked around, calming them down. Gabriel was hanging from the bar – I went towards him, but he moved away from me. Then he rested by the wall. It was quiet,

⁷ ehkä se, se projekti, se joku Taikomo projekti.

⁸ no ku siinä oli aina kiva käydä.

⁹ oon mä jossaki tarhas leikkiny poliisii.

¹⁰ ei mul oo jääny muuta [mieleen].

¹¹ ne kaikki jutut mitä me tehtiin.

nobody moved. I woke up Ulla, and she woke up the next, etc.

Matias woke up Zachary in a nice, tender way. Zachary woke up Gabriel. Was this his gesture of reconciliation? Gabriel woke up the next child and ran out the room.

According to Johan, Gabriel was very quiet in class. In the interviews with me he talked a lot; he told about wild imaginative stories that he has. Now, today he seemed very vulnerable. A lot of emotions; almost too much to handle. I don't know why he was so sensitive today, what had happened before. Was it something at home or at school with friends? Who knows. But this makes me think how little teachers know and how helpless we are in understanding complicated social events and their backgrounds. I felt sorry for Gabriel. I wished I could have helped him.

Today Johan was absent and they had a substitute teacher. The boys especially were restless, even there were only eight children in the class today. The beginning was a little chaotic, but the main part, the working part was successful. Follow the leader in the beginning was spontaneous, free.

I was calm myself; I was present, awake. There were problems with Olivia in the beginning, in the end with Gabriel. Zachary worked great today, great effort. Dennis was careful, but enthusiastic. With Henri there was slight improvement. Gabriel was positive excluding the fight with Zachary. The boys are getting somewhere... maybe the girls a little bit, too.

Having a substitute teacher makes a difference. Some classes have had 18 different teachers during the school year, Johan told me. He agreed with me that it is important to build the responsibility for the discipline within the students, so that it would not be so dependent on outer authority. Now, they could not take responsibility:

If I am absent and there is a substitute and then I hear so unbelievable stories next day about what has happened there . . . I have said to [the Principal] that it is a difficulty that when I am away anything can happen.¹²

¹² Jos mä oon poissa ja siel on sijainen ja sit mä kuulen niin uskomattomii juttui seuraavan päivän et mitä siel on tapahtunu . . . mä oon [Rehtorilleki] sanonu et se on vaikeus et ku mä oon pois niin voi tapahtuu mitä tahansa.

He also told me that this particular day had been especially difficult, at least for the substitute teacher:

She had, I heard, cried in the teachers' lounge . . . why children are so terrible . . . water pipes had been torn off, boys had climbed on the water pipes they had made them into V-shape, then they all were replaced . . . so good morning, it looks like this today.¹³

Johan went on telling me that once he had a meeting with the school psychologist and left the children in the classroom to clean it up. When he came back there was a terrible noise in the classroom and as Johan went in and yelled at them he suddenly noticed that the Principal was standing in the middle of the room trying to tell them something.

Maybe it was better for me that I was not thoroughly aware of the larger picture when I was teaching. It might have intimidated me even more than I already was. Later these accounts help me understand the children and the world they live in.

Thoughts about Meri-Rastila (written on November 3, 1999)
I have an indulging feeling. The group is stronger than me. I am not an authority. But I am something, I guess. A negotiating partner. Do the children like to come to classes? I feel that they do.

Is "democracy" possible? Voluntariness within certain limits?

November 16, 1998

I feel a little bit tense. Will anything come out of this demo? I would like to start "choreographing." What happened to the process? How much time would be needed for all this?

"Hey, let's begin really briskly today as Ike has to leave before two!" My voice was energetic, happy, trustful. Julius came really close to me; he wanted to tell about his injured foot. His manner of approaching me was open and trustful.

With the second half of the class with me again, we started with the name game. I reminded that they were not supposed to hit with the newspaper roll,

¹³ Se oli kuulemma itkeny siel opettajanhuoneessa . . . miks lapset on noin kamalia . . . siel oli niinku vesiputket revitty pois, pojat oli kiivenny niitä vesiputkia pitkin ne oli saanu ne V:n muotoseks sit ne uusittiin kaikki . . . että hyvää huomenta, tän näköstä tänään.

just to touch. "If someone swings the roll, they get a time out, which means getting out of the game," I explained very casually. Leonard jumped in the middle, grabbed the roll, and acted roughly. I did not let him start. The game went quite well otherwise, but every time Leonard got caught, he started banging everyone with the roll, using both hands like it was a baseball bat. "Now, enough, enough, enough! This is just what I meant you were NOT supposed to do!" I took the roll away from him. "Now you can't be in the center anymore." I let him stay in the game, though. The game went on quite well.

Then I told that we would do reacting to sounds. I asked Ike to start with a faster tempo, and slow down later. He started really fast – the children got caught by surprise, they couldn't quite follow, except Quincy who got a flying start. Many children watched him smiling, with respect and surprise. A more continuous and more steady and clear beat would have been good first; to give them time to get the beat, find it in their body, and let movement grow and develop... Now the atmosphere was a little bit hysterical. There was freedom, yes, but no consciousness of body and movement.

Tiina and Belinda – the only two girls in class today – danced together nicely for a moment, then Belinda joined a boys' group doing some kind of shadow boxing, Tiina followed. Nathan sat on the side.

Tiina and Belinda were the two girls in the class who were easily able to work with boys. Tiina told me that she had learned to be with boys by playing soccer with them. She thought that boys and girls should play more together, and play games together.

After a while I praised them: "Great, there were many kinds of movement there." We continued with follow the leader. Quincy started and Vincent continued, showing a wonderfully childlike rabbit jump. Everyone else but Nathan did it. He said: "I won't move!"

Then I explained the next activity, searching a movement to a sound. The atmosphere was calm. After a while Julius yelled: "Eeva, Eeva!" and again. I went to watch, since they wanted to show their movement to me. Julius played, Quincy did a wild movement, and Vincent tried his best to follow.

We started showing the movements: Quincy and Vincent showed the first movement, Julius was playing. "Good" I said. Next Ringo was playing, but the other boys were hesitating to show. After a while Patrick decided to show. Then it was the girls' turn: Tiina played the steel pan, Belinda showed many movements, like she was improvising. The boys were following her contently. Maybe I should have demanded the girls to stay on the task. I wonder if Belinda did not understand the task because of language problems, or did they just choose to work this way?

Leonard and Nathan refused to show first, but then Nathan said, "There was one jump..." But when Leonard said that, in no case he was going to show it, Nathan withdrew. I said, "You are too critical to yourself" and tried to persuade Nathan to show with no success. I went on to tell about our plan, about a little "piece."

Nathan told me about the other group drumming in the classroom although they were not allowed to. He spoke to me like he was concealing important, confidential information, looking at me seriously. There was something significant in this moment. Nathan had been hassling with Leonard – it seemed like he regretted now, willing to participate now, but did not dare to show alone. There was a dialogical moment here between him and me. All this time he had been distant and restless, and now, here he was, open and trusting, and very close to me.

I continued to explain our plan; everybody was listening quietly. Then we did their suggestions from last time: one was statues. Nathan and Leonard did not want to do it. I told them to observe the others, then. It was calm. Nathan talked to Leonard, suggesting something. I could only hear that Nathan talked about their suggestion from last time. I suggested that they do first statues, and then we could do their suggestion in the end. They agreed. The dialogical moment from a few minutes ago carried on to this incident. Nathan somehow found a different approach, and wanted to negotiate with me, but was definitely keeping his will and power to himself.

They did statues with some fooling around. There was no sensitivity in their touching each other.

We continued with sitting and rocking back to back. I went around, helped the children by touching, talking softly. It was a difficult task for them: their necks were stiff; they had difficulties in trusting and letting go of their weight. We continued with turning around holding hands. There was noise and they were using too much force; I advised them to use less force. It went a little better. Nathan and Leonard were on the side.

I said, "Well, it went quite well." I reminded them of not needing to pull each other, and that they only needed to lean away, and then the turning would happen almost by itself. Nathan responded, "Then the other one lets go and...", demonstrating a fall. "Yes, the important thing is to trust your partner that he will not do such a thing," I replied. Then Nathan said, "I cannot trust Leonard at all!"

Here he was still taking part in a conversation that is meaningful at least to me. We did not discuss this further. I wish we had started to discuss trust. Why didn't we? I was still learning to support

meaningful dialogue in a big group, to involve others without manipulating the dialogue; this would be “technical dialogue.” (I will discuss technical dialogue later, on p. 307). I did not trust the process enough. I still had a time frame of a dance class structured in my head that does not allow enough time and flexibility for dialogue.

I told that we do “haarhippa” (a tag game) next, and said that this was Nathan’s suggestion. I told them to move silently, and to try to slide through the legs smoothly. Then I said, “Hey, now I have an idea...” My idea was that the one who would get caught would close her/his eyes, and try to feel when s/he was saved. I was spontaneous, myself, genuinely excited about my new idea, a little bit child-like.

My idea was not very warmly welcomed, and I said, “I leave this up to you – you can try it.” There was still resistance. Nathan asked everyone: “Who wants to do this in a usual way?” They voted. Everybody, unanimously, wanted the usual way. My idea was voted down. I was not disappointed. Nathan took the lead, from a dialogical moment grew out a situation, where a child took over the initiation and power in the class. He used power in a democratic, constructive way. I have no problem with this. I liked my new idea, but this was not the time for it. This is where I want my pupils to get: shared power, meaningful conversation, negotiating skills.

The game was beginning; it was quieter than before. The speed got faster. After a while I asked everyone to come and rest. There were sounds and moving around. As they calmed down, I talked softly about breathing. It was quiet. Now Leonard was making sounds, when I approached him he escaped. I praised him that he had been very well with us today.

We did some shaking and stretching; “Autch, autch” went the children. Then we formed a circle, with soles of the feet touching neighbor’s soles of the feet, saying “hello” to the next person, touching hands. We almost succeeded to reach and hold hands on both sides.

Then we chatted. More suggestions came up. We did group statue with numbers. The atmosphere was nice. Some children would have liked to do the statue again, but I refused. The class was over. I just asked them to walk out calmly, and said bye bye to them.

My physical appearance tells about exhaustion. Also, watching this class made me tired. I am almost too tired to write. There were so many things – my powerlessness and on the other hand willingness and trust that there are possibilities to help. But there is too little time and strength. The discussions in the circle were very soothing; a feeling of community was present. Also, I sustained being myself.

I would really like to know more about Nathan, to understand him better. It was very interesting how he used his power. He is a sharp kid.

November 29, 1998

"Hey, all, come and talk a little, we have a load to do today." The children were moving freely but calmly in the room. This was a class for the whole group again.

"Look!" Sebastian showed me a jump. There was energy and enthusiasm in the room. I asked everyone to sit down. A girl said, "Maybe a bigger circle" and I replied, "Yes, you can make it a little bit bigger." A child initiated – I reacted. "It is nice to see you all together," I said. I was myself, casual and relaxed.

I explained what we were going to do; everybody was listening nicely. I showed them the script I had made out of the movements they created; it included 18 different movements, and four parts. "Are there any difficult movements?" someone asked. "No, the movements are not very difficult because they are movements that you created," I replied. I also told that there were eight different instruments used to accompany certain movements, and that later they would decide with Ike who would play which instrument.

We went through the script, and started organizing the beginning so that group A lined up to one side of the room, and group B to the other, according to their length. The children walked calmly to their places. I asked Johan to help lining up the other group and walked quickly to the other group. My appearance became more tense. As if my body was saying – how will this work? I did not quite trust the process.

The intensity and my nervousness were increasing. I walked back to the other side of the room and asked everyone to stay still. Leonard did not want to take his place. Someone told on Nathan touching the camera. "Please don't," I said quietly to Nathan and ran across the room again. Finding everyone's partner was difficult. A loud and angry voice (a girl's) said, "He is in a wrong place, he was supposed to be in the very back!"

How could I have done this differently? This partner finding problem was so big. Maybe I could have first asked them to choose a partner about the same height first, and forget about A and B groups... but then, they probably would have started to quarrel about who is whose friend today, as they had done so many times before. There are these basic things, like partner work that the school does not support the children with. It is a load for a dance teacher to have to start from these very basic things. The society, the school system, does not seem to value these kind of basic social skills. But without them, the children are handicapped in this kind of situation, where co-operation is needed.

Co-operation. Community. Constructive work.

Leonard came finally to his place. There were more angry comments, on the other hand, the situation was just mildly restless, it was just not constructive. Finally I asked, "Does everyone have partners now?" They replied, "Yes!" It was not that bad, after all.

I told them to take the beginning position, on their knees, heads down. I was more relaxed now. "Now, listen ..." I sounded like a director, or choreographer now. They started rolling towards the center. Everyone found their partner, put their backs against each other's backs, and started rocking back and forth. There was a lot of noise; "Can I have silence, please – everybody stop for a moment." I asked them to try to do this without sounds, and as slowly as they could.

We continued with "the wave", partners facing each other. I said, "That is really great how Matias and Zachary are doing this simultaneously – it looks really great, it looks clever." Then I said, "That looks good too, when you go against each other" to a different couple.

I asked group A to line up to go to the other room with Ike to rehearse playing. I asked the group that stayed with me to concentrate because we only had this class before we would get an audience. "Oh, in that case I will not do this," said someone, and another child said, "I'm gonna skip school that day."

There was resistance to showing this to an audience. I said that it will be just a few people, and pointed out that there had been people watching their class every time. There was more resistance now. I raised my voice a little bit: "Whether we will have audience or not this is your thing and you should do it well."

I started a sentence for three times without being able to finish it. The children were calm, though, the interruptions were minor, but I demanded a lot now. When we started rehearsing, everybody was quite attentive. We went through the first sections, and everyone was still with me, and we went on. I said in a quite friendly tone that they should try to concentrate just a little bit more. Then, I paused to figure out how to do the next part. The children waited patiently when I was thinking aloud. As I suggested a solution, I asked them if it would work, they said yes. Patrick was very close to me: he seemed interested.

Physical proximity and a feeling of closeness also in a mental level comes close to my idea of encounter.... The atmosphere in this "figuring out phase" was quite nice. No one disturbed, it felt that I was trusting the process now, I was not nervous even though I was not sure how to proceed. I like being able to stop and think without fearing that the situation gets out of hand.

We continued into the third section, which was a slow part again. It went quite

well. I wonder if they were able to sustain this for so long because these were their own movements.

Then there was some noise outside the studio. Ike had problems with the other group. I became restless, my tempo got faster, and I started rushing. We practiced turning under arms holding partners' hands ("pancake"), and the turn with one partner going down and turning on the floor. There was enthusiasm, and I praised them: "Just so."

Ike came in the room. They had not had much success. The group that had worked with me lined up nicely. I exchanged a few words with Ike; I said "quite surprising" that they had given Ike a hard time.

This was the most difficult moment in the project for Ike, he told me later. According to him that day he was close to a nervous breakdown. He said that he is a person who gets enthusiastic easily, but then, on the other hand

. . . it may feel that this is not going to work . . . a long winter and there were such moments that I just leaned back . . . I had those weak moments then when I tried to teach them, when I tried to teach them something . . . Luckily I realized that I should not teach so terribly much . . . I thought that I'll let them do what they do and enjoy it and let them enjoy.¹⁴

He continued, recalling the whole process that,

Like this, afterwards, it is so that you want to like the best, the best things stay with you, the human mind works that way like, if I would keep mourning the class when I tried to teach the girls to play drums . . . so I could not have gone through the whole thing to the end, so there it goes, you keep going as there is also positive feedback.¹⁵

I am really glad that he persisted, and that the next group worked better with him.

I told the other group who was getting ready to go play with Ike to "behave,"

¹⁴ . . . mulla saattaa myös tuntua ettei tästä taia tulla mitään . . . pitkä talvi ja niinku sellasia hetkiäki että mie niinku vähä enemmän otin niinku takanojaa vaan . . . mulle just tuli niitä heikkoja hetkiä sillon ku just ku mie opetin niille niitä, ku mie yritin opettaa niille jotaki . . . onneks mie sitte tajusin että miun ei pidä opettaa hirveesti . . . mie aattelin et antaa niien tehdä mitä ne tekkeevät ja nauttii siitä ja antaa niitten ite nauttii.

¹⁵ Näin jälkeinpäinhän siin on sekin että ainahan sitä halua niinkun parhaat, parhaat asiat niinku jää, ihmisen mieli toimii sillä tavalla että, jos mie surisin niinku sitä kertaa ku mie yritin opettaa niille tytöille rumpujen soitto . . . niin enhän mie olis jaksanu niinku koko juttuu loppuun asti että siinhän se mennee että kuitenkin sitä jaksaa ku on sitä myönteistäki palautetta siinä saa kaikella tavalla.

and to the group that came in to keep their “lips zipped up.” I let them read the script. “I don’t know what got into you in the other room” I said, and told them to tell themselves to behave. It sounded a little odd. This way of addressing the children with a moralizing, preaching tone could be a reminiscence of my old “teacherliness.”

I waited until it was quiet. The script went around, there was talking and noise. A concentration or focusing exercise would have been needed here.

I said, “Now we just start working...” They still interrupted me. I didn’t let them, but they still did. Then I raised my voice: “Hey now really. Now I have not once before gotten mad at you – this is the very first time now. I have a really long nerve, but when it breaks it means that something is really wrong.”

It was silent for a little while – when I continued, there was still some movement and very little noise making. I said firmly that we have just this class-maybe their only opportunity to do something like this.

There was something now with the children. They just couldn’t make themselves calm down. What was this restlessness about? Something in today’s world is wrong. The school atmosphere, the manners and behavior culture at schools, TV programs including horrible news, videos, videogames, internet etc., maybe even food additives and of course, increased insecurity overall – and what ever, seems to make the children just so vulnerable and unstable.

I continued, firmly again, that now they just should try to do this for a half hour, an after that decide if it was fun or not. Aaron commented that he did not like it, and I said that everyone should have a chance to decide for themselves if they like it or not, and that if a few children do not like it they do not have the right to spoil the experience from everyone else. I think that this is a good justification – one that I used later in the spring too, when we discussed how to deal with boring moments in rehearsing.

I said, “I am now a little bit upset because I went through a lot of trouble figuring this thing out. Do you now want to go on into the next movement?” This was a brave question... I let them decide. The answer was positive and I started to explain. But there was still an interruption; Henri was making noise. I said again very firmly: “Now this noise must stop! My throat becomes sore and my ears hurt...”

Something in my tone, even though it was firm, was caring. I can’t quite explain my relationship to them when I was mad at them. My “getting mad” was somehow conscious, chosen and controlled by me, and I was somehow trying to continue respecting them. I spoke from my own point of view, and tried not to point out to any particular child.

It seems to make a difference also for children how they are being disciplined. Olivia

remembered Anita as someone who never yelled. On the other hand, she said that "Johan was quite nice in the beginning but now a little time has passed and he does yell and such."¹⁶ I asked her if it was unpleasant when a teacher or an adult yells; she said yes, and that,

It can be said in a normal voice, it is not necessary to yell . . . he can say it in a more peaceful voice.¹⁷

To me this tells about her need for respect, even when she has done something wrong. I hear this same desire often from my own children. They really object being yelled at.

Now I continued as if nothing had happened. The group was with me, but somehow they were limp. I did not stop for a little noise making anymore, but reminded as we went on that I did not want to get mad again. Johan was helping Ike, so he was not in the room, and in a while I said, "This is quite unbelievable how you behave when your teacher is not here," pointing out to the whole group now. Here this interesting issue about the source of discipline again. Is it an external authority, or is it the self controlling self?

The rest of the movements went well, and we sat down. It was quite quiet now, quite good atmosphere. We practiced one more movement and had a water break. Zachary, Aaron and Matias stayed in the room and practiced cartwheels. Then it was the time to put the groups together and do the whole thing with music!! What is going to happen....?

There was waiting, setting the instruments. Many children were practicing cartwheels and other tricks. There was some wrestling, and something like tag going on. It was like a recess. I now remember what Johan said about their behavior on recess. He said that they seem to have their own "thing" going on, boys and girls playing movement games together, with more action and variety in their movement than other children. Maybe some things we did in the class, after all, carried on to their peer culture and gained a different level of meaningfulness for them. Maybe the activities we did in class gave them tools for constructive co-operation in physically active play.

I asked them to find their beginning places. Now the group that just worked with me was calm, sitting quietly on their places. The group that came in was

¹⁶ Oli Johan ihan alus ihan mukava mut sit nyt vähä aikaa on menny niin kyl se sit huutaa ja sem-mosta.

¹⁷ Kyl se voi sanoo sen ihan normaalisti ettei tartte huutaa . . . se voi sanoo sitä rauhallisemmalla äänellä.

now restless. Finding the partners they had earlier took time.

I asked everyone to be silent and to put their heads down. When they would hear the chimes, they should start rolling slowly, find their partners and put their backs together. Now this went quite well. They did the wave; I used an image of sea. They turned to face each other, and then towards the mirror, and did the “animal listens” movement, and next the fast walk following Ulla. This went surprisingly well. Nathan and Julius went to play, as Ike called them by nicknames they had invented for themselves.

Later Ike told me about this nickname incident as a very meaningful incident for him:

. . . just like this companionship when those boys come to say that don't call us by our own names, call us such and such now and then when I called them by those names they practically winked their eyes to me that we are like the same gang so that feels like after that I could ask them any help or to do anything they are really mates.¹⁸

It requires sensitivity from adults to receive these cues and take it on from there. Maybe it is just that which is important: realizing when you are being tested for trust in children's terms, and then, to fulfill that trust, to get in the game and play it right.

The rehearsal went well, everyone was working. Then, we had to finish: “Hey, do you know that we are running out of time today...” We chatted a little bit and the class was over.

I was more like a director-choreographer now. It was a different “role” although the movements were children's own. Managing a big group – well, that is a skill that is sometimes needed. A new role... it is interesting to see how the project directed what happened. However, just like when I “got mad” to the children, my role as choreographer-director was somehow adapted. Still, I would hope for more trust in the process: more space and time, just like in the “figuring out” phase earlier.

I am most myself as a choreographer-director, taken that the process carries itself. That is a place where I would like to be. I need to develop this kind of work more – for my sake, at least.

I did not write anything after this class, because I had a long talk with Ike on our way back to the department. He was depressed about not having been able to manage the group. He said he was really thankful now that he never became a schoolteacher, as he one time had planned to.

¹⁸ . . . just semmonen toveruus just ku ne pojat tulee sanomaan että älä sano meitä omilla nimillä että kutu meitä näillä nimillä nytte ja sit sen jälkeen ku mie kutuin niin niillä nimillä niin ne suurin piirtein iskee silmää että me ollaan niinku samaa jengä ja tuntuu että sen jälkeen mie voisn pyytää niiltä vaikka mitä apua tai vaikka mitä tekemään ne on ihan kavereita.

December 14, 1999.

Last class this fall. I am nervous. There will be an audience. I am not sure how the children will do. There was resistance, am I pushing them into a direction they would not want to go?

The class started with a discussion in a circle. It was tense in its tone, the children were giving me a little bit hard time, not telling their real names, when I asked them to introduce themselves to our guests. Then we began with settling down to beginning places. It was restless and noisy and took time. I told them that the playing would not start before it was quiet. The rolling was too fast, as was the rocking.

Later I found out that some children disliked the beginning of the piece. That was almost the only part "choreographed" by me. Rolling and rocking with backs together were movements that we had practiced this fall, and I wanted to include them. Nathan, for instance, said that he liked the piece, but there were "some movements that I didn't like . . . there is two, rolling on the floor and the wave."¹⁹ He repeated later, when I asked him what he would like to change in the piece that he would like to take these two movements out. Also Patrick and Aaron said that they did not like the rolling in the beginning. When commenting on photographs about the piece, Quincy said that "this is an irritating part,"²⁰ referring to a picture when they were leaning their backs against each other.

I walked among the children, giving instructions. Now there was waiting, figuring out who will play next. It was a wonder that they stayed in their places this well during the waiting.

I repeated, "Please don't start before it is quiet." Then turn towards the mirror – for a moment everyone was engaged. I praised them: "Good, good! Let's have a small break." I directed the children who were playing gently back to the floor to continue. Again, figuring out who will play and with which instrument. The others were sitting and waiting relatively nicely.

Next movement was "animal listens." I forgot the gallop. I must have been nervous, because I forgot things! It was restless again, as players changed and the rest tried to settle into two rows. Then I noticed: "We left out the samba step – let's do it

¹⁹ jotain vaan sellasii liikkeitä oli mistä en tykänny . . . niitten kaks, se kierii siin maassa ja sitte se lainehtiminen.

²⁰ tää on ainaki ärsyttävä kohta.

next time. We forgot also the jump back and forth – I goofed.”

The Africa jump was quite messy, as was the dive. Now Ike asked when was Aaron going to play. I said that it was the movement that we forgot. Ike said that he thought that Aaron had to get to play.

I said, “We’ll do the whole thing again soon.” Again, I said, “The players decide when to start. Do not start before it is ready.” The turn on the floor went quite well, into a circle. “Now let’s have silence for a while . . .” It was calmer now. It took time before we got into the next movement but when we did it, it went relatively well. Then I said calmly, but firmly: “Rain trees down, drums quit.” Then, rolling on bottoms, knees and feet. I praised Aaron. “Great Aaron – good Aaron – wow!” And again: “Good Aaron, that is really great – hey, let’s stop for a moment and see how Aaron does this turn.”

The others watched as Aaron spun on the floor and then tried to do it themselves. I praised many children. Some of them said, “Watch Eeva,” and “Like this Eeva?” What is the significance of this little moment? The children wanted to show, they wanted to be noticed – this seemed to be meaningful for them.

We continued with Gabriel’s movement. It was quite calm now. The partner section was next. It went quite well also. It was a little chaotic; there was a lot of loud talking. They used a lot of force again, pulling each other. This became more and more messy. Leonard and Henri were playfighting, very lightly.

Aaron and Henri plugged the fan in the wall. I went to unplug the fan, and asked Aaron to take his sweater off. He didn’t. “The fan stopped!” yelled Henri. Aaron and Henri went and plugged it in again. I did not notice it. Maybe Aaron was really hot, and still wanted to move, but for some reason did not want to, or could not take his sweater off. I think he was always wearing a sweater...

We got into a circle. “We have one movement left now -hey! The last movement.” I told them that then we would have a break, and would do the whole thing again. There was resistance! Aaron got up and picked up a rain tree. I called him back. He sneaked towards the fan, looking if I noticed him. I did notice him soon. “Aaron, Aaron hey, come here!” Either Aaron was seeking my attention or else he was nervous about the audience. This was not like him; he was not usually this “wild.” Henri was following Aaron all the time. Every class seemed to have one or two children, different each time, who were being restless.

Now there was clearly exhaustion – the children were tired. Not physically, but they couldn’t concentrate any more. They complained. Johan interrupted: “Be quiet now – full silence now and work peace for Eeva and everybody!”

We began tag. I explained, and asked if everyone understood, they replied they did. The game went well. Although I had thought that we'd do the whole thing again, I said that we would not because they were tired. I said also that I understood them, since Christmas was so near. But instead, I said, we had two suggestions: "Now we will do number statue game." "YEEE!" the children went.

The game went quite well, although the statues were not quite clear, and the melting in the end was restless. I did not even try to get them to calm down. I just asked if they still want to do tag. "Yes" they replied. We did a silent tag. Johan interrupted again: "Hey, whoever makes noise gets out of the game."

We got into a circle. To finish we did the "fan thing." They lay down on the floor in a big X-shape. Aaron got to plug on the fan. It was quite quiet; I reminded them that girls would wake up boys and vice versa. I waited until it was silent and walked around, helping them calm down by touching.

The atmosphere was odd. There was waiting, suspense before they went to touch each other, then they did the touch with suddenness. The touch was very light, just a little flick. There was some movement. Henri refused to touch a girl; I let him go. Belinda grabbed Patrick, who escaped. Zachary, the last one, wanted to touch Johan in the end, but forgot to wait until he himself was touched. I said that it was a nice idea.

This was an odd class. I was certainly nervous about the audience; just rehearsing with the whole group was a challenge itself. I got mixed up, as did Ike. I think we could have been better prepared, who plays when and what, for example. There would have been less waiting. On the other hand, I am interested just in those moments of uncertainty, whether the process will carry over those unstructured, confused moments. I am interested in building the children's responsibility over themselves as group members in those situations... so that they would not always be in a leash. In a creative, artistic work there often is a lot of loose time, planning, waiting and insecurity.

The children were more restless than usual, did the Christmas time with all the hassle have its input in this? It is also the darkest time of the year. They also might have had a basic resistance about the whole thing and the audience coming to watch.

My meaning, on the other hand, was not to give a model class for the audience; quite the contrary – to let them see the roughness of this work, and the kind of world that the children live in and that I face when working with them. There is so much to learn and think about in all this. I keep thinking about the task that art teachers are supposed to be fulfilling in schools. I did not want to give the children one more fragment to their already fragmented worlds. I wanted to sense what they needed from me and wanted from the process, and keep my faith in the power of imagination, bodily and artistic experiences. I thought that if I were able to keep my faith, some of it might spread to the

children. But at the same time I felt a need to understand where they are and what is meaningful for them. Their lives were filled with unmeaningful "learning" experiences; I did not want to add to that.

Coming to terms with time: Letting go the fear of freedom

My classes during the first year were thoroughly planned, structured and pedagogically "sound."

They represented typical creative dance pedagogy, where the teacher is responsible for the aims, content and structure of the class. Although the tasks are open ended, the teacher controls time structurally and uses time efficiently.

Often there was a feeling of haste, like we were in a hurry or had a lack of time. I used phrases like "we are losing time" or "wasting time" during the classes, and I also talked fast. I went "through the exercises fast, being tense as if I was afraid of something." The impression of being "too efficient, too much content, too quickly" reflected this time-efficiency.

It seems like I was going with the flow; I let myself get drawn in the hectic tempo of life in the school and the children's lives. I was not secure enough to search for peace, or I was only vaguely conscious of the haste at that time. A few times I reflected that "there must be time, space for absorbing," and that I would desire to "give space" and "stop the hassle," but was unable to make it happen.

Something happened to me during the summer. "My use of time has changed from last year," I noticed viewing the classes of the second fall. "My teaching has become less structured. Here again, I am letting time pass abundantly. There is no sense of rush," I reflected. Although I occasionally still used phrases like "We are wasting your time now," the sense of rushing was gone. Even when time was "wasted," I did not become anxious: "It took a while to get settled again. I let time go, there was no rush." I managed to stay calm in chaotic situations, and rarely felt an urge to rush. I noticed that "my way of working is now less structured than before, I am giving more time and freedom" and thought that occasionally I was even giving too much time.

The process of changing had started for me, and there was no stopping it. Becoming more and more critically reflexive launched an internal reorganization of values and ideas, that now became manifest in my teaching. Freire (1972, 15) notes that "critical consciousness, they say, is anarchic; others add that critical consciousness may lead to disorder." I began to question my pedagogical

practices and the thinking behind it that I had constructed during almost 20 years of experience in teaching. I was gaining courage to let go of tight structure despite the fact that I was risking efficiency and order in the classroom. The shifting had certainly started, the old, secure order was gone, and I was in a state of flux. I indulged myself in the flow of events, tasting the feeling of freedom it created.

Freedom is an essential concept in critical pedagogy, as well as in dialogical philosophy. In both views however, freedom is relative: it is not an end in itself. It is always joined with responsibility. Freire writes,

Freedom without limit is as impossible as freedom that is suffocated or contracted . . . The great challenge for the democratic-minded educator is how to transmit a sense of limit that can be ethically integrated by freedom itself. The more consciously freedom assumes its necessary limits, the more authority it has, ethically speaking, to continue to struggle in its own name . . . Freedom becomes mature in confrontation with other freedoms . . . (1998b, 96)

According to Freire (1972, 42) critical, or liberatory pedagogy aims at authentic existence, it aims at freedom from oppression that prevents human beings from becoming fully human. For him, freedom is not a gift, and no one is liberated by others. But no one liberates himself alone, either: freedom is a result of dialogue and praxis that lead to conscientization, i.e., critical consciousness.

Freire explains the process of liberation as follows. Humans, as conscious beings, exist in a dialectical relationship between the determination of limits and freedom. As a limited life situation becomes an object of cognition and perception, human beings become critically objective of reality. As they perceive these 'limit-situations' as obstacles to their liberation, they can respond to them by 'limit-acts': acts that intend to overcome limit-situations rather than passively accept the given. Freire says that it is not limit-situations themselves but rather the way we perceive them, that creates hopelessness: "As critical perception is embodied in action, a climate of hope and confidence develops which leads men to attempt to overcome limit-situations." (Freire 1972, 72). This is how praxis transforms reality.

This is the kind of process that I was going through while the project was continuing. I perceived myself being in a situation where I was teaching without really realizing what and why, and whose advantage was in question. As I had

opened my senses by searching for dialogue, what I saw made me question my own practice. Where was I rushing? Who is telling me what should be done here? Should we not look for the content of our sessions together? These questions made me realize that the limits are set mostly by my own thinking, and that I can transform myself and the world around me by reflection and action, by praxis.

My quest for freedom was set out by my search for dialogue, and I began to realize that there couldn't be dialogue without freedom. Freedom, in Buber's view, is just this: becoming free or independent is not a "dwelling-place," an end or purpose in itself; it is a "foot-bridge" for human beings to commune and to covenant with other human beings, the world and our destiny:

... it is the nature of freedom to provide the place, but not the foundation as well, on which true life is raised. (1947, 90)

Buber asserts that freedom in itself leads nowhere, it cannot be made use of in itself: "It is the run before the jump" (1947, 91). He challenges our tendency to understand freedom as the opposite of compulsion; instead, for him, the opposite of compulsion is communion:

Compulsion is a negative reality; communion is the positive reality; freedom is a possibility, possibility regained . . . Compulsion in education means disunion, it means humiliation and rebelliousness. Communion in education is just communion, it means being opened up and drawn in. Freedom in education is the possibility for communion. (1947, 91)

Freedom is also a question of trust. Trusting the process became increasingly significant for me during this fall. "I would hope more trust in the process, more space and time...." I reflected. Loose time, waiting and figuring out when the teacher (choreographer, director) is going through an internal or external dialogue about what to do next, has started to interest me. I would like to invite the children to participate in the decision-making process: for example, one day, they "waited patiently when I was thinking – I was thinking aloud, and asked their opinion. As I suggested a solution, I asked the children if it would work; they said yes."

Occupying free time is also learning to perceive and make use of what is going on around you. Often it seems to me like the world is so full of programmed

stimuli to which children are supposed to respond in a certain way, that they are losing their capacity to make choices using their intuition and free mind.

I do not anymore feel that it is necessary to plan every moment of the class, and to program the children through the entire class. I am also interested to see how children make use of loose time. I wish that they would learn to fill empty slots of time by occupying their minds and bodies with something: watching others, relaxing, stretching, talking quietly, thinking, or whatever that does not distract the process for others.

Consequently, ideas like "time on task" have begun to feel suffocating to me. These ideas determine the course of the process, and lock it to a set direction. Measuring efficient class time and trying to eliminate "non-efficient" class time negates the possibility of multiple simultaneous processes that may also be valuable for students. It predicts learning outcomes and deletes the element of surprise from the process. Moreover, using Maxine Greene's words,

Distracting the young from the [sic] their own perceived landscapes and shapes, we teachers insist on the givenness of predetermined explanatory frames. (1995, 74)

This may, indeed, seem radical from a curriculum planning point of view. However, new ideas on curriculum, like emergent curriculum, are developing. Emergent curriculum has been developed with young children in relation to Reggio Emilia approach in Italy. It means that the curriculum is co-constructed by children, teachers and parents, and that children's ideas and interests are respected. The curriculum goals are connected with children's goals in responsively. (Cadwell 1997, 69) Emergent curriculum has been successfully implemented in dance education in a Children's Centre in Melbourne, Australia, where dance was part of a larger collaborative study known as the Octopus Project. In this project, four-year-old children's aesthetic and intellectual values were appreciated as the children were co-creators of the curriculum. (Bond 1997, 366)

Looking from a perspective of postmodern curriculum theory a new way of thinking about curriculum may become more acclaimed in the near future. William Doll says that a postmodern perspective has enormous implications for education:

I believe a new sense of educational order will emerge, as well as new relations between teachers and students, culminating in a new concept of curriculum. The linear, sequential, easily quantifiable ordering system dominating education today – one focusing on clear beginnings and definite endings – could give way to a more complex, pluralistic, unpredictable system or network. (Doll 1993, 3)

Indeed, Doll sees that this “new and subtler form of order” will drastically change the relations between teachers and students; the relation will epitomize more a group of people interacting together in the mutual exploration of relevant issues, rather than “a knowing teacher informing unknowing students” (1993, 4). Albeit these developments largely still have failed to become manifest in educational practice, these views are optimistic and progressive, and are related to ideas of critical pedagogy. Doll’s thinking resembles Freire’s ideas also in his stance on authority, and Buber’s emphasis on community, and also the view they both share, namely, the importance of dialogue. Doll claims that control as external imposition is firmly embedded in modernist thought. Alternatively, the postmodern view of control is quite opposed to the modernist view in that it assumes authority to lie within the “situational parameters” and thus, he speaks about auto- or self-control. (Doll 1993, 167) The implications for education, again, are crucial:

. . . the teacher’s role is not abrogated; it is rather restructured and resituated from being external to the student’s situation to being one with that situation. The authority, too, moves into the situation. Questions of procedure, methodology, and values are not decided in the abstract, away from the practicalities of life, but are always local decisions . . . (1993, 167)

The teacher’s role becomes even more crucial here, says Doll, as the teacher becomes an enforcer and an interpreter of other’s values, a leader from within. He reinforces the meaning of community in this process:

. . . a key ingredient in this situational frame is the establishment of community . . . Here lies the basis for dialogue, and it is through dialogue within a *caring and critical* community that methods, procedures and values are developed from life experiences . . . (1993, 168)

Doll thus speaks about developing authority and control internally, communally, instead of imposing them externally. He strikes directly into one of the most painstaking questions that I struggled with throughout this project: how to refrain from imposing external authority and be a leader from within. As I was going through a process of liberation, i.e., licensing myself to be the kind of teacher I wanted to be, I was painfully aware of the shortcomings of this approach.

The idea of teacher's freedom does not free the teacher of responsibility for what goes on in terms of learning. By accepting and encouraging multiple simultaneous processes I do not wish to encourage a "laissez faire" attitude. Viewing the class of October 26, 1998 (p. 125), I wrote:

I could have been more demanding – where is the line between free will, spontaneous producing, self-directing and outside directions? Now I seem to foster positive atmosphere, free will and not focus on "outcomes". I believe that with a little effort I could have made them demand more from themselves. Now the feeling is a little bit careless.

Although this particular class was a rare incident of such permissiveness or carelessness on my part, I think this is a serious issue. I strongly agree with the idea of teacher responsibility for a meaningful learning process for each student. Permissiveness is not a part of critical pedagogy, as Freire asserts:

The danger . . . is either that of exaggerating the educator's authority to the point of authoritarianism, or that of voiding of the teacher's authority that will mean plunging the educand into a permissive climate and an equally permissive practice. (1996, 112)

The teacher's freedom, thus tied with responsibility, makes the job of teaching more complex. It entails awareness and follow-up of the students' multiple meaning making processes so that students' learning processes become situated in the structure of the content. Greene has put it well:

Recognizing that meanings are not simply given or unearthed but are to be variously achieved, we ought to be able to find new modes of initiating the young into "provinces of meaning" . . . that allow for many ways of directing attention to the world. To understand how children themselves reach out for meanings, go beyond conventional limits (once the doors

are ajar), seek coherence and explanations is to be better able to provoke and release rather than to impose and control. (1995, 57)

Taking into account students' meaning making processes transforms the act of teaching from a series of aforeplanned steps into a multiple web of simultaneous processes, where the teacher is not the sole source of meanings. Greene reminds us:

Perhaps, with this in mind, we should think of children as others who are capable of ordering and accumulating meanings. (1995, 58)

Another significant thought related to meaning making still comes from Doll; he says that meanings are constructed through dialogue and that,

Without dialogue there is no transformation; the eclecticism of post-modernism remains a pastiche. (Doll 1993, 169)

Here, again, Doll's thinking is coincidental with that of Freire's, who says that,

Dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world . . . If it is in speaking their world that men transform the world by naming it, dialogue imposes itself as the way in which men achieve significance as men. Dialogue is thus an existential necessity. (Freire 1972, 61)

At this point it seems necessary to make a point about language: both Freire and Buber used the term "man" in a way that in our time feels odd and dated. Although it is quite evident that they are not referring to males but human beings when using the word "man," at least Freire has been criticized by feminist writers about his apparent lack of mentioning or problematizing gender. (See, for example, Kenway and Modra 1992, 156–157). I am reading both writers' work as gender neutral.

Returning now to the issue of the teacher's freedom and rights as a human being, I am intrigued about the issue of being in charge all the time. Being the center of action all the time, from class to class, from week to week, from year to year may become very taxing. I suggest that this is one reason for teachers' burn out. Teachers are afraid to let go, fearing chaos and anarchy. This is where

a mutual quest for freedom is called for. The teacher's liberation becomes of little use if the students are not sharing responsibility for their learning and meaning making processes. Learning to take responsibility for one's actions, for the whole group and for the mutual process is everyone's task in the group.

It takes time to become free of outside stimuli, command and discipline. These children did certainly not immediately learn to use freedom with responsibility. I realize that I put a lot of expectations on the children, occasionally too much. On the other hand, I did not wish to underestimate them; I was impatient in the process, wanting to see how far they could take themselves in terms of being responsible and trustworthy. In a way, my expectations on my teaching bringing about growth in their autonomy were too great, since this process obviously was not much emphasized elsewhere in their lives. I urgently wanted to give them chances to practice taking responsibility, in Freirean spirit:

No one is first autonomous and then makes a decision. Autonomy is the result of a process involving various and innumerable decisions . . . Either we become mature with each day that passes or we do not. Autonomy is a process of becoming oneself, a process of maturing, of coming to be. It does not happen on a given date. In this sense, a pedagogy of autonomy should be centered on experiences that stimulate decision making and responsibility, in other words, on experiences that respect freedom. (Freire 1998b, 98)

Towards the end of the fall, there were moments when I felt that the process was carrying itself and the children were taking responsibility. Once, for example, "there was waiting, figuring out . . . the others were sitting and waiting relatively nicely." During the last class, however, the process failed to carry itself, resulting in a slightly chaotic situation. Ike and I had not prepared the class, or rehearsal, as well as we could have. As I realized that there would have been less waiting if we had been better prepared, I learned that these kinds of moments of insecurity from the part of the teacher (choreographer, director) are important to me: that is where trust and responsibility get tested. I then know where we are in terms of mutual trust and in building the atmosphere of "freedoms encountering other freedoms."

This is related to my "innate" inclination to being a choreographer or director. I do not wish to be a director in the traditional sense of the word. I do enjoy being a "leader from within," when I work with a group that shares

responsibility and power and where everyone is willing to take turns in leading. Then I can trust the process. After one class I wrote that "I am most myself as a choreographer-director, taken that the process carries itself. That is a place where I would like to be at. I felt at home. I need to develop this kind of work more – for my sake, at least." When writing this I thought about work experiences that have been most satisfying for me.

When I was younger, I often dreamed about being a choreographer. When I woke up early to go to school or, later, to work (maybe a summer job in an office or factory), I daydreamed about different life and work. In my mind, I was working through the possibilities to fulfil my life's vocation. For 15 years, I was always constructing a piece. But, as time passed, I increasingly wanted to refrain from being in a position where I was telling others what to do. Although I kept having a flow of ideas for dances, I became more interested in shared creating, especially when working with children. This has to do with my growth as an educator willing to let others, my students, actualize themselves. I was, already then, taking the first steps in developing a different, probably a humbler way to teach, and looking for crossing of ideas from one human being to another. Freire writes,

It is one thing to value who we are. It is another to treat those who are different with arrogant disrespect. And it needs to be said that no one can be humble in a merely formal way . . . Humility expresses . . . that nobody is superior to anyone else. The lack of humility . . . is a transgression of our human vocation to develop. (Freire 1998b, 107–108)

Probably I have become more and more open and compliant to others' ways of seeing the world, and more and more interested in sharing worlds than manifesting my individual world through art. To me, artistic process, as well as teaching, is a communal act. As a teacher-choreographer-director, I fulfil the same aspiration: my curiosity of what human mind and imagination, an open, playful attitude, can create. In this way, my idea of teaching is coming closer to the nature of mutual creative, artistic process. Through learning and doing art with their teacher, children could experience processes similar to those of artists, working as a team, creating something new.

These questions are about finding who I am, about finding myself in my work. I believe finding oneself in work is important for anyone who wishes authenticity

in life. Freire (1972, 56) claims that authentic existence is only possible for men when they are engaged in inquiry and creative transformation. I also believe that being authentic and openly oneself is a basis for a dialogical relationship. Only an authentic teacher can support authentic growth in their students.

For Freire, authentic existence entails taking man's historicity as a starting point, and seeing man as being in the process of becoming, incomplete, but aware of their incompleteness and historicity. Because man is always becoming and always incomplete, and because reality is always transformational, education is an on-going process, rooted in the dynamic present and constantly remade in the praxis. Moreover, it is prophetic and hopeful: it entails perceiving reality as limiting, but not fated and unalterable, and thus challenging. (Freire 1972, 56–57)

During this fall I managed to find myself in work, to stay myself, "not playing a role" more often than during the first year, when I was bothered by being teacher-like. I tend to get excited easily and even carried away, a little bit like children. A part of me is "genuinely excited about my new idea, a little bit child-like." I do wish to keep that part of my childhood in me. Being "spontaneous, relaxed and casual" is about me as a person, but I wonder if the feeling of being relaxed and spontaneous is also connected to aspiring to be dialogical. Citing Freire again,

Dialogue does not impose, does not manipulate, does not domesticate, does not 'sloganize'. (Freire 1972, 136)

A casual or non-imposing attitude is also related to power: when I can trust the process and share power, I can relax and refrain from imposing, exercising power over others. I noticed that "my manner of being there is relaxed, I have a non-imposing attitude. I am like one of the group, not the authority" and during another class "I am suggesting, not imposing – I leave it to them to think about this. It is their choice; there is openness and freedom. This is, for me, a dialogical moment." This attitude is also related to influencing, rather than interfering, that I discussed earlier in the chapter on sensing (see p. 93).

Another view related to freedom in dialogical philosophy is a way of thinking about life in general, an approach to life that Buber describes as follows:

Free is the man that wills without caprice. He believes in the actual, which is to say: he believes in the real association of the real duality, I and You. He believes in destiny and also that it needs him. It does not lead him, it waits for him. He must proceed toward it without knowing where it waits for him. He must go forth with his whole being: that he knows. (1937/1970, 108)

Thus freedom is also courage to encounter and belief in life's purpose. This belief, in Buber's philosophy, is certainly related to life's purpose being out of the grasp of human beings, something that is above our ability to comprehend. This thought is very opposed to a positivist struggle to predict and control life and nature. Buber, interestingly, sees that herein lies the freedom for us:

But the free man does not have an end here and then fetch the means from there; he has only one thing: always only his resolve to proceed toward his destiny. (1937/1970, 109–110)

Buber's philosophy emphasizes the present moment, the encounter here and now. Planning and predicting the future is neither significant nor possible. What is in the past, becomes objects for our reflection. He says,

Presence is not what is evanescent and passes but what confronts us, waiting and enduring. And the object is not duration but standing still, ceasing . . . What is essential is lived in the present, objects in the past. (Buber 1937/1970, 64)

Experiencing time as presence, as strong moments, where the absolute nature of time fades away, became important for me as the project proceeded. Those moments, when I forgot the lapsing of time and when time seemed to stop or fade in the background are, in general, meaningful experiences where the present moment becomes so intense that past and future fade away. I experienced this a few times during this fall, and intuitively related this feeling to dialogue: "A direct exchange of ideas . . . There is a sense of immediacy in this moment. Strong presence. The feeling is intense, and dialogical now."

Strong presence means to me throwing oneself into the moment, opening up senses and encountering others. One day I wrote in my journal: "I am trying to concentrate, to focus on this moment, on encounter, openness." I also strived "to be there and ready, inside the group." Some days I had feelings of intensity,

or felt that “I was present, awake.” For Buber, presence seems to be related to dialogue. He writes,

The present – not that which is like a point and merely designates whatever our thoughts may posit as the end of “elapsed” time, the fiction of the fixed lapse, but the actual and fulfilled present – exists only insofar as presentness, encounter and relation exist. Only as the You becomes present does presence come into being. (1937/1970, 63)

Maybe giving oneself completely up to dialogue entails giving up a linear concept of time. Maybe learning to live a life in dialogue means letting go of fixed purpose, of ends and aims, and respecting the present moment. Citing Buber, once more, helps to see the necessity of this shift:

The relation to the You is unmediated. Nothing conceptual intervenes between I and You, no prior knowledge and no imagination; and memory itself is changed as it plunges from particularity into wholeness. No purpose intervenes between I and You, no greed and no anticipation . . . Before the immediacy of the relationship everything mediate becomes negligible . . . For the real boundary, albeit one that floats and fluctuates, runs . . . across all the regions between you and It: between presence and object. (1937/1970, 62–63)

These words tell to me an important message: seeing another human being as an object of our purpose extinguishes my dialogical life with him. Buber’s words, although complex and poetic, resonate strongly in me. He manages to put in words the so ephemeral nature of the dialogical moment as it is lived. The words paint a picture that has many shades and many possible interpretations and representations in human minds. To me, however, his words are a comfort; they tell about something that is not palpable and observable but still is recognizable as something that exists.

The nature of dialogue, thus, consists of many qualities and shades. An essential quality that became evident during the course of our journey was silence and its counterparts, listening and voicing.

Silence: A narrow passageway towards dialogue

In discourse related to critical pedagogy the terms voice and silence appear frequently. Elizabeth Ellsworth claims that the concept of student voice has become highly visible and influential in educational discourse, and that the concept functions to “efface the contradiction between the emancipatory project of critical pedagogy and the hierarchical relation between teachers and student” (1992, 100). A basic premise of critical pedagogy is the importance of giving voice to the silenced. Silencing is a negative idea in terms of dialogue, where the effort is to make silent voices heard. Speaking about adults unable to express a “generative theme,” a meaningful topic that they would like to study, Freire writes,

The theme of silence suggests a structure of muteness in the face of the over-whelming force of the limit-situations. (1972, 78)

At first sight the case for student voice seems valid and sound. Ellsworth, however, seriously questions this strategy, as she names the targets of it being students from disadvantaged and subordinated social class, racial, ethnic and gender groups, or, on the other hand, alienated middle-class students, with no skills of critical analysis. By speaking their authentic voices they would then, regain authority of their own world, an identity and political position from which to act as agents of social change. The same logic, claims Ellsworth, has been applied within feminist discourses, where concepts of “voice” and “speech” are used as metaphors for women’s self-definitions. She challenges this logic by noting that she, as a critical educator, can never “participate unproblematically in the collective process of self-definition, naming of oppression, and struggles for visibility in the face on marginalization engaged in by students whose class, race, gender and positions I do not share” (Ellsworth 1992, 101).

As a dance educator I have often encountered a wall silence as I have tried to trigger conversation with my students. Talking while dancing, or talking about dancing, were not widespread in dance classes when I learned dance, and still seem quite rare. Although there might be even a cultural nuance in this, since the Finns are lightheartedly described as a nation that is silent in two languages, I have encountered the silence in dance classes in other cultures, as well. The

fact that most dance students are girls may well have to do with this, as girls may have been educated as the silent gender. Thus, prior to my more extensive visit to Finnish elementary schools in the late 1990's, I was eager to buy this idea of student voice as such.

Soon I was to discover that the situation at Meri-Rastila Elementary School was quite paradoxical in relation to "student voice." First of all, the whole concept has developed in adult education, and is less explored with children. Without going into developmental psychology here, which most certainly is loaded with theories that could help in proving that children are not linguistically and cognitively apt to verbalize their existential situations, I contend to note that whatever was the mechanism or cause that hindered these children from expressing their thoughts in an articulated way, it caused more noise than silence. Although successful applications of critical pedagogy have been carried on in, for example preschool education in Sweden (Ojala 1984), the concrete problem in my project was quite the opposite from silence: noise, that is, too much and qualitatively problematic "student voice," sometimes so much that it seemed like it was the teacher who was silenced.

Of course, making noise is not the same as a conscious and deliberate act of using one's voice for articulating one's opinions, thoughts or feelings. Using one's voice in this sense did, indeed, become an issue of focus in this project, not as a reaction to silencing, but closely related to the issues of sensing the body that I discussed earlier in the sensing chapter (p. 93). Thus, voicing one's opinions, thoughts or feelings in this project denotes becoming more silent, paradoxically.

I described how during the first year with this class I had repeatedly felt frustrated about the children's inability to control their bodies. This went on during the second year. There still was excess energy, "dragging, using too much force and noise." Sometimes it seemed "like the body just kept going, the will was not strong or clear enough to make it stop. As if the body was detached from the mind." In contact work, I saw tension, insensitive touching and "difficulties in trusting and letting go their weight." In improvisations I noticed that they were more able to move freely but often there seemed to be little or no consciousness of body and movement.

"The children just have a hopeless amount of noise and concentration problems," I wrote in my journal again during the second fall of the project, but now from a slightly different viewpoint. The problem seemed now to be

that involvement in physical activity was often connected with loud voices. I tried to help them to learn to move without making sounds – a task that was amazingly difficult to achieve. I repeatedly asked them to move and work with less noise. I suggested, “If everyone together would decide to move quietly it could feel quite different?”

Often the noise seemed to come from the body, for instance from collapsing without conscious directing, and often the voice accompanied movement in a way that seemed to have no purpose. Moreover, the children seemed to have been used to using loud voices when trying to get attention, as if they would not be heard otherwise. They did not have a sense of turns in talking: interrupting and talking over each other was all too common. Most distracting for me was their manner of solving conflicts by yelling and screaming, calling each other names and so on.

Little by little, the children started to move more quietly. In tag games, “miracles” occurred: “As in a miracle, they did not scream!” I wrote in my journal one day. Once a tag game felt to me spell-like; the children moved faster and faster, while the noise level got lower. During some classes the children moved “freely but calmly,” signaling to me that something had happened at the bodily level. They seemed to be able to move around and find their places calmly. But often, for example in melting exercises, they made a lot of noise, as if they could not help it.

All this made me long for peace and silence, a space where everyday hassle and haste would fade away, and something creative and new might happen. I realized that in order for dialogue to happen, we needed to find silence. Silence, paradoxically, became a narrow passageway towards dialogue.

Looking more closely, silence is a positive concept in critical pedagogy. There is a difference between *silence* and *silencing*. Silence denotes listening:

In the process of speaking and listening, the discipline of silence, which needs to be developed with serious intent by subjects who speak and listen, is a sine qua non of dialogical communication. (Freire 1998b, 105)

Reflecting on my teaching during the first year, I was very much bothered by my own hollering. Adults’ hollering seems to be a response to children’s spontaneous noise making activity or vice versa, as if by making more noise the noise would decrease. Most teachers know that this strategy is bound to fail

in the long run. I knew that as well, but during the first year I was unable to resolve this conflict – I was hardly conscious of it while I was teaching. The second fall brought about a change in my own use of voice, a change similar to my use of time. I somehow grasped that the key to silence is not imposing silence – that is silencing – but being more silent myself. The change had to start within me. Freire writes,

To accept and respect what is different is one of those virtues without which listening cannot take place. If I am prejudiced against a child . . . it is obvious that I cannot listen to them and I cannot speak *with* them, only *to* or *at* them, from the top down. Even more than that, I forbid myself from understanding them. If I consider myself superior to what is different . . . I am refusing to listen. (1998b, 108)

Definitely, the smaller space had to do with the apparent change. I did not make an effort to holler less; I had not even become fully aware of my hollering yet. But something in my manner had changed, like I described in the previous chapter: I was on a path towards transformation, a path that had turned away from old habits and manners. As I was looking for dialogue, I encountered listening.

The first class, when I had the whole class in the dance studio, was very difficult. I managed, however, to stay calm. I did not lose my hope, even though I was disillusioned. Even in the end of the class, when I, being extremely tired, asked the children to stay silent and quiet for 30 seconds before they could leave the room, my voice was “firm, but not tense.” Surprised, I noticed that there was no more tension in my voice; there was hardly any during the whole fall. I was relieved to find out that “I did not have to raise my voice at all.” A few times tension reappeared when I started to rush – when I talked or moved faster, my tone became a little tense, or “a little loud and tense.”

But more often, I found out that my voice was quiet, soft, calm, casual or friendly. Sometimes it was “calm, but firm,” or “decisive, but calm.” Something in my tone, even though it was firm, was caring. I also noticed an “energetic, happy and trustful” tone.

The use of voice is directly related to the state of mind and to the body. This connection is well established in the fields of acting and singing, but less discussed in the fields of dance and education. According to a renowned figure the world of theatre, Jerzy Grotowski (1993, 141–142), it is not possible to work

with voice without simultaneously working with the body experience. For him, voice is continuation of the body (1993, 143). He also claims that teachers have difficulties with their voices because they are trying to control their body and voice, forcing themselves to be calm.

Since emotions reside in the body (see Damasio 1999), the connection between emotions and voice seems evident. Grotowski also writes about the relationship between emotions and voice, for instance, that conscious monitoring of voice creates nervousness and that nervousness disturbs the voice system. Instead of forcing or controlling the life through a "dead serious will" he says that what will come of our lives depends on our attitude to our lives as a whole. (Grotowski 1993, 121–123) I take this to mean something similar to what Buber means by proceeding towards our destiny (1937/1970, 109–110).

In my experience, a relaxed, peaceful state of mind and a feeling of trust are connected to an easy and relaxed voice, a voice that stems deeply from my body and openly reflects my emotional state. Emotional states, like nervousness or anxiousness, annoyance or fear, make the body and voice tense. So, my soft and calm voice reflected that "I was calm myself," meaning calm as a whole, physically and emotionally. I was able to be calm even in conflict situations, for instance when I got mad or told a child not to do something. Speaking from my own point of view is important even when speaking about something that is negative. For instance, I once told the children that "I am now a little bit upset because I went through a lot of trouble figuring this thing out," speaking about how I felt. This is related to Freire's idea of directing the words to a subject instead of an object:

Only the person who listens patiently and critically is able to speak *to* him or her. Even when, of necessity, she/he must speak against ideas and convictions of the other person, it is still possible to speak as if the other were a subject who is being invited to listen critically and not an object submerged by an avalanche of unfeeling, abstract words. (Freire 1998b, 110–111)

When my voice became more tense, the tension was reflected in my body and my whole appearance became more tense. As I was trying to control myself and my feelings, I wanted to be in control of the whole situation and the children. Thus, a message of control becomes embodied and conveyed to the children. An imposing, commanding voice sends a message about power residing in the

teacher. If that voice is directed to the whole group, up and over them, it alienates the students from the teacher instead of connecting them in a dialogical relationship. I argue that a dialogical relationship cannot be established by using controlling or commanding voice. A soft voice is a message of trust, respect and caring. Some children talked about this in the interviews; they were conscious about being commanded and yelled at. (See p. 139)

A friendly or casual tone also reflects an adult's position in the group. I was not trying to become their friend or mate, in a sense that I would hope to become one of them. Friendship is a different kind of dialogical relationship than an educational relation, as I found out earlier (p. 72). However, being easygoing with my students denotes my authentic existence as a teacher.

As a member of the group, I was an adult bearing responsibility, but willing to share as much power as the children were able to take and use constructively. I was there with an agenda, but I wanted to be open so that I could respond sensitively to reactions that my agenda might trigger, and willing to adjust it. Actively listening and sensing the children's oftentimes blurred messages became a challenge for me, as Freire suggests,

Listening is an activity that obviously goes beyond mere hearing. To listen . . . is a permanent attitude on the part of the subject who is listening, of being open to the word of the other, to the differences of the other. This does not mean, of course, that listening demands that the listener be "reduced" to the other, the speaker. This would not be listening. It would be self-annihilation. True listening does not diminish in me the exercise of my right to disagree, to oppose, to take a position. (1998b, 107)

The idea of listening made me more conscious of the meaning of my agenda to the children and made me question what I had to give to them. I wanted to learn to respect their need for meaningful activities. The spirit of critical pedagogy entails that the teacher bases the content of pedagogy on themes that are meaningful for the students. If the things I have to say to my students are meaningful for them, engagement in the learning process should not be a problem. Then I can expect them to want to hear what I have to say without having to impose my message by raising my voice. Moreover, I can even expect that they will respond to me, as Freire writes,

This is why I say that whoever feels that she/he has something to say ought also to accept, as a duty, the need to motivate and challenge the listeners to speak and reply . . . the space of the democratic-minded teacher who learns to speak by listening is interrupted by the intermittent silence of his or her own capacity to listen, waiting for that voice that may desire to speak from the depths of its own silent listening. (1998b, 103–104)

Sounds and voices that stem from silence seem very powerful. From a silent background it is possible to hear much more. That is why I think that silence is necessary for silent voices to become heard. Consequently, the more dialogical the atmosphere is, the quieter it gets. My adult students recently discussed this issue, having noticed that listening to others makes the discussion quieter and that a dialogical approach to dance improvisation easily leads to slowing down of movement. Together we concluded that a reflective space is needed in order to be responsive to others. So, in order to hear silent voices we need to listen, and in order to listen we need to quiet down and slow down. According to Freire,

The importance of silence in the context of communication is fundamental. On the other hand, it affords me space while listening to the verbal communication of another person and allows me to enter into the internal rhythm of the speaker's thought and experience that rhythm as language. On the other hand, silence makes it possible for the speaker who is really committed to the experience of communication rather than to the simple transmission of information to hear the question, the doubt, the creativity of the person who is listening. Without this, communication withers. (1998b, 104)

A listening, dialogical atmosphere, then, is built on the possibility of silence. Moreover, in my view it is evident that a listening atmosphere also supports concentration, and thus makes following and participating in the activities easier for the students. This is how silence gives them more equal opportunities to hear, to listen and to react. Students who have difficulties with attentiveness probably gain most from a silent atmosphere in terms of learning. Silence, or a listening atmosphere, seems a significant quality for a nurturing learning environment.

Silence, listening and sensing also lead to certain aesthetic qualities and choices that many dance educators appreciate as artistic values in themselves. While it is important to learn to listen to others in a sense of social skill

development, certain movement qualities are valued just because of their intrinsic meaning or aesthetic pleasure. These qualities are probably quite widely encouraged in dance education. For example Bond (2001, 43) describes a dance education project with young children where the dance teacher gave attention to aesthetic values and showed concern for bodily-felt sensual experience and imagination. She noticed that the teacher's language emphasized concentration, thinking, memory and silence. She writes,

. . . there is a focus on concentration and silence . . . Emphasis on quiet focus alternates with opportunities for breaking out . . . Qualities of stillness and quiet are again reinforced by adults. (2001, 45)

I can easily imagine myself as the teacher Bond describes here, sharing the desire for concentrated, focused, quiet movement. These qualities are what many adults, especially dance educators, have learned to value in dance art. Adults' values, however, seem often conflicting with children's desires. Since noisiness also belongs to childhood, it sometimes feels a little harsh to repress this noise-making behavior of children. Noise is often an expression of joy, enthusiasm and engagement.

Although noise can be fun for children, I feel a need to justify my desire for quietness with additional arguments. I think that living in constant noise may dull senses. If children get accustomed to noise, they might think that less noise is same as silence. Moreover, since groups are often quite large, children's noisiness easily becomes unbearable for teachers and for the children themselves, as well. Another problem with noise is that it seems to exist everywhere. Making noise is always an option, but making silence is a much more difficult skill and rare occurrence.

Learning to "make silence" (an idea introduced by Stinson 1988) gives the children another choice to make: to move quietly or with noise and thus, widens their range of action, like all skills do. Just like it is sometimes fun to make noise, it can also be exciting to experience silence, and thus widen the dynamic range of expression. Experiencing noise might make silence more appealing as its counterpart. Children sometimes like noise, or they are not bothered by noise; on the other hand, I think that noise makes it possible to appreciate silence. Without noise, silence might be monotonous and boring. To me it seems that noise and silence complement each other. In a noisy room

a certain sound may not be heard at all, in silence the same sound gets a whole different meaning and creates a different dynamic.

This fall, there were many occasions when we managed to experience silence, when it was quiet. Maybe quite quiet, almost quiet, "peace and quiet," or completely quiet. Or, I experienced calmness in the atmosphere. Also, our basic contract that one speaks at a time worked better; I did not have to remind of it so often. Sometimes I praised the children for not talking at the same time.

But, still, often there was a lot of noise. It was not always connected with restlessness or disruption, but sometimes it led to a restless or chaotic atmosphere, where I became tired or nervous, and some of the children, as well, could not concentrate. Especially the last class this fall was a setback; it was almost as restless as the fall's first class. It was noisy and chaotic, and I felt tense and tired. During this class, I tried to wait until it was quiet before we started any movement. I told those children who were playing the instruments not to start before it was quiet. I wanted to help them learn to be in command of themselves and responsible for each other.

This task was a huge one. I tried to embed this task in creating and rehearsing the dance piece that evolved originally around the idea of listening. This was largely a coincidence, since they were making rain trees at school, and Ike used a rain tree as one of his instruments. When I decided to bring in live accompaniment I did not yet think about this idea of listening, and using the musical instruments in the way we then did. Although they never finished the rain trees, and although the piece evolved into something other than "a rain dance," the original impetus – listening and responding to different qualities of the instruments – remained significant for the process of making the dance.

Listening became more important since we now worked with live music. The children seemed to encounter listening in a more concrete, direct way. Very soon it became apparent that this kind of listening was different from listening to taped music: it involved respect towards Ike and his work. His comments, like "it is not nice to play music when you are not listening" and his metaphor about the taxi driver had a strong impact. When Ike talked or introduced the instruments, or when they played the instruments themselves, the children seemed interested, and often everybody listened to Ike or each other closely. Interest, curiosity, or a new focus seemed to help them to calm down and become more focused.

Although it may at first seem paradoxical that silence would lead to dialogue,

it begins to make even more sense when this question is illuminated by Buber's thinking on silence and dialogue. Buber sees that dialogue exceeds the barriers of spoken language. He (1947, 97) claims that a "shared silence" may be dialogue, and that that "for a conversation no sound is necessary, not even a gesture" (1947, 3). I will return to this issue in the ending chapter of this work (p. 290); for now, I will try to tie this issue of silence to sensing on a bodily level. In the chapter on sensing (p. 93) I indicated that sensing the outer world, as well as the inner, through the body, is crucial for human beings living as conscious beings in this world. Now, merging this idea of sensing with silence and listening gives this kind of conscious presence still a deeper meaning.

In my experience, silence makes it easier to receive signals from within the body, since these bodily messages are completely silent. For example, "hearing" one's heartbeat is not an auditory sensation, but a proprioceptive one. Listening to one's own body, or "sinking into" one's body is very difficult if the environment is not completely quiet.

When moving and dancing it is often important to receive auditory information from outside own body: others moving, sounds of breath, steps, and of course, music. It makes dialogue with one's own body, music and the sound environment possible, and helps establishing dialogue with others. Moving with a listening attitude may also lead to a respectful attitude towards other movers in the same space, and respectfulness towards everybody's right to concentrate, to listen and to learn.

In the next segment of our journey, these questions of listening and respect manifested themselves in all their might and remained central for the rest of the journey. I will return to deeper reflection on these issues later, on p. 234.

FOURTH SEGMENT OF PASSAGE: SPRING 1999

Turbulent times

Between the last class in December, when we had the audience watching, and now, February 18th, a lot happened. Of course, there was the Christmas vacation and over two months' break in our dance classes. But also, a lot happened with the Taikomo project. We had a day long retreat, where a lot of pent up emotions came up. There was a lot of anxiety in the school community about this project, the classroom teachers were defensive about their way of working, and the artist teachers were frustrated about the school's inability to support their work. The project was in crisis.

Johan admitted to me that he was not very enthusiastic about the project meetings. He said,

The children's issues are not dealt with there . . . every now and again some researchers and other people come there, speaking about some things . . . I was really so lost . . . I did not understand anything about anything that was discussed there . . . it was to me personally a waste of time, I could have been writing children's evaluations during that time.'

He also complained about sudden timetable changes and speeches about things that did not really connect with what we had done, saying that all this adds to the frustration towards the project. He added that he had better possibilities to connect to the project than most teachers, because he had experience in artistic projects through having been involved with music so much. He said that he understood very well the "normal" classroom teachers who had even more difficulties to connect to the project.

¹ Lasten asioita ei siel käsitellä niissä . . . siel välil tuppaa jotain tutkijaa sun muuta henkilöö ker-
toon jostain asioist . . . mä olin tosiaan niin pihalla . . . mä en ymmärtäny yhtään mitään mistä siel
edes keskusteltiin . . . Se oli mulle henkilökohtasesti ihan ajan tuhlausta, mä olisin voinu tehdä
lasten todistuksii se aika.

It is such a lofty level . . . the teachers are after all more with . . . the children, then there is always such conflict . . . the practice of our school and what happens in the meetings are two different things after all.²

To make things more complicated, a TV journalist interested in multicultural issues had spotted the project from the internet. He wanted to make a TV program about the project and without much alert, things started to happen.

First, they came to shoot at our retreat. A cameraman was present all the time, sometimes filming us at a close range, with little sensitivity to the discussion that was going on. I felt odd, but tried to ignore this. The oddest moment was when one of the artists spoke directly against the TV program when the camera was filming her! I felt embarrassed and puzzled. I felt sorry for the journalists, too.

Another issue that came up concerning the TV program was that a few first graders were removed from their class when the program was made because of their behavioral problems. The artist teachers working with that class were really annoyed about this decision. I agreed that it was very unscrupulous to remove these children from their class because of the TV program. This certainly deepened the crisis the project was in.

The journalist also contacted me to set the time when they could come to film my class. It appeared that they really needed footage, because one of the other teachers had become sick and had had to cancel the shooting. I tried to be helpful, and agreed on a date in January.

That day I did not bring my own camera; I felt that this could not be part of my research. It felt more like another demonstration class; The difference was that this time most children were really eager about the incident, and seemed to feel important. For them it seemed also exciting to see TV people at work, and to get to see oneself in TV. So, I felt confident that there would be no problems.

I wish I had brought my camera. What happened that day was very important to me. Just when the shooting was supposed to begin, the light bulb of the camera broke. The cameraman had to rush to get a new bulb, which should take at least 40 minutes. It was close to lunchtime, so we decided that the

² Se on niin korkeelentosella tasolla . . . opettajat on kuitenkin enemmän . . . lasten kanssa, niin siin on tietty semmonen ristiriita . . . se meidän talon se käytäntö ja sit se et mitä siel kokouksis tapahtuu ne on kaks eri juttuu kuitenkin.

children should go and have lunch.

The lunch took only about 15 minutes, and the children were allowed to come back to the space – which was not their regular gym, but a youth center space adjacent to the school. First I told them to play a quiet drama game, “eye murderer,” that was one of their favorite games. It lasted about 10 minutes. By that time all children were back to the room, and some wanted to play tag. I let them play. I was sitting by the side chatting with Ike. It was a free tag; I gave no instructions. Gradually, the game evolved into something else: some children were running around, catching each other, some were practicing tricks or inventing new tricks, some started making statues and pyramids in small groups, some were lying on mattresses, or playing a hide and seek kind of game all over the room.

Everything went smoothly and constructively. There was no shouting and yelling, no fighting, no arguing. I stared at them, quietly, not wanting to interrupt and break the magic. For me this moment was very significant: I saw 24 children being together in the space freely, without outside authority telling them what to do (and what not to do!). They were able to initiate activities and take responsibility so that nothing disruptive happened.

I felt like I was in a dialogical relationship with their world: watching it, attending to it, listening to it, wondering it. I was a part of it, but not affecting it. It took its own direction; it had its own power and will. I was taking it in, trying to construct meaning out of this: what is it be a child in this world? I was intensively present in the moment, alive, awake, my attentiveness almost piercing through the space. But not quite, though, it was a softer feeling – I wanted my eyes to be everywhere in the room.

The actual shooting went well, too. We did some warm up activities and the “piece.” and then statues and pyramids. The children suggested the pyramids, which became an important part of the piece later.

February 18, 1999

What is my state of mind today... a feeling of the end coming nearer. I wonder if the children feel the same way after last time. Myself, I would like now to bring this thing to a clarified closure, so that everybody

would be left with a feeling that we have achieved and experienced something together.

We were again in the youth center space, so this was the third space we worked in. The change of space resulted from many things: the TV shooting happened there and the space seemed to work, the children had given feedback about the dance studio being too small, and we thought that if the "piece" becomes a performance, this space could work as a performance space.

"Hello, hello," I greeted the children as they arrived. They were active, enthusiastic. They played tag freely, with some happy cheers. Softly I asked them to come sit in a circle. "What did you think about last time when the TV people were here?" I asked them. Many children wanted to talk, impatiently talking over each other. "One at a time," I reminded them. Sebastian raised his hand: "It was fun." Julius said he did not like it; he was the only one who had repeatedly said that he did not like the filming.

Someone suggested that we play "eye murderer" again. I promised that we would do it at the end if there was time. "Today we'll start with statue tag but listen carefully." There was some babbling. "Can we agree that one talks at a time?" I asked.

One of the children said to those who were babbling, "Can you please be quiet now!" "Yes, thank you," I said and continued by asking them to make different statues instead of freezing as they were when the music stopped, and to melt as slowly as they could. They were listening well, but the noise started immediately when the game began. "Without noise!" I reminded them. I walked around them, reminding them to melt slowly and to be really frozen in their statue. Ike was playing.

I really wanted them to get into next level of working. I tried to help them as much as I could. I had more demanding goals in my mind, and had planned slightly more "sophisticated" activities than before. I really was anxious to see if they could master their bodies with more precision, with more attention and concentration.

There were cheers of joy. But something odd was developing. Nathan was making some obscene gestures. I did not notice it when it started. Maybe I could have stopped it right here, if I had noticed it.

Meanwhile Henri was moving in an exciting manner; he was dancing! He was not running, but stepping, lifting his other leg in the air and making flying movements with his arms. Now, different ways of moving were starting to

evolve, most children were not running anymore. There was galloping, arm movements, etc. Where did this come from? I did not tell them to move differently. Maybe the free play situation last time made an impact? I wish I had now done a real music improvisation with them. Now, there would probably have been a great variety of movement and engagement, throwing oneself in the process....

Then, in a circle again I told that next we would try contrasting very fast and very slow movement. The children were restless. I was firm and said that if this goes on, we must leave out "eye murderer." Johan had left the room (having said he had a meeting with the school psychologist). Soon I gave up: "The fact that your teacher left the room should not mean that this kind of stuff can start to happen!"

This was a very undialogical moment all together. There seemed to be no connection between most children and me. They were restless from the beginning, yes, and the space was difficult with all these temptations, but still, I should have done something differently earlier. What could I have done? Did I trust them too much now? Am I distracted by last time's magic moment, believing that it would last and the children now could take responsibility, thinking that external authority was not needed anymore. Johan's leaving the room had a huge impact today. Days are different... I should have been quicker to realize that now they needed a firmer approach.

"I don't think this is too nice now," I said, still trying to be a person to them rather than an authority. I decided to go on and start even though the situation was not calmed down, hoping that the activity would draw the children in. Many times it works, just to get into an activity – taken that the activity is fun enough to make the children forget the other stuff they are doing....

There was a lot of really fine movement and work. But there was a lot of other stuff: noise, sloppy movement, unfocused work, and obscene gestures that spread from Nathan to other boys. There seemed to be no respect for Ike and me or for our work. Was I hurt also about the fact that Johan left? What was the message for me that he had to go? I couldn't or didn't want to take the role of discipline keeper. It offended me that I would have to take that role. I just couldn't.

I stopped the exercise and tried to talk. But since I couldn't get their attention – they talked over me about their own stuff, not even to me – I got really hurt. The one rule that I had constantly reminded them of, and that I thought we had agreed about during the whole time, was violated really badly – that one talks at a time.

Recalling my experiences: Internal rage, when the children completely lost it. I left. Johan's leaving the room created a total chaos- what do I do here then, either. I am not a discipline keeper!

My feelings really burst to the surface. I felt hurt really deeply as a human being. I did not want to be in the same room – I wanted out from the situation. I do not need to stand this. I left the room. I walked fast down the corridors towards the teachers' lounge with thought about quitting the whole project crossing my mind– in the back of my mind I knew that Ike was there so that the children were not left alone. As I arrived to the teachers' lounge, Johan was there sitting and chatting. It was not more than 15 minutes since he left, so it must had been a quick meeting.

Recalling this event makes me stop, silent and serious. The last time before Christmas had been maybe unfavorable for the development of our dialogical relationship – did I betray them when I made them show the very unfinished work to an audience? The Christmas vacation – whatever it may have brought for the children. And then the TV program. Although most children were excited about it, I do not know how it affected this process.

Their movement material has become more varied, and there is more courage. But we have lost our mutual respect and warmth. Could Johan's slightly indifferent attitude somehow be reflected in children?

In the school there is now a resistance towards the whole Taikomo-project. The situation is tense and conflicted. Although Johan and I have had no confrontations, maybe it is natural for him to take the side of the other teachers and not to be too enthusiastic about this work.

In any case, I left. I had enough. Does this show how personal and important this project is to me?

Meanwhile, the camera was running. Ike took the situation in his hands in his own way. He played a rhythm on the steel pan and asked the children do a simple percussive clapping in a certain spot. Leonard, Nathan and others were responding to the rhythm with their whole body.

When I came back they showed it to me. I was calm but reserved.

Then I asked what they thought about the prior incident, and how they would

like to continue. They replied: "Correctly, correctly." I said that I wish this would apply to this class and to the next class, which might be our last class. They agreed unanimously. The children seemed a little bit regretful and admitted that they had gone too far.

We agreed together that from now on to the end they would work properly.

Ike and I discussed this incident later. Ike told me that that day he had a long nerve, like he thought I had that day last fall when he had his "black moment." He said that when I left, he talked to them and he felt that they understood really well and realized what they had done wrong. He said that:

They all were listening really; it made them listen when you left, like they realized that we are serious about this, and that if I leave, too, this thing might be over.³

Ike also said that with children you can always start over, if you are honest with them and try to build trust, that they forgive you like you can forgive them:

. . . like let's try again . . . although you were . . . really mean to us, then they are ready to forgive us, too . . .⁴

We agreed that this is a question of trust, that if we trust the children and ourselves we are inclined to take risks, and then there is a danger that the process might sometimes get out of hands. Moving within "borders of risk" was something that we both thought was necessary. Ike said that "it is a much bigger danger to crush them so that from the beginning . . . you show them where the closet stands and are tough, and then they are not really enthusiastic to put anything of themselves into play."⁵ So, this was in way, a test of trust: do we understand each other and agree to work together within the limits of freedom and respect we have created together.

³ Kaikki kuuntelivat ihan, se sai ne kuuntelemaan ku sie menit pois just että ne huomasi että nyt tässä ollaan tosissaan jos mieki lähen vielä pois niin tätä juttuu ei ehkä tuukkaan.

⁴ . . . että yritetään vielä vaikka te olitteki . . . tosi keljuja meitä kohtaan niin samalla tavalla neki sitte ovat valmiita antamaan anteeksi . . .

⁵ paljon suurempi on se vaara että nujertaa ne että on niille niinku alust asti . . . näyttää missä täällä kaappi seisoo ja on ankara, sitte ne tulee sinne vasten tahtosesti ja ei sitte oo kovin innoituneita mitään itteensä panemaan peliin.

We did the last exercise again. There was a good amount of nice movement and constructive interaction. We did melting, calming down and silence. Then we did mirroring. This went without distractions in principle, but they still could not really concentrate. Only Julius, Patrick and Vincent worked really well. I walked around and directed with supporting instructions. "Great, that went quite well – thank you for the music" I said; some children, who had been sick and could not dance, were playing for the others with Ike.

Then we did following the leader in diamond formations. Some children wanted to play – I agreed that one group of four can play at a time. I demonstrated the exercise with Julius's group, the others watched quite nicely. This was a quite demanding exercise – more challenge. I didn't seem to give up.

Julius's group worked quite well. Otherwise, the diamonds did not stay in the formation. On the next round, just two groups were moving; I let the others watch. Vincent (who volunteered to do it again instead of playing), Leonard (!) and Matias were working well! I asked them to find an ending shape – they formed a fine star shape on the floor. The change in Leonard was remarkable!!! What happened to him now? He was like a different boy compared to just a while ago.

Next, I let them do pyramids. Matias was directing. Boys and girls started doing pyramids together. Matias, Zachary and Gabriel made a moving pyramid. Johan was around helping and advising. They made a pyramid that had 14 children, boys and girls!

We sat down in a circle – I suggested that we would do the first section of the "piece" and then eye murderer. They say this was blackmailing. They complained that the piece was boring. I said that it can be made better, and that I had some suggestions, e.g. that in the beginning one couple at a time would start rolling, like a wave. They tried to vote me down, but I defended by saying that our original agreement was that we would play eye murderer if the class went well without hassle, and that was not exactly the case today. I said that this was negotiation, a mutual decision, not blackmailing.

This, to me, was a dialogical moment. I was myself, speaking as I felt and thought, and the children were openly telling me what they thought and felt. The tone was not especially warm, there was still some inflammation in the relationship, but it was recovering. Dialogue does not need to be warm and positive; it can be critical, cool; as long as there is listening and authenticity. I don't think dialogue can be extremely negative or hostile, though.

Patrick said: "Okay, let's do it." It was a mutual decision. Then, something remarkable happened. Leonard, who had prior to this class done everything

to make the rehearsals more difficult, said: "Now, let's do it so that they go first and then they ..." He had picked this idea up from my talking earlier. I said: "Yes, I think it is a good idea."

Kia was having a temper tantrum; she did not take her beginning position. I tried to direct her. Leonard took the lead of the situation, telling Kia to take her place! We went through the first part, it went quite well, and we did some fixing.

We came to the circle – I suggested that they would start thinking about the story of this piece with Johan. I praised them that this went well, and said that now they can play eye murderer – "Yes" they said.

The change in Leonard was great. Ike talked afterwards about Leonard a few times, and also on the interview. Did the change happen when I left the room, when they did the clapping? He moved really nicely already before that. Whatever. I will never know.

This class was a turning point in this project. A conflict and its resolution generated a new beginning. There is hope . . .

March 4, 1999

Now I feel somehow too relaxed and easy. Ike is not coming; I have lost my focus partly. On the other hand I am worried whether we will be able to discuss the future of this "thing." Do the children have interest in this? However, now I think it is important to reach concentration, at least momentarily. Can the children feel, sense their own bodies?

In the beginning the atmosphere was quite happy and active. The children came quickly to the circle when I called them. We started with statue tag, which itself went well; but the qualities I was looking for were still missing. Their movement was varied, but a little sloppy, and the statues were limp. It was quite restless and there was screaming again. Johan interfered. He had a whistle with him. He hollered, "Let's make a soundless tag!" This must be because of the last time, now he was much more involved, but I am not sure if I meant that he should interfere with such an authoritarian way.

I asked Henri, "Are you taking part?" He nodded, and I directed him gently towards the center, telling him that if he was taking part he should not be so close to the wall. He agreed. My manner of addressing him was gentle, caring and respecting. This was a fleeting dialogical moment between teacher and student, adult and child.

Consideration, respect, trust, peace...

We gathered in the center again. I told them that there would be music with different tempos, and that I'd like them to move according to the tempo in many different ways. The music seemed amusing for them (it was childish!), but they immediately started to make funny, bouncing, rhythmical movements. Four boys made a group. The movement was sloppy, but very positive in its tone.

I stopped the music, my tone of voice was apologizing about the childishness of the music, but, to my surprise, they asked for more. I agreed, and said that they could take a partner or form groups of three or four. I noticed that there was a desire to work together, and responded to it.

When the music started, lines and circles were formed quickly, and there were different movements in those formations. Then they invented the movement under arms in circle, one at a time! Aaron joined and suggested something to Matias. There were many kinds of formations. There were also some fast and slow movements according to the music, the girls especially remembered the original task. Although the original task was somewhat forgotten, the activity was constructive, and the children seemed to have a really good time. The children were together dialogically now –Johan and I were outsiders – willingly. I enjoyed watching this.

I asked if they wanted to continue. There were yesses and nos; I let them continue for a little while and told them that they could soon show to others what they had invented. The girls were creating a small choreography. A group of boys invented the jump over others' backs. The freeing had happened. Now they would just need self-discipline so that they could use their creative energy constructively. The creativity was now storming like a dam had broken in a rapid.

We sat down as audience, and Olivia, Belinda, Ulla and Tiina showed their nice choreography with bows and everything. I asked, "Who wants to go next?" No one wanted to go. There was noise. I encouraged them, saying that I saw some really nice movements.

Ville, Julius and Matias showed their jumping combination. I asked them to show their other movement as well, and they did. Since no one else wanted to show, we went on to the "diamond." I asked them to form groups of three or four, and said that everybody should join. My manner reflected an assertion that everybody should really join, that I did not even think of a possibility of choosing not to join, like it was clear-cut that everyone would join. I did this lightly, gently, but reflecting self-confidence.

How important is self-confidence for a teacher? A positive manner and attitude towards the

subject, towards the activity, "this is what we will do, this is a good thing" – to a certain limit there must be a basic love and affection towards the activities, but on the other hand, there must also be sensitivity towards childrens' different experiences.

The atmosphere was restless. Patrick, Julius, Vincent and Quincy started immediately and worked really well. Nathan and Leonard refused to do this. Ringo was dragging Leonard to join. Their contact was somehow exciting. Nathan and Johan were arguing – Johan tried to force him to participate. It seemed like it was not going to work.

I said that I would divide them into groups if they couldn't form the groups by themselves: "I gave you the opportunity to form groups yourselves, and I will now give you another chance: Those who have a group stand up and go to your group, those who don't stay sitting so I can divide you into groups!"

Only Fred, Aaron and Nathan were left without a group. Leonard was now working well with Ringo. There was no noise. I tried to get Aaron and Fred to join Leonard and Ringo. This was a true test of co-operation and teamwork!

Since almost everyone was working, I put the music on. The movements were rhythmical, but there was also a lot of wandering around. Although Johan was hollering something, the atmosphere was very positive: everyone was taking part, no one was disturbing. There was joy of movement! Ringo and Leonard were moving on all fours really rhythmically! It looked really fun.

Leonard told me later that during the project he got new friends. He said that "now I am usually with Ringo."⁶ They found each other and became friends. The conflict situation of last class had been a turning point for Leonard. As if he had awakened and decided to become a true member of this class.

We sat down to talk about the future plans of our project. I said,

We should now think how we will continue from here on . . . you have a chance to affect what we will be doing in the future with this dance and music thing . . . we have basically two alternatives, or even more if you have suggestions.

I presented the options. One was to make a performance out of our material with costumes and masks. It was now calm. I also said that if we decided to do it, everyone must participate, and that we would make the decision together.

⁶ nyt mä oon yleensä Ringon kanssa.

There were some opposing comments on performing. I said that there does not seem to be a great enthusiasm about performing and suggested that we would decide later if they wanted to perform, but anyhow we could finish the piece and think of a story that it could tell.

*There were a few children in the class who did not like performing, or who were shy to perform. This is probably the case in most childrens' groups. Julius opposed performing most openly; he was the only one who was not even happy about the TV program. Quincy, Patrick, Dennis and Zachary were not really interested in performing, but eventually agreed to do it because the others wanted to perform. They realized that they needed to conform to the majority's opinion. Quincy even saw some advantage in performing, saying that "it is beneficial for the future that you can give some speeches."*⁷

*Clara told me that she did not like performing because she tended to get so embarrassed. She added, however, that she was especially embarrassed about her mom coming to watch, saying that "I never dare to perform in front of my mom."*⁸ *I tried to find out why, but she said that she did not know.*

*Some children in the class were eager to perform: Ulla, for example, said that she liked performing a lot because it is "just somehow so fun"*⁹ *and that she would like to perform more. She said that she sometimes wanted to perform at home and with her friends. Some children said that performing is not "dangerous" but it is "odd," "funny" and "quite new"; many said that it is a little bit scary.*

*Many children stated that they had not performed before. Only Belinda said that she had a lot of performing experience, saying that she had performed in many places. Some children remembered a single performing experience: for instance, a group of girls once made a Spice Girls show together at school. Leonard told about having performed in school when he was a first and second grader, Clara remembered a "swan thing" from her former school. Elisa, as well as Matias, had performed in dance sports. Gabriel remembered that "once we had my little brother's birthday party when we had to dance."*¹⁰

During the discussion some children yelled out names of stories that had nothing to do with our project. I told them to try to stay on the topic of discussion. I said: "It seems like you are not ready to influence what we are going to do,

⁷ onhan siit niinku tulevaisuudes hyötty et voi pitää jotain esitelmii.

⁸ mä en kehtaa ikinä esiintyy meidän äidin nähden.

⁹ se on jotenki vaan niin kivaa

¹⁰ meil oli kerran mun pikkuveljen synttärät niin meidän piti tanssii.

like we would have to decide for you.”

Then Ulla raised her hand, and softly told what she thought the story could be about. I praised her, and then I asked if I could tell what came to my mind about the beginning. They said yes, and I told them. They said it sounded boring; I then asked what kind of a story they thought was exciting. Someone replied: a story where people get killed. Some else mentioned Teletubbies. I told them not to tell about stories from TV, and then someone mentioned Peter Pan.

A moment of despair! This could not be true. It seemed like they had no imagination, but I could not believe it. This was when I felt a need to find out what was going on in their minds, and when I felt that this kind of big group discussion did not really lead anywhere.

I told them that today we could not rehearse because Ike was absent. I let them now play eye murderer for the rest of the class, as I had promised earlier.

I am not satisfied in myself as a teacher. A basic thing, choice of music and setting it up was done carelessly. Well, Ike's sudden cancellation and the problems with the function of the player were not dependent on me... excuses, excuses. Taped music sounds so dull now.

Johan says that the class is now having a really difficult time; negative atmosphere that especially certain children are affecting. I am more worried about Aaron and Fred not getting involved and the phlegmatic attitude of the girls. The roughness of other boys is mostly ok with me – it is even a positive resource.

The plans for continuation remained open. Developing a story and using masks as help. Yes, and the concentration did not succeed again. It needs still something else . . .

A detour to the land of imagination

March 24 and April 7–8, 1998

Not willing to believe that these children lacked imagination altogether, I decided meet them in pairs. I wanted to tap deeper into their worlds and to find out what was going on in their minds. I spent three whole days at the school, not teaching dance but meeting the children, creating a story with them. I audiotaped and transcribed our discussions. I also asked them to make drawings of their character and the location of the story. Then we made face paintings

for each child. This was an intense period, where I think I got much closer to the children and their worlds than before. The following is a description about children's ideas that they produced during these days, as well as a description about how they experienced this work. I have used normal font in this chapter; this is not quite like the previous chronologically proceeding chapters, nor is it another "island." This chapter contains no theory.

We started the discussion by talking about what kind of images the dance brought into their minds, or what came into their minds when they danced or when they thought about the dance. The first or most common thing that the children said that came into their minds was different animals. It may be that the one movement, that I called the "animal investigates" movement, created by Zachary and Dennis, somehow triggered this world of imagery for many children.

But the animals were very different, as were the reasons for choosing certain animals. Most children, however, seemed to be very fond of animals in general, or at least interested in animals. All children also had experiences relating to animals, which they quite willingly brought up in our discussions.

One's own pet was one possible starting point: Olivia wanted to be a cat because she had a cat. Moreover, she wanted to be a gray-white-black Persian cat because "my cat has those colors"¹¹ and "because Persians can do what they like."¹²

Some children wanted to be their favorite animals: Tiina wanted to be a panda because it is so cute and also because black and white were her favorite colors. Thinking about her friend Kia who was not present, Clara said "I am quite sure that Kia wants to be a swan or something . . . because she likes swans."¹³ Well, Kia did not want to be a swan but a cheetah. She said that cheetah is the fastest animal in the world. It seemed to be meaningful for her for some reason; she repeated this a few times. Clara, herself, chose the panther; she said that panthers are wild and cute, and that she liked cats terribly much.

Patrick and Vincent wanted to be bears. Patrick did not give any reasons for his choice, but it was clear from the very beginning he wanted to be a Finnish animal in a Finnish forest, and that he wanted to be a bear. Vincent, who first suggested some human characters, was ready to go with his friend's idea, saying

¹¹ mun omas kissaski on tommost värii

¹² koska persialaiset voi tehdä mitä tykkää.

¹³ mä oon ihan varma et Kia halua olla joku joutsen tai joku . . . noku se tykkää joutsenista.

that the bear is his favorite animal. He then told me that he had petted a bear in Turkey, on a street.

Also Ulla and Irene debated whether to be Finnish or foreign animals: Ulla first thought about monkeys, because they “jump around and do funny things”¹⁴ and also because they are happy animals, but when Irene said that she would like to be a squirrel Ulla said that “a squirrel would be also quite good.”¹⁵ We then discussed the similarities between monkeys and squirrels: they can climb trees, they are small and swift, and they are fun to watch. Ulla told that she once tried to catch a squirrel.

Nathan also thought about animals, but was undecided for a long time about which animal he would choose to be. He thought he could maybe be a dog, but much later decided that he would be a crocodile. But he was active in planning all the characters:

Well, if everybody would like be their own so that everybody does their own thing then . . . they all are different animals so that there is not the same kind of animals . . . I could be a dog, for instance . . . and then we would be divided into groups of animals . . . like, wolf, fox and dog and then cat animals: cat, lion, tiger and so on.¹⁶

Something like this actually happened: in addition to two squirrels we had two (eventually three since Sebastian changed his mind later) bears, two pandas, one polar bear (Ringo’s favorite animal), two cats and three catlike animals, (cheetahs etc.) and three dinosaurs that looked a lot like Nathan’s crocodile, so they made a group of four. We also had one lone kangaroo, Fred, who always seemed to be a left out of all group in real life, as well.

Gabriel was the one who thought of being a dinosaur. He said that he often plays “some dino, a raptor kind of animal”¹⁷. So he wanted to be a dinosaur. Later, Yuri and Henri, who did not come up with anything during the discussion, joined Gabriel and became dinosaurs, as well.

¹⁴ ne pomppii kaikkee tekee sillee kivoja juttuja

¹⁵ orava ois mun mielest kans ihan hyvä.

¹⁶ No jos kaikki ois niinku oma et kaikki tekee omaansa ni . . . ne on eri eläimii kaikki et ei ois ykskää niinku sama . . . mä voisin esimerkiks olla joku koira vaikka . . . sitte jaetaan niinku se eläinlajin ryhmiin viel... vaikka, susi, kettu ja koira, sit nää kissaeläimii . . . kissa tiikeri ja leijona ja semmosta.

¹⁷ mä yleensä leikin vaa ... jotain dinoo – vähä raptailin tapasta otusta.

Not all boys wanted to be animals. Zachary made the clearest choice; to him the whole performance had no meaning until he realized that he could be a ghost. When I asked him to talk about the story and his character he said, "everything in it is boring."¹⁸ I then asked him to think how we could make it more interesting for him, and what he would like to do in it:

Zachary: I would like to play a ghost.

Eeva: You would like to be a ghost character in it?

Zachary: Yes!

Eeva: Well, you can be.

Zachary: Yee!¹⁹

Other non-animal characters were fictional, green or black creatures that had some characteristics from cartoons characters. I emphasized that they should try to think of a character that was not borrowed from any video, TV-program, computer game or cartoon, and they tried to avoid those. Julius, for instance, wanted to be a "Two-face": one side of his face would be green and the other blue. Sebastian wanted to be a zombie-type of character that he described in detail:

[It is] a kind of monster. . . who has a green face and all screws go through its head . . . and it is green all over . . . hands and all [are] all green like itself.²⁰

He also added a red headband "like Ninja" and that it would be a scary but definitely not a cruel character. Aaron wanted also to be a green "maskman" with a headband.

In addition to Zachary's ghost, who became a black ghost, we had two more black characters, both combinations of bats and humans: a crazy bat (Dennis) and a madbat (Quincy). Quincy's madbat was a senselessly courageous madman

¹⁸ kaikki siionon tylsää.

¹⁹ Zachary: Mä haluaisin leikkii haamua.

Eeva: Haluaisitsä olla haamuhahmo siinä?

Zachary: Joo!

Eeva: No sähän voit olla.

Zachary: Jee!

²⁰ [Se on] semmonen hirviö . . . vihree naamaltaa ja kaikki ruuvit menee pään läpi . . . se on ite kaikist paikoist vihree . . . kaikist kädet ja tallee et se on ihan vihree niinku ite.

who could dive down the Eiffel tower.

I then asked the children where they thought this story took place and asked them to describe the place. Many children said that this happened in a jungle or in a place like a jungle. Even Julius, whose idea first was going along with Quincy's ideas about a madhouse, said:

A madhouse, yes, that's a cool thing . . . A JUNGLE! You must listen to animals there.²¹

Quincy then agreed that it could be a jungle, adding: "Oh, then there can be a Tarzan."²² In more detailed descriptions, Ulla said it was a clean and green place, and Kia said that,

Well, there are a lot of plants and animals . . . and then there is some shelter, a kind of a paddock where these animals are being sheltered . . . it is quite dark there because there are so many plants and animals but the sun shines there too.²³

Some were not so clear if it was a jungle or any forest. For Ulla it was a "forest or a place with lots of animals."²⁴ Nathan said that,

It is like an island . . . you can see forest, some island that is sort of a forest. There is something like in a real forest, something a little bit more . . . not so much habitation.²⁵

He said also that it was evening and dusk, and that it was scary. Some children thought it was light, but most thought it was dark or dusk, and most also thought it was scary; even when it was light it was still scary. Belinda thought that it was safe for the animals otherwise, but there was a trap made by a hunter somewhere. A couple other children talked about hunters, traps and safe places as well.

²¹ Mielisairaalaa, se ois hyvä juttu . . . VIIDAKKO! Siin pitää kuunnella eläimii.

²² Ai niin sillon vois olla joku Tarzan.

²³ No, sielon paljon kasvei ja eläimii tietenki . . . ja sit siel on joku suojeluspaikka, semmonen aitaus jos näit suojellaan näit eläimii . . . siel on aika hämääää ku tota nii siel on niin paljo kasvei ja eläimii mut sinneki kyl paistaa aurinko.

²⁴ metsä tai semmonen, misson paljon eläimii.

²⁵ Se on semmonen niinku saari . . . näkyy metsää, joku saari niinku mikä on tavallaan metsä. Sielon jotain niinku on oikeeski metsäs, jotain ehkä vähä enemmän . . . ei hirveästi asutust.

Patrick was firm in his opinion that this was a Finnish forest. He said that there were pine trees and spruces, and Finnish animals there. Gabriel and Zachary disagreed about the place. Their argument didn't seem to go anywhere:

Gabriel: A jungle
Zachary: No, a cemetery
Gabriel: A jungle
Zachary: A cemetery
Gabriel: A jungle
Zachary: A cemetery
Gabriel: A jungle²⁶

I then said that the place does not have to be same for everyone; it can be a cemetery to someone and a jungle to another. We then went on to discuss if it was a safe or a dangerous place, they replied that it was "really scary" and dangerous. They continued planning the plot without me:

Zachary: There is full moon and a few roads, a tree and then . . .
Gabriel: Bats
Zachary: Yes
Gabriel: And in the bush hides . . .
Zachary: And it is dark and in the bush . . .
Gabriel: A constrictor, or, well, a kingsnake, and it attacks and grabs and pulls,
Zachary: And then a small meat eating plant that . . .
Gabriel: A small meat eating plant that grabs your leg.²⁷

²⁶ Gabriel: Viidakko

Zachary: Ei, hautausmaa

Gabriel: Viidakko

Zachary: Hautausmaa

Gabriel: Viidakko

Zachary: Hautausmaa

Gabriel: Viidakko

²⁷ Zachary: Sielon täyskuu ja sitte muutama tie, puu, ja sitte . . .

Gabriel: Lepakkoja

Zachary: Niin

Gabriel: Ja sit siel pensaassa vaanii . . .

Zachary: Ja sitte on pimeetä ja pensaassa . . .

Gabriel: Kyykäärme, tai no kuningaskäärme, ja se hyökkää ja nappaa ja se vetää.

Zachary: Ja sit siel on vaik pieni lihansyöjäkasvi joka . . .

Gabriel: Pieni lihansyöjäkasvi joka ottaa jalasti kiinni.

They kept on speaking together. These two boys seemed to share a world of imagination. They were not embarrassed to speak about their dreams, hopes and fears to me or to each other.

I drafted a description of the place based on the children's ideas:

Green, forestlike: it can be a jungle or a Finnish morass: wet, foggy, ditchy. It can also be an island that has a forest, or a strange unfamiliar place, like another planet. There are lots of plants, animals, creatures, space creatures? A rope, liane, meat eating plants, small and big.

It is dusk, a little bit light; it is full moon, it is evening. The sun can shine a little bit at times. There are clouds.

The place is exciting, secretive; there are dangers, hidden ditches, hiding places. It is dangerous. There is also a safe place where you can hide from hunters. The place is then quite safe as well.

Strange sounds, unknown danger, maybe a hunter. The darkness is frightening.

I also asked them to tell what they thought happened in the story. It was quite clear that this story would be an adventure, and that there was danger and animals were involved in it, and maybe some humans, too. Tiina said that they would meet each other and be surprised because everybody was so different. Kia thought that some animals could not stand each other "like the tiger does not stand the cheetah because it is the fastest."²⁸

For many children the adventure included running away or getting lost. Elisa and Olivia thought that this story was about animals that were wandering in a jungle, that they had run away somewhere, maybe from home, and then one of them disappeared, or got lost. They also met dangerous animals, like a crocodile, on their way.

Escaping an unknown danger was an element that some children, like Ulla, wanted to include:

It would be good so that some animal says like some sound or some strange sound and then everybody gets scared and runs away.²⁹

Nathan wanted to include humans in the story; his plan was that someone would get lost and then change clothes and reappear as a human. The human entering the story would create the danger in it. Also Belinda wanted to add a human element to the story; she suggested that she would be a leopard who could transform itself to a human, and that no one else would know that the leopard could become human.

The danger in this story was not to be a real danger. Only Vincent first suggested a realistic story about hunters coming to chase the bears. Even he softened his story so that then in the end "there would not be bad people after all,"³⁰ explaining that the animals just thought so. Ulla continued her storyline so that the sound that scared all the animals was made by "some normal animal who then joins their dancing . . . and they would not be scared of it anymore."³¹ Patrick suggested that it was a rabbit in the bushes that made the scary noise, and that the animals thought that it was a hunter. Gabriel and Zachary had a different idea. Talking together about the danger phase in the story, they constructed the following flow of events:

Zachary: The ghost eats everybody . . . ghosts conquer the world.

Gabriel: I would like to be a dino . . . who eats the ghost.

Eeva: How can you eat ghosts?

Zachary: You tell that! You go through my stomach!

Gabriel: It is the kind of Dino that eats ghosts . . . a ghostdino! It eats all ghosts.

Zachary: My name will be then kind of ghost-guy, dinoghost, I eat dinos, kind of huge ghost who eats dinos!

Gabriel: Then we will bump our heads together! (laughter)³²

²⁸ niinku leijonakaa ei siedä gepardii ku se on kaikkein nopein.

²⁹ Se ois sille hyvä vaik et joku joku eläin sanois vaikka jonkun äänen tai jonkun oudon äänen sit kaikki pelästyy ja lähtee juoksemaan karkuun.

³⁰ siin ei oiskaa mitään pahalaisii

³¹ joku normaali eläin joka tulis sitte mukaan niiden tansseihin . . . ne ei ois enää pelänny sitä.

³² Zachary: Haamu syö kaikki . . . haamut valtaa maailman.

Gabriel: Mä haluaisin olla dino . . . joka syö sen haamun.

Eeva: Mitens haamuja voi syödä?

Zachary: Kerroppas se! Sä meet mun mahan läpi!

Gabriel: Se on semmonen Dino joka syö haamuja... haamudino! Se syö kaikki haamut.

Zachary: Mun nimi onki sitte semmonen haamu-ukko, dinohaamu, mä syön dinoja, sellanen valtava haamu joka syö dinoja.

Gabriel: Sillon kopsautetaan päät! (nauria)

Zachary then wanted to add that a reaper would come to the cemetery and that zombies would come out from the ground. When I asked them how the story would end, Gabriel said that someone would save everybody who got into danger. I asked how this saving would happen:

Zachary: So that the reaper would come to get all the ghosts away from there to their own home . . .

Gabriel: Or then so it would suddenly be so that someone would accidentally say some word when in the beginning it would have said some hipuli-hopuli-hip and then it would accidentally say it backwards so that everything would disappear like oops . . . and then we would be in some place.

Eeva: In the end? Would it be a safe place?

Gabriel: Yes, home.

Eeva: Would this have been a dream all together?

Gabriel: Mm, in a way . . . someone would have found a bottle and said a magic word and we would have gotten into the bottle . . . and then someone would have said the word backwards when you say that hepuli hopuli hop and then shhh and then we would have gotten out from the bottle.³³

This quite complicated plot did not end up in our story as such, but affected the basic idea of not being quite sure if this was a dream or not; we did not have to know if it was day or night or if it was light or dark. Or, if this happened in a forest or in a jungle, or in a cemetery. For some it was dangerous, but somehow safe, and for some it was safe, but still somehow dangerous.

One thing seemed to be unanimous: the ending was to be happy and everybody would be saved. Nathan suggested that someone finds a boat or that humans help the animals to get back to their own island. Some children thought that after all the danger and excitement, the animals would get to know each other

³³ Zachary: Sillee et se viikatemies tulis hakemaan kaikki haamat pois sieltä niitten omaan kotiinsa . . .

Gabriel: Tai sitte se olis yhtäkkiä niin että joku sanois vahingossa jonkun sanan ku alussa se ois sanonu jonkun hipuli-hopuli-hup ja sitte se sanois sen vahingossa takaperin niin sit kaikki häviäs että hups . . . sit oltais jossain paikassa.

Eeva: Lopuks? Oisko se sit turvallinen paikka?

Gabriel: Joo, koti.

Eeva: Oisko tää ollukki uni kokonaan?

Gabriel: Mm, tavallaan . . . joku ois löytäny jonku pullon ja sanonu taikasanan ja me oltais joudut-tu sinne pulloon . . . ja sit joku olis sanonu sen sanan takaperin ku sanoo että hepuli hopuli hop ja sitte shhhh ja sitte me oltais päästy sieltä pullost pois.

and become friends. Even Kia thought that the animals would become friends “when they learn to accept each other.”³⁴ Ulla suggested that the animals would have a feast, a dance in the forest.

From the children’s stories I constructed the following draft story, which includes some questions and open ended events. I added some details according to the flow of events in the actual dance. The title of the dance was agreed on later; however, I am disclosing it here.

A DREAM JOURNEY TO THE UNKNOWN

Strange creatures, unfamiliar to each other get stranded, beached, shipwrecked or fall from somewhere; they arrive to a strange place. No one knows each other and the place is unfamiliar to everyone, maybe a new planet. (Why did they get there? How? Had they run away?)

The creatures are careful, they are a little bit afraid of each other, but they try to get to know each other. They are surprised: everybody looks so odd, different. Some seem not to stand each other. Some are similar, most are different. Some are happy, some are sad. But the place feels dangerous, and the creatures feel that they belong together, so they decide to stick together. They hear strange sounds, become frightened and escape. Some disappear or get lost. (Will they be found again?)

One of them is courageous and encourages the others to explore the place with him, and they get on the move. The expedition is exciting, and together they go and try to find out what are those strange sounds. The sounds sort of chase them. (What caused the sounds? A harmless animal in a bush, a bat in the sky, imagination, fear of death?) The creatures are afraid of different things: darkness, other creatures, animals, being lost, death.

Then they come to a peaceful place that feels safe, and gather into a circle. The place is like a graveyard, but is not as frightening. (Reaper, black death and zombie). There is a full moon. During their adventure together the creatures have learned to know each other and trust each other. They want to get to know each other even better, and they dance

³⁴ sit ku ne oppii hyväksymään toisensa.

and play together in the moonshine. They become good friends. (Similar creatures form groups? Someone transforms into a human being?) The sounds feel safe now; they do not scare them anymore. Everyone is saved; some one (a human being?) helps the creatures away. (Reaper gets the ghosts away). The fears disappear – the place is safe.

In the end the creatures depart from each other, it is safe to go back home now... Or the strange place becomes a safe home. It is morning, and the dream is over.

Johan read the story to the children in class. I was present, listening. There was a short discussion about the questions and open-ended events, but no clear decisions were made. It did not seem important to have an exact plot.

Later, I wanted to know how the children had experienced this story-telling process. For some, it had been clearly significant that they got to create their character themselves. Leonard told me that,

I wanted really myself to perform a panda bear, I think it is so good looking . . . if it had been some other [character] . . . then I would not have wanted to perform it.³⁵

Clara also said that she probably would not have performed at all if I had told her what her character would be. She added, however, that it would have depended on what I had told her to be. Fred, the lone kangaroo, was also very clear about his preference, saying that he just decided it somehow; that it was a good choice and that it was fun to be able to choose himself. Dennis, Patrick and Quincy said that it would have been dull if they couldn't have the chosen character themselves. Tiina thought that it would have been different if I had told them what they performed. Gabriel said that it would have depended on what I had told them to be. Others, like Vincent, Aaron, Ulla and Olivia, liked having had the choice, but said that it did not matter so much.

Zachary was still not quite satisfied about his character. He said that,

I would have wanted that I have a gray . . . when you painted me, when we were being masked, I looked really funny, like a whiteface . . . then it

³⁵ Mä halusin niinku ihan itte esittää sitä panda -karhuu mun mielest se on niin hyvännäkönen . . . jos ois joku toinen [hahmo] . . . sit ei ois taas halunnu esittää sitä.

should have been better . . . it was really weird, I said like a skull . . . ghosts do not have skin.³⁶

He still was happy with the ghost idea, saying, "it is the best of all."³⁷ Sebastian, on the other hand, had a complex process in creating his character. First he wanted to be a zombie, but when he noticed that,

. . . there was some others . . . who I didn't want to be with in the same group, then I wanted to be a devil, but then I still wanted to change to be a bear because Patrick and Vincent they are my friends, see, so I wanted to be with them.³⁸

He later remembered from the photos that it was Gabriel with whom he didn't want to be. I asked why and he said:

Well, Gabriel always irritates or he does not irritate only but like, if he gets pushed a little bit then he starts chasing you. If in the performance accidentally would happen a little push, he goes chasing you in the performance, then it would go really, get ruined, see, I have irritated him enough during first, second and third grade so now if I just a little, just a little irritate him still then he immediately gets at me and hits me.³⁹

After all this, he thought, he still would have liked to have kept his original idea, that "I would have liked to be a zombie maybe, yes I would have wanted to be a zombie the most."⁴⁰

The lives of children are more complicated than we adults may think. For each and every child the process of creating the character was unique. For me it was comforting to go through this process. This story was not about killing or

³⁶ Mä oisin kyllä halunnu et mul ois ollu harmaa... sillonku te maalasitte, ku maskeerattiin, niin sillon mä naytin ihan hassulta, ihan valkonaamalta . . . sillon sen ois pitäny olla parempi . . . ihan omituinen, mä sanoin et pääkallo . . . kummituksillahan ei oo nahkaa.

³⁷ se on niist kaikkein paras.

³⁸ . . . ku siel oli yks toinen . . . kenen kaa mä en halunnu olla niinku samassa ryhmässä, sit mä halusin mennä piruks, mut sitte vielä halusin vaihtaa karhuks ku Patrick ja Vincent ne on mu kavereit kato niin mä halusin olla niitten kaa.

³⁹ No Gabriel aina niinku aina ärsyttää tai ei se ärsytä vaa tai sillee, jos sitä vähä tönäsee niin se lähtee jahtaamaan. Jos esitykses vahingos vaikka sattus pikku tönäsy se lähtee jahtaan siel esitykses sithän se menee ihan päin, mönkään kato ku mä oon sitä ärsyttäny tarpeeks ekal tokal ja kolmannella niin nytte jos mä vähäki jos mä vähäki sitä ärsytän vielä niin se lähtee perään ja lyö.

⁴⁰ Mä oisin halunnu olla zombie kyl ehkä, kyl mä zombie olisin vaan ollu mieluiten.

getting killed. In my multiple “role” as teacher, researcher, choreographer/director, or a co-creator I think I got almost inside their world. Probably no one of these “roles” or perspectives alone would have done the same. After this it felt very different to continue the work.

It was also comforting to discover that the land of imagination really exists. Maybe that land is forgotten or covered in haze, or it is not drawn on the map of learning. We, too, had to make a detour in order to find it.

Imagination: A forgotten path towards treasures of knowledge

Our detour made me really curious about imagination. I started asking questions like, how does imagination work, what does it do? These questions can be approached from various vantage points; I already have discussed image-making as a human capacity, following Damasio (1999, 303–304). He refers to imagination as the world in which images of different modalities (visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic) can be combined to produce novel images of situations that have not yet happened. Thus, humans are able to create novel responses in novel situations.

Philosophers have for a long time been fascinated with imagination. John Sallis (2000, 66) discusses Immanuel Kant’s idea of transcendental imagination that depicts imagination as an indispensable function of the soul and a prerequisite of knowledge and understanding. Although we are scarcely conscious of imagination, we would have no knowledge without it. This view deviates surprisingly little from the latest findings in neuroscience. Sallis writes,

. . . imagination is brought to the fore not just as mediating between sense and intelligence but as the power of synthesis that yokes sense and intelligence together in the knowledge or experience of objects. (2000, 66)

This synthesis occurs also on the empirical level, but in Kantian terms, pure synthesis operates entirely beyond sense, exceeding and preceding it. It surpasses the temporal and the logical and unites understanding with intuition. (Sallis 2000, 67)

Sallis speaks of "Force of imagination," following Kant's original expression (Einbildungskraft). For him,

. . . there is nothing more forceful than the force of imagination . . . For this force is such that it can bring together what cannot be brought together . . . (2000, 128)

On the other hand, he says, there is nothing less forceful than imagination, because it

. . . does not turn against the force that separated them [opposed pulls]. . . it only lets things show themselves as they properly are . . . (2000, 128)

British art philosopher Paul Crowther (2002) has also developed his thinking along Kantian lines by stating that there is an existential primacy of mental image versus thought and language, and that imaging allows for creative interpretation of reality and this is the basis of personal identity and artistic making. For him, imagination makes possible a new way of seeing, and is the engine of producing different ways of representation and thus, innovation.

Maxine Greene connects imagination to education. She (1995, 19) says that "to tap into imagination is to become able to break with what is supposedly fixed and finished, objectively and independently real." She emphasizes the importance of imagination in education, saying that,

. . . imagination enables us to cross the empty spaces between ourselves and those we teachers have called "other" over the years . . . of all our cognitive capacities, imagination is the one that permits us to give credence to alternative realities. (Greene 1995, 3)

She continues by reflecting how, for years, we have considered, for example, children or people of another race to be incompetent; and how lately, voices of these people have become a focus of interest. Imagination, according to Greene, is what we need to enter their worlds. By using imagination "we extend our experience sufficiently to grasp it [other people's world] as a human possibility" (1995, 4).

Greene also speaks about poetic use of imagination. By that she means an ability to bring into being what she calls an "as if" world created by artists.

Participating in artists' worlds that reach far back and ahead in time leads us to become wide-awake to the world, to see new perspectives on the world, and to encounter "a startling defamiliarization of the ordinary" (1995, 4). Encountering art, then, leads from discovery to discovery, and to renewing the terms of life. Once again, by reading Greene, I become affirmed that arts belong to education. Not only, as Greene puts it, because of the pleasure and beauty they provide, and not only because of the cognitive rigor they may involve, and not only because of the balance and added motivation they may bring to schoolwork. Instead, arts belong to education because they

. . . have a unique power to release the imagination . . . the role of imagination is not to resolve, not to point the way, not to improve. It is to awaken, to disclose the ordinarily unseen, unheard, and unexpected. (Greene 1995, 27–28)

In contradicting the established, or the given, art reaches beyond what is customary and leads those who are willing to risk transformations to the shaping of a social vision. (1995, 30)

Greene also speaks about social imagination, which she defines as "the capacity to invent visions of what should be and what might be in our deficient society" (1995, 5). We need that capacity to see that things could be otherwise and to become aware how things are now. Imagination makes us see how things really are; without imagination we cannot see. According to Greene,

This kind of reshaping imagination may be released through many sorts of dialogue: dialogue among the young who come from different cultures and different modes of life . . . dialogue among people undertaking shared tasks . . . When such dialogue is activated in classrooms, even the young are stirred to reach out on their own initiatives. Apathy and indifference are likely to give way as images of what might be arise. (1995, 5)

How much I aspired to this happening in my class! Feelings of powerlessness in front of the invisible but massive apathy made me sometimes depressed and even angry, silently screaming at the system that turns curious children into youngsters who easily slip into boredom and indifference, or hopelessness. Freire says that hopelessness paralyzes and immobilizes. For him, hope is an ontological need for humans, and hopelessness is a distortion of that need:

I do not understand human existence, and the struggle needed to improve it, apart from hope and dream. (1996, 8)

Freire's concept of "untested feasibility" denotes a belief in the "possible dream" that humans can become aware of once they perceive "a limit situation," that is, a situation that limits their authentic existence as humans. If humans perceive these obstacles as something that can be broken through, they devote themselves to overcoming them. (Freire 1996, 9, 206) This is how, for Freire, hope and dreams mobilize us to transform the world:

. . . the attempt to do without hope, in the struggle to improve the world, as if that struggle could be reduced to calculated acts alone, or a purely scientific approach, is a frivolous illusion . . . hope, as an ontological need, demands an anchoring in practice . . . just to hope is to hope in vain. (1996, 8–9)

Freire explains this by saying that hope, without concrete action, dissipates and turns into hopelessness and despair that cause inaction and immobilization. It is exactly here that he sees the crucial nature of education:

Hence the need for a kind of education for hope . . . One of the tasks of the progressive educator . . . is to unveil opportunities for hope . . . (1996, 9)

Hope, says Freire (1972, 64), is rooted in our incompleteness that instigates a constant search for becoming more fully human. This search can be carried out only in communion with other men, through dialogue. He asserts that dialogue cannot be carried out in a climate of hopelessness, because hopelessness makes humans expect nothing of their efforts. Thus, their encounter with each other will be empty and sterile. (1996, 64)

Greene (1995, 5), as well, speaks of action in and through education and looks for ". . . all kinds of openings to possibility"; an idea that to me seems indistinguishable from Freire's notion of untested feasibility. She looks for ways to move from a mechanical chain of routine behaviors to moments of awareness and intensified consciousness. Greene writes:

All depends upon a breaking free, a leap, and then a question. I would like to claim that this is how learning happens and that the educative

task is to create situations in which the young are moved to *begin* to ask, in all the tones of voice there are, "Why?" (1995, 6)

In a discussion with the Principal of Meri-Rastila School, it became evident that the resources of the teachers in the school are limited in supporting imagination. He said that,

An ordinary classroom teacher does not kind of have the ability and they can't even be expected to start taking it to that world and even have a courage to move there themselves and see what will come out from there and let like both give freedom and guide it so that it does not turn into anarchy.⁴¹

He also expressed his concern about the whole school system in this respect:

In this school system I think there is frankly speaking a weak point; that is that learning is an external process still, even though there has been a lot of effort to develop these pedagogical methods and ways. Still the way the pupil experiences himself in the situation, how he experiences himself as a learner, [and] how he experiences himself being allowed to be what I feel . . . this side is really negligible . . . in fact at times I feel like it so negligible that it does not exist.⁴²

I feel that he is speaking about the same thing that Greene is worrying about, and that I experienced as a hidden barrier in arousing the children to sense and feel themselves, in helping them make a move, become curious and interested. I had a growing concern over their life situations, an anxiety that I did not know enough to relate my teaching to their worlds. I reflected on this several times during the second spring as children's conflicts seemed to surface in the class. I felt a strong desire to help, but at the same time, powerless and

⁴¹ Eihän tämmösel tavallisel luokanopettajal niin eihän sil oo tavallaan kykyä eikä silt voi edes edellyttää sitä et se lähtee viemään niinku noin vaan tonne maailmaan ja ja uskaltaa jopa ite liikkuu sielä ja kattoo et mitä sielt alkaa tulla ja osaa sit niinku sekä antaa vapautta että ohjata niin että se ei mee anarkiaksi.

⁴² Täs peruskoulus on must semmonen suoraan sanoen heikko kohta; [se] on se että oppiminen on niin ulkokohtanen prosessi yhä edelleen, et vaikka kuinka on koitettu kehittää näitä pedagogisii menetelmii ja tapoja, niin se et miten se oppilas kokee itse itsensä siin tilanteessa ja miten se kokee itse itsensä oppijana, [ja] miten se kokee sen et saanks mä olla sitä milt must tuntuu . . . kaikki tää puoli on niinku kauheen vähällä . . . oikeestaan joskus tuntuu siltä et se on niin vähällä et sitä ei oo.

tired, realizing my limited possibilities to do so. Searching for a common ground became increasingly important for me in finding a way to connect and spark a light into the alarming atmosphere of hopelessness.

According to Greene, breaking through barriers of expectation, boredom and predefinition is what constitutes teaching and learning, and breaking through takes imagination on the part of the teacher and the student. The teacher needs to break through ordinary classifications and to encounter the students in their lived situations; the students need to “perceive openings through which they can move” (Greene 1995, 14). The breaking through with imagination means that the students become inventive, learn to teach themselves and use their open capacities, and maybe surprise themselves and the teacher.

To speak about learning in this way is to speak about beginnings, not endings; it is to speak about openings, possibilities instead of prescriptions and aims. It is about being lured by incompleteness and by roads not taken. (Greene 1995, 15) To me, this idea of indulgence into incompleteness resembles Buber’s view of presence and freedom. He says that,

Whoever is overpowered by the It-world must consider the dogma of an ineluctable [inevitable] running down as a truth that creates a clearing in the jungle. In truth, this dogma only leads him deeper into the slavery of the It-world. But the world of the You is not locked up. Whoever proceeds toward it, concentrating his whole being, with his power to relate resurrected, beholds his freedom. (Buber 1937/1970, 107)

From teacher’s viewpoint I conceive this as trusting the process, trusting the moment; as courage to let go of structure, of aims and plans; as seeing possibilities in open-endedness, and as the fading of barriers, definitions and distinctions. Teaching, too, becomes a search, where the teacher is transformed along with the students’ transformation. Teaching, then, may be reaching beyond what is given, and what is, and “a person may become freed to glimpse what might be, to form notions of what should be and what is not yet” (Greene 1995, 19).

Instead of taking one’s identity and position as fixed, being yourself is a process that involves surprise:

The surprise comes along with becoming different – consciously different as one finds ways of acting on envisaged possibility . . .

Moreover, to learn and to teach, one must have an awareness of leaving something behind when reacting to something new, and this kind of awareness must be linked to imagination. (Greene 1995, 20)

Greene insists that learning is about becoming different, and that "a kindred imaginative ability is required if the becoming different that learning involves is actually to take place" (1995, 21). For her,

. . . the classroom situation most provocative of thoughtfulness and critical consciousness is the one in which teachers and learners find themselves conducting a kind of collaborative search, each from her or his lived situation. (1995, 23)

Doll's view on postmodern curriculum is based on a similar idea. For him, a pedagogic creed involves a reflective relationship between the teacher and the student, where the teacher does not ask the student to accept the teacher's authority, but "to join with the teacher in inquiry, into that which the student is experiencing" (1993, 160). Doll claims that postmodern curriculum is an open-ended, nondeterminist, constructive and nonlinear matrix, one that

. . . emerges through the action and interaction of the participants; it is not one set in advance (except in broad and general terms). A matrix, of course, has no beginning or ending, it does have boundaries and it has points of intersection or foci. (1993, 162)

Doll spells out that he does not advocate a sloppy curriculum, quite the contrary. Playing with material in "imaginative and quirky manners" that he does advocate, "requires a curriculum rich in diversity, problematics, and heuristics, as well as classroom atmosphere that fosters exploration" (1993, 164). The environment should be rich and open so that multiple interpretations and perspectives can come into play. Doll claims that anomalies, even mistakes must be nurtured, and this means dialoguing "seriously with the students about *their* ideas as *their ideas*" (1993, 166). As Greene (1995, 24) puts it:

The difficult task for the teacher is to devise situations in which the young will move from the habitual and the ordinary and consciously undertake a search. (1995, 24)

In a similar vein, Freire (1996, 82) approaches the teacher's task. Whereas building an intellectual discipline is crucial, it cannot be built by the teacher, but by the students. However, the teacher's role in "birthing of this discipline" is enormous; it requires effective presence, stimulus and orientation from the teacher's part. Apart from this, Freire points out that,

It is crucial, then, that educands discover and sense the joy that steeps it, that is part of it, and that is ever ready to fill the hearts of all who surrender to it. (1996, 82)

Thus, building an intellectual discipline seems more like play, exploration or search, as Doll and Greene suggested. Moreover, Freire makes clear that although "there is no educational practice without content" (1996, 112), he emphasizes that no framework and no content is neutral, free of values and ideology. Thus, he cautions against imposing the teacher's reading of the world on pupils and holding content as property, or possessing the content. (1996, 111) What is left for the democratic, progressive educator is to

. . . join battle for good and all in favor of the democratization of society, which necessarily implies the democratization of the school in terms, on the one hand, of the democratization of the program content, and on the other, of the democratization of the teaching of that content. (1996, 113)

Thus, Freire speaks of not only "knowledge of living experience" and "popular knowledge" as the fabric of education, but equally, of "the horizon of cultural context" and "erudite knowledge," reminding that,

Educands' concrete localization is the point of departure for the knowledge they create of the world. "Their" world, in the last analysis, is the primary and inescapable face of the world itself. (1996, 85)

In a surprisingly similar vein, Buber reminds educators not to impose their "selection of the world" arbitrarily on the students. This happens if the selection is carried out from the educator and from his idea of the pupil. Instead the pupil's reality should affect that selection:

In learning from time to time what this human being needs and does not need at the moment, the educator is led to an ever deeper recognition of what the human being needs in order to grow. But he is also led to the recognition of what he, the "educator" is able and what he is unable to give of what is needed – and what he can give now and what not yet. (Buber 1947, 101)

Here, the educator is being self-educated. This self-education, warns Buber, does not happen by being concerned with oneself but only through the educator's being concerned with the world:

The forces of the world which the child needs for the building up of his substance must be chosen by the educator from the world and drawn into himself . . . The educator gathers in the constructive forces of the world. He distinguishes, rejects, and confirms in himself, in his self which is filled with the world. (1947, 101)

Buber denies that there is or ever has been a norm and fixed maxim of education. He claims that there have only been norms of a culture, a society, a church or an epoch, to which education has been submissive, and "which education translated into its language" (1947, 102). He says:

In a formed age there is in truth no autonomy of education, but only in an age which is losing form. Only in it, in the disintegration of traditional bonds, in the spinning whirl of freedom, does personal responsibility arise which in the end can no longer lean with its burden of decision on any church nor society or culture, but is lonely in face of Present Being. (1947, 102)

I see here the same premise that Doll advocates in his idea about postmodern curriculum; the indetermined nature of curriculum. The answer to the question, "To where, to what, must we educate?" then remains indefinable. Buber says, however, that the constructive forces that build up the substance of a human being and human life are eternally the same and bound up in community.

If education is about helping students "become more fully human" or "building up the substance of a human being" and if the teacher is a learner, as well, education then, becomes a mutual search. Greene writes,

If teaching can be thought of as an address to others' consciousness, it may be a summons on the part of one incomplete person to other incomplete persons to reach for wholeness. (1995, 26)

If I, as a teacher, within my quest of becoming me, realize that my students have that same quest within themselves, waiting for space and time for it to surface as emerging questions and self-initiated actions, I can be someone who provides them with that opportunity. Greene suggests that the arts play a crucial role in this mutual search:

Through proffering experiences of the arts and storytelling, teachers can keep seeking connection points among their personal histories and the histories of those they teach. (1995, 42)

Within my search I can give space for my students to conduct their search. Somewhere in space and time our paths will cross, and the crossings could become openings for everyone because no one knows what will happen next.

THE FINAL SEGMENT OF THE JOURNEY

Rays of light emerge

April 12, 1999

Today the rehearsal went beautifully in the beginning, although the pupils had to memorize and wait. Unfortunately the video did not work! The children were doing their own things in the gym while we adults were getting ready. When I sat down, ready to begin, I asked in a very ordinary tone to come here and most pupils came right away. The others streamed to the cluster quickly, I just needed to call them first. I said to Nathan, "Hey, Nathan, wrong direction" and he came right back.

We agreed on some rules first, that we will work without wasting time and then we can play some games in the end.

We were back in the big gym, and the echo was tiring. I was a little uptight and tense. I called out: "Two rows now, we are losing time!" The noise from the instruments added to the restless sound environment. Immediately in this big gym, I was again more tense and used my voice differently.

I tried to make the big jumps happen more simultaneously and in two rows. Getting in rows and preparing the musicians took time, but the children waited patiently. The rows did not work. Then, Zachary said: "Animals do not move in straight rows." I replied, "They don't? Aha, that is true. I have many times myself wondered in dance performances, why on earth are those dancers in straight lines. This is a relief, let's reject the rows! We won't even try to stay in rows. It is unnatural, really..." This was an important moment for me. A child took initiative, told his honest opinion, and changed the flow of events. This is what empowerment is about.

As I was giving directions for the next move, someone (a boy) asked: "Eeva?" I replied, "Yes?" "When do I go and play?" I told him when. In this hassle it was a small wonder that my "one talks at a time" –principle worked.

The situation stayed quite jammed for some time as we were fixing move-

ments. Johan left the room – he did not tell me where he went. Next two movements, and the children seemed bored. The movement did still not have enough meaning. It did not seem to motivate them. The connection from the characters and the story to movement was not working yet.

Then we practiced “the pancake.” Some children practiced, I helped them, and others waited patiently. I was getting tired because of losing the listening connection. “Now this is enough of this!” I said firmly.

Then – everything changed. The noise got louder and I lost my contact to the children. Whereas we were a team first, now we were like a group of atoms dispersed around the space. My voice could not be heard and the children were suddenly actors wholly separate of me, who acted somehow without any logic. The situation was not a complete chaos, but the connection was lost.

We continued the rehearsal; I was still determined to handle the situation without yelling. I asked the children to be still in their places for the pancake until everybody was ready and it was quiet. This succeeded, although it took time. I was calm, not hurrying now.

It was quiet now, and we started turning. This movement lasted only for a little while, and it had taken so long to get ready for it. Getting organized for the next move seemed to be a tremendous task. We almost got through the piece, except for the very last movement. Then I stopped the rehearsal and asked the children to come and discuss the situation. I asked them how they thought the rehearsal went. They replied that it went badly, and I agreed. Many children wanted to talk. The discussion was constructive although the content was partly negative.

It turned out that many children were lacking motivation/meaning to this work, and that they were really tired. Most children (14 or 15) however, wanted to go on all the way to a performance. So we continued. The atmosphere was a little strange, however.

The whole thing, and putting together a performance in general, does not seem to be meaningful for everyone. I am wondering what is going on with these children? What interests them? Easy living? Enjoyment, idle life, or what? My research could become a journey to the soul and world of children of year 1999. I would like to know and understand.

Discussions with the children revealed more about their world and helped me to understand their life that for some children seemed to lack meaning. Julius, for instance, was opposed to everything in school. He thought that everything in the school was in vain, that he did not learn anything there. With Quincy they started to imagine a better world for themselves in a following way:

Julius: I would like to sleep at home and watch TV.

Quincy: I would like to fly . . . no, I would like something totally crazy . . .

Julius: I would to go to jungle and play Tarzan.

Quincy: Yes, that would be fun, to go to Hawai'i for a vacation . . . to sun bathe and swim.

Julius: [I] would be a king there.'

I then asked if there was anything else they would like to do if they would not have to go to school. Quincy said that he would like to eat candy at home, go to cruises and buy candy from the boat. Quincy and Julius then reasoned that they needed to go to school because if they didn't, they would not get a job and then they would have no money. Julius then asked me:

Do you know where I will go to work? . . . as a NHL player, professional, then I'll make money.²

Julius's account on a wish for an easy life may reflect a lack of deeper meaning of life. He seemed to stand the boredom by daydreaming about easy life and money. Zachary also disclosed to me his dreams. He told me:

I have thought sometimes that I would have a secret place . . . I would have a secret key so that I can push it to a secret door, ziuu, and then I go in through that door and then . . . it is all different place there is, I have such nice huge building there and then there is all pools there, I can take from there and eat, like chocolate pools . . . or then pizzas . . . I always imagine that, it would be so good . . . it would be so cool.³

¹ Julius: Mä haluaisin nukkuu koton ja kattoo telkkarii.

Quincy: Mä haluaisin lentää . . . ei ku mä haluaisin ihan jotain hulluu . . .

Julius: Mä haluaisin viidakkoon leikkiin Tarzani.

Quincy: Niin, semmonen ois hauskaa – mentäis Hawaille lomalle . . . ottaa aurinkoo ja uida.

Julius: Olis[in] kuningas siel.

² Tiiätsä mihin mä meen töihin? . . . NHL-pelaajaks, ammatillaiseks, sit tienaa rahaa.

It seems like reality was a little bit too harsh for the children. Have these children faced the unexciting side of life a little too early? Do they have enough space for dreams, where they could live in castles like kings and princesses, and could make all their dreams true? Isn't this dream world a place where all people sometimes visit? Again, I find myself thinking about the importance of play reality, children's right to play. At least my own children often talk about having a thousand wishes and then imagine all different things they would do with the wishes. I don't think there is anything wrong in dreaming about being rich and powerful, as long as the dreams will not dominate your life.

Building a sound value base for life is a long and complicated process. It seems to me that during this era of information society it is increasingly difficult for children make choices and value judgments. There is so much to choose from, and so many conflicting messages from various sources. I think it is no wonder that children are confused, because I, as an adult, am often confused, as well. This entire work is about testing the soundness of my values. Maybe it is an instinctive reaction for children to turn their minds off from facing difficult and confusing issues of the real world and switch to daydreaming, or to stick to very concrete and down-to-earth matters.

During the story-telling sessions, I sometimes tried to enlarge the discussion into issues related to the children's life situation. These attempts were clumsy on my part, and also revealed that the children were not used to discussing such issues. The following excerpt is one example of such exchange:

Eeva: . . . you can be a friend with different people, even though you are quite different, you can still be friends.

Clara and Tiina: Mmm

Eeva: So that you have first been surprised because someone is so different and then you have noticed that you can be a good friend with them?

Clara and Tiina: Mmm

Eeva: Do you think sometimes beforehand so that isn't she weird, have you ever thought that way?

Clara and Tiina: Mmm

³ Mä oon ajatellu joskus semmost et mul ois semmonen salanen paikka sit se on et mä meen et mul on sellanen salanen avain et mä voin painaa sellaseen salaseen oveen –ziuh- ja sit mä meen siit ovest sisälle . . . se on ihan eri paikka sitte sielon, mullon sellanen kiva hirveen iso rakennus sielä ja sitte siel on kaikkii altaita, mä voin ottaa sieltä ja vaikka syödä vaikka jotain suklaa- altaita . . . tai sitte pizzoja, laittaa vaan pizzat uuniin, zing, mm, hyvää . . .mä kuvittelen sitä aina . . . se ois niin hyvää . . . se ois niin siistii.

Eeva: Can you recall such an event?

Tiina: I can't at least just now remember.

Clara: Me neither.

Eeva: Do you feel that anyone has thought so about you?

Tiina: No

Clara: Yes

Eeva: What would it feel like if someone thinks that isn't she weird, if someone thinks so about you, how would you feel about that?

Clara: I don't know.

Eeva: How would it feel? Try to really imagine that someone would say to you that you are weird or odd and if you, for instance went to a foreign country where everyone would be different from you, different looking, how would it feel if you were looked upon like you were odd?

Tiina: Really odd I guess.

Eeva: Is it a good or a bad feeling?

Tiina: Bad

Clara: Bad⁴

⁴ Eeva: . . . erilaistenki kans voi olla kaveroi vaiko on ihan erilainen niin voi olla kaveroi silti.

Clara ja Tiina: Mmm

Eeva: Onks teil koskaan käynny sillai elämäs oikeesti?

Clara ja Tiina: Mmm

Eeva: Et on ensi hämmästynny ku joku on ihan erilainen ja sit on huomannukki et sen kans voiko olla hyvä ystävä?

Clara ja Tiina: Mmm

Eeva: Ajattelleeks sit joskus sillai etukäteen et onpas toi omituinen että otteeks te koskaan ajatellu sillai?

Clara ja Tiina: Mmm

Eeva: Tuleeks teil mieleen semmonen tilanne?

Tiina: Ei mul ainakaan tuu nyt just mieleen.

Clara: Ei mullakaan.

Eeva: Tuntuuks teist et joku on aatellu joskus teistä sillä taval?

Tiina: Ei

Clara: Joo

Eeva: Miltähän se mahtas tuntuu jos joku ajattelee et onpas toi omituinen, jos joku aattelis vaikk teist sillä taval – mitähän se mahtais teissä, minkälaiat tunnetta siit tulis?

Clara: Emmä tiiä.

Eeva: Milt se tuntuis? Koittakaas oikein kuvitella et jos joku vaikk sanois teil et sä oot kummallinen tai omituinen tai... jos te menisitte vaikk johonki vieraaseen maahan jossa kaikki ois erilaisii ku te, erinäkösi – miltäs se mahtais tuntuu jos teit katottais et oottepas te ihmeellisii.

Tiina: Varmaan ihan ... oudolta.

Clara: Mmm

Eeva: Onks se hyvä vai huono tunne?

Susanna: Huono

Clara: Huono

Here, I talked most of the time, forming thoughts for them to react. However, they did not buy my thoughts as such, but stayed quite indifferent about the whole topic. With Olivia and Elisa I managed to arouse them a little bit more:

Eeva: Well, what happens if you get lost . . . have you ever gotten lost yourself?

Olivia: No

Eeva: Have you ever gotten lost?

Elisa: I can't remember – yes.

Eeva: How does it feel when you get lost?

Elisa: Really horrible.

Eeva: So it is not fun at all to get lost?

Elisa: No (deep sigh)

Eeva: You can feel lost in a place, in a strange place, right?

Olivia and Elisa: Right

Eeva: Even though you would know on the map where you are but the place would be so strange that . . .

Olivia: . . . It feels difficult that you can't get away from there.

Eeva: So that it feels that you can't get away?

Olivia: Mmm

Eeva: From a place, has this ever happened to you?

Olivia: No

Elisa: To me no.

Eeva: Can you imagine how it would be if you would end up in a place like that?

Olivia: That it would be awful, you would not know anyone . . .⁵

⁵ Eeva: No mitäs sit tapahtuu jos eksyy... oottekste eksynty koskaan itse?

Olivia: Ei

Eeva: Ooks sä eksynty koskaan?

Elisa: Emmä muista – oon.

Eeva: Miltäs se tuntuu jos eksyy?

Elisa: Ihan kauheelta.

Eeva: Niin eli se ei oo yhtään hauskaa jos eksyy.

Olivia ja Elisa: Ei (syvä huokaus)

Eeva: Sitähän voi tuntee olevansa eksyksissä jossain paikassa, jossain vieraas paikassa eikä niin?

Olivia ja Elisa: Niin

Eeva: Vaikka tietäis ihan kartalta että missä on mutta paikka ois niin outo et tuntuu . . .

Olivia: . . . Tuntuu vaikeelta että ei pääsis sieltä pois.

Eeva: Niin et tuntuu et ei pääse sieltä pois.

Olivia: Mmm

Eeva: Jostain paikasta – onks teil koskaa käyny niin?

Olivia: Ei

Elisa: Mul ei oo.

Eeva: Voittekste kuvitella minkälaiat se ois jos joutuis jonneki semmoseen paikkaan?

Olivia: Et se ois kauheeta, ei ketään tunne eikä . . .

My intention here was to search for a deeper meaning to the "getting lost" idea of the dance, and to find connections between the dance and real life. Moreover, I hoped to trigger ideas about, for example, accepting others in order to add another layer to the dance project, to make it more educational, or more meaningful. This aim, however, was too ambitious. On a verbal, conceptual level, I did not manage to bring the children to a "new consciousness" or "critical awareness" of life issues and values. It was much easier for me to connect to more concrete, even mundane life experiences, for example in this way:

Eeva: It is of course dreary to come to school early in the morning if you are tired.

Julius: You don't have to.

Eeva: I have to wake up early also I wake up before anyone else in my family every morning.

Quincy: Oh why? Do you make some breakfast?

Eeva: Yes and then I have to fix lunch for our daughter, who is still in pre-school, to take with.

Quincy: Do you make some pea soup always?

Eeva: I don't make pea soup . . .

Julius: Or some other soup?

Eeva: Soup is difficult . . . because it can spill, I make this and that, sometimes spinach crepes and . . .

Quincy: Soup in a bag.

Julius: Can you make them yourself?

Eeva: No I buy them from the store (laughter) because it is easiest.

Quincy: So does my mom.

Eeva: But some mornings I make something more complicated if I have time.

Julius: Do you wake up at seven, do you wake up at six?

Eeva: Yes, between six and seven every morning.

Quincy: I wake up at seven.⁶

⁶ Eeva: Se tietysti on ikävää tulla aamul aikasin kouluun jos väsyttää kauheesti.

Julius: Sun ei tarvii.

Eeva: Kyl munkin tarvii herätä mä herään aikasemmin ku kukaan meiän perheest joka aamu.

Quincy: Ai miks, teetsä jotain aamupalaa?

Eeva: Niin ja sit mun pitää tehdä meiän tyttäreille joka on viel leikkikouluus niin sille pitää tehdä lounas mukaan.

Quincy: Teetsä jotain hernekeittoa aina?

Eeva: Emmä tee hernekeittoa . . .

Julius: Vai jotain soppaa?

Eeva: Soppa on hankalaa . . . ku se voi vähä vuotaa, millon mitäki, joskus pinaattilettuja ja . . .

Quincy: Soppaa pussissa.

Julius: Osaaksä tehdä niit itte?

Some discussions about life experiences were more intriguing, especially those involving fear. With some, for example Patrick and Vincent, the issue of death emerged, but seemed too difficult for them to pursue in depth. Ulla talked quite freely about her fear of darkness, telling about how she always wants to take a candle with her when she goes to toilet at their summer place. She articulated her fear:

Ulla: So then I get this feeling that someone sneaks behind me.

Eeva: Even though there is no one you still feel it?

Ulla: Yes

Eeva: It comes from your imagination, right? Many times you are afraid of nothing . . . luckily, right?

Ulla: I am sometimes afraid that a bear comes.

Eeva: Well, have there ever been bears?

Ulla: There have been bears around there, that I am always afraid of . . . then I always say to lock the door. . . because it is so hot there that we usually leave the door open.⁷

I accepted the situation that I could not alone make great shifts in consciousness happen for the children. I was quite content that they were willing to share with me any issues concerning their lives. In discussing this with Johan later, I admitted to him:

. . . I can't like, I don't have the capacity, I don't know how to, I don't know how in a classroom situation, I don't know how to act in a classroom . . . I would have to go to a studio again and sit in a circle . . . I can't conduct a classroom discussion.⁸

Eeva: Ei mä ostan ne kaupasta . . . (naurua) ku se on kaikkein helpointa.

Quincy: Niin mun mutsiki.

Eeva: Mut kyl mä jonain aamuina teen vähä monimutkaisempiaki jos on aikaa.

Julius: Heräätsä seittemältä, heräätsä kuudelt?

Eeva: Joo, kuuden ja seittemän välillä joka aamu.

Quincy: Mä herään seittemältä.

⁷ Ulla: Niin mut sit välil mulle tulee sellanen tunne et joku hiippalee mun takana.

Eeva: Niin et vaik ei siel oo ketään niin sä silti tunnet sen?

Ulla: Niin

Eeva: Se tulee ihan mielikuvituksest eiks niin? Monta kertaa pelkääki ihan turhaa . . . onneksi, eiks niin?

Ulla: Mua aina välil pelottaa myös et tulee karhu.

Eeva: No onks siel koskaan ollu karhuu?

Ulla: On siel päin kyl liikkunu karhui sit mä aina pelkään . . . sit mä aina sanon et laita ovi lukkoon . . . ku siel on niin kuuma et me yleensä jätetään ovi auki.

Johan responded that conducting a classroom discussion demands the ability to use leading questions and managing the course of the discussion happening through them, but that it depends a lot on chance how it turns out. I feel that this kind of discussion resembles technical dialogue, where the contents and aims are predetermined, and the task of the teacher is to "lure" the students to find the answers themselves, although the teacher already knows what the right answers are (see discussion on technical dialogue on p. 307). To me this is like cheating! Maybe this is the reason why I have trouble in conducting such a discussion. I probably tried to generate a genuine discussion, but when I found out that these children were not immediately inclined towards discussing these kind of issues, I withdrew. I was uncertain about the significance of these discussions, since I was more interested in getting to know their world and their way of thinking.

Whether the children's apparent disinterest towards more "serious" discussions was due to their unfamiliarity with discussing such issues, the lack of personal connection of these issues for them, or due to my inability to spark interest in discussing them, I do not know. I just know that with me they were more interested to discuss about pea soup and spinach crepes. Well, if that is so, then we'd discuss that.

Still, I was as concerned as ever about meaningfulness of school and especially my classes for the children. Even though discussions did not take us very far, I was not about to give up.

April 15, 1999

This day I came to the school not to rehearse, but to work on the setting and the costumes. We finally had gotten the materials, one week too late. A week ago I had come to the crafts class just to find out that we could not work because Johan had not gotten the fabrics yet.

The day was chaotic, so it seems to me now, but still, we got a lot done. Johan worked with the girls making the "cave" and I worked mainly with boys, creating the "forest" and their individual costumes: tails, ears etc. Some boys were really engaged, but my hands were not enough to help everyone. Their crafts teacher, Rosa, was there, but she did not have a clue what we were intending to do, and did not really seem to care. Her attitude was not helping this project. Irma, the

⁸ . . . mä en niinku, mullei oo siihen kapasiteettia, mä en osaa, mä en osaa niinku luokkatilanteessa, mä en osaa toimii siel luokkahuoneessa . . . mun pitäis mennä johonki saliin taas ja istuu piirissä . . . en pysty vetään sellast luokkakeskusteluu mä en osaa.

school assistant, was able to give us a hand for a little while. She was really lovely and helpful, and promised to finish some things, e.g. sewing the “leaves” together, at home! She also promised to bring some props and costumes she had at home.

Between this day and the next rehearsal I also spent quite many hours shopping around for materials, props and the t-shirts and sweatpants that made the basis for their costume. Trying to spend as little money as possible but still trying to make it look good was difficult! How much are we, dance teachers (usually women), willing to do for our students? Or for whom are we doing this? I can’t imagine any other professional doing all this, and I know almost all dance teachers do this all the time.

April 22, 1999

After the rehearsal:

A good feeling. The children have realized that we are working on this seriously. The setting and costumes are beginning to get shape. This feels like fun.

They were wondering what all this costs – as if they were surprised that all this is for them. There is still a little scorning going on, but now nobody says anymore that they are not in the performance.

We changed the piece so that the problematic part is taken out. It is much better now! It pays to listen to the children’s voice! We took out some “stupid” movements. It is a pity, on the other hand.

Also Johan seems to be now serious and encourages the children. I also appreciate Irma – she is sweet and meticulous. But Rosa!

There would be much to practice still, but it is not the point. I find myself to be surprisingly calm. Even though I have a headache. I did not tape the rehearsal.

During the story-telling session I had asked Julius and Quincy, who both were opposed to performing and making the piece, how to make this work more interesting for them. Quincy first said that if they would not have to be in it, and Julius agreed. Then I

asked if they were in it, what would make it more interesting; Quincy then said that if there were no audience, Julius again accompanying him. I asked why they did not want an audience; Julius said that there is always noise in the audience, that they should be quiet. Quincy then hoped that he could play drums, and Julius joined him in saying that "it would be interesting to play and not have to do the movements."⁹ I asked if there were any movements that were interesting to do, and suggested adding the movement they invented in one class, where they jumped over each other. Julius said that the movement where they went under each other's arms was more fun, Quincy agreed. I said that we could add that movement into the piece.

It appears that children are very sensitive to things having or not having meaning. Things they do should either be fun, exciting or challenging, or involve learning, or both. Any activity that lacks meaning becomes inert, and children show it by becoming restless and a little rebellious. Of course, authority or clear coercion may eliminate the rebellion, but in my classes these were missing. Lacking the atmosphere of fear, the expressions of rebellion were able to surface. I value these expressions; they make it possible for me to understand more about the children, and to rethink how to make "freedom's encounter freedom's."

Although I had been worried about making changes to the choreography so late in the process, and had decided not to make changes, I turned around and decided to omit the part that caused problems, and added new movements that the children had invented during the first classes this spring.

These new movements replaced a section in the dance that had created problems. Movements that were taken out were created by children, and I felt reluctant to omit anybody's movements. But they told me that they did not care much about this; Ulla, for instance said that her movement was not so good and that the new movement was a little better.

The new movements became the favorite spots in the dance for many. The pyramids were important: Leonard, for instance told me that he became interested "when we made the pyramids and then started like making the performance."¹⁰ Kia said that "everything in it was fun, but the pyramid was the most fun."¹¹ Tiina, looking at photographs of the performance said that "those pyramids were fun or these pyramids where we are, and this is fun this jumping."¹² When I asked Nathan what was the best

⁹ se ois mielenkiintost ku sais soittaa mut ei tarvis tehdä niit liikkeit.

¹⁰ no siin ku me tehtiin se pyramidi ja sitte alettiin niinku tekee sitä esitystä.

¹¹ kaikki oli siin kivaa, mut se pyramidi oli kivoin.

¹² noi pyramidit oli kivoja tai nää pyramidit mis me ollaan, ja sit tää oli kiva tää hyppiminen.

part of the performance, he, looking at the photos as well, said that "this pyramid was at least one, this was quite fun."¹³ Ringo, as well, said that "most fun in my opinion was that pyramid."¹⁴

Jumping over each other in threes was a favorite for some: Sebastian, looking at photos, thought that this was the most fun part. Tiina and Nathan said that jumping over each other and all turning movements were their favorites. Some children, like Olivia said that jumping in general was most fun.

A few children picked the small circles' movement as their favorite spot. This movement was invented during an improvisation this spring, like the jumping over each other. For Leonard, this was the best part of the whole dance: "That when . . . three people took hands and went like inside two arms . . . because there you saw like head when you went fiuu . . ."¹⁵ Tiina, Nathan, Aaron and Patrick mentioned this, as well.

Some children liked turning in general. Olivia said: "It was fun when we were turning – all these are fun spots – there was nothing stupid."¹⁶

April 26, 1999

We were now rehearsing with costumes. The atmosphere was now completely different compared to the last taped rehearsal (April 12). The children were full of enthusiasm. They were practicing the pyramids by themselves.

Maybe the children, indeed, had not realized that this was really going to be a performance until now. During the story-telling sessions they seemed a little curious but quite unfamiliar with the whole concept of performance. They asked me many questions like:

*Will there be an audience?
Will there be a lot of people?
Where are we going to perform it?
Will we talk there something?¹⁷*

¹³ tää pyramidi oli ainaki yks, tää oli aika kiva.

¹⁴ kaikist kivoint oli mun mielest toi pyramidi.

¹⁵ Se ku . . . kolme ihmist otettiin kädest kiinni ja mentiin kahden käden niinku sisäpuolelle . . . koska siin näki sillee niinku pään ku meni fiuu . . .

¹⁶ Kiva oli se ku pyörittiin kaikki ne on kivoi kohtii ettei ollu mitään tyhmää.

¹⁷ Tuleeks sinne katsojii?

Tuleeks sinne paljo ihmisiä?

Missä me esitetään se?

Puhutaanks me siellä jotain?

There seemed to be a special interest towards costumes. Nathan asked me:

Could we make some like whole costumes somehow or buy . . . could we ask that we would be like somewhere or that we would buy the whole costume?¹⁸

When I suggested that we probably would make the costumes mainly by ourselves during crafts classes, he said that "I will at least buy my whole costume . . . I am sure that we can find them somewhere."¹⁹ He then went on planning: "We could put on some face paintings."²⁰

Belinda was worried about costuming; she seemed to have an idea that the costumes must be complete. I tried to explain how a costume can be partial, and give a hint of the character, and let the imagination do the rest. She said that "I do not have any leopard clothes"²¹ and I tried to assure her that we would figure something out.

I showed the children some accessories that I brought with me. They tried them on and seemed excited. I showed Quincy the "devil's horns" I had bought for him since he wanted to have horns. I said, "These are a little funny, you do not have to accept them" but he said "Cool!"

Johan, Leonard and Dennis came with the still unfinished "cave," and Johan started to hammer it together right there with Fred helping him. There was noise. Dennis tried on the Wolverine mask and asked why it was not black. Later, I covered the yellow parts with black fabric for him. He ended up not wearing it.

The rehearsal finally started. It was quiet. Everybody worked well. Soon I stopped the run through because I wanted the music to be more threatening, and to set some sound marks for the jumps. I was now more like a director again. It was not really very dialogical, but not undialogical either. As the performance got closer, I became more clearly a leader, which probably was necessary here – some one must take the charge, and I think the children did not mind me being a leader.

The pyramids were the "climax." There were three groups and three pyramids. There was an element of competition here, since the children rehearsed to get the pyramid ready as fast as possible. "We were first again," I heard them say. On the other hand, this element of competition may bring a different kind of motivation into

¹⁸ Pitääks meidän...tehäänks.... pystyiskö tekeen jotain niinku kokopukui jotenki tai ostaa . . . voisko pyytää et ois niinku jossain tai et ostais koko puvun?

¹⁹ Mä ainaki ostan mun koko puvun . . . kyl niit varmaan jostaan saa.

²⁰ Vois laittaa jotain kasvomaalauksii.

²¹ Mul ei oo mitään leopardivaatteita

teamwork: "As a team we succeed – we need everybody to make this work": this kind of attitude. It seems to be so very usual for children; it may be the same thing that makes movement games so dear for them. Sound competition. Well, I think that dance does not have to encourage competition since it thrives by itself just fine! How about other things that dance is about? Many things are cherished almost solely in dance, and largely forgotten elsewhere, like listening to one's own body, taking gentle contact, etc. etc.!

We finished the dance and sat down. I told them that during the next run through it would be quiet, only I could talk. "Now everybody does their best!" I encouraged them. Quincy asked: "Eeva, do I have to wear this?" He was bugged because the horns kept falling off. I told him that he did not have to wear the horns now and that we would make them stay on better later. I think that his way of asking this was interesting. There was respect, and it was very close to fear of authority... interesting...

The run through went well. The children agreed to repeat the last section without any complaints. Then we rehearsed the bows in a "professional" manner. Back in a circle, I asked them what went well in the run through. They said everything. I asked what went a little bit less well and we discussed some problem spots. Then I told that we would do one more run through. Johan said that the next run through would be a dress rehearsal without stops and instructions. And so it was.

The feeling in this rehearsal was quite good. We got the costumes, and the children seemed to relate to this "thing" even more seriously. There were practically no disciplinary problems, just a little bit noise, of course.

The performance itself is quite raw still. Of course I would want much more – to put attention to details etc.

I remember especially Julius, and a moment just before the beginning of the rehearsal, or just in the beginning – an intense moment of concentration . . .

Fuss and bustle, excitement, involvement – that is what I want to see.

I wonder, how do they feel themselves??

April 28, 1999

The day of the performance. I went to the school in the morning; we had a rehearsal first, which went smoothly. I did not want to keep them too long, I just wanted to make them feel comfortable about remembering everything, and not having to be nervous about not being sure what to do.

I spent the rest of the day finishing the costumes. I worked a little bit with some children, so that those who had not finished theirs were able to work a little while with me. The children got off school to go home for a little while and I stayed on cutting, glueing and sewing.

We had set times for the children to come back to the school so that they would not all come in at the same time. A couple of children were to come first in order to help in setting up the stage. This was done by volunteering. Fred was especially enthusiastic about the setting up the stage. He was the first to arrive.

Stage work really seemed to interest Fred. Later, I asked everybody about their hopes in the future regarding dance and performance projects. Fred said that he would like to be in performances, but that he would like to have enough money for stage set up:

. . . more of those rope things up there and artificial grass on the floor . . . yes, more, more. If there would be an artificial grass that would be good . . . and then a few more of those ropes up there . . . and then, it was like a night happening, this could be a day . . . in another [performance].²²

Fred was maybe a little disappointed that we could not get a proper lighting for this performance. So was I.

Almost everyone came earlier than they were supposed to. Nobody was late; no one was missing. The dressing room, where we did the face painting and hair styling, was soon full of children, full of energy. The atmosphere was electric, they were really anxious to get their hair and face done. I worked as fast as I could, still trying to be careful. Irma and Johan were helping me, doing the base color and spraying their hair.

Towards the time of the last run through there were, of course, more children who were done than those waiting. Those who were still being done or waiting

²² . . . enemmän niitä köysihommii sinne ylös ja tekonurtsin vetäis lattialle . . . joo, enemmän, enemmän. Jos ois tekonurtsi niin sillon se ois hyvä . . . ja sitte muutama niit enemmän niit köysii sinne ylös . . . niin, sit se oli niinku, se oli niinku yö tapahtuma, se vois olla päivä . . . toisessa [esityksessä].

grew increasingly anxious, and those who were done were running around in zeal. It was hectic!

Minutes flew, and I tried to stay cool. It took longer than we had thought to do this. But we finished in time, had a run through, and . . . performed the dance twice through.

After the performance I was too exhausted to think. The children still had loads of energy; they ran off to change and to get ready for the school disco that was following. I hardly met them afterwards; I just stayed in the room helping to take off the setting, etc. I heard some encouraging comments, too, and jotted them down in my journal:

The Principal: "Something has happened." He talked about the idea of empowerment, he had followed the children' facial expressions . . .

Irma: "I would never have believed that this class could do something like this."

Rosa: "It looked really magnificent."

The children had experienced the performance in different ways. Nathan said that it felt funny and odd to perform, and that he was a little nervous in the beginning. After the performance he said that he felt relieved that it was over, and that it went quite well. He said that it was worth doing. Dennis was also nervous in the beginning, and felt good in the end. I asked him if he felt courageous when he performed, he said no, it took no courage to perform. Leonard said that he wanted to perform even though he was nervous.

Sebastian was also a little nervous, saying that this was "the first time I perform somewhere."²³ When I asked him if it was worthwhile to make the performance, he said, "Well, at least it was not dangerous."²⁴ Quincy said that he was not nervous after the performance had started.

Kia was nervous during the first performance, but not during the second one. When it was over, she felt relieved, as well. Olivia was afraid that her friends in the audience would start laughing. She told me that one friend did laugh, but after all, she was not bothered by it.

²³ ekan kerran mä esitän jossain.

²⁴ No, ei se vaarallistkaa ollu.

Elisa said that performing felt good although she was nervous. Ulla, also, liked performing despite the excitement. She said that,

It is quite scary in the beginning, but then when the performance has started then it is really fun . . . then it does not scare so much.²⁵

Clara said that she felt shy and embarrassed, but that after the performance she felt quite good, and thought that "maybe it was worth doing."²⁶

Some children said that they were not really nervous: Vincent and Fred said that they were a little nervous; Julius, Aaron and Henri were not nervous at all. Henri said, "I am used to that I do not get nervous about almost anything."²⁷

Many children, for example Sebastian, Olivia and Ulla evaluated that the performance was good, and that they were happy to be in it. Ulla said: "This performance was really good in my opinion."²⁸ Kia said that,

It was a really nice performance and the rehearsals were, too, although the boys messed up a little there, and I would like to do it again.²⁹

Belinda said that "we all were satisfied about it in my opinion."³⁰ Nathan commented on the performance before I even asked about it. He said, in one breath, when I asked what he remembers of the past school year:

Well, all your classes they at least stay in my mind 'cause we had that thing – it went by the way quite well, then all the examinations I don't remember so much.³¹

Some others, like Patrick and Quincy, were just relieved that it was over. Zachary said that it was good that it was over, that now we get to do P.E. again.

²⁵ Kyl se aika paljon alussa jännittää mut sit ku on ruvenu jo esittämään niin sit se on ihan kivaa . . . sit se ei enää jännitä niin paljo.

²⁶ no kyl kai se kannatti tehä.

²⁷ Mä oon tottunu siihen ettei mua jännitä melkein mikään.

²⁸ Oli tää must tosi hyvä esitys.

²⁹ Se oli tosi kiva esitys ja harjoituksetkin oli vaikka pojat vähän sähläs siellä ja mä haluaisin tehdä sen uudestaan.

³⁰ kaikki me oltiin ihan tyytyväiset siitä mun mielestä.

³¹ No kaikki nää sun tunnit ne ainaki pysyy mieles ku meil oli se hommeli – se must meni muuten aika hyvin, sitte kaikki kokeet emmä hirveesti muista.

Some children told me about their feelings when something went wrong during the performance. I did not notice these "mistakes" during the performance, and did not think that little mistakes mattered. But, for the children, mistakes seemed to matter. One incident that caused embarrassment and annoyance was when Ringo accidentally missed the moment when they were supposed to do the pyramids. His group members remembered this incident as something terrible. Looking at the photos Patrick, for instance, said that "Ringo was a little dumb here because when we were making the pyramids then he leaves somewhere running."³² Patrick did not like performing in any case and this "mistake" made it even more uncomfortable for him:

Because it was not fun to perform when at times everything went [wrong], like when Ringo went running – then I became embarrassed when everybody else had done [the pyramid] and one just went away . . . he went there where the instruments were to ask something . . . he did not have to go, no no he was not supposed to go and play, he was supposed to make the pyramid with us and he just left running there.³³

Also Vincent, who otherwise was very positive about everything, told me about the same incident as I asked about any negative memories. He said that,

Well, maybe . . . when we tried to make that pyramid and Ringo just played over there and he didn't come and we had to wait for him like half a minute before he came and we could make the pyramid . . . everyone was quite angry with him, a little like... I was mad with Ringo because he was late for that thing.³⁴

Luckily, Ringo himself did not notice his mistake, or experience his friends' anger as something that would have spoiled the performance for him. Apparently they kept their anger to themselves. Ringo described the whole process and the performance as the most fun thing in school:

³² Ringo oli vähä hölmö tässä koska silloin ku me tehtiin niit pyramidei niin se lähtee jonnekki juoksemaan.

³³ Koska ei se ois kiva esittää ku kaikki meni välil [väärin], ku se Ringoki lähti juokseen – niin vähä alko nolottaan ku kaikki muut oli tehny [pyramidin] ja yks lähtee pois vaan siit . . . se meni sinne missä oli niitä soittimii niin sinne meni jotain kysyyn . . . ei pitäny, ei ei pitäny soittaa, se vaan, ois pitäny tehdä meidän kaa sitä pyramiidii niin se vaan lähtee juokseen sinne.

³⁴ No ehkä . . . ku yritettiin tehdä sitä pyramiidii sitte Ringo vaan soitti siellä eikä tullu me jouduttiin varmaan jotain puol minuuttii odotteleen sitä ennen ku Ringo tuli ja voitiin tehdä se pyramidi . . . kaikki oli aika vihasii sille, vähä sillee . . . olin vihanen Ringolle ku se oli myöhästyny siit jutusta.

In my opinion at least it is the most fun thing we have ever had at school that performance and the rehearsals.³⁵

When I asked him to tell about his experience more specifically, he told me that,

I don't really know there was fun when we were turning and such things and I like, I liked such things . . . at least we all really had fun during the performance and it was fun when we at times . . . like signaled something to each other and I don't remember anything anymore but we giggled a little bit there.³⁶

It seems like for Ringo the little extra excitement was stimulating, whereas some others became nervous about it. Ringo also said that performing was much more fun than regular school work and that "in my opinion it would be fun to always do this but of course you would become tired of it if you would do it all the time."³⁷

Even though Ringo was not stressed about a little extra hassle, others, like Gabriel, were more bothered by such experiences. He described specifically the difficult spots of the dance:

There was that one difficult [place] that where you were supposed do this way – it was difficult all the time, arms went criss and cross . . . that is why I did not make it, it was left this way . . . so that arms were in a knot.³⁸

Another difficult spot for him was turning the partner around, when his partner "slowed down a bit there . . . and sometimes when there was not enough speed then he stopped right away and then fell directly on his stomach."³⁹ Gabriel also remembered "mistakes":

³⁵ Mun mielest se on ainaki kivoint mitä meil on koskaan ollu koulus toi se esitys ja ne harjottelut.

³⁶ Emmä oikein tiedä siel oli varmaan se kivaa ku me pyörittiin ja just tollasta ja mä tykkään, tykkäsin sellasesta . . . ainaki meil oli kaikil tosi hauskaa siinä esityksessä ja me se oli hauskaa ku me välil . . . viittoiltiin jotain toisille ja emmä muista mitään siit enää ku me vähä hihittää siinä.

³⁷ mun mielest se ois kivaa tehdä aina tollast mut sit siihen tietysti kyllästyis ku tekis koko ajan.

³⁸ oli se yks oli vaikee [paikka] se missä piti tehdä sitä tällä tavalla se oli vaikeet koko ajan kädet meni ristiin rastiin . . . sen takii ei ehtiny perään, se jäi tällä tavalla . . . niin kädet oli solmussa.

³⁹ vähä hidasteli siin . . . ja joskus ku ei ollu tarpeeks kova vauhti niin se pysähty heti ja sit kaatu suoraan mahalleen.

There is one thing there was that when we went in the line so it moved slowly . . . and someone behind me babbled "go a little faster," but we could not . . . then this went quite wrong during one rehearsal when we were supposed to go under and like that.⁴⁰

Gabriel was also a little sorry that the part where he originally played an instrument was left out, and in the hassle we did not figure out where Gabriel could play, instead. So he did not get to play at all.

Nathan, who thought that the performance went really well, in general, was also sorry about a mistake. He remembered a part that in the second performance did not go right. When he said that he started to feel better after the performances were over, I asked him if he felt bad after the performance, and he said, "Well, after the second one, one part went quite badly."⁴¹ When I asked if he was cross about the spot that went badly, he said yes. For many children, then, it seems that the feeling of security that "doing things right" gave them was important. They did not want to make mistakes, or be involved in messing things up. Some children told me about incidents in their everyday life that reflect the same kind of need for security, need for knowing what they are supposed to do or where they are supposed to be, etc.

For instance, when I asked about any dull memories about this school year, the following conversation with Zachary took place:

Zachary: Well not this year.

Eeva: Some other year then?

Zachary: Yes I sat all the time after school . . . when Anita forgot me in detention . . . she forgot me there.

Eeva: Oh no, what were you thinking then?

Zachary: That when would she come, others have left school already . . . I sat three hours there.

Eeva: Oh no, you were afraid to leave?

Zachary: I went to the door and then some one came there and then I went with that teacher to Anita and then she [said] "there you are, others have left already."⁴²

⁴⁰ On kai se yks juttu siin se oli et se ku sillon ku me mentiin siin jonossa niin se meni hitaasti . . . et joku takana koko ajan pölis "menkää vähä nopeemmin," mut ei päässy . . . sitte tää tais mennä kyl jossain meidän harjotuksis aika paljon pieleen ku piti mennä sieltä ali ja sillee.

⁴¹ No sen tokan, siin meni osa aika huonosti.

⁴² Zachary: No ei tästä vuodesta.

Eeva: Jostain toisesta tulee?

The fact that he still recalled this even though it happened more than a year ago, and that nothing after that incident was to him "a dull memory," reveals the deep meaning that this incident had for him.

Quincy had a similar experience. He remembered

. . . the first German class when I was half an hour late . . . when I did not know where the class was I thought it would be somewhere at the main school although it was here . . . I had to go and ask at the teachers' lounge. I remember there were all who at our class are in German together.⁴³

To me it is striking that they told me about these seemingly minor incidents, as something important and meaningful. It tells me that we adults should be careful in judging the meaning of any experience for children. The importance of an event for a child follows a different logic than for us adults, who maybe can depress an uncomfortable feeling by reason, by telling ourselves that what happened was not significant. Maybe logical reasoning is not a tool that children can or want to use for fixing things. If something feels bad, then it is a bad thing, and seems to stay that way. Children remember a lot of details; time does not seem to even things out – they seem to have "long memories." Having positive memories must then be really important.

I reflected on this issue of security, more specifically, of things going right, much earlier (see p. 70). Now I am trying to make sense of this avoidance of making mistakes or looking funny. Could this be related to the way we, teachers and adults, approach mistakes and errors in general? Would children like performing more if they were not afraid of making mistakes or looking funny?

Zachary: Joo mä istuin koko ajan jälkässä . . . ku Anita unohti mut jälki-istuntoon . . .se unohti mut sinne.

Eeva: Voi ei, mitähän sä sillon aattelit sitte?

Zachary: Et millon se tulee, muut on päässy koulusta jo . . . mä istuin varmaan kolme tuntii siel.

Eeva: Voi voi, sä et uskaltanu sit lähtee pois sieltä?

Zachary: Kyl mä menin vähä siihen ovelle ja sitte siihen tuli joku ja mä menin sen opettajan kans Riikan luo ja sit se [sano] "ai siinäkö sä oot, muut on lähteny jo."

⁴³ . . . eka saksan tunti ku olin puol tuntii myöhäs . . . ku mä en tienny mis tunti on ni luulin et se on jossain pääkoululla vaikka se on täällä näin . . . mun täyty kysyy opettajanhuoneest. Mä muis-tan siin oli kaikki ketkä meidän luokas on saksantunnil niin kaikki oli siin samassa.

Circles in the water: The community reacts

The day after the performance.

I am really satisfied.

A feeling that we created something together, something that in a small scale is quite meaningful . . .

I just talked with Johan – they had already talked about continuation! The children were tired, but nobody had complained that it had been dull or said that it was good that it was over.

Someone had said that the performance was stupid (a pupil from another class). Johan had suggested that maybe they were envious – the children had smiled.

“Pure gloria” said Johan.

Indeed, it seemed that there had been some critique about the performance by other pupils at the school. Henri told me that,

All Aaron’s brothers and everybody’s friends they thought a little that it was a little bad and all that. Everybody’s moms said it was good.⁴⁴

When I asked Henri how he felt about those negative comments he said, “I would have told them back that try doing that yourself.”⁴⁵ Ringo had noticed something like this as well:

It was like quite nice the performance ‘cause there were so many people and then it was a little dull when some started yelling when it ended and some others started “booing.”⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Ne kaikki ne Aaronin kaikki veljet ja kaikkien kaverit ne vähä tuumas et se oli vähä huono ja kaikkee semmosta. Kaikkien äidit sano et se oli hyvä.

⁴⁵ Mä oisin sanonu niille takasin et oisitte ite tehny sen.

⁴⁶ Se oli aika sillee kiva esitys ku siel oli niin paljo porukkaa ja sitte se oli kyl vähä tylsää ku ne jotku alko huutaa sit ku se loppu ne toiset alko buuaamaan.

Ringo, likewise Henri, was not discouraged: When I asked him how he felt about that he said, "I just thought that they must be just jealous."⁴⁷ His mother had said that the performance was really great. Nathan spoke apparently about the same pupils, saying that he would not have wanted them there at all. I asked him why did he think they behaved that way; he said that they always behave like that, and that it bothered him but that he would not want to say anything to them. Nathan's mom and little brother were also there. His mom had said that we could have rehearsed better, and that some parts were good and some not. According to Nathan they had noticed a mistake in the beginning of the piece. Clara's mother had said that the performance was good but a little bit messy. Leonard had heard nice comments and his mother had seen the dance and had said that it was really good.

Kia said that her family liked the performance a lot, and that made her feel good. She had been a little worried about the audience liking or not liking the performance:

When I looked at Eero's class and all when they were whispering there then I thought that the performance was bad in their opinion.⁴⁸

Those pupils never said anything, but "some girl came to say that it was a really good performance . . . it felt like good that she did not come to say that it was a really bad performance."⁴⁹ Elisa had heard that some pupils say that it was a ridiculous performance, and naturally, felt bad about it: "It is not nice when we performed and then they said that it is stupid."⁵⁰

Irene said that her two friends had told her that she looked ridiculous. I asked her how she felt about that, and she told me that it felt dull, but that she thought that they were just jealous. Julius also had heard that someone had said that the performance was "a joke." Tiina's friend had said that some movements were funny, and Aaron said that his friends had said to him that the performance was funny.

⁴⁷ Mä aattelin vaan et ne on kateellisii varmaan.

⁴⁸ Ku mä katoin niit Eeron luokkalaisii ja kaikkii ku ne kuiski siellä niin mä luulin et se on niiten mielest huono.

⁴⁹ joku tyttö tuli sanoon et se oli tosi hyvä esitys . . . se tuntu niinku et ihan kivalt ettei tota niin se tullu sanoon et se on ihan huono esitys.

⁵⁰ Ei oo kiva ku me esitettiin ja sit ne sano vielä et se oli tyhmä.

Belinda's friends had said that the performance was good, and she said that she herself was satisfied, too. Her mother was not able to come. The performance was arranged to take place on an evening when there was an informal spring happening for parents and families at the school, with lots of other program. That is how we got such a large audience, and many parents came. Parents' comments, indeed, were positive, as could be expected. Those children, who had their parents watching, seemed to feel good about having them there and about the feedback. For instance, Ulla told that her mother said that the performance was good and "very unusual . . . because there were different animals and there were somehow like different movements and then there came even such music from the back."⁵¹ Vincent had his whole family watching; they had said that it looked fun with face paintings and all. Gabriel told me that his parents had said that the performance was great, and that it felt nice when they said so. Some parents had not really given feedback: Sebastian's parents had just said "something good, good and such."⁵²

Even though this was a big happening at the school, there were some children whose parents did not come. Olivia, Elisa, Belinda, Patrick, Julius, Fred and Quincy had no parents watching. Johan told me later that parents generally at this school were very passive, and that he had not been able to form even a class committee. "It is pitiful that they are not interested in even their own children,"⁵³ he said.

As the children heard these ridiculing comments from their friends and other pupils at the school, their enthusiasm about the whole project faded somewhat. Johan said later that,

They said to me in class that . . . it is really children's stuff to jump around in some animal costumes . . . they [ask] why we have to [be] in children's costumes, in some bunny outfits jump around there that it is ridiculous for some and then others of course join them a little.⁵⁴

⁵¹ hyvin erikoinen . . . ku siin oli erilaisii eläimii ja siin oli jotenki semmosii erilaisia liikkeitä mmm sit sielt tuli semmost musiikkiaki sielt takaata.

⁵² jotain hyvä, hyvä ja tämmöstä.

⁵³ Säälittävää et ei oo ees kiinnostuneit omist lapsist

⁵⁴ Ne sano mulle luokassa et . . . se on ihan lasten hommaa olla jossain eläinasuissa pomppia . . . ne sano et miks meidän pitää [olla] lasten vaatteissa, semmosissa jossain pupuvaatteissa pomppia siellä, että se on naurettavaa muutamien mielestä ja muut tietenki vähä yhtyy siihen.

As we were planning another possible performance for the fall, Johan was contemplating "some children's attitude to this project . . . should we somehow try to change it somehow or should we somehow like bring that . . ." ⁵⁵ He did not finish his thought, but continued: "I took it up in the class and said a little bit that we are planning [another performance] some were right away a little bit like no . . . those same." ⁵⁶ Johan then went on telling about how enthusiastic the same children were about music and singing, and stated that they had asked if they could become a music class. He said that,

Should we somehow try to condense this our thing so that we somehow could get . . . I have mentioned a little that what if we took music in and something like this and they somehow are really like . . . positive atmosphere. ⁵⁷

As we very much had included music in this project, I was baffled about this. Johan also stated that the children in this class consider music as art, but could not connect our project to the concept of art.

The second interview with children had happened before I had this discussion with Johan. I had asked them what the word art brings to their minds. They, indeed, did not talk much about dance or theater, but no one mentioned music. Following a "wild practice" (Lather 1999), I created the following verse out of their words without adding any words of my own.

⁵⁵ niiden muutamien suhtautuminen tähän projektiin . . . ruvetaanko me muuttamaan sitä jollakin tavalla sitä niiden suhtautumista vai pitäiskö meidän jotenki tuoda tuoda se . . .

⁵⁶ Mä otin sen esille sillai ja kerroin vähä et suunnitelmis on [toinen esitys] . . . muutamat oli heti vähä et ei . . . ne samat.

⁵⁷ Pitäiskö sitä jotenki yrittää tiivistää sitä tätä meidän hommaa et sais sen jotenki siihen . . . mä oon vähä maininnu et mitäs jos me otettais musiikki mukaan ja jotain näin niin kyl ne on jotenki siis ihan . . . myönteinen ilmapiiri.

WHAT IS ART?

*I can't say I haven't many times seen anything
Not much comes to my mind . . . I don't have a clue*

*Like we know how to be well
If you remember something by heart
What everybody knows so that we like have art
Different skills*

*I don't know
I don't know*

*All paintings, all such and then all museums
Artist and everything
Some drawing or something*

*Painting, art, like a painting
Painting
Painter
Not really anything else*

*I see it everywhere
In all kinds of places
I have seen it in museum's paintings of course
But then there is nothing else*

*I have done some pictures but I would not call it art
I have done drawings
It is nicer to do than see*

*I do know what it means
But I don't know how I would say what it is
Art is like such that you self show how you self
I don't know, what would I say
I don't know*

*Isn't it a little bit like movement
I don't know for sure
Maybe such where you move slowly and such beautiful*

Later (on p. 259–260), I will tell what they said about our performance in relation to art. I had also asked the children whether they wanted to continue and how. So, I was aware about some doubts towards another performance. There were a few children who preferred not to perform at all again: they were Julius, Clara, Zachary and Patrick – the same children who told me earlier that they did not like performing. Some children did not have a clear opinion (Henri and Yuri). Then there were others, who would want to do a new performance: Belinda, for instance asked if we could make another performance; she wanted more movements, and more difficult movements. Ulla, on the other hand, said that,

I would like to do another performance . . . 'cause this was so difficult to do, had to make up all the movements . . . I at least want to make a new performance.⁵⁸

In case we would perform this again, Ulla asked if she could then be a different animal. Tiina said the same thing: "I would not then want to be the same character . . . it was somehow such . . . funny or such."⁵⁹ Vincent also would like to make a new performance:

I would like to next, when we make a performance that we would not do the same, but that we would make some other . . . that there were some other characters but not animal characters.⁶⁰

Leonard, Olivia and Elisa were content with the dance as it was, and would not like to change anything. They were willing to perform it again, as was Kia, only she wanted to change partners. Dennis, Sebastian, Aaron, Fred and Nathan would have made some little changes to the dance, and were willing to perform it again. Gabriel and Ringo said that the performance was too short; Irene would have wanted to do a continuation for it as well, but not altogether a new dance. Vincent thought that the audience did not understand what was going on, and that the plot should be somehow explained to the audience.

⁵⁸ Mä haluaisin et me tehtäis joku toinen . . . ku tää on niin vaikee tehdä, pitää keksii kaikki liik-keet . . . mä ainaki haluaisin et me tehtäs uus esitys.

⁵⁹ Mä en kyl varmaan sit haluais olla sama hahmo . . . jotenki se oli niin... semmonen . . . semmonen hassu tai semmonen.

⁶⁰ Mä haluaisin ehkä seuraavaks ku tehään esitys et ei tehdä samaa, vaan tehään joku toinen . . . siin ois jotku toiset hahmot muttei eläinhahmot.

Based on the interview, I was not ready to give up quite yet. But Johan seemed to be concerned about their fear of performing:

They have somehow like some have fears of performing it for others . . . Then there are a few girls who are really negative about performing . . . do we somehow try to make their fear [go away] or such 'cause they don't, somehow . . .⁶¹

This was somewhat contradictory to me, since of the girls only Clara told to me that she would not want to perform again. Johan admitted that for some children the performance was a high point of the whole year, but said that for some it was the opposite. Later he contradicted himself a little by saying,

That is just great . . . the children's joy that came in the end, what it became for everybody, so that even [The Principal] said that, with many such children that you would think that they would make it a farce all the time . . . it went really fine.⁶²

To me all this tells about an immediate feeling of joy, accomplishment and relief that became faded during the days after the performance when the children heard some comments about the performance having been childish or ridiculous. These comments affected especially those children who were not so enthusiastic about performing to start with, but got involved in the last phase of the process. They fell back to the ground just when they started to fly.

The school community, at least peers, did not seem to value or support the courage to be different, the courage to imagine, play and perform. The issue of peer pressure and conformity to group norms is a serious matter, not to be ignored in any art education project. It seems to be an invisible threat to children's self-expression. In the "Wild Things" project that I described earlier (see p. 74), the peer pressure and gender distinctions were tackled quite successfully (Bond 1994a, 30). The project managed to "tame" gender distinctions within the group:

⁶¹ Niil on jotenki semmosii muutamal on pelkoja just et esittää sitä muille . . . sit se et siel on muutama tyttö jotka on tosi kielteisii niinku esittämään . . . yritetäänkö me jotenki niiden pelkoi saada [poistumaan] tai semmosta ku ne ei, ku jotenki...

⁶² Se on hieno . . . se lasten riemu mikä et niist sitte lopuksi, mikä siit tuli jokaisen kohdalla, et [Rehtoriki] sano et monien sellasten lasten kohdalla et mist se luulis et ne vetää koko aika läskiks . . . se meni tosi hienosti.

In taking on the strength, percussive stamping, loud vocals and powerful gestures, the girls also appeared to break out of stereotypical concepts of dance. Boys also expanded into qualities of sustainment, lightness, and stillness . . . independently and in collaboration with girls. (Bond 1994a, 31)

To a certain degree such progress was evident also in this project. The question remains, however: how to ease the peer pressure from other groups and the wider community. Could school be a place where individual expression, imagination and even making mistakes and looking funny could be accepted? I am inclined to think that as long as the values of wider society are centered around conformity and the importance of being right and looking right, it will remain very difficult for any school, any class or any teacher to make a difference here. Difficult but still, even more crucial, I think from an art educators' point of view.

The notion of community versus culture could be helpful here. Bond (1994b, 22) points out that the concept of community has meaning as a temporary phenomenon: smaller, more temporary communities can evolve within larger society or culture. In her study on children with dual sensory impairments she witnessed a group process which she describes as a growth of an aesthetic community. It was evidenced in shared sensory and aesthetic values, heightened group relatedness, reciprocal communication, celebration and collective style of movement. This happened despite of the children's lack of access to the larger culture due to their impairments in sight and vision. (Bond 1994b, 22)

Bond's suggestion on the significance of human's predisposition to aesthetic experience and potential for multi-sensory engagement, self-transformation and social relationship in building communities is intriguing (1994b, 24). I see this notion of aesthetic community as a possibility to build resistance from within towards the larger society that seems to devalue aesthetic experience, imagination and transformation. In this project an aesthetic community was created within the class, but not within the entire school. If aesthetic communities are to be strong, they need to be appreciated and valued by the surrounding peer communities.

The leap into the world of play, art and imagination that these children were able to make was something that this school was not used to. Some adults appreciated this leap: many parents, some teachers. Especially the Principal of the school had seen something out of the ordinary about this event and

process. Later, when I asked what he meant when he, right after the performance, spoke about empowerment, he explained:

I have really been in this field for over 20 years and have seen many kinds of pupils' [performances] and taught and tried to direct many kinds of plays and performances and tried to get those children encouraged into [performing]. So I really saw in the spring thing that this is not quite ordinary, that they do it like this . . . that they, in front of this large audience and with each other, and boys and girls together, that they do it like this . . . this is not quite ordinary . . . something must have happened here just in this empowerment that it becomes our thing that it is to the pupil as my thing so important and big that I want it to be our thing as well.⁶³

As I had given up empowerment as the "final aim" of the project, I was astounded to hear this. He also said that "they were aware that they were all there together, they were aware about that there were these others, and this other and this partner, and that when they were those exciting characters and all . . . so that they realize the existence of others in relation to themselves."⁶⁴ The Principal is here speaking about something that seems related to the inherent nature of dialogue. Buber says,

The basic movement of the life of dialogue is the turning towards the other . . . no man is without strength for expression, and our turning towards him brings a reply, however imperceptible, however quickly smothered . . . (1947, 22)

Buber constantly emphasizes the essential nature of the turning towards the other in becoming a person. He says that "man becomes an I through a You" (1937/1970, 80), crystallizing the significance of "You-moments" in the development of selfhood.

⁶³ Mä nyt kuitenkin oon yli 20 vuotta täs alalla ollu ja nähny monenlaisii oppilaitten [esityksiä] ja opettanu ja koittanu vetää monenlaisia näytelmiä ja esityksiä ja koittanu saada ne lapset niinku rohkastuun [esintymiseen]. Niin kyl mä näin siel kevään jutussaki sen että tää ei oo ihan tavallista, et ne tekee sen näin . . . et ne tän näin isonki yleisön edessä ja näin keskenänsä ja viel tytöt ja pojat keskenänsä et ne tekee sitä tällai, et tää ei oo ihan tavallista . . . et täs on täytyny tapahtuu jotain just tässä vahventumisessa että siit tulee meidän juttu et se on oppilaalle mun juttuna niin tärkeä ja iso et mä haluan et se on myös meidän juttu.

⁶⁴ ne oli tietoisia siit et ne on kaikki siel yhdessä, ne oli tietoisii siit et täs on nää toiset ja tää toinen ja tää pari, ja tää ku ne siinä ne jännät hahmot ja muut . . . et ne tajuu toistensa olemassaolon suhteessa itseensä.

The Principal was concerned about the children's selfhood. Speaking about the whole Taikomo project and all classes that had been involved, he said that,

Those pupils have gotten just what we have aimed for, that some little . . . contact and scratch into this "irrational world", that it exists, and there they have their own strength and own capability . . . I believe that the goal that the pupil would get support for all learning improves here all the time . . . the more they find courage to express themselves, well, in my opinion it is not only the question of expressing but maybe more like encountering themselves.⁶⁵

He said that his interest has been for a long time to find out if children could be given some tools for "getting into themselves and getting to know themselves and for finding those own hidden resources"⁶⁶ and, despite all the problems the project had been through, he thought that this had happened. He said that he trusted his own inference about how the children have experienced the project:

Well, the way pupils express this kind of feedback is at times quite limited, especially when the moment has already passed . . . but when you hear comments like it was really fun, or that it was cool, or when you notice children talking among themselves about what they had done . . . and then, of course, what the teachers notice and tell me and what I notice myself, such interaction among pupils, how such "worked up" situations . . . that have decreased in those classes.⁶⁷

He thought that "pupils who really do things together, something positive that they achieve, something that causes them a feeling that, yes, we did this, then

⁶⁵ Ne oppilaat on saaneet just sitä mihin on pyritty, et jonkin pienen . . . kontaktin ja ja niinku raapasun siihen että tää tällänen lainausmerkeis epärationaalinen maailma on olemassa ja siel heil on omaa vahvuuttaan ja omaa osaamistaan . . . mä uskon siihen että se tavote et oppilas sais tukea kaikelle oppimiselle se edistyy tässä koko ajan . . . mitä enemmän ne löytää rohkeutta ilmasta itseään, niin siinäähän ei oo kyse mun mielest pelkästään ilmasemisest vaan nimenomaan ehkä viel enemmän siitä niinku itsensä kohtaamisesta.

⁶⁶ omaan itseensä meneemiseen ja tutustumiseen ja niitten omien piilossa olevien voimavarojensa löytämiseen

⁶⁷ No siis oppilaiden tapahan ilmasta tämmösiä palautteita on hetkittäin aika niukka, etenkin sit ku se tilanne on jo menny . . . mut et kun kuulee semmosii kommentteja et se oli ihan kivaa, tai et se oli makeeta tai huomaa lasten keskenään juttelevan että mitä ne oli tekemässä . . . ja sit tietysti niinkun minkä opettajat huomaa ja kertoo mulle ja mitä mä itekki huomaa että tämmösten oppilaiden välinen kanssakäyminen, että miten semmonen karvat pystyssä tilanteiden . . . se on vähentyny näis luokissa.

they do not go to the same degree into conflicts and arguments with each other, whereas those children who have no knowledge of the other and others' capabilities or have not been in a situation where the other would have been together in some good thing."⁶⁸ Again, comparison with the Wild Things project seems relevant. Based on the findings related to that project, Bond (1994a, 31) advocates performance as an educational strategy, suggesting that performance process, combined with observation and discussion, may challenge perceptions of gender, and thus foster openness and mutual respect. In this particular performance process, masks served an important function: they appeared to "suspend gender inhibitions and bring forth an expanded sense of individuality" (Bond 1994a, 32).

In our project masks were used as well, in the form of face paintings. I am inclined to think that costuming and masking supported the transformation process for the children and released some inhibitions for performing. Bond (1994a, 32) speaks about the power of masks in liberating human beings from normal reality, as well as about the significance of allowing and supporting individual expression:

In the Wild things there was a strong emphasis on individual expression. Time and detail were put into the decoration of each wild thing costume . . . Gender researchers in education suggest using explicit teaching strategies that recognize and value individual learners and the particularity of life experience. (Bond 1994a, 32)

As the Wild Things project centered on affirming individuality, it succeeded in fostering social equity and change. According to Bond, "boys and girls found a common ground in their identification with wild things, establishing a kind of egalitarian community" (1994a, 32). In our project something like this happened, as well. As the Principal noted above, he saw boys and girls doing something really positive together, and that he thought that the way they interacted was not quite ordinary. This suggests to me that given space and time for creative work together, it is possible to make a difference in

⁶⁸ oppilaat jotka todella tekee tekoja yhdessä, jotain myönteistä et ne se saa jotain aikaan mist niile tulee semmonen tunne et, jees, me tehtiin tää, niin ne ei lähe samassa määrin ollenkaan konflikteihin ja ristiriitoihin keskenänsä ku taas ne lapset joillei oo mitään tietoo toisesta ja toisen osaamisesta tai ei oo koskaan ollu tilannetta jossa toinen ois mukana jossakin hyvässä jutussa.

children's social world. A performance project seems to be a valuable approach for making a difference in their lives.

The Principal also spoke about the fear of difference and fear of new situations that becomes manifest as aggression, arguments and fights and reflects weakness. He said that,

Now when I follow these pupils, especially in Johan's class . . . in them, not in all but some, even I who do not teach them, I am seeing such, such power and strength that . . . there is no need to boast, no need to get into conflicts, no need to experience somebody as a threat to me, so like that empowerment . . . in a sense that I am strong enough in myself, and I have strong enough selfhood and role and status here, that I do not need to emphasize it.⁶⁹

Finally, he summarized his view about empowerment:

. . . the empowerment that happens there, that I can experience others, I can give space, I can appreciate them, because I am given space as well and I am being appreciated, that kind of things I saw there.⁷⁰

The Principal's comments have been very meaningful and encouraging to me throughout the rest of this research. It is so easy to become disillusioned and discouraged in this kind of work where apparent "outcomes" are hardly noticeable. Also Ike gave me direct, meaningful feedback about his feelings about the whole project. For him, establishing relationships with some children, those who were very difficult for him in the beginning, was significant:

The ending balance for me was really good . . . really finely it was built towards the end so that the performance succeeded so well, and then, little by little I noticed also that clearly it has significance for them after all . . . for a long time I feel that I have not received such good feedback

⁶⁹ Nyt ku mä seuraan niinku näit oppilaita, erityisesti tässä niinku Johanin luokassa . . . niis oppilaisa niin kyl mä niis, en kaikissa mut muutamissa jopa minä, joka en edes opeta niitä . . . oon näkevinäni selväst semmosta, semmost vahvuutta ja voimaa . . . et ei tarvitse uhota, ei tarvitse niinku mennä ristiriitoihin ei tarvii niinku, ei tarvi kokee että toi on uhka mulle eli se vahventavuus . . . siinä mielessä et mä oon tarpeeks vahva itessäni ja mul on tarpeeks vahva niinku minuus ja rooli ja asema täs et ei mun tarvi niinku korostaa sitä.

⁷⁰ . . . se vahventuminen mitä tapahtuu siinä, että mä voin kokea toiset, mä voin antaa tilaa, mä voin arvostaa niitä, koska itekki saan tilaa ja mua arvostetaan, et sen kaltasii asioit mä siin näin.

. . . like when I went to my car in the parking lot then he [Leonard] went by and shouted "Ike, hello" and looked like a good friend, that really moved me, then I thought that this has been one of the most important things that I have been involved in for a long time.⁷¹

Ike said that now he appreciates me and also himself because "we did that thing and that it is not like eating cakes but there you have to really struggle and work before you get the prize that they say . . . hello Ike."⁷² Ike, who has also taught a music class that has elected pupils with parents who know and care enough to support their children to apply to such a class, said that he now felt that it was unfair that only those children who already have so much get more, and that he thought it was really great that an ordinary class gets to dance and play music. Although in the beginning they did not realize how privileged they were but later he noticed that they actually did appreciate it when "they give something out of themselves and throw themselves into it."⁷³ He said that,

For many probably . . . comes totally such, that they do not want to be involved, but in the end they did not think that anymore because I noticed that they were enjoying it.⁷⁴

Ike also emphasized the feeling of togetherness during the final phase of the process. He had experienced it in the back, where he was helping with the instruments and playing:

Yes, and the performance was really important for me too, that when I was there with them in the box [the cave] helping the beginning, then there was such an atmosphere, like here we are . . . it disappeared really clearly that I would be somehow on top of them or some teacher of theirs, but there we were really together making the performance . . . like making

⁷¹ No, ihan niinku loppusaldo minust oli tosi hyvä . . . tosi hienosti se rakentu loppuu kohti, että se esitys onnistu niin hyvin ja sitte niinku vähitellen huomas myöskin sen, että selvästi sillä on niille kuitenkin merkitystä . . . pitkään aikaan musta tuntuu ettei oo saanu niin hyvää palautetta . . . niin ku mie menin autoon parkkipaikalle, niin sit se [Leonard] kulki ohi siitä ja huuti että "Ike, terve" ja katto niinku hyvä kaveri, se kyllä liikkutti minuu, silloin mie aattelin että tää on ollu tärkeempiä juttuja missä mie oon ollu mukana pitkään aikaan.

⁷² myö tehtiin se homma että ei se nyt oo pelkästään sellasta niinku leivoksien syömistä vaan siinä joutuu tosissaan taistelemaan ja tekemään töitä että ennen kun siitä tulee se palkinto että ne sanoo . . . terve Ike.

⁷³ antaa siinä itestensä ja pistävät ittensä peliin.

⁷⁴ Monet varmaan . . . tulee totaalinen semmonen että ne ei halua olla mukana mutta lopussa ne ei enää ajatellukkaa sitä että koska mä huomasin että nehän nauttivat siitä.

a performance always creates a mutual feeling that we are together doing . . . together working.⁷⁵

More and more I begin to think about teaching as being akin to artistic, creative process where the teacher and the students are searching together for meaning.

Drawing a line onto water: The subtle difference between respect and fear

Reflecting on Ike's, Johan's and the Principal's different perspectives illuminates another viewpoint on dialogue for me. This viewpoint is only slightly different from my earlier reflections on sensing, listening and freedom. Now, I am wondering how all this is connected to the issue of authority, more specifically, to the question of inner or outer authority, and respect for oneself and for others.

How is this issue related to sensing? To me the connection is unambiguous: to sense one's own body is to become connected to oneself, to become master of one's own body and gain ownership of one's body. Green (2001, 157) speaks of somatic authority as a focus on and affirmation of what goes on inside the body. According to her, helping students to take ownership of their bodies has become a recent interest among dance educators. A sense of agency and inner authority that results from awareness of internal body messages seems to me related to knowing and respecting oneself.

A sense of ownership, agency and self-respect are issues that were present in discussions about this project from the very beginning. For the Principal, encountering oneself through the arts was a central issue. In the very first meeting related to this project, back in 1996, he hoped that through self-expression, the children would strengthen their self-confidence and strengthen their own cultural identity. Through a strengthened cultural identity, he hoped that they would learn to understand other cultures, and to be more open and be less prejudiced towards others. He believed that this is where arts could be

⁷⁵ Joo, ja se esitys miusta oli se oli sillä tavalla älyttömän tärkeä mullekin, että ku mie olin niitten kanssa siellä kopissa [luolassa] auttamassa sitä alkamista, niin siin oli kyllä semmonen tunnelma, että tässä ollaan . . . se hävis jotenki tosi selkeesti se että mie olisin jotenki niitten yläpuolella tai joku niitten opettaja, vaan siinä oltiin ihan yhdessä tekemässä sitä esitystä . . . esityksen tekemisestä aina syntyy sellanen yhteinen tunne että ollaan yhdessä tekemässä . . . yhdessä työn tekemistä.

significant. (Sava 2000, 8–9)

Dance was not yet mentioned as an art form to be included in the project: music, visual art and drama were discussed. As I entered the project, I, naturally, approached this issue of encountering oneself from a bodily perspective, through body and movement. The task was much more difficult than I had thought.

A major challenge over the course of this research has been to make sense of children's detached manner of moving, voicing and relating to others that mostly was quite harmless but nevertheless, made me increasingly bewildered. During the last semester of this project I still "was anxious to see if they could master their bodies with more precision, with more attention and concentration."

I am now tempted to connect this phenomenon to a lack of inner authority, or lack of agency. Freire speaks of an "invisible power of alienating domestication" that leads to "bureaucratizing" of the mind:

It is a state of refined estrangement, of the mind's abdication of its essential self, of a loss of consciousness of the body, of a "mass production" of the individual, and of conformity in the face of situations considered to be irreversible because of destiny. (1998b, 102)

My logic in helping children to gain inner authority and sense of agency was to give them opportunities to practice decision-making and let them take responsibility. Following Freire's advice that "it's in making decisions that we learn to decide" (1998b, 97), I believed that inner authority cannot be reached by constantly relying on outer authority, i.e., for someone else making decisions for you.

Without doubt, the project would have been different if building inner authority had been a conscious aim that the whole community was truly committed to. By true commitment I mean praxis, i.e. a change in practice, not only a change in thinking and talking. As a general educational aim on a level of written curriculum this is widely accepted, and I never encountered resistance in the community regarding my working towards this aim.

Throughout the project I had tried to be sensitive to Anita's and Johan's views so that I would not make the class go against the classroom teacher's efforts. Anita told me that she thought I could tolerate more chaos than she could; she also said she appreciated my tolerance. Her peacefulness and ability to calm the children down puzzled me in relation to my obvious shortcomings in this

area. She certainly seemed to respect the children, as I wrote: "Anita's peacefulness seemed to transfer to the children. She is a motherlike, safe figure. There is respect . . ." While she was able to calm the children down by her peacefulness and by her caring attitude, I am not sure if this calming down was for dialogue's sake. Since I never witnessed her teaching, I will not infer anything of it, but nevertheless, I argue that it is possible to silence children respectfully and for many reasons; while respect seems indispensable for dialogue, alone it is not enough for dialogue.

The issue of respect puzzled me already during the first year, as I asked, "Respect – is it different than fear of authority?" Somehow I have been reluctant to consider the idea of respect as an order or prescription, an attitude that sometimes seems to be asked from children towards their parents and teachers.

I also asked Johan about his view on my approach, since he never had said to me that I was giving the children too much slack. He replied that "you have very rarely but sometimes visited the border when it like gets out of hand,"⁷⁶ explaining that he had noticed sometimes during his own classes that when he worked or talked with someone individually, it was difficult to keep the others occupied. I then asked if the class in his opinion had been more difficult to handle because of my approach, and he said,

No it has not, no it has not, quite finely they have managed themselves . . . those face paintings and all, how they after all have managed, so that nobody has started to do their own things there.⁷⁷

Johan approved my approach when I reiterated my manner of not guarding everything that is going on, and said that I wanted to increasingly give them more responsibility. He said that he tried to work towards that direction himself.

Thus, I think it is the everyday practice at school that does not really live up to this ideal. Because I do not know much about what actually went on during their regular school hours, I can only report on those incidents that happened during my classes. The instances when Johan overtly used his external authority in my class were actually rare. Once (March 4, 1999) he brought a whistle to

⁷⁶ sä oot aika harvoin mutta joskus käyny siinä rajalla et koska se niinku koska se niinku karkaa käsistä

⁷⁷ Ei oo, ei oo ollu, et aika hienosti ne on pärjännny . . . ne kasvomaalaukset ja nää, miten ne on kuitenkin pärjännny, et ei kukaan nyt ihan omii juttui rupee siel puuhaamaan.

the class. A few times he interrupted the class by demanding silence; sometimes he attended to restless children so that I could work with the rest. Most often, though, it was his mere presence that seemed to be the controlling factor. When he was present, I was not conscious about how his being there affected the children. Since he was present most of the time, I do not know how my approach would have worked if I had been with the children on my own, or how developing inner authority would have proceeded if he and the whole community had worked towards it in concrete ways.

I do know that when Johan left the class, the children started behaving differently. The same, although to a lesser extent, happened during the first year when Anita was not present. Most incidents involving disciplinary problems occurred when Johan left the room. Usually he left without letting me know; thus, I was unprepared to adjust my approach accordingly. When I discussed these situations with Johan we got into the issue of inner and outer authority. Johan readily admitted that basic order in the class demands his presence, and that when he was gone, the order was gone. This happened not only during my classes. Substitute teachers and even the school principal had disciplinary difficulties with the class when Johan was not present (see p. 130–131).

The major incident was, of course, the first regular class this spring (February 18th, 1999), when I ended up leaving the room as well. I had seen them play with inner authority during our previous meeting: “To see 24 children being able to be in a space freely, without external authority to tell them what to do (and what not to do!)” was very significant for me. What I did not realize then was that this was a free play situation, a part of their peer culture. It was not a pedagogical situation, although I was present. I still think it was significant that they could engage in free play without conflicts, and am tempted to think that my classes had something to do with this apparent social coherence.

Following that incident I trusted them more than before, and let the situation develop more freely. I wrote,

Did I trust them too much now? Am I distracted by last time’s magic moment . . . thinking that no external authority was needed anymore? Johan’s leaving the class had a huge impact today.

I need to make clear that when I speak of external authority I refer to someone or something who has the sole power and control over others. External authority,

in this sense, is someone who makes decisions for others and monitors other's behavior, enforces the rules and enacts penalties. While I think adults do need to watch over children, for example, for safety, I think, in Freirean terms, that responsibility for complying with rules should gradually be shared so that everyone can trust that there will be basic safety and order. Moreover, I think that rules should be more like mutual contracts and result from negotiation, and that commitment to these contracts should develop as they are put into practice in everyday life.

Since I refused to be a "discipline keeper" and did not realize that such authority was still occasionally needed, the situation developed into chaos. There was no respect for each other, resulting in collision of freedoms. I felt that respect for Ike and me was missing, and became very hurt. I was there as a person, as myself, not representing external authority or discipline. My choice, as I exercised my personal freedom and understanding of ethics, was to leave. Freire tells about his reactions to lack of respect, saying that he does not

... need to grovel before his or her lack of respect or offensive behavior, carrying the weight of all this home with me, on my shoulders, without any form of protest . . . It is necessary that she/he know that I know his or her lack of ethical values . . . (1998b, 109)

For Freire, respect is indispensable for freedom. He says that the tension between authority and freedom has not yet been resolved, and because of our dedication to overcome authoritarianism we have fallen into the opposite error of limitless freedom, and confuse legitimate exercise of authority with abuse of authority. (Freire 1998b 95, 99) A teacher's authority, then, is legitimate when exercised with respect for students, supporting their right to become autonomous. A teacher's authority is abusive and oppressive if it is exercised arbitrarily, without respect and without concern for students' growth in autonomy.

Students' lack of respect towards teachers and adults in general, then is a highly complex issue. As I found out in discussing friendship, preadolescents are sensitive to adults' injustice. I have also described how, for example, children object being yelled at. On the other hand, it seems that teachers are being attacked by students exercising their freedoms without limits; often parents are being accused for not setting limits for their children at home.

For me a crucial point was to maintain respect towards myself and towards

the students. Even in the most difficult moments I “tried to be a person to them rather than an authority.” I aspired to become a “leader from within,” since I had felt at ease with that position in different contexts, even as a choreographer or a director. My quest for mutual respect was strong. I wrote, “We have lost our mutual respect and warmth,” and was very sorry about this. Still able to overcome it as an adult, educator with a quite strong sense of self-respect, I came back to them to start over. Although maintaining respect towards someone who does not seem to respect you it is not easy, I think it falls on the teacher to hang on to respect, no matter how difficult it seems. Freire writes on respect:

What ought to guide me is not the question of neutrality in education, but respect, at all costs, for all those involved in education. Respect for teachers on the part of school administrators, whether public or private. Respect among teachers and students. And respect between both. This respect is what I should fight for, without ceasing. For the right to be respected and for the duty I have to confront those who belittle me. (1998b, 101)

It sometimes seems to me that the idea of respect for others has all but disappeared from our society. In daily newspapers everyone cries for respect: elderly people are not respected, parents are not respected, teachers are not respected any more. As opposite cries ask for respect for children’s and youngster’s lives, demanding more opportunities for them to participate in society, and as other voices beg for women’s and men’s rights, it is easy to become bewildered. Who should do what, for whom? In a school context, I think, true community cannot grow if any members of the community feel that they are not respected.

It is maybe possible to unfold this issue even more, and look at the larger school context. Whose rights or feelings had actually been violated first? Going back to the beginning of this spring term, I wrote, “There was a lot of anxiety in the school community about this project, the classroom teachers were defensive about their way of working.”

Maybe I was sensing a slightly indifferent attitude towards the project from Johan’s behavior. It was so slight that I could not make sense of it during the project. It was just a minor irritation, not enough to take the issue up; after all, he was always supportive and positive about my ideas. It was just that there was a different intensity in his attitude; I was deeply committed and serious about this project, while he had maybe many as important projects or tasks

in his mind while I was working with his class.

His disappearances from and entrances to the class were not the only problem. Some seemingly minor things, like getting the fabrics, constructing the "cave" and organizing the lighting were delayed. I worked with the costumes for hours, but the final visual touch that lighting would have brought into the performance was missing. The children performed practically in darkness.

What might be the reason for his slight indifference? Of course, there is just so much one can do as a classroom teacher. One reason may be that he felt uneasy about his role in the project, since so many other teachers were opposed to the project. Probably there had been some staff room discussions about this project, about how much their work has been questioned by scholars and artists intruding into their classes without understanding the reality of the everyday school life.

So, maybe there was too little respect for the classroom teachers' work; maybe we artist teachers and researchers represented an external authority for them, coming in and saying how terrible a place the school is and how little the teachers know about art and its significance. For instance, the project brought researchers and researcher trainees into the school in order to conduct observation tasks. These observations were sometimes critical, and were reported in publications related to the project. In one publication classroom teachers responded: they wrote how they felt when reading the reports. One teacher writes,

Reading the report raised conflicting feelings in me. The report reveals many good observations for example on my own working methods and lacks in the planning phase. These must be necessary things in order to be able to develop. On the other hand it was really depressing to read word to word quotations or how I had happened to look at a pupil . . . At times I feel like I would like to defend my doings. It feels really bad. Am I a lousy teacher? I am beginning to be worried about my self-confidence. (Sava et. al. 2000, 47; my translation)

It may be that Johan was uncomfortable about being enthusiastic about this project, although, to my knowledge, Taikomo researchers never reported on his classes in the project publications. Moreover, he was more inclined to work on artistic projects than some other teachers. He also said to me that,

. . . because I have not myself experienced that kind of [conflict] . . . with you, something like that we would disagree . . . this is not at all a burden to me, it maybe is for other classroom teachers.⁷⁸

Johan was involved and supporting, more so towards the end. But then again, he was quite ready to yield when facing critique: His readiness to back up from another performance showed to me that he was not completely committed to this project, or did not see the value of the courage the children showed in performing in childish animal costumes, thus manifesting their imagination for others. The fact that the school community failed to respect the children's work shattered the picture.

Adults' uncertainty about the meaning and significance of the activity may be reflected in the children. I am willing to claim that, had I been able to confirm for Johan just a little bit more about the value of this work, some trouble and confusion might have been omitted. This is not to blame him: as I said, this may be because of the setting of the whole project caused this confusion in attitudes. Maybe my own belief was not strong enough. And, whether this is the case or not, does not even really matter.

What matters to me is respecting others, be they people of any age, from children to elderly people, or of any vocation, from bus drivers to doctors, and from any nationality. Building a community must be based on unquestioned mutual respect. Any working community, meaning a group of people who are working towards a mutual end, has to be based on respect: valuing and appreciating each member as a unique person.

Buber (1937/1970, 92) writes about the paradox of what usually happens when people learn to "experience and use," stating that it generally causes a decrease in their power to relate. He goes on, explaining that,

Standing under the basic word of separation which keeps apart I and It, he has divided his life with his fellow men into two neatly defined districts: institutions and feelings. It-district and I-district. Institutions are what is "out there" where for all kinds of purposes one spends time, where one works, negotiates, influences, undertakes, competes, organizes, administers, officiates, preaches. . . Feelings are what is "in here" where one lives and recovers from the institutions. (1937/1970, 93)

⁷⁸ . . . koska mä en oo ite kokenu semmosta [konfliktia]. . . sun kans, jotain semmosta et on ollu eri mieltä . . . mulle tää ei oo niinku yhtään, yhtään rasite, se saattaa muille näille luokanopettajille olla.

Buber says that the borderline between institutions and feelings is continually endangered, as feelings break into institutions, and that it is most difficult to keep the separation in personal life, like in marriage. He states that neither institutions nor feelings know the human being:

Neither knows person or community. Neither knows the present . . . Neither has access to actual life. Institutions yield no public life; feelings, no personal life. That institutions yield no public life is felt by more and more human beings, to their sorrow: this is the source of the distress and search of our age. (1937/1970, 93–94)

Buber describes how a remedy has been thought of for this problem: institutions should be renewed by bringing feelings into institutions, by opening them up by feelings. Buber disagrees:

True community does not come into being because people have feelings for each other (though that is required, too), but rather on two accounts: all of them have to stand in a living, reciprocal relationship to a single living center, and they have to stand in a living, reciprocal relationship to one another . . . True public and true personal lives are two forms of association . . . but even the combination of both still does not create human life which is created only by a third element: the central presence of the You or . . . the central You that is received in the present. (1937/1970, 94–95)

This creates a world of relation, where "I and You confront each other freely in a reciprocity that is not involved in or tainted by any causality; here man finds guaranteed the freedom of his being and of being" (Buber 1937/1970, 100). To me this means that giving up using others in order to gain predetermined ends is stepping into the world of relation, the world of freedom within its ethical limits. That is what respecting oneself and respecting others means to me. Authority becomes internalized and external authority loses its meaning.

Respecting others is based on respecting oneself, and respecting oneself is based on knowing oneself, encountering and accepting oneself. Buber speaks of becoming a person and compares it with becoming an ego. Egos appear by separating from other egos, resulting in differentiation. Persons appear by entering into relation to other persons, generating association. Only in relation can one participate in actuality:

All actuality is an activity in which I participate without being able to appropriate it . . . Where there is no participation, there is no actuality . . . The more perfect the participation is, the more actual the I becomes. (1937/1970, 113)

If the task of school is to support this process of encountering oneself in relation with others, the teachers must be ready to do this with children and among each other. But how can a teacher help children to enter into relation with each other and learn to respect themselves and others, if the teacher is uncertain about her or his own value as a person or a professional? This must be the starting point: if in a school community teachers are not valued as persons in relation with each other, as a true community, it is impossible to build a true community within children.

Building respect for themselves, for others and for Ike and me was my central concern during the project, more so towards the end. Soon after my conflict with the children was resolved, I was ready to continue pursuing dialogue with low voice, gentleness, a caring attitude. I felt that this manner of addressing the children would restore our mutual respect. Words like consideration, respect, trust and peace were, and still are silently whispering inside my head and leading my way. Interestingly, I sensed new kind of consideration from some children who earlier had been quite blunt with me: for instance, when Quincy wanted to get rid of the horns I had given him, he did not just throw them away as if he were worried about how I would feel about it. I wrote: "I think that his way of asking this was interesting. There was respect, and it was very close to fear of authority."

At times the children seemed to get in touch with their inner authority. There were moments of dialogical, self-directed work, where we could just wonder and enjoy watching. This is how many movements for the performance were created. Somehow, those movements seemed to be much more meaningful to the children than movements that I gave them, or some movements that they had created earlier.

Lack of meaning, on the other hand, may be related to lack of agency. This is the area with which I struggled the most, and I believe Ike did, as well. I desperately searched for ways to make this project meaningful for the children, being aware that meaning could not be imposed on them. Arousing the children and making the project theirs was not easy. Since I was committed to not making

this my project or my dance, I refrained from taking the leader's position. Our shared, non-imposing approach seemed to be counterproductive as far as visible progress in dancing and playing the instruments. It also created an opening for children's feelings of meaninglessness to surface.

Since most of their daily lives were conducted according to what others (adults) told them to do, they did not always know how to make use of the slack. Apparently they were quite used to being told what to do, and did not question that; nor did they seem to hope for any other way. In the second interview Olivia revealed something related to this. When I asked how she would like to continue from here, regarding our project, the following conversation resulted:

Olivia: Well, I don't know, I don't care as long as someone decides.

Eeva: Yes, someone will decide, don't you want to decide yourself?

Olivia: No

Eeva: Is it difficult for you to make decisions?

Olivia: Yes

Eeva: Is it better for you that adults decide for you?

Olivia: Mm, if I'm at home then I want to decide myself but in school issues I don't really.⁷⁹

Although it often seemed quite difficult and even hopeless, we pursued this path. It was a complicated path. Ike said that,

It was to me the only right approach what you had and what I had too, that they were like their movements and I let them play what they wanted. I showed a little something at times but my educational philosophy is . . . that you can never give too much positive feedback . . . it would be really difficult for me to start saying to them . . . "hey now you played wrong, this goes this way that listen now, this is how it goes" . . . however, I was fully satisfied on how it sounded in the performance . . . I was really proud about it. I could have asked any of my musician friends to listen and I would have been proud about how it sounded.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Olivia: No emmä tiä, mulle on ihan sama, kunhan vaan joku sen päättää.

Eeva: Niin, joku sen päättää, eksä halua ite päättää?

Olivia: En

Eeva: Onks sun mielest vaikee päättää asioita?

Olivia: On

Eeva: Onks sust parempi et aikuiset päättää sun puolesta?

Olivia: Mm, jos kotona ollaan niin kyl mä haluan itte sit päättää mut koulutekemisis mä en oikeen.

Ike thought that the music lived in a different way than it would have if he had showed and directed everything, and that "it could have destroyed completely the satisfaction what they had."⁸¹ As I have reported before, Ike had had his black moments during the year, when he in his own words "leaned back." Luckily he then realized that he should not try to teach so much: "I thought that I would let them do what they do and enjoy that and let them enjoy,"⁸² he said. I had realized the same thing. I explained this to Ike:

Every time with me too, that if I tried to [focus on] some specific detail, that now we could look at this a little and concentrate . . . in a way how it would look good for me, so easily it lead into a kind of slumping . . . then the drive was gone . . . the energy was quite on a different level when it went along its own path, in a way a little wild . . . of course, there was a danger all the time that it gets out of hand, like it did at times.⁸³

To this Ike responded that, "Yes, but you were able to keep it in certain limits obviously because the performance was created . . . in my opinion really you must dare to move within the borders of risk."⁸⁴

The quality of the process and the performance, then, was different than it would have been if we had used a more traditional approach. I think the question here is not which approach is better – they are qualitatively different approaches. By making any choice you always exclude something, as Sue Stinson (2001, 30) so well has pointed out by reminding that every choice has both negative and positive consequences, and that you always lose something when gaining something.

⁸⁰ Se oli must just ainut oikee linja mikä sulla oli ja mikä mullaki oli ,että ne oli niitten liikkeitä ja mie annoin soittaa niitten melkein mitä ne halus. Vähä mie välillä näytin jotakin, mutta miun kasvatusfilosofia on . . . että ikinä ei voi antaa liikaa myönteistä palautetta, että mie miust ois tosi vaikeeta ruveta sanomaan niille . . . " hei sie soitit väärin, että tää menee tällä tavalla, että kuunnelkaahan nyt, että se menee näin" . . . kuitenkin niin mie olin ihan älyttömän tyytyväinen siihen et miltä se kuullosti siinä esityksessä . . . mie olin ihan ylpee siitä. Mie olisin voinu pyytää kenen tahansa soitto, muusikkokaverin kuuntelemaan ja mie olisin ollu ylpee siitä miltä se kuullosti.

⁸¹ et se ois voinu tuhota täydellisesti sen niinku mielihyvän et mitä ne siit saivat.

⁸² Mie aattelin et antaa niien tehä mitä ne tekkeevät ja nauttii siitä ja antaa niitten nauttii

⁸³ Joka kerta mullaki, että jos yritti [katsoa] jotain tiettyä yksityiskohtaa, että nyt tähän voitais vähä kattoo ja paneutuu . . . tavallaan et miltä musta näyttää et se vois olla hyvä ja se helposti vei sit siihen semmoseen lässähtämiseen . . . siit lähti semmonen draivi . . . se oli ihan toisel tasolla se energia silloin ku se meni niinku omia uomiaan tavallaan vähä sillai holtittomasti . . . tietysti siin on se vaara koko ajan et se menee niinku käsistä, niinku meniki aina välillä.

⁸⁴ Niin mut sie osait pittää sen joissaki rajoissa selvästi koska se esitys syntyy . . . mut miusta oikeestaan pittääki uskaltaa liikkuu siinä riskirajoilla.

I kept my firmness as a person, sometimes asserting with considerable self-confidence that in order to finish this project we need to work according to our mutual contracts. By firmness and self-confidence I mean something that Buber refers to as "the concentration of the world" in the teacher (see p. 95). Reflecting on one class (March 4, 1999) I wrote,

My manner reflected an assertion that everybody should really join, that I did not even think of a possibility of choosing not to join, like it was clear-cut that everyone would join. I did this lightly, gently, but reflecting self-confidence. How important is self-confidence for a teacher? A positive manner and attitude towards the subject, towards the activity, "this is what we will do, this is a good thing" – to a certain limit there must be a basic love and affection towards the activities, but on the other hand, there must also be sensitivity towards childrens' different experiences.

I also reasoned, for instance, that even if someone does not like an activity, s/he does not have the right to spoil it for those who want to do it well, learn and enjoy. The message got understood better as the spring proceeded. A few times I declared that now I feel that I need to make decisions for them. I gave them plenty of opportunities to practice freedom, to gain autonomy, but at times I noticed I needed to take the lead. I said to them, for instance, "It seems like you are not ready to influence what we are going to do, like we would have to decide for you."

Not always was my tone gentle and caring, then, and not always was the content of our discussions positive. We had tough negotiations, even voting. Sometimes I felt very tired and hopeless, but the resolving of our negotiations always cleared the air so that we moved forward. For instance, on April 12, 1999, "the discussion was constructive although the content was partly negative."

Buber tells about an incident that reminds me of my experiences with the children. He says that he can best illuminate what dialogue means by examples. He tells about a "broken-off conversation" with Christians and Jews in 1914:

. . . one of us, a man of passionate concentration and judicial power of love, raised the consideration that too many Jews had been nominated . . . Obstinate Jew that I am, I protested against the protest . . . so I directly addressed the former clergyman. He stood up, I too stood, we looked into the heart of another's eyes. "It is gone", [sic] he said, and before everyone we gave another the kiss of brotherhood. The discussion of the situation

between Jews and Christians had been transformed into a bond between the Christian and the Jew. In this transformation dialogue was fulfilled. Opinions were gone, in a bodily way the factual took place. (1947, 5–6)

In a similar way, the children and I did not always reach a consensus, or understand each other completely. But sometimes we encountered each other eye to eye, with a presence encountering another presence, seriously and totally. When we did, things became resolved, and peace was restored.

The only way, I believe, an adult and an educator can reach this process is to stay true to yourself, to stay connected to your values, beliefs and your self-respect. Giving that out and staying open to the children, they may respond. That is, to me, the basis for dialogue. Buber writes,

Between you and it there is reciprocity of giving: you say You to it and give yourself to it; it says You to you and gives itself to you. You cannot come to an understanding *about* it with others; you are lonely with it; but it teaches you to encounter others and to stand your ground in such encounters; and through the grace of its advents and the melancholy of its departures it leads you to that You in which the lines of relation, though parallel, intersect. (1937/1970, 84)

The moments of dialogue, the “You-moments” according to Buber must become It after the event of relation has gone by, and appear to us as “lyric-dramatic episodes,” whose spell is seductive but dangerous, because “they pull us dangerously to extremes, loosening the well-*tried* structure, leaving behind more doubt than satisfaction, shaking up security – altogether uncanny, altogether indispensable” (1937/1970, 84–85). He asks, why do we need those moments, because we must return to the It-world anyway? His view of the necessity of You-moments is firm:

One cannot live in the pure present: it would consume us if care were not taken that it is overcome quickly and thoroughly. But in pure past one can live; in fact, only there life can be arranged. One only has to fill every moment with experiencing and using, and it ceases to burn. And in all the seriousness of truth, listen: without It a human being cannot live. But whoever lives only with that is not human. (1937/1970, 85)

Life in the It-world does not burn, it is structured, ordered and predetermined, it is using and experiencing. You-moments stir up this order, seduce and

confuse, shake up security, but in order to be human, you must open yourself to presence, to You, to say You.

To say You is to enter into dialogue. The world of dialogue is very close now, I feel. But before sailing to our final destiny, I feel that one more detour is needed. I want to visit play and imagination once more.

Revisiting play and imagination: Isn't this what art is about?

After our first visit to play a lot has happened. Now play itself looks very different. Then play was for the most part about movement games that Marjatta Kalliala (1999) labels as *agon* (see p. 50). The children's desire for this kind of play was remarkably strong then and it remained strong throughout the project. The second year brought along another kind of play; *mimicry*, i.e. imaginary play that seemed to all but have disappeared from these children's lives. My stubborn faith in the importance of imagination for all humans, not just preschool aged children, compelled me to take these children for a tour to imagination, and this visit brought mimicry into our project. Kalliala describes mimicry as follows:

Imaginary play demands a temporary acceptance and commitment to illusion or at least a separate or closed, contract-based and in some sense fictitious world. In play there is not always question about experiencing something in an imaginary world, but about transforming oneself into a fictitious character and acting according to it. The expressive forms of this kind of play are based on the player believing, making herself/himself and others believe that s/he is something else than he is. S/he throws oneself into her/his role and gives up her/his own personality in order to perform somebody else. (1999, 43, my translation)

According to Kalliala (1999, 44), the force that creates mimicry is an organic impulse that is very basic and authentic by its nature. This view resembles Kurkela's (1993, 33) view on play as a manifestation of life force. In mimicry reality and imagination are intertwined:

The task of the player is to seduce the other to join by avoiding a mistake that would break the illusion; the part of the spectator of the play is to

share the illusion that for a limited time is experienced more real than reality. (Kalliala 1999, 45, my translation)

It is easy to believe in children's capacity for transformation. It is amazing how quickly and easily they become another being, and as quickly they shift back to being themselves again, and transform again into something else. In their study on young people's experiences of the superordinary in dance, Bond and Stinson (2000, 74) confirm that in their artistic expression young children embody their identification with animals and other natural forms. They suggest that despite apparent decreasing of such expressions with increasing age human beings retain and value this connection to the super-ordinary and may return to it as source of artistic inspiration. Bond (1997, 39 and 2001, 48) reinforces this idea based on her study on the Octopus project that I have referred to earlier on p. 147. She asserts that the young Australian children demonstrated their expertise as transformers, as their identification with animals and nature took many forms and appeared even without asking. Bond writes,

Animals appeared, sometimes uninvited if not discouraged, and children's graphic representations of animals were often integrated with their concept of "self." As in the animal dances of Native Americans and Australian aborigines, there was an authenticity about the animal forms that emerged . . . Children in the present study were captivated by the archetypal "dance" of the predator and prey. (Bond 2001, 48)

The relationship of children's artistic expression to our primal, bodily, transformative knowledge is an issue of growing interest to many researchers, including me. This idea also takes me closer to understanding how play, imagination and art are connected, and how they are essentially about profound humanness. Moreover, they are profoundly about humanness through and by dialogue.

Before connecting play and imagination with art, and contemplating what all this has to do with dialogue, it seems necessary to draw out some significant features of play in a more general sense. Huizinga (1934/1984) has analyzed play as a cultural phenomenon. He argues that play is more than physiological, biological or physical phenomenon, stating that play is significant and meaningful action, it always has a meaning and a purpose. It is too much to claim that it is spiritual, says Huizinga, but too little to claim that it is instinctive. Psychological and biological explanations of play are just partial explanations. They do not

tackle the question of the primary and intensive nature of play that is deeply anchored into aesthetics. Neither do they explain why play is so much fun. (1984, 9–11)

According to Huizinga the most fitting representation for the original nature of play is the English word “fun.” In play, he says, we are dealing with this primary category that self-evidently appears to all human beings, that deserves, if anything, naming it as wholeness. The reality of play exceeds the human world, it exceeds rationality, and it is not bound to any level of cultural evolution, not to any worldview. Play as reality is self-evident to all thinking beings, it cannot be denied. Huizinga claims,

You can deny the existence of truth, but not play! (1984, 12, my translation)

The nature of play is not connected to substance. It breaks the limits of the physical world. The existence of play deletes absolute objectives and strengthens the “more than logical” nature of our being. We are more than rational beings, because play is irrational. For Huizinga play exists before culture and follows culture into present day. It has always been a part of human interaction and all original human activities, and it is a part of all cultural life. He claims that “genuine and pure play is the base and ingredient of culture” (1984, 14, my translation).

Huizinga claims that play is voluntary: obligatory play is not real play. The only “must” in play is that children and animals “must play” because of the fun that playing involves, but that must is in actuality a freedom. He also states that play is unnecessary. The need that is involved in play stems also from the fun of it, but otherwise, there is neither physical reason nor responsibility to play. It is impossible to use the concepts coercion, responsibility or task in relation to play. It is possible to pretend playing by coercion, but that is not real play. (1984, 17–18)

Huizinga ties these characteristics, voluntariness and lack of necessity for play, together and concludes that the main sign for play is freedom. Another main sign for play is that play is not ordinary life, it is not “real” but on the other hand, it is more than real. Huizinga says that the relationship between play and reality stays undefined, and that play can become reality and reality can become play. (1984, 18) He writes:

Play is separated from ordinary life through time and space. Play begins, it has its course, and it is over. It can be repeated but it is always reinvented as it is repeated. Play is restricted in space; each play happens in a certain physical or symbolic place. In the realm of our ordinary world these play worlds are temporary worlds, stages of action that enclose themselves. (Huizinga 1984, 18–20, my translation)

In the playing place there is a definite order; play creates order. It brings a momentary perfection to an imperfect world and confused life. Huizinga claims that even a small deviation from order spoils the play, takes away its nature and makes it worthless. This is where he connects play to aesthetics: play has a tendency to be beautiful. The aesthetic element of play may be identical with human desire for orderly form. The words that are used in describing play belong to the realm of aesthetics: excitement, balance, evaluation, contrast, variation, connecting and separating. Huizinga's depiction on the essence of play elucidates the connection between play and art:

Play connects and lets go. It spells. It is filled by the most noble characteristics that man can perceive and express in beings: it is full of rhythm and harmony. (Huizinga 1984, 20, my translation)

Ellen Dissenayeke (1997) claims that even newborn babies express rhythm and harmony in their vocalizations and movements. In playful, dynamic interaction with their caretakers, small children are able to respond to patterns of rhythm and form. According to Dissanayeke this reciprocity of communication strengthens the emotional bond between adult and child. She also claims that this kind of communication is the origin of art making activity. Human beings have an innate sensibility for rhythmic and aesthetic forms. Throughout history human communities everywhere have developed this sensibility further through dance and music. These artistic practices have strengthened the sense of unity within human communities, and a wealth of cultural meanings has been embedded in these art forms. Dissanayeke claims also that the sensibility to recognize rhythmic movement and the ability to respond to it are among the most basic human abilities, and that developing these abilities through participating and practicing art is crucial for human well being. (Dissanayeke 1997, 1–2)

An aesthetic quality that fascinates me especially in play is excitement.

Huizinga describes excitement as uncertainty and chance. It is present in all forms of play. Excitement is interesting in that it brings together order and chance: in play, order and rules exist, but still, the outcome of the play is not known beforehand. That would spoil the play; there must be the element of surprise, but the surprise must not follow from breaking rules. Breaking rules means that the play is over, and the spell and illusion are gone. The rules of play do not dictate the outcome; they ensure that the outcome is not known or agreed ahead. (Huizinga 1984, 20)

Further proving his case about play as an element of human culture, Huizinga connects play and art together. For him, art forms involving rhythm and harmony are closest to the inherent nature of play. He mentions poetry, music and dance, reminding that in Greek culture music included dance, and that the Greek word for music, *moysiké*, it actually included all arts and skills that Apollon and his muses governed. These were opposed to plastic and mechanic arts and skills; *moysiké* did not bear the weight of truth or utility, and brought neither harm nor danger to anyone. The muses were practiced because of the "higher satisfaction" and pleasure they brought, but also for the virtue and morality they educated towards. The recreation of mind through the arts was an ethically and morally justified way to enjoy life. Using leisure time in noble ways and purposes was the basis for Greek education and civilization. (Huizinga 1984, 185)

In his recent study on drama education, Hannu Heikkinen (2002) interestingly applies Huizinga's theory to drama education. In the field of drama and theatre the idea of playfulness, or the relationship between art and play seems to be as valid as in the field of dance. I will return to his study shortly, in the closing of this chapter. For now, I will finish this discussion by summarizing Huizinga's reasoning concerning music and dance. He states that music and dance practically always stay within the limits of play. He is concerned, however, that some newer forms of dance are beginning to lose their play character; that he views as a sign of loosening and impoverishing of culture. But basically, he claims, play and dance belong together:

That play and dance belong together, there is no problem. The affinity is so obvious and certain that no detailed explanation is needed. The relationship of dance and play is not such that dance would include something of play, but dance forms a part of play; there prevails an identity of being. Dance is a special and very perfect form of play. (1984, 189, my translation)

For me, dance has always been associated with playfulness. As a child, I made up dances the same way I made up stories, drawings and plays together with my friends. Transformation happened as easily as breathing. Later, in my early years as a dance teacher I made up dances for my students with the same attitude, with playfulness. I was never concerned about these dances belonging to the realm of art. Making them was fun and rather easy, and ideas followed each other in a continuous stream.

It was easy for me to make up dances with children and amateur dancers. I remember the first occasion when I choreographed for professional dancers. I was nervous and tense, and nothing seemed to work. I overcame these feelings, but remember them clearly. Oddly enough, the same feelings occurred during my choreography studies at UCLA. Careful analysis of each movement made me very conscious about my skills as a choreographer, and I partly lost the spontaneity of my choreographic imagination. Ideas stopped flowing in my mind. I am extremely glad that the flowing of images reappeared later. I can hardly imagine an existence without them.

All this makes me wonder about the nature of art for me. This contemplation is significant; a personal conception of art is foundational for my work as an art educator. Articulating my conception about art should not and does not negate the value of any other conception of art. To reiterate, the following discussion is not meant to state that this conception is the only right one for art educators, even for those dance teachers who wish to teach dialogically. The following is simply testimony of my personal life history and my personality. However, I will substantiate my own conception of art by revealing some roots of my conception; I do this in order to tie together the main ideas about the importance of dialogue in art education. Although my conception of art may seem to collide with mainstream Western conceptions of art, I do not attempt to tie this discussion with various definitions of art (this would, of course be a task that would easily take a whole study). As such, this presentation remains at a personal, non-scholarly level in relation to theories of art.

Encountering Native American culture during my study years in the United States made a deep impact on me. Not that it started something new in my development, but it made me understand what art means to me, and why I so often have felt a stranger in the professional world of art. Jamake Highwater's *The primal mind: Vision and reality in Indian America* was a textbook on one of the choreography courses I took (here I must give merit my dear teacher, Martha

Kalman, whose course this was). Reading this book helped me understand my own relationship to art. Highwater writes:

The Indian does not make the separation into personal as contrasted with impersonal in the Western sense at all. What he seems to be interested in is the whole question of existence and reality; and everything that is perceived by the senses, thought of, felt, and dreamed of, truly exists for him . . . as *inseparable* aspects of the real. (1981, 56)

He goes on to explain what art for an Indian is: "Art is a way of *seeing*, and what we see in art helps to define what we understand by the word "reality." We do not all see the same things" (1981, 58). According to Highwater the process by which the act of seeing is transformed into a vision of the world, in other words the act of envisioning and engendering a work of art, is complex and powerful:

Making images is one of the central ways by which humankind ritualizes experience and gains personal and tribal access to the ineffable . . . the unspeakable and ultimate substance of reality. (1981, 58)

Thus, "an image is a visual counterpart of that reality" (1981, 56). Highwater explains that this process of envisioning involves pure vision and intense awareness of things become manifested through art. For primal people, this process is spontaneous and direct, a part of their life, so that they do not usually possess a word for art. In Western culture, says Highwater,

The "conceptualizing" of art into something special called "Art" produced a wide separation between commonplace experience and specialized forms of expression. (1981, 55)

Although I respect art as a domain of human endeavor in its own right and do not wish to erase the word *art* from our language, I do share a lot with Highwater. Even when art is separated from life and ritual, and made an object to spectate on stage, I long for personal meaning in art. I long for resonance; I long for humanity, something to relate to. Skill, mastery and form are important but meaningless to me when connection to human life is lacking. Anyone who is willing to view art as a detached object can do so; for me art making and viewing is a moment of encounter or transformation. As Buber says,

The essential deed of art determines the process whereby the form becomes a work. That which confronts me is fulfilled through the encounter through which it enters into the world of things . . . (1937/1970, 65)

It is beginning to make more sense to me how I have been drawn into Buber's writings. He speaks of about a similar process than Highwater, and both of them seem to me, describe the kind of process of images flowing into my mind as a constant stream, as I have experienced as the origin of my creative work. Buber says,

This is the eternal origin of art that a human being confronts a form that wants to become a work through him. Not a figment of his soul but something that appears to the soul and demands the soul's creative power. (1937/1970, 60)

Thus, I see that the origin of a work of art is a gift that I receive from the world. It is not something that I create. Buber speaks of a form that we confront, whereas Highwater speaks of an image. To me they are tantamount. What is needed then, says Buber, is "a deed that a man does with his whole being: if he commits it and speaks with his whole being the basic word to the form that appears, then the creative power is released and the work comes into being" (1937/1970, 60). This encounter is dialogical, it is saying You to the form that man encounters. This encounter and deed that follows it involves risk:

[The] basic word can only be spoken with one's whole being; whoever commits himself may not hold back part of himself . . . if I do not serve it properly, it breaks, or it breaks me . . . The form that confronts me I cannot experience nor describe; I can only actualize it. And yet I see it . . . far more clearly than all clarity of the experienced world. (1937/1970, 60-61)

This explains to me why conscious deliberation while creating has felt difficult to me. To me choreographing is an act of faith; it is a dialogical event that cannot be forced.

Above, Buber also speaks about seeing. For him seeing is something other than observing, very much like Highwater thinks. Buber has also written about the difference between observing, looking on and on becoming aware. To observe is to probe and "write up" the observed that consists of traits. The observer intends to notice as many traits as possible, and to infer things about the object

according to the traits; it is known what lies behind the traits. (Buber 1947, 8)

The onlooker does not intend, instead "he takes up the position which lets him see the object freely, and undisturbed awaits what will be presented to him . . . he lets himself go, he is not the least afraid of forgetting something" (Buber 1947, 9). The onlooker is not interested in traits and gives no tasks to his memory. According to Buber, all great artists have been onlookers. Compared to the observer, he has a similar orientation: he has a position, a desire to perceive an object separated from themselves and their personal life. Neither observer nor onlooker need to act on basis of what they see, but "the whole is given over to the aloof field of aesthesis" (Buber 1947, 9).

But, according to Buber, there is a perception of a different kind. He explains:

It is a different matter when . . . a man meets me about whom there is something, which I cannot grasp in any objective way at all . . . But it means, says something *to me*, addresses something to me, speaks something that enters my own life. (1947, 9)

The effect of this kind of perception is completely different from the effect of observing or on-looking:

I cannot depict or denote or describe the man in whom, through whom, something has been said to me. Where I attempt it, that would be the end of saying. This man is not my object; I have got to do with him. (1947, 10)

Buber names this way of perception as becoming aware, and explains that "it by no means needs to be a man of whom I become aware. It can be an animal, a plant, a stone" (1947, 10). He finally connects becoming aware to dialogue:

The limits of the possibility of dialogue are the limits of awareness. (1947, 10)

Becoming aware denotes dialogical life. It does not matter whether it is in relation to children in an educational context, or to one's own body, senses or images in dancing or choreographing, or, to ideas and thoughts in doing research. The basis premise remains: an I-You relationship is one of becoming aware, not of observing or on-looking. Indeed, becoming aware is also my methodological foundation in this present work. This work evolves as I am

entwined with it; its form reveals itself to me gradually, sometimes painfully, but often with joy.

Highwater also speaks about awareness: he, akin to Buber, explains that primal awareness, or pure vision, is not achieved by observation, which he names as a Western way of seeing, but by transformation. He says that American Indians

. . . look at reality in a way that makes it possible for them to know something by temporarily turning into it. (1981, 61)

The question here is about transformation as a process by which primal people become aware of things. Highwater goes on:

An image is not a deliberately puzzling sign that points to something else. It means what it is. And to share in its meaning we must become the painting we are seeing, for that is the creative aspect of vision; just as the painter is necessarily transformed into what he is painting by the very process of making images. (1981, 64)

Transformation, as arduous and complex process as it is, is a way of life for American Indians; it is "an effervescence of living" that Westerners, according to Highwater, call "the creative process" (1981, 64–65).

Buber, keen to understand the primal mind, stays humble before this realm, accepting that "even if we would fully understand the life of the primitive, it would be no more than a metaphor for that of the truly primal man" (1937/1970, 76). He goes on to search for the natural reality of the I-You relationship through children, starting out by stating that prenatal life of a child is pure natural association, a bodily reciprocity. Longing towards unity, says Buber, is based on this association. As the human child gradually detaches itself from the bodily mother to enter a personal life he has to make it a reality for himself: "He gains his world by seeing, listening, feeling, forming" (1937/1970, 77). Buber says,

No thing is a component of experience or reveals itself except through the reciprocal force of confrontation. Like primitives, the child lives between sleep and sleep . . . in the lightning and counter-lightning of encounter. The innateness of the longing for relation is apparent even in the earliest and dimmest stage. (1937/1970, 77)

Buber describes how a child glances into the space and projects his hands softly and aimlessly to all appearances, reaching into empty air towards the indefinite, and how these glances will “eventually, after many trials, come to rest upon a red wallpaper arabesque and not leave it until the soul of red has opened up to them,” or how he motions toward a shaggy teddybear in a way that it eventually apprehends “lovingly and unforgettably a complete body” (1937/1970, 79). Here it is not a question of experiencing an object, but of confronting an active, living being that confronts him. Buber explains that even a non-living thing becomes alive through imagination, imagination meaning to Buber “a drive to turn everything into a You . . . where it does not find a living, active being that confronts it but only an image or symbol of that, it supplies the living activity from its own fullness” (1937/1970, 78).

This way, the longing for relation is primary: “In the beginning is the relation . . . *the innate You*” (Buber 1937/1970, 79) that manifests itself as a drive for contact. The drive aims at tender reciprocity, and is the basis for an inventive drive that emerges later.

The development of the child’s soul is connected indissolubly with his craving for the You, with the fulfillments and disappointments of this craving, with the play of his experiments and his tragic seriousness when he feels at a total loss. (1937/1970, 79)

Highwater also speaks of children; he sees them as capable of visioning, relating to “the other.” The visionary apprehension of the other is the basis for the capacity for otherness. Highwater claims that this capacity cannot be supplanted by education and refinement of the world. He says:

Without a grasp of the *essential heterogeneity of being* we commit ourselves to solitary confinement . . . There can be nothing more horrifying for the victors of the Western world than to discover that they have won everything and in the process lost themselves. By methodically divesting their children of the capacity of vision they have forfeited the ability to see anybody but themselves. (1981, 12–13)

The organic nature of play resembles the way primitive people make art as a part of their everyday life. Art is for them a manifestation of life, as play is for children. This is how I think play and imagination are intertwined in art. To me

art is an expression of life. It belongs to a human life. This is the premise on which I teach art and dance. In my thinking, professional art is just an extension of the same force to create and imagine that we all possess. Thus, I do not share the idea of artists as a special group of people. Even less do I believe that only another artist can detect the potential for becoming an artist in another person. I must believe that there is a potential artist in every student that I encounter.

This kind of conception of art is not totally out of place in the field of aesthetics and art theory. Paul Crowther (1993, 205) has formulated an ecological definition of art. His theory is based on the premise that aesthetic experiences play an important role in harmonizing the "basic ontological reciprocity" between human beings and the world. To me, this idea of ontological reciprocity seems very akin to Buber's view of the essential nature of dialogue for human beings. Moreover, Crowther claims that the aesthetic domain answers the needs of self-consciousness:

By so doing it enables the embodied subject to engage with his or her essence at the level of perception. In this way self-consciousness intersects with itself in the fullest sense. Its ontological reciprocity with the world is complete but not rigid. It is a free-belonging. (Crowther 1993, 205)

Crowther presents still another point related to this ecological definition of art that resonates in me. He speaks of "passive consumer sensibility" that sees art as just one set of pleasures amongst others. He claims that,

The ecological definition of art rehumanizes these pleasures by showing them to have an intrinsic connection with the needs of self-consciousness . . . Our inherence in the aesthetic domain is part of our full definition as human beings. (1993, 206)

Art and art education mean to me, thus, fulfilling our lives as human beings and treasuring our capacity to play and imagine. To me it is essential to be extremely careful in not crushing dreams, hopes and images while helping the students refine the tools and forms of their creative expression.

I was curious to find out what these children thought about art in relation to what we did. After the whole project was over, I asked the children if they thought our performance was art or not. No one said that it was not art. Nathan, for instance said that,

In my opinion it is art ... since all this went, clothes and ... yes, almost all of it, the whole thing was art.⁸⁵

Ulla based her opinion about our performance being art in the following way:

Not really anyone else could right away do anything like that.⁸⁶

In Ulla's view there seems to be an aspect of knowing how to, or being able to, in relationship to art; she seems to refer to a skill to produce something new. Zachary, who was a little bit more hesitant to claim that the performance was art, seemed also to connect skill and art, but in a slightly different sense. He said that it was "maybe" art, and added,

Although we did not all know how it ... if you remember that how it is done, remember something by heart ... so that how it happens, that part it is somehow nice to know how to.⁸⁷

Still another viewpoint was an audience viewpoint. Patrick said that it would be better to ask someone else, someone who saw the performance.

Despite their limited encounters with art, these children seemed to have a hunch about the concept of art; a hunch that I earlier illuminated in a form of a poem (see p. 225). Much more space and exposure, I think, would be necessary for them to reconnect play, imagination and art in a way that would truly make a difference for them. Herein comes the political message of my work. I have noticed symptoms of a sort of 'cultural deprivation' in these children and in so many other children in our society. I consider this deprivation a kind of oppression since it prevents children from exercising all their faculties and thus, becoming more fully human (Freire 1972, 51). Most children of my project class had never been to a theatre, and they connected the word "art" mostly to paintings and museums. Possibilities to develop and use their imagination and creativity in school and during their free time seemed quite limited. I am convinced that this kind of deprivation prevents children from becoming the

⁸⁵ Must se on taidetta . . . ku kaikki nää meni, vaatteet ja...joo, melkein kokonaan, koko juttu oli taidetta.

⁸⁶ Ei kyl kukaan muu osais heti tehdä tommosta.

⁸⁷ Vaikkei kaikki kyl osattu . . . jos sen muistaa et miten ne teht[iin], muistaa ulkoont jotain . . . niin et miten tapahtuu, niin se kohta on jotenki kiva osata.

kind of persons they would want to become. Moreover, I am convinced that the desire to create and the desire to relate to others need to be treasured jointly. Our educational system seems to negate both desires.

This exploration into the indispensable nature of play, imagination and art for human life makes me question why Western art and art education, and education itself, have become so serious. I share Huizinga's concern of the lack of play in dance and art that I mentioned above (see p. 252). Instead of play there is work, and instead of imagination there is reason. Instead of relation there is separation. It seems like life itself is becoming more of an ordeal.

Heikkilä (2002) offers an interesting idea for resolving the tension between work and play. Based on Huizinga's philosophy, he speaks about serious playfulness in drama education:

. . . playful can also be seen as a serious mode of human behaviour. Playfulness is about culture and about creating a culture. In that sense it is serious. (2002, 147–148)

Heikkilä proposes that drama education can open up new ways of meaning making through an active, co-operative and democratic process, and that,

It can bring alive cultural heritage through imagination . . . Drama education's aim is to deepen students' understanding of cultural and social traditions and increase their understanding of others, themselves and the world around them. (2002, 151)

Furthermore, he hopes that drama education would promote reflection and give validity to different viewpoints, and thus, help to develop a sense of community and encourage multiple interpretations (2002, 151). These ideas seem consistent with the themes of my work and make me more confident about the essential quality of playfulness for dance education, and for that matter, for all education, and life. Being playful does not mean being lighthearted or frivolous. It is possible to be playful and serious simultaneously; to play seriously is a question of ethics.

According to Heikkilä play and drama bring about the kind of seriousness that can hardly be reached by discussion. He explains that ethics belongs to serious play; it emerges out of the choices that are possible to make in fiction, but impossible to make in real life. In all, Heikkilä claims, serious playfulness

has to do with laying grounds for a good life. (2002, 68–69)

Thus, playfulness can be seen in a different light. Instead of relaxation, recreation or recovery from work, it can be seen to be the core of meaningful learning and meaningful life. Similarly, also “fun” can be assigned a new, wider meaning instead of “entertaining” or “amusing.” As an antonym for “boring”, it can be thought of as not-boring: absorbing, intriguing and captivating. Activities that bring about this kind of qualities can perhaps be seen as having personal meaning and thus, can arouse a feeling that may be related to a sense of agency.

The seriousness of play lies in its deep significance for human beings in creating a culture. Serious playfulness is a necessity for human life: without play, a celebration of life, human culture would perish. Maybe children’s peer culture should be considered from this viewpoint. Seemingly about recuperation and fun, peer culture, in its joyous appearance, could be a quite serious issue for preserving and reproducing human culture. Maybe children’s culture is more significant than many adults believe; lack of recognition for children’s culture might bring about a deterioration of human culture.

Returning now to the sphere of dance and its significance to human culture, I once again cite Highwater. For him, primal life illuminates the significance of joy in life, and how dance is an expression of joy:

. . . motion is the most important and pervasive means by which primal peoples celebrate living. (1981, 133)

He explains how and why bodily movement is so fundamental by referring to physiological facts about the senses: how the organs of perception are the means by which we experience the world. He speaks about how the sense of balance and rotation, and the kinesthetic sense, serve a practical function, but for primal people they also serve another function:

Every sentient state expresses itself in movements that are not necessarily utilitarian or representational, but that nevertheless reflect the specific quality of the ideas and feelings that cause them . . . In its most fundamental form this spontaneous link between sentience and movement is called dance – a direct, nonverbal, unreasoned assertion of ideas and sentience expressed in forms of motion. (Highwater 1981, 137)

Earlier, in "Contemplating sensing" (p. 93), and in other pages after that, I have reflected on this very idea. For me, living with this connection between sentience, i.e. awareness, and movement is the basis of my existence. As I wrote in the very beginning of this work, I do not know how it has become so essential for me; nevertheless, it has guided the path of my life, my self-actualization. And it guides me in my teaching work. Leading my students towards this connection is a mission for me.

I also asked the children if they thought that our performance was dance or not. Only some of them thought that it was dance. Most seemed puzzled about the question; as they had difficulties in talking about art, they seemed lost in talking about dance, as well. Some tried to use movement words, like turning and jumping to describe what it was; Fred said that it was making tricks or acrobatics. Kia said it was in a way dance, because there were dance movements in it. Olivia thought that this performance was not dance because "there was no dancing, it was all the time movement."⁸⁸

Elisa was along same lines, but she tried to grasp the difficult relationship to music:

It was like music but it was not such, we played like very by ourselves music ... this was like first of all movement and movement something, I don't know.⁸⁹

Nathan thought that some parts of the performance felt like dance, but could not explain why or how. He said that "somehow I felt it as dance."⁹⁰ Tiina mentioned also this feeling aspect, although for her "it did not very much feel like dance."⁹¹

As most children searched for words to say this was other than movement but still not dance, Belinda seemed to have a clearer view about why this was not dance. She said that "it was such different, it was a little bit better than dance."⁹² When I asked how, she replied,

⁸⁸ siin ei tanssittu vaan oli koko aika liikuntaa.

⁸⁹ Oli se niinku musiikki mut ei ollu semmosta, me soitettiin niinku ihan ite musiikkia ... se oli niinku ensinnäki liikuntaa ja liikuntaa jotai, emmä tiedä.

⁹⁰ jotenki mä tunsin sen tanssina.

⁹¹ ei se kauheesti tuntunu tanssilta.

⁹² se oli tämmöstä eril... se oli vähä parempi ku tanssi.

Well, that the others did not know anything about these movements and they saw different kinds, different movements ... they look really peculiar.⁹³

One possible interpretation for all this could be that the children had a vague conception of dance, a conception that includes predetermined steps and movements that are performed to a certain kind of music. They had seen some dancing in TV; no one remembered ever having seen a live dance performance. Their own movement, one might say, sentient movement, was not dance for them; on the other hand they did not know what it was. They could not find a word for that kind of movement. Clearly, this kind of movement was new and strange for them. In their lives, dance and art were very distant phenomena, almost non-existing. I cannot help drawing a connection to Bond (1994b, 15) where she describes children with dual sensory impairments as having minimal access to culture and no exposure to dance culture. I wonder how it is possible that children in my study, with normal sensory faculties, can be so limited in terms of verbalizing about art and dance. They, indeed, seem to lack the experience that would support the development of related concepts and language (see Damasio 1999).

It has been striking to me how difficult this task of bringing sentience and movement together is and how early in the lives of children the connection can become lost. Not only the connection between sentience and movement, but also between imagination and reality, between I and You. The innate longing towards relation must be there, but the drive has lost its power. But the way it manifests itself, even now, is play. Longing for play, for me, expresses the children's longing towards relation, towards community, towards excitement, beauty and joy; towards life.

⁹³ No et se toiset eivät tienneet näistä liikkeistä mitään ja ne näki erilaisii, eri liikkeitä . . . ne näyttävät ihan erikoisilta.

The land of dialogue looms in the horizon: Deconstructing what it means to be a teacher

Exposing my pedagogical practice to a critical review has been a meaningful growth process for me. Writing out the actions and reflections that usually are kept private, and often, I believe, not brought even to teachers' own consciousness, has demanded some courage. Looking at one's own teaching and reading afterwards one's own reflections is sometimes difficult even as a private practice; disclosing all of this in a dissertation, as a public document, makes me feel bare and undisguised. It is a humble and noble feeling at the same time.

Why do I feel bare? Careful scrutiny onto my teaching practice has resulted in stripping off signs that denote "being a teacher" that are not indispensable for being a teacher. Following Lather (1991), what I have done can be identified as deconstructive inquiry. This kind of inquiry aims at demystifying the realities that we create and fighting the tendency of our categories to congeal. Deconstructive inquiry, widely practiced in literature and in art criticism, has begun to affect research in human sciences, as well. (Lather 1991, 156)

The question here is about a shift in thinking about what it means to know, about the politics of knowing and being known, about knowledge as contested and partial, shaped by the interplay of language, power and meaning. Objective reason, created during the era of Enlightenment and hailed by positivism, is being displaced by political and historical reason. (Lather 1991, 153)

Deconstructive inquiry simultaneously uses and challenges dominant meaning systems so that their partiality is revealed; while refusing to create new categories, definitions or "master narratives" that would replace the old ones, deconstruction can be seen as a "way of thinking about how we think" (Lather 1991, 154). Accepting that interpretations of our life experiences are regulated by language laden with historical conditions of meaning helps us see how our knowing and understanding are bound to the categories of language. It makes it possible to be more aware about the "power-saturated discourses that monitor and normalize our sense of who we are and what is possible" (Lather 1991, 164).

The problem in this stance is how to discuss, describe or interpret something without making it an object, without dominating the process. Lather claims that this demands self-reflexivity: looking closely at our own practice of contributing to dominance. These strategies of displacement are grounded in

deconstruction. Deconstruction challenges us to think about the danger of what is powerful and useful; to keep things in process by disrupting, by questioning, by providing “a corrective moment, a safeguard against dogmatism, a continual displacement” (Lather 1991, 156). These self-reflexive practices help us attend to the politics of what we do and do not do. Asking ourselves questions like who is speaking for whom, who is being looked at (“the politics of gaze”), how do we write ourselves into our texts and how can we decenter the author via polyvocality, aim towards textual self-consciousness and breaking of methodological silences. (Lather 1991, 164)

What is at stake here is thus transforming the relations of dominance and generating less oppressive ways of knowing. Deconstructive inquiry can lead to a more accurate self-understanding as knowers and as human beings being known about. Never-ending self-critique that these kind of practices entail, can be difficult to bear with and sometimes even paralyzing, but according to Lather (1991, 166) they offer hope for developing more effective social change practices.

I now see my former pedagogical practice, despite my early intentions to be a different teacher, as shaped by historical conceptions of what teaching is and what is a good teacher. These conceptions, formulated and mediated through language, have affected my thinking and my action as a teacher. By looking at my own pedagogical practice it seems possible to claim that certain values, ideas and a way of thinking are concealed in educational practice and discourse without us really knowing why we think the way we do. This seems a valid claim at least in my case.

Paulo Freire is probably one of the first educational radicals who truly questioned the justification of this order. Having experienced life from both middle class and working class perspective, he developed an aversion to a patronizing attitude from one human being towards another. This attitude was present in the teacher-student relationship that he named “banking education.” For Freire, the following attitudes and practices of banking education are a mirror of oppressive society:

1. The teacher teaches and the students are taught.
2. The teacher knows everything and the students know nothing.
3. The teacher thinks and the students are thought about.
4. The teacher talks and the students listen – meekly.
5. The teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined.

6. The teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply.
7. The teacher acts and the students have the illusion of action through the action of the teacher.
8. The teacher chooses the programme content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it.
9. The teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his own professional authority, which he sets in opposition to the freedom of students.
10. The teacher is the subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects. (Freire 1972, 46–47)

In addition, Freire claims, teachers talk about reality as static and predictable and choose topics that are alien to the students' experience, detached from their reality and thus incapable of becoming significant for them. He describes such education as depositing, the teacher being the depositor and the students, depositories. The action left for the students is limited to receiving, filing, and storing the deposits. (Freire 1972, 46)

In Freire's description of banking education I recognize many characteristics of the way I was taught in school, the way I was taught dance and music. I also recognize some practices, values or ideas that I learned – or was supposed to learn – when studying education. I recognize these values and ideas present in today's educational climate in Finland, for instance in my own children's school, and in the pedagogical practice present in Meri-Rastila elementary school, where this study took place. It strikes me that despite decades of educational discussion and research, so little has changed.

The traces of "banking education" were even detectable in my teaching at Meri-Rastila, especially during the first year to the project. Viewing the video-tapes and reflecting on what I saw afterwards, I wrote,

This is very typical creative dance methodology: I had planned a series of activities, and smooth transfers so that the children do not have a change to get distracted, I held the control although the activity itself gives certain freedom and even initiative.

This is the first critical point that I made about my own teaching. Viewing more, my eyes opened to see more and more traditional teaching practices. I made notes like this:

I was talking over the class: by this I mean a sort of hollering, a tense, quite loud tone of voice . . . It must have felt unpleasant and authoritarian for the children. It created an authoritarian atmosphere, from my point of view. Maybe the children were so used to being hollered at that they did not even notice me doing it.

Here, disclosing whose point of view I am writing about is important: I am trying to be careful not to impose ideas, feelings or experiences onto others. When speaking for myself, it was crucial to reach my authentic experience and response relating to the situation. This was possible, to some extent, by refraining from excess reasoning: as I viewed the videotapes, I wrote down my impressions and thoughts as they occurred to me. I have not altered the content of these reflections afterwards. (When I translated them from Finnish to English, I have, though, made the necessary editing for grammatical correctness, and thus, have, changed, for exaple, word orders.)

My attention was focused a lot on something that I started calling "teacherliness." Teacherliness implies to always knowing what to do, telling others what to do, having structured plans and using class time efficiently. It is a certain tone of voice: a sharper, louder, maybe even commanding tone; it is a body attitude that denotes being in control, on top of things. I noticed myself working in teacher-directed ways and leading typical "model" creative dance classes. Looking more carefully into "teacherliness" I have found that it has distinct values embedded in it: security, stability, control and hierarchy. It implies that knowledge is cumulative over time, and that the teacher is the one who is supposed to know. I reflected on these issues in the chapter about time and freedom (see p. 144).

Freire insists on a resolution of this traditional teacher-student contradiction; instead of being "the-one-who-teaches," the "teacher-of-the-students" turns into a teacher-student, and "the-students-of-the-teacher" become student-teachers. For Freire, both are jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. He says that "men teach each other, mediated by the world" (1972, 53), and that in banking education students are targets of "paternalistic social action apparatus" that aims at adapting to their life situation, not changing it. Thus they are more easily dominated and managed. By domesticating their capacity for intentionality and consciousness, their vocation of becoming more fully human is being denied. (1972, 51) According to Freire,

The teacher cannot think for his students, nor can he impose his thought on them. Authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned about *reality*, does not take place in ivory-tower isolation, but only in communication. If it is true that thought has meaning only when generated by action upon the world, the subordination of students to teachers becomes impossible. (Freire 1972, 50)

As I continued reflecting critically on my teaching, I started to see how my actions repressed possibilities for communication, for dialogue. For example, I wrote,

Here I could have asked the children how we could solve the problem . . . probably the children would have come up with a better idea to start with. Now, the result was a moment of no dialogue at all, when I one-sidedly used my position as a teacher to tell the children what to do. Why could they not be in the same group with their friends? And, how could I know WHY they wanted to change places if I didn't ask them?

I also started questioning the aims and contents of my teaching. The starting point for the project was not the children's needs; nor was starting this project a mutual decision by the entire school community. The original idea came from above, and the teachers were most likely quite easily persuaded about the importance of this project. I joined the project following my own interests, and I was coupled with this particular class and teacher by chance; the basis for this choice was that Anita was interested in dance herself. As I stated in the beginning, I discussed and formulated the aims of my teaching together with Anita. At no point had the children been asked what they would like to learn, what their interests or needs were. I became increasingly uneasy about the aims and contents relating to my part of the project:

Which is more important, to offer the children a chance to move spontaneously and to be together in a manner that seems to come easily from them, or set goals for them from above? I believe that they (the goals) are for the good of the children, but how much can come out from the children themselves – if they are given time and space for interaction?

As I encountered the children's world more "dialogically" than before – wondering it, letting it enclose itself to me, I started taking part in their world and trying to make sense of it:

I am trying to make sense out of this way of being in the world. They seem to be happily immersed into the “web” of noise, movement and freedom. Nothing else than being there seems important. How much time there is to be?

I wondered what was more important for them, to have time and space for self-initiated activity, play and games, or help them gain more body awareness and control. On the one hand, they seemed to need space and time for self-initiated play; on the other hand they seemed desperately handicapped in mastering their own bodies. In the chapters on play (see p. 48) and on sensing and touching (see p. 93) I looked into these issues more carefully. As I realized I could not get into their bodies and into their experiences, I was left with so many questions:

How do they experience this? Is it important? Does the activity always have to be directed? What is the sense of community that rises from the children’s own subculture, and is created on their own terms? How do children experience adult directed sense of community – is it phony for them?

I also wondered about my preference for a calm and quiet atmosphere, whether I favored it for my own sake or for the children’s best interest, and problematized listening and silence (see p. 156). On the other hand it appeared to me that I was more tolerant of chaos and noise than Anita, for instance. Since the children did not seem so bothered about noise, I wondered the meaning of “work peace.”

The dialogical attitude that I was more and more inclined towards created a slow transformation in my teaching. In the videotapes I noticed moments of my being more like a “guide, or co-learner”, and the “teacherliness” fading away momentarily, although the “teacher in me jumped in” at many occasions often creating a feeling of haste and tension. Time-efficiency often led to quick resolutions instead of searching together, asking questions or suggesting.

Next, I was faced with the dilemma of choosing a theme for working. My naïve enthusiasm about the friendship theme caused a situation where dialogue could not happen. I had to realize that “manipulating the discussion is not dialogue.” I asked myself, “Why couldn’t we try to find a theme together?” and admitted to myself: “When I chose the friendship theme, I did not ask the children. It

could not have worked.” The idea of friendship seemed to be another adult conception that I took for granted (see p. 72).

Reiterating some of Freire’s ideas, the task of education is to ensure men authentic existence; inquiry and creative transformation are essential in this process (Freire 1972, 56–57). The content of education should be based on the things about which men want to know more, i.e. the content of education needs to be based on “significant themes” and thus, the starting point is students’ present, concrete life situation. Significant or “generative” themes are meaningful ideas, concepts, hopes, doubts, values and challenges; they are found from the students’ perception of their reality. (Freire 1972, 73–75, 81) Generative themes are embedded in human beings’ relationship with their world and thus, cannot be divorced from reality nor from human beings:

To investigate the generative theme is to investigate man’s thinking about reality and man’s action upon reality, which is his praxis. (Freire 1972, 78)

Themes are not static entities that exist out there; they occur. They cannot be understood apart from those concerned. Thematic investigation, thus, aims towards awareness of reality and self. Freire warns about shifting the focus of thematic investigation from total reality towards the people as objects. (Freire 1972, 78–80)

What I tried to do was to impose a theme over the children, a theme that I believed would be meaningful for everyone. As searching dialogue had made me more sensitive towards the children’s authentic interest, and as their authentic interest towards the friendship theme failed to manifest itself, I was ready to retreat. I felt that the theme, or my way of presenting it, appeared phony or not meaningful for them. The same thing happened during the discussions; I tried to manipulate the children into discussing more serious or “deep” issues, but did not succeed.

At this point, I became critical about Freirean critical pedagogy. As de-constructive inquiry entails, congealing any categories is dangerous. Critical pedagogy would so easily become another category, dogma, or master narrative. I have asked myself, whose interests are served by implementing critical pedagogy as a process involving rational, abstract thought and discussion? Is it in adults’ interest to make children to be more like them, more mature and

more intellectual? Still, the underlying premise of Freirean pedagogy, the respect for the students' life situation, their interests and needs, seems valid. But, if and when it appears that children are not truly excited about discussing such issues, I feel it is against the spirit of critical pedagogy to manipulate them into discussing topics that do not "catch fire" in them.

I discovered that my well-intentioned attempts of generating sophisticated discussion did not really catch fire. Instead, I encountered the children's world as it revealed itself to me. As I described in the discussion section (p. 202), sometimes the children were occupied with mundane life experiences like what they liked to eat, what was their favorite animal or color, and sometimes they revealed their dreams, hopes and fears to me. They told me about their secret stories and displayed even anger. During some classes and especially during waiting times, they moved, played, danced and interacted with each other and with me in ways that made me understand more about the state of their bodily existence and about their strong desire for movement and play. I was content to wonder about this irrational, wild, sometimes even crazy world that the children revealed to me, but then again, I wanted to understand that world better. This is how I became so involved with play and imagination; and by trying to grasp what play and imagination may be, I have begun to grasp how they are related to art.

Their world of play and imagination that I encountered seemed quite distant from the world of logic and reason. Encountering this world has made me re-think how we think about art. Art seems to be another congealed category, a myth that needs to be revealed. I attempted to tackle the myth, the thought-restricting category of art in the previous chapter (p. 248). It strikes me now that the world of play and imagination itself necessitates the "breaking of the barriers" as Greene (1995, 14) suggests.

The children's world tempted me with its vividness. Every time it was created so that I could join it by attending it, with a sense of wonder, I felt present and alive. These moments of "their own type of dialogue, interaction on their own terms," appeared already during the first year. I wrote: "They were in their own world, which I did not quite understand." As the project went on, these moments occurred more often, and made me question even more the adult perspective in structuring "learning units," or educational aims and contents. So, teaching became to me more and more something that Greene describes as openings and possibilities instead of prescriptions and aims (1995, 15).

The second year brought a shift in my teaching. The origin of this shift must be in a slow transformation that reflecting the meaning of dialogue brought about; I did not view any videotapes during the summer. All viewing happened after the project was over. The transformation *during* the project happened on a less conscious level than the deconstructive phase that I have been involved with *after* the project. I take the deconstructive phase to start from the point when I started viewing the videotapes and reflecting on them.

The shift was clear in my use of time and voice. My teaching became less structured and less "pedagogical." I let go of strict plans and efficient use of time. This resulted in a more casual and relaxed body attitude and voice. "Teacherliness" faded away despite of the many hardships that the project faced: new pupils, new classroom teacher and so on.

As our work started to evolve into "an entity" or something like "a piece," I continued to question: "What is important here after all?" Again, my ideas, presented in a more dialogical manner, were not always greeted with enthusiasm. I wrote in my journal:

I have an indulging feeling. The group is stronger than me. I am not an authority. But I am something, I guess. A negotiating partner . . . is democracy possible? Voluntariness with certain limits?

There were incidents when a child took a lead, or initiative. Once, for instance,

Nathan took the lead, from a dialogical moment grew out a situation, where a child took over the initiation and power in the class. He used power in a democratic, constructive way. I have no problem with this. I liked my new idea, but this was not the time for it. This is where I want my pupils to get: shared power, meaningful conversation, negotiating skills.

I had feelings of powerlessness on the other hand, but growing trust on the process on the other. I also started to sense a feeling of community, and was usually able to "sustain being myself."

As the problems regarding the whole project and the question about whether we would make a performance or not were at their peak, I fought with myself in trying to be a "person to them rather than an authority." Questions of trust and respect surfaced, and I was in a quite deep crisis with my approach. Not yet understanding the larger picture and all possible reasons behind the problems, I

somehow managed not to submerge. The question, should I at that point have restored some of my skills as a more traditional teacher, was left unanswered. I refused authority, and expected respect. I also insisted on sustaining respectful relationship towards the children even when I felt hurt. This probably could not have succeeded without a sense of self-respect and self-confidence that I felt towards myself. Coupled with "sensitivity towards others' different experiences," a belief that I am worthy of others' respect is essential, I think, in building a dialogical relationship. Whether a teacher can build her work on respect instead on fear of authority was another meaningful question for me (see p. 234).

In the very last phase of the project I did, however, take a more leading position. Most problems were already then resolved; we were together creating a performance. During this last phase I, and (as far as I can tell based on the children's accounts) many children were quite engaged in the process. I had let the children suggest changes to the dance, so that it was as meaningful and interesting for them as possible within the time frame we worked in.

Freire (1972, 91) insists that generative themes should not be approached rigidly. Additional themes may emerge during the process. He says,

If educational programming is dialogical, the teacher-students also have the right to participate by including themes not previously suggested . . . They may either facilitate the connection between two themes in the programme unit, filling a possible gap between the two; or they may illustrate the relations between general programme content and the view held by the people. (Freire 1972, 92)

After having made the changes to the choreography, everybody seemed to be able to "live with it." There were no more conflicts or disciplinary problems; my reflections flow without such incidents; we were just working together, almost as any working team. Here, I took a little bit different position in the group:

I was now more like a director again. It was not really dialogical, but not undialogical either. As the performance got closer, I became more clearly a leader.

I did not take this position consciously, the change evolved and I, at that stage of "climax," forgot that I was a teacher, and I my awareness about this project being "research" faded to the background. Did the end justify the means? Did I forget my intention, and justify my leading position by simply noting that "I think the children did not mind me being a leader?"

We most likely could have resolved many problems during the project by my taking this position more eagerly, and the children probably would have welcomed my being a leader more often. At that case, however, something significant may not have happened: sustaining a non-leading position over the difficult moments was important because this way the children's reality was revealed for me.

Liberatory education, according to Freire, involves a representation of the "thematic universe" that the students originally revealed. This representation happens through teamwork but is led by the teacher-student. Thus, explains Freire, the thematics that originated from the students become systematized and amplified, "not as contents to be deposited, but as problems to be solved" (Freire 1972, 94). Thus, liberatory, dialogical education entails responsible leadership from the part of the teacher-student.

Here I am also facing one of the most fascinating and challenging issues about this research project. As I am deconstructing my pedagogical practice, or *what it means to be a teacher*, I am concurrently questioning the differences between positions that in professional practices are generally classified as different. What I am speaking of here is, for instance, the position of a choreographer in comparison to the position of a teacher, or, the position of an artist in comparison to the position of a teacher.

In our everyday uses of language, these categories are used rigidly. I testify to this with a deep commitment, since I have on many occasions tried very hard to dissolve unnecessary categorizations in face-to-face discussions without succeeding even to make other people understand why I think they are unnecessary, let alone arrive at any shared understanding about this issue.

I suggest that this tendency to categorize professional practices belonging to the realm of art or pedagogy is one example of how dominant meaning systems effectively construct categories and frameworks that shape our thinking. Interestingly, resisting rigid categories and definitions by deconstructive inquiry does not lead to its opposite, which would be no categories. Deconstruction is movement across and within categories. Lather describes post-

modern, deconstructive inquiry as movements of contradictory practices which cross each other and give rise to something else, mixing old and new, re-configuring and intensifying modernism (1991, 154). To cite Lather:

To both confirm and complicate received codes is to see how language is inextricably bound to the social and the ideological. This moves social inquiry to new grounds, the grounds of discourse where the ways we talk and write are situated within social practices, the historical conditions of meaning, the positions from which texts are produced and received. (1991, 154)

Pursuing the question of my taking on a leader's position a little further takes me back to another issue, the issue of self-actualization, or becoming more fully human. Earlier, on page 152, I reflected on my youthful aspirations on being a choreographer, that being a place where I dwelled in my dreams; I felt that when I was choreographing I was able to actualize myself and use my faculties quite fully. Later, this inclination developed into a slightly different aspiration: I started to *resist telling others what to do*. This did not mean that I did not want to choreograph anymore, but that I wanted to do it differently. It became crucial for me that the process carries itself, that there is trust in the process and trust in each other.

So, on a small scale, I was deconstructing what it means to choreograph by asking, does choreographing consist of telling others what to do? The more I have thought about this question, the more I am assured that choreographing does not necessarily mean telling others what to do. Surely I am not alone in this line of thinking. In her artistic doctoral dissertation, Riitta Pasanen-Willberg (2000) discusses how a dialogical relationship between the choreographer and the dancers transforms the choreographic process. She writes,

I noticed that dance too often succumbed to practices influenced by a mechanistic conception of humankind. Accordingly, this meant that dancers and their bodies were regarded as instruments and as raw material for creating a choreography. (Pasanen-Willberg 2000, 255)

Pasanen-Willberg noticed that a dialogical relationship between the choreographer and the dancers opened up the work situation, but left their roles intact. Respecting the dancers' need for freedom and creative input in physical per-

formance through different methods related to dialogue, for example working with images, made her realize that dialogue does not necessarily mean that the dance is jointly created. For her, then,

. . . the conception of the choreographic process and its relation to the moulding of the dance became crystallized in the exchange of perceptions. Consequently, my view of dialogue in the choreographic process is that I, as the choreographer, have the ability to perceive the dancers' stances while they are dancing. (2000, 256)

Like Pasanen-Willberg bases her choreographic work on dialogue and thus, seems to recognize the dancers' need for "inquiry and creative transformation," borrowing Freire's words, I am intrigued to take this same question a little further by asking: ***Does teaching consist of telling others what to do?***

In the spirit of deconstruction, the question here is not about oppositions, or the idea that, in order to deconstruct, I would have to reverse things completely, and then fix that new position. What I am getting at here is a basic fundamental question about relationships to others, be it in a teacher-student relationship or choreographer-dancer relationship, or any other relationship: the question of telling others what to do, and moreover, what telling others what to do means for a dialogical relationship?

Turning now to Buber's ideas of dialogue, especially to his ideas about dialogue in education, I can pursue this issue even further. In his address on education, Buber (1947, 84) speaks about "creativity" as having taken on the meaning of "something dwelling to some extent in all men . . . needing only the right cultivation." Everyone is elementally endowed with the basic powers of the arts, art being the province where a faculty of production reaches completion. Buber claims that the starting point for this conception is an autonomous instinct, not derivable from any other instincts, that he calls the "originator instinct." He says:

Man, the child of man, wants to make things . . . What is important is that by one's own intensively experienced action something arises that was not there before. (Buber 1947, 85)

According to Buber this instinct never becomes greed, because it is not directed to "having" but only to "doing." Moreover, it can grow only to passion, not to lust, and it does not "snatch" the world to itself, but expresses it to the world.

(1947, 86) The way “educative forces” meet this instinct affects what becomes of it. Buber claims that,

An education based only on the training of the instinct of origination would prepare a new human solitariness which would be most painful of all. (1947, 87)

He admits that there is much that the child can learn only by “putting things together.” However, there is something that he cannot learn this way. Buber explains:

There are two forms, indispensable for the building of true human life, to which the originative instinct, left to itself, does not lead and cannot lead: to sharing in an undertaking and to entering into mutuality. (1947, 87)

Buber, then, distinguishes between an individual achievement and an undertaking by saying that by entering into an undertaking, where a human being practices community of work with other human beings, s/he ceases to follow the originative instinct alone. S/he now follows another strong instinct: the instinct for communion that is “the longing for the world to become present to us as a person, which chooses and recognizes us as we do it, which is confirmed in us as we in it” (Buber 1947, 88). The instinct for communion teaches us the saying of You. It teaches us the being of the world as a subject. The originator instinct teaches us about the world as an object. Thus, Buber claims, “as an originator man is solitary” (1947, 87).

Buber’s ideas of *originator instinct and instinct for communion* help me understand what I have been longing for in my being a learner of art, a teacher and a choreographer, not willing to tell others what to do. In all these human endeavors I have been looking for a *unity of these two instincts*.

I am not speaking on behalf of any one else but myself: those people, those artists, for example, who find satisfaction in solitary work or who are not preoccupied about how their work will be received by others, have every right to feel this way, and I have no problem with that. I am worried, however, what becomes of those human endeavors that involve actually working with other people, if such work is dominated by the originator instinct. Anything that has to do with education belongs to this realm; and clearly, creating a dance piece with human beings does too.

For me, teaching and choreographing, then, are essentially the same: in both I follow my originator instinct as well as my instinct for communion, and I want to give everyone in the group a chance to follow theirs. In neither case am I willing to base my work on telling others what to do; to be the sole leader. Both can involve moments of leading, however, taken that everyone else has a chance to take the lead, as well. In the case of this project, the moment of leading came in the very end, when the creative work was already done.

When it is possible to shift turns in leading, it is also possible that momentarily, our paths cross. This is what I reflected on page 199, where I contemplated the nature of imagination. It appeared to me that what I was hoping to happen in this project was a parallel search; that somewhere in space and time would become a mutual journey, when our paths cross.

Two questions remain to reflect on here. First, do people (children, students, dancers) usually want to be told what to do? Second, can there be dialogue if people are told what to do? Answering the first question thoroughly is a topic of a research in itself, a topic that I intend to tackle in my next study where I will be exploring whether liberatory pedagogy is called for in dance education. Now, I am able to only suggest something based on what I saw in the case of this particular class. It seemed that the children were somewhat reluctant in taking the lead (see p. 44 and p. 244). At least they were not used to suggesting activities. On the other hand, some children enjoyed having that chance. It is clear that different children thought about this very differently, depending on their life experiences and personalities. I tackled this question about growing into autonomy on p. 151 and on p. 235; citing Freire (1998b, 98), I tried to illuminate how growing into autonomy is a long process involving innumerable decisions and that children should have experiences that stimulate decision-making and responsibility.

If the answer to the first question was positive, it would be intriguing to ask, why people enjoy being told what to do. Is it because it is easier to live in this world this way? Is it because of the *burden of responsibility* that follows freedom? Is the fear of freedom actually fear of responsibility? Without yet knowing whether or not, or when people want to be told what to do, I'll contemplate the possibility of the positive answer with the help of Freire and Buber.

Freire (1972, 16) points out that fear of freedom originates from a desire to achieve security. As freedom leads to conscientization (i.e., critical consciousness), it threatens the status quo. For Freire, the oppressed fear freedom as

much as do the oppressors; this fear, in fact, makes the oppressed desire the role of the oppressors:

The oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom. Freedom would require them to eject this image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility. (Freire 1972, 23–24)

It thus, may be less troublesome and more secure to let others tell us what to do. On a smaller scale, I argue, many of us are oppressed because we fear what we would have to do if we would take on true reflection and act upon it. Security and status quo are comforting; we do not have to invent the world again each day. I admit that inventing the world each day would be tiresome. On the other hand, however, taking the world as fixed would nullify life. Freire, at 75 years of age, wrote:

The search for knowledge should never make us tired, and the acquisition of it should never make us immobile and satisfied . . . We are young or old to the extent that we tend to accept change or not as a sign of life, rather than embrace the *standstill* as a sign of death. (Freire 1998a, 72)

As ***freedom with responsibility*** is troublesome, ***freedom without responsibility*** may be more appealing. Buber (1947, 91) discloses the consequences of such freedom. He talks about the exaltation of freedom in a time when traditional bonds have become questionable and describes how freedom has been made an experiment or a program. He points out:

Let us realize the true meaning of being free of a bond: it means that a quite personal responsibility takes the place of one shared with many generations. Life lived in freedom is personal responsibility or it is a pathetic farce. (1947, 92)

What Buber calls empty freedom, is for Freire being falsely young:

People are being falsely young when they adopt an irresponsible attitude towards risk, when they take risks purely for the thrill of it. Risk only makes sense when it is taken for a valuable reason, ideal, a dream beyond risk itself. (1998a, 73)

It does not take much reckoning to reject the idea of empty freedom. Pursuing the idea of freedom with responsibility, then, leads me to look at the concept of responsibility. Why would responsibility be something to fear? Responsibility, for Buber, gives content to empty freedom, and turns life into a fulfillment, a dialogue. Buber explicates *responsibility as responding*:

The idea of responsibility is to be brought back from the province of specialized ethics, of an "ought" that swings free in the air, into that of lived life. Genuine responsibility exists only where there is real responding. (1947, 16)

He explains that responding means being attentive to what happens to us, what is seen, heard and felt, that provides us "content drawn from the world and from destiny" (1947, 16). Often we do not listen to the address that comes to us in thought, speech and action. Responsibility is "the kindling of the response . . . to the unexpectedly approaching speech" (1947, 92); speech denoting the content that is drawn from the world. This speech, according to Buber, "has no alphabet" and each sign is a new creation:

It will, then, be expected of the attentive man that he faces creation as it happens. It happens as speech, and not as speech rushing out over his head but as speech directed precisely at him. (1947, 16)

He does not mean that this speech would be something extraordinary and larger than life, it consists of events of the personal everyday life. If we venture to respond, says Buber, we enter "into the situation which has at this moment stepped up to us, whose appearance we did not and could not know, for its like has not yet been" (1947, 17). Then, says Buber, we are true to the moment and respond to it:

A newly-created concrete reality has been laid in our arms; we answer for it. A dog has looked at you, you answer for its glance, a child has clutched your hand, you answer for its touch, a host of men moves about you, you answer for their need. (1947, 17)

When we listen and respond to the speech, to the address that comes to us we enter the world of responsibility:

But if the word comes to us and the answer proceeds from us then human life exists, though brokenly, in the world. (Buber 1947, 92)

Freedom with responsibility, thus, leads us to relation, to dialogue. It may be challenging, and lead to a more arduous life.

It is difficult for me to see why people would consciously prefer doing what they are told to do. To me it seems that we like being told what to do because we do not yet see the other possibility. But, again, this is a question that remains unanswered, for now.

In every case, being free of traditional bonds must be replaced by taking on personal responsibility. Being free entails that we must carry the responsibility on our own shoulders instead of leaning onto something. Buber points out that freedom with responsibility also leads to more obligations:

To become free of a bond is a destiny; one carries that like a cross, not like a cockade. (1947, 92)

At the same time as traditional bonds are becoming more and more questionable and deteriorating, education, according to Buber, has to be transformed, as well:

As we “become free” this leaning on something is more and more denied to us, and our responsibility must become personal and solitary. (1947, 92–93)

Educators, then, face a dilemma: Is there anything other than personal responsibility to build education on? Stopping here, for a moment, to think about what deconstructive inquiry has revealed about the values on which education has long been based on, and about how our thinking is formulated and shaped by historical meanings that are mediated to us through language. To think about how we think is important here, in order to understand “who we are and what is possible” (Lather 1991, 164); or to break through barriers of expectation or predefinition, following Greene (1995, 14). For me this question

has been crucial all through my teaching career: Allowing my students to understand who they are and what is possible for them by breaking through barriers takes me back to my very original desire to support students' self-actualization.

I am now continuing to explore Buber's educational thinking in trying to comprehend the meaning of being a teacher. According to him the principle of education can be only a basic relation. In other words, the relation in education is based on the same instincts of any human relationships, that is, instincts to power and to love. Buber says that an instinct for love characterizes much of education today, as educators have lost the bonds of tradition and have become longing individuals, but in education these instincts must become transformed. Neither the will to power nor an instinct for love can constitute the educational attitude. Neither a desire to enjoy students nor to dominate them can be a principle of education.

A dialogical teacher then, cannot be interested in himself. He should not expect the students to love him. His need for love should be fulfilled elsewhere. Love of the educator for his students must be all-inclusive, not selective: "the glance of the educator accepts and receives them all" (Buber 1947, 94). It is the "living tact" of an educator that helps him regulate his relationships with his students from intimacy and distance, from giving to withholding. Buber sees education the following way:

In education, then, there is a lofty ascetism: an ascetism which rejoices in the world, for the sake of responsibility for a realm of life which is entrusted to us for our influence but not our interference. (1947, 95)

Buber explains that the transformation of the will to power and to love is a reversal of the direction of the instincts, that is "experiencing the other side," or *inclusion* (see p. 89). This reversal or transformation takes the relationship into a different place, and here, an instinct of inclusion takes the lead. As the instinct to power and to love are reversed into an inclusive power, the relations characterized by them become dialogical. The instinct then "enters into communion with the fellow-man and into responsibility for him as an allotted and entrusted realm of life" (1947, 98).

Through this discussion of inclusiveness, Buber then arrives at discussing dialogue, as he claims that the element of inclusion in a relationship makes

it dialogical (1947, 97). Buber continues writing that the element of inclusion constitutes the relation in education and that,

The relation in education is one of pure dialogue. (1947, 98)

But, in education the dialogical relationship is peculiar. Although the relation in education is based on inclusion, it cannot be mutually inclusive because of its' oneness, i.e., the student cannot experience the educating of the educator; if s/he would, the relationship would turn into friendship, as I described earlier (see p. 92). I will return to different forms of dialogical relationships once more in the next chapter.

The peculiar nature of educational relationship has generated different views about the possibility of genuine dialogue in education. For example, in his dissertation on dialogical education Veli-Matti Värri claims that dialogue in an educational relationship, even in parent-child relationship, can never be completely a mutual I-You relationship, because I-You relationships that imply a purpose or direction where one human being affects the other cannot be based on complete mutuality. Värri concludes that this is why educational relationships cannot be genuine I-You relationships. (Värri 1997, 91)

Freire discusses the much-doubted possibility of dialogue in education, as well. Many criticisms towards his work have pointed towards dialogue leveling teachers and students, making them alike. Freire denies this stance:

Dialogue between teachers and students does not place them on the same footing professionally; but it does mark the democratic position between them. Teachers and students are not identical . . . After all, it is a *difference* between them that makes them precisely students and teachers . . . dialogue does not *level* them, does not even them out, reduce them to each other. Dialogue is not a favor done by one for the other. . . (1996, 116–117)

Freire points out that,

. . . a dialogical relation does not, as is sometimes thought, rule out the possibility of the act of teaching. (1996, 117)

For him the act of learning is correlative of the act of teaching, and it is by dialogue that both become authentically possible. Through dialogue the educator's thinking refuses to hinder the student's thinking:

On the contrary, both "thinkings" become authentically possible only when the educator's critical thinking is delivered over to the educand's curiosity. (1996, 117)

Both Freire and Buber see the possibility of rebellion in the student's mind. For Freire, crushing or hindering the student's thinking tends to generate either timid or inauthentic, or rebellious thinking; for Buber, interference "divides the soul in his [educator's] care into an obedient part and a rebellious part" (Buber 1947, 90).

I discussed the concepts of influence and interference earlier (beginning p. 94). To reiterate here, Buber sees that the world, including nature and society, "educates" the human being; thus, conscious and willed education means a selection by man of the effective world, which is concentrated and manifested in the educator. This selection denotes purpose, as the streaming education by all things is seemingly purposeless. As the child is educated by the world, by its elements, he is also educated by relationships. Buber says,

The true educator represents both; but he must be to the child as one of the elements. (1947, 90)

This brings me back to the questions I presented above: first, does teaching (or education) consist of telling others what to do, and second, what happens to dialogue when telling others what to do.

Buber and Freire, like many other educators, share the view that education denotes a purpose and a direction. I do share this view. It is important to bear in mind, however, that the content of education and its direction are not pre-determined in either Buber's or Freire's view, neither do current curriculum theories see the content of education as fixed. The purpose and direction of education, thus, is relative; it is determined *through dialogue*. Dialogue, thus, is a necessity in purposeful education and education without dialogue becomes impossible.

Moreover, the significance of dialogue becomes even deeper when the

content is tied together with method. If the content of education is formed through dialogue, telling others *what* to learn becomes unattainable. Now, telling others *how* to learn is another, albeit related, question. Here, I return to Freire's idea of democratization of the content and the teaching of the content. For him, pedagogical dialogue implies not only content but also a presentation concerning it (1996, 117). Freire claims:

As a democratic relationship, dialogue is the opportunity available to me to open up to the thinking of others, and thereby not wither away in isolation. (1996, 119)

If it is possible to arrive at the content of education dialogically and if it is possible to present that content dialogically, isn't education, from this viewpoint, a dialogue? This conclusion can, of course, only be made if we agree about the nature of education. My starting point in this work was that education is about promoting the good of the other. Returning here to Buber's idea of the constructive forces of the world being eternally the same, not subject to norms of culture, society or church, helps to conceive the difficult philosophical question of "good and worthy." Värri (1997, 20) speaks of good life and self-actualization as the ideals that should guide education, and that an educator's purposes should never conflict these ideals. Värri's view is concurrent with Buber's philosophy, and it is easy for me to agree here, and see how the circle, once again, encloses itself around the idea of self-actualization.

My conclusion is that it is impossible to know what is good for the other without dialogue. Thus, *true education without dialogue is unfeasible*.

In practical life this stance may not be as straightforward as it seems in theory. Refraining always from telling others what to do does not seem possible. In order to make the essential nature of dialogue more feasible in practice, *two additional questions* remain to be solved: how much not telling others what to do is needed for a dialogical relationship to evolve, and, on the other hand, how much telling others what to do can a dialogical relationship, once established, endure? Solving these questions is, in my view, crucial for anyone wishing to be a dialogical educator.

Although purpose in education does not extinguish dialogue, I claim that denoting this purpose by telling others what to do might eventually do so. This means returning to an I-It relationship of using and affecting, even when

it is thought to be for the good of the child or the student.

Moreover, I think it is important to realize that not all interaction that goes on in an educational relationship is education. There is a wealth of other kinds of interaction, and mutual life. Of course, this is more so in a parent-child relationship; it consists of much more than affecting the child with a purpose and direction in mind; just being together is as important. For me, conscious efforts to educate make up only a fraction of parenthood. Being available and present, saying You with my body and soul to my children is the core of parenthood.

It is as a parent that I feel that dialogue is most intense, most overwhelming and most enduring and true. Caressing children and meeting them in hugs that seem to last forever, constitute encounters where a human being comes as close to another human being as possible. A child entrusts himself completely, unreservedly, to his or her parent. This kind of mutual "unreserve" is rare in other relationships; even in other very close relationships I sense a slight courtesy. For me, at least, parenting is an area where I feel a subtle difference in experience.

Although a teacher-student relationship is less intimate than a parent-child relationship, I argue that the dialogical attitude, the turning towards the other, can be just as intense in both cases. Physical proximity is significant even in teacher-student relationship. When the teacher lets and invites the students into his/her personal space, and when the students feel secure and invited, communication, silent or spoken, can stream unreservedly between them, and there is mutuality, true dialogue.

During the course of this project I became sensitive towards the issue of physical proximity, and felt that it was significant for dialogue. As early as the first fall, for example on October 9, 1997, I positioned myself amongst the children during a movement game. Although I was not participating in the game, I sometimes touched the children and they touched me. Sometimes an individual child or even the whole group came very close to me. These moments signify trust and reciprocity for me, and make me very sensitive to the issue of being. By this I mean qualitative differences in, for example, how the teacher situates himself or herself within the group.

I claim that a lot can happen in teacher-student relationships that actually is not purposeful education or traditional teaching. As I have gone through a deconstructive process on what it means to be a teacher, I have also encountered the question: *what is teaching?*

Turning the question around may be helpful: as Freire suggests, the act of teaching is correlative to the act of learning. Thus, if the students learn something that is, philosophically thinking, good for them, the teacher has taught whether or not s/he did something that, in a traditional sense, can be called teaching. Moreover, they can learn without the teacher consciously having a purpose in mind.

This is how I end up claiming that **teaching, essentially, does not consist of telling others what to do**. Here, I return to the possibility of a genuine dialogical encounter between a teacher and a student, and that encounter essentially belonging to the realm of education. I can educate, or teach just by being there, by being available, by responding to ever changing demands and needs, without a distinct purpose other than the good of the student.

This idea could be connected to something that in educational literature is referred to as organizing learning environments. Although organizing stimulating and nurturing learning environments could be emphasized more even in dance education, I think that the most important issue in any learning environment is the quality of relationships.

I close this discussion by returning to Buber's idea of instincts of origination and of communion. As an originator working with say, clay, I could "tell clay what to do." But, working with other people, if I am striving towards communion, and towards a dialogical relationship, an element of inclusion makes my purposes fade; instead, being immersed with the world, and in experiencing from the other side, the authority originates from the others and from the world. The reality is then, between people, it is a "steady potential presence of the one to the other" (Buber 1947, 98). Thus, I am limited by otherness, but I also receive grace by being bound to the other (Buber 1947, 101). Going back to *I and Thou* I am now looking at what I feel is the essence of dialogue:

Now he no longer interferes, nor does he merely allow things to happen. He *listens* to that which grows, to the way of Being in the world . . . he *encounters*. (Buber 1937/1970, 109; italics mine)

To me, then, teaching is essentially **listening** and **encountering**. It may appear as doing nothing at all. There may be moments of interference, when I tell my students what to do. But these I-It moments must not supersede the I-You moments, otherwise the I-You relationship vanishes. How much interference

a dialogical relationship endures, is a question only to be solved by dialogue itself. How dialogue comes to be can, likewise, be genuinely understood only by living dialogically. In the closing section of this work, I will, however, attempt to disclose my understanding of the possibilities of dialogical life, and tie together what I have learned about dialogue. I hope I can portray an impression about the manifold and rich nature of dialogue in education, and thus, encourage others to search for dialogue in their life and work. In this way, I hope that the personal will evoke the political, and create a space for conversation, reflection and critique, as I hoped for in the beginning.

ARRIVAL

I embarked on this journey in fall 1997, searching for dialogue in dance education. It was my longing for relation as a learner, dancer, choreographer and teacher that gave my search its thrust. My journey has thus been set out from my own life history – as any research in one way or another is. I share a philosophical view that human beings are thrown into this world that already is there: a history, a culture, a set of values, a language that has shaped our experiences and thinking. As a representative and product of this world I am also speaking about this world as I speak about myself.

Voices of other people who took part in this journey displace me as being the sole center of this work. Instead of one center there are many centers. Thus, the focus of this work is in a shared world; on moments of life that my students, my colleagues and I shared. Before presenting my understanding of dialogue, I will try to illuminate how this research process itself has been tied to dialogue and how, in such a way of doing research, body memories and body knowledge are essential.

Buber (1947, 10) talks about moments that penetrate an armour, i.e. a defense apparatus for keeping things happening as they always have happened. These moments stir the soul into sensibility. He adds,

What occurs to me says something to me, but what it says to me cannot be revealed by any esoteric information . . . it is said into my very life; it is no experience that can be remembered independently of the situation, it remains the address of that moment and cannot be isolated . . . (Buber 1947, 12)

Elsewhere Buber differentiates between experiencing and participating:

Those who experience do not participate in the world. For the experience is "in them" and not between them and the world. (1937/1970, 56)

In this work I have attempted to not only focus on my inner experiences, but on what is between the world and me, on something that occurred to me and addressed me. Citing Buber again: "In what occurs to me the world-happening

addresses me” (1947, 11).

The moments shared with others that I have collected into this work have continued their existence in a special way, although our physical encounter in space and time has passed. By special I mean that it is a different kind of continuance compared to everyday remembering of past events.

This continuance is enhanced by a process of “re-search” that I essentially see as vivifying memories. Memories refer to mental representations of events but also recollections of bodily sensations and feelings related to them, as Damasio (1999, 183) suggests. Also Marja Saarenheimo, in her study on body memories of aging women, suggests that “in the process of remembering, consciousness and body are tied together like Siamese twins” (2001, 6). This kind of holistic approach to research is akin to participatory philosophy, which entails that philosophy must be practiced holistically with the body and the mind.

Tapio Koski (2000) based his study of physical exercise on participatory philosophy. He claims that when a human being is connected to the world by multiple sensory channels, his relationship to the reality becomes more comprehensive, and that the closer the researcher is to what he or she is researching, the better and more versatile perceptions he gets about it. Moreover, he asserts that the more able the researcher is to act bodily in the world, the more multifaceted relationships he can reach with what he or she is researching. All this brings a better understanding about the nature and constitution of the phenomenon under study. (Koski 2000, 39, 42)

Also Moustakas (1990, 14) emphasises a direct, personal encounter with the phenomenon being investigated, and the importance of researcher’s total, sensual and perceptual involvement in it. He writes,

Whatever presents itself in the consciousness of the investigator as perception, sense, intuition, or knowledge represents an invitation for further elucidation. What appears, what shows itself as itself, casts a light that enables one to come to know more fully what something is and means. (1990, 10)

It seems to me that interest in body memories and body knowledge is increasing. The fast development of information society may well have triggered a very human need to be reconnected to our primordial ways of knowing. I am

intrigued by new developments in research that relate to body knowledge and tempted to learn more about this area.

In this present project I vivified my mental and bodily memories with the help of unaltered material (videotapes and journal writings) on the events. Wolcott (1990, 128) recommends recording as soon as possible for minimizing the potential influence of some line of interpretation or analysis. The memories of others are represented by interview material that is qualitatively different from the videotapes and journals as it is somehow transformed, shaped or interpreted. Some time had passed in between the event and the interview where we recalled the event: I wonder how what has occurred after the event shapes the memorized experience of the event. For instance, hearing others' opinions about something may shape our own experience about it. This happened, for example, after the performance. From the children's immediate responses and comments, I detected enthusiasm that faded somewhat later. I suggest that others' comments made them think and feel differently.

According to Damasio (1999, 187) verbal narratives related to a past events do not necessarily accord with what actually happened. As I noted earlier, in producing language the mind works creatively and easily indulges in fiction. Saarenheimo (2001, 4) argues that different options for relating to the body in autobiographical research mainly rely on linguistic practices that imply a dualistic assumption of the mind. She challenges this position by basing her research on the assumption that the body and consciousness are tied together by necessity. She suggests that the concept of "embodied self" should be taken into account in autobiographical research as well, although she also holds other perspectives of the body (the expressive body and the socially constructed body) equally important. (Saarenheimo 2001, 16–17) How to tap into embodied memories of others is a challenge for me in my future "re-search."

The shared moments of life that are the focus of this work have become unraveled in many concurrent cycles as I have been engaged with them. Whether or not, or how, any of these shared moments prevail in anybody else's memory, I do not know. As the author of this story, I remain in the center, but by focusing in the world and letting it "concentrate in me," I represent a part of this world in this story.

I will now turn to the closing phase of this work. My intention is to disclose what I have learned about dialogue through this process. Here, the theoretical and philosophical roots of dialogue merge with an interpretive process. I dare

to propose that the following depiction is partly familiar and partly novel.

When I embarked on this search for dialogue in dance education I had a preconception of what dialogue means. It was diffuse and intuitive, but made it possible for me to determine which moments and events felt dialogical to me and which did not. These “judgments” were initially quite unsystematic. Starting from the first class, for example, I felt that a “basis for a dialogical relationship was created on its own, without planning.” These were moments that occurred to me and addressed me, saying something to me, and thus “stirred my soul.” Throughout the narrative there are instances marked by my reflections. Reflecting on the fifth class (October 23, 1997), I wrote: “It feels dialogical – there is respect towards others and listening, being responsive. They seem to be in connection with each other in a relaxed manner, not trying to affect each other but by being interested and attentive.” Here I had begun more clearly to recognize some essential qualities related to dialogue.

During the course of the journey my reflections and judgements became more coherent as my understanding about dialogue evolved, supported by discussions with fellow researchers, by reading literature related to dialogue and by working on the material that I had collected. Through this process I started to distinguish qualities like sensing, listening and respect that have led my way towards understanding dialogue. These became issues that I wanted to look at more deeply, and that became themes, or the “islands” that interrupted the journey, the narrative.

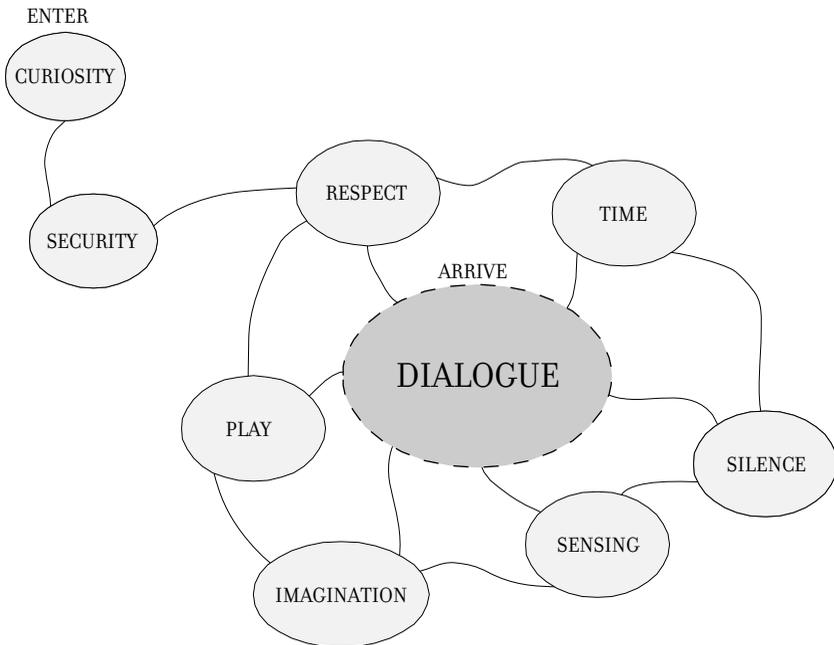
I also encountered surprises: play was something that I did not expect to become a significant issue in understanding dialogue in dance education, whereas I consciously tried to impose an idea of friendship into it, coming across very different findings than I expected.

Distinguishing qualities and issues related to dialogue in dance education happened after having viewed the videotapes, when I constructed the story and inserted the material from others into it. My intuition and pre-conception about dialogue had not led me far off the course: I can track my inclination towards these qualities in the early reflections. By early I mean here a first part of the “research phase”, i.e., when viewing the videotapes (before constructing the story, see timeline on p. 34). For example, reflecting on the first class (October 8, 1997), I wrote:

Good. Silence feels good. To see how far it is possible to go without talking, to let them lead themselves, to hear the silence, to sense more. The teacher should not be the center of focus all the time.

The problem in arriving at a conception about dialogue is defining and organizing these qualities and values. Any attempt to organize them into a coherent structure is doomed to become a static icon that does not respect the nature of dialogue as something resisting being made an object. A representation of qualities related to dialogue should be dynamic so that they will be in constant movement in relation to each other, preventing hierarchy and causality within the "web." Dialogue cannot be reduced into a methodology where doing one thing would lead to another.

Although a dynamic representation would be possible to build with help of today's technology, I prefer giving that task to the human mind, since I believe that it is capable of creating the movement. Thus, I ask the reader to imagine movement within this web of ideas and at the same time, to think about how we think. Is there a possibility of reorganizing our system of knowing? Can we accept that knowing can be unstructured, not tamed by categories of language?



In this “map” there are places to visit, islands, and there are different pathways to take. I conceive it as a map of possibilities, of alternative routes to be explored. And, it is a peculiar map: there are no exact locations or distances; it cannot be used for finding shortcuts. It is peculiar also because the names of the places on the map may mean different things for each traveller. For instance, curiosity denotes more than curiosity; it also denotes belief and love for human beings. Security denotes also trust and openness, silence means also listening and time is related to presence and freedom. Thus, each journey into the land of dialogue will be unique, a surprise.

The land of dialogue peculiar is in itself. It is possible to arrive there and in an instant, notice that it is not there anymore. As such, it is like a dream, true and ephemeral at the same time. It is possible that not everyone occupying the same physical space arrives to the land of dialogue; some may, some may not. They may do so at different paces. There may also be secret gardens of dialogue that no one else knows about, or there may be open places that provide stands for speaking for anyone who wishes to make their views public.

In this way, it is possible to conceive an **array of dialogue** that extends from private encounter to a publicly shared event (see illustration on p.309). In *I and Thou* Buber distinguishes three spheres in which the world of relation arises:

The first: life with nature. Here the relation vibrates in the dark and remains below language. The creatures stir across from us, but they are unable to come to us, and the You we say to them sticks to the threshold of language. (1937/1970, 56–57)

Buber (1937/1970, 57) refers, for example, to contemplating a tree; he also describes encounters with animals, saying: “The eyes of an animal have the capacity of a great language” (1937/1970, 144). Looking at the eyes of a house cat, he wonders the eloquence of this glance (Buber 1937/1970, 145). Relations with inanimate objects that become living active beings may also belong to this sphere. This can happen through imagination, imagination meaning a drive to turn everything, be it an image or symbol, into a You. (1937/1970, 78) Buber writes:

Little inarticulate sounds still ring out senselessly and persistently into the nothing, but one day they will have turned imperceptibly into a conversation – with what? Perhaps with a bubbling tea kettle, but into a conversation. (1937/1970, 78)

Buber explains that the longing for relation is primary and the relation, a “worldless anticipation of saying You, comes second” (Buber 1937/1970, 78). Relation then, is a “category of being, as readiness, as a form that reaches out to be filled . . . *the innate You*” (Buber 1937/1970, 78). The first sphere of relation can happen with anything in the world or an image of it; it can be a sound, a symbol, a work of art. I suggest that a relation with images and sound is possible, and that relation with the tactile and kinesthetic world may belong to this sphere, as well. Thus, I would like to include a relation to one’s own body in this sphere. This reminds me of a rather significant event for me, being in a class taught by a British dancer Paul Douglas, who talked about dancing as “having a sophisticated conversation with your body.” This idea brings reflection into dancing, not necessarily thinking with language, but conversing, nevertheless.

Uniting the idea of reflection with dance – in the spirit of Freirean praxis – may seem odd at first. It may be accurate to say that, in dance, action often overrides reflection. Actually thinking while dancing is not exactly what I have in mind here, although the term reflection is often connected with cognitive, linguistic processes. Reflection in dance is more like a silent dialogue with one-self, with others and with the space surrounding us. It entails awareness of one’s movements, one’s bodily sensations and changing relationships among others in space. Having a dialogue with one’s own body, then, does not consist of verbal language. Moreover, in dance the body is the medium for dialogue. The point where dialogue shifts from the first sphere to the second, to dialogue among human beings, is a line drawn onto water; the silent, private dialogue may become communicated to others or it may not; it may be communicated consciously or not, depending whether there is turning towards the other or not.

During this project there were numerous occasions that I now recognize as attempts on my part to encourage this *first kind of relation*. Vaguely and intuitively, I noticed that moments of concentration into bodily work was something significant: the fifth class (October 23, 1997) begun by slow rolling movement from sitting to lying down to the floor. When viewing this afterwards I wrote:

Here in this beginning there is some dialogue. Mastering the body!

My intense preoccupation with mastering and sensing the body throughout the journey reflects the need to reach this level or type of dialogue.

Also, the need for silence was significant for me early on even though I did not have a clear idea how silence was related to dialogue. Now I see that silence is significant for dialogue in more than one way. I asked myself: "There is dialogue with the self and the sound?" At that time this question was left in the air. Now, it seems related to being in dialogue with the world, opening oneself to sense the world. In the chapter on listening and silence (p. 156), I contemplated this issue more deeply.

Silence and listening are significant also when discussing *dialogue among men, the second sphere of relation*. Buber says,

Here the relation is manifest and enters language. We can give and receive the You. (1937/1970, 57)

The third sphere of relation, life with spiritual beings is out of the scope of this work and my expertise. I present it here shortly and then return to the second sphere. About life with spiritual beings Buber says,

Here the relation is wrapped in a cloud but reveals itself, it lacks but creates language. We hear no You and yet feel addressed . . . (1937/1970, 57)

This description resembles Buber's idea of destiny and life occurring to us, and as such, is a clear continuation of his thinking, spirituality being for him as concrete as the actual world.

I'll return now to life with men (or human beings), the second sphere of relation. According to Buber (1947, 99–101) there are three different kinds of dialogical relationships between human beings. Buber illustrates the differences between these relations along two dimensions: *abstractness* versus *concreteness* and by *mutuality* versus *one-sidedness*.

An *abstract but mutual* dialogical relationship can happen, for example, in a dispute between two persons, where each is aware of the other's full legitimacy:

In this way living truth arises and endures . . . In this way we have become able to acknowledge. (Buber 1947, 99)

This kind of relationship is related to human being as a spiritual person and leaves out the full reality of his being and life; thus, says Buber, it is abstract. The two other kinds of dialogical relationships are concrete, including man's full reality. A relationship that is **concrete and mutual** is, according to Buber, friendship, "the true inclusion of one another by human souls" (Buber 1947, 101). I discussed friendship in more detail earlier (see p. 72), and found out that issues of friendship are complex and difficult to handle in an educational context.

The third kind of dialogical relationship among men is **concrete and one-sided**, as in education. This kind of dialogical relationship is, needless to say, the focus of this work. To reiterate, onesidedness of the relation in education does not make it any less dialogical than any other kind of dialogical relationship. Nowhere does Buber, to my knowledge and understanding, posit these three kinds of dialogical relationship into a hierarchical order in relation to each other.

Onesidedness does not mean that the student does not stand in a relation with the teacher. The student, too, "should intend and affirm his educator as this particular person" (Buber 1970, 178). Onesidedness refers to the act of inclusion: it is only the teacher who feels from the other side; it is the teacher who needs to feel the student's sensations related to the educational situation. Onesidedness means that the student cannot live through the educative event from the standpoint of the teacher. For a dialogical relation, onesided inclusion is enough. It is not less than mutual inclusion; it generates a qualitatively different, but still genuinely dialogical relationship. (Buber 1947, 96–97)

What is indispensable to dialogue, according to Buber, is turning to one another:

Two men bound together in dialogue must obviously be turned to one another . . . no matter with what measure of activity or indeed of consciousness of activity . . . (1947, 8)

The other person participating in dialogue, thus, does not need to be conscious about it. It is also possible to enter into relation, to say You to a person even if that person does not hear it:

For You is more than it knows. You does more, and more happens to it, than it knows. No deception reaches this far: here is the cradle of actual life. (1937/1970, 60)

Even though a relation among men enters language, language is not necessary for dialogue among men. In his address on education Buber explains:

A dialogical relation will show itself also in genuine conversation, but it is not composed of this. Not only is the shared silence of two such persons a dialogue, but also their dialogical life continues, even when they are separated in space, as the continual potential presence of the one to the other, as an unexpressed intercourse. (1947, 97)

Elsewhere Buber reiterates that "for a conversation no sound is necessary, not even a gesture" (1947, 3). An example Buber gives about dialogue illuminates the extraordinary quality of Buber's idea of dialogue. He tells about two men sitting beside one another, not speaking or looking to another, not thinking or knowing anything of each other. The other is "calm, hospitably disposed to everything that may come" (Buber 1947, 3). The other withholds himself, reserved, unable to communicate himself. But then, imperceptibly, something happens, without him doing anything the reserve is released. Even now he does not speak a word, does not stir a finger:

Unreservedly communication streams from him, and the silence bears it to his neighbor. Indeed it was intended for him, and he receives it unreservedly as he receives all genuine destiny that meets him. (Buber 1947, 4)

Buber concludes this story by saying: "For where unreserve has ruled, even wordlessly, between men, the word of dialogue has happened sacramentally" (Buber 1947, 4). Buber then reiterates:

Human dialogue, therefore, although it has its distinctive life in the sign, that is in sound and gesture . . . can exist without the sign, but admittedly not in an objectively comprehensible form. On the other hand an element of communication, however inward, seems to belong to its essence. But in its highest moments dialogue reaches out even beyond these boundaries . . . it is completed not in some "mystical" event, but in one that is in the

precise sense factual, thoroughly dovetailed into the common human world and the concrete time-sequence. (Buber 1947, 4)

Buber (1947, 5) speaks about events that open from communication to communion as embodiment of the word of dialogue. Dialogue is a concrete, bodily happening, it streams out from a body to another body. The life of dialogue, however, is not limited to “men’s traffic with one another” but is represented in it (Buber 1947, 8). I understand this as dialogue, that is, a relation of men to one another, continuing its existence even without actual physical encounter, but represented through and in physical encounters.

This kind of moment happened, for instance, one day with Nathan (November 16, 1998), when he had been preoccupied with Leonard, and the two boys had done almost everything otherwise than everybody else. He suddenly came to me, telling something to me, almost like it was a secret. I wrote:

There is something interesting in this moment. Nathan had been hassling with Leonard – it seems like he regretted now, and he would like to participate, but did not dare to show alone. There was a dialogical moment between me and Nathan. All this time he had been distant and restless, and now, here he was, open and trusting, and very close to me.

I wonder if Nathan would have come to me if our relationship had not gradually evolved into a dialogical relationship. In this moment, our relation was represented in our “traffic with one another.” On another incident, on March 4, 1999 I turned towards a child. I asked Henri, who was standing close to the wall, whether he was taking part or not, and he said he was. I then directed him gently towards the center, and he followed me and started taking part. About this incident I wrote:

My manner of addressing him was gentle, caring and respecting. This was a fleeting dialogical moment between teacher and student, adult and child.

Likewise, although this moment was fleeting and may appear as nothing much, it means to me more than an incidental passing by. It was an embodied representation of a continuing relationship. Again, I wonder if such embodiment of closeness and mutual turning to one another could come to being without gradual evolvment of a dialogical relationship.

I would even like to dare to suggest that it is possible for a child to act inclusively, i.e. feel from the other side, towards an adult, or to that matter, towards anything: a toy, an animal, another child. A student may feel from the side of the teacher, as happened once when one of the boys, Walter, came to me before the class. He looked at me straight into my eyes, and asked why my eyes were so dark. I told him that I had not slept well because one of my children had been sick the previous night. I remember that moment very clearly, since this boy genuinely showed interest and concern about my well-being.

I do not claim that this situation was educational; he certainly did not experience my educating him. But I do claim, as I stated in the previous chapter, that there is a lot more going on in an educational relationship than purposeful education. The above incident is one such example. This way, I think, it is possible even to enter into mutual inclusiveness between teacher and student, for a fleeting moment. Furthermore, to understand the nature of dialogue, I think it is crucial to bear in mind the inclusive capacity of children. The compassionate love and caring they may show, for instance, when caressing a baby animal, is maybe an example of the fullest manifestation of the act of inclusion.

Although a continuing dialogical relationship between two people may take a while to evolve, qualities that support this evolving may appear instantaneously. I would now like to extend the array of dialogue into something that could be called a *dialogical atmosphere*. A dialogical atmosphere means to me a *possibility* to enter mutuality, or dialogue. In the "map" above (p.294), dialogical atmosphere starts from "enter," but it is not yet dialogue. Buber's idea of inclusion, or feeling from the other side, leads to a dialogical atmosphere. Buber says that an educator "is of all men the one for whom inclusion may and should change from alarming and edifying event into an atmosphere" (1947, 100).

Again, emphasizing the concrete, bodily happening is important. It is the body attitude that carries the message of trust across: how one focuses towards another, how one leans towards the other; how one is present in and by her/his body to the other, and how communication streams from the body without reserve. A human being carries an attitude and sends a message to others by the way of his/her being and relating to others. Buber (1947, 21–22) describes this attitude as consisting of a basic movement of turning towards the other. The attitude and the basic movements include both an inner movement and bodily action, for example, the "very tension of the eyes' muscles and the very action of the foot as it walks" (Buber 1947, 21). Buber explains:

If you look at someone and address him you turn to him, of course with the body, but also in the requisite measure with the soul. (1947, 22)

Buber's notion of "unreserve" also reflects this attitude. What is this "unreserve"? It is, based on my understanding of dialogue, reaching outwards, turning towards the other; it consists of trust, respect, openness, and unconditioned, all-inclusive love towards human beings, towards students. It is possible to detect "unreserve" as a released bodily attitude, where excess control and tension have dissolved. The releasing of bodily tension also affects the quality of voice, often making it softer. This overall "softness" may, in turn, signify a caring attitude, and send a message of recognition and acceptance across.

Freire's idea of dialogue may, in general, be more graspable than Buber's, but here their ideas concur very closely. Freire claims that dialogue cannot exist in a relation of domination or in the absence of profound love for the world and for men. (Freire 1972, 61) Neither can dialogue exist without faith in men: "the 'dialogical man' believes in other men even before he meets them face to face" (Freire 1972, 63).

Freire also speaks about trust and hope: according to him dialogue creates a horizontal relationship of mutual trust, and cannot exist in a climate of hopelessness. For Freire, dialogue is seeing reality as process rather than a static entity. (1972, 64–65) Freire claims:

A dialogic relationship . . . is indispensable to knowledge . . . Dialogue . . . is full of curiosity and unrest. It is full of mutual respect between the dialoguing subjects. Dialogism presupposes maturity, a spirit of adventure, confidence in questioning, and seriousness in providing answers. (Freire 1998a, 99)

Freire claims that authoritarian antialogue is the enemy of curiosity and punishes for displaying it (Freire 1998a, 99). Antialogue can, in my understanding, appear in many ways. It can be compulsion or commanding. It can be indifference or dishonesty, or it can be a diffuse sense of tension or haste.

I am willing to assert that dialogical atmosphere can hardly evolve by telling students that they should behave in a certain way. I think that it streams out from the teacher as a concrete, embodied occurrence. It evolves when the teacher turns towards the students and sends them a message through his/her whole being: I am interested in you. I am here for you, for each and every

one of you, unreservedly, all-inclusively.

I often, especially during the first year, noticed that my becoming more tense made dialogue fade away. A teacher can maintain external authority and control over students in many ways, even respectfully. That is why distinguishing the difference between fear of authority and genuine respect is so difficult.

Although an overall quality of softness seems to be affiliated with dialogue, and although harshness most certainly leads away from dialogue, I think that dialogue can become manifest in different dynamic qualities. Thus, the ***tone or intensity of dialogue*** can range from softness to firmness and from warm or emotionally charged intimacy to a quite neutral and rational partnership.

Not always, I noticed, were situations that felt dialogical to me friendly or warm. There were instances where negotiations were tough and my voice was firm. My voice denoted firmness and disapproval also when one or more children seemed to forget about respecting other children and me. This quality of firmness does not damage a dialogical relationship once it has been established; I think that it reminds the partners in dialogue that they are forgetting about their responsibility in maintaining the dialogical relationship.

I also wondered if a restless situation could be dialogical. I am inclined to think that restlessness, energy and excitement can be present in a dialogical situation as long as some individuals' freedoms do not limit others' freedoms. I noticed that it was even possible to sense excitement and peace simultaneously. For instance, reflecting one class (January 26, 1998) I wrote: "I was calm. There was excitement and peace!" Still, if restlessness and noise obstruct someone's rights to enjoy, concentrate and learn, it is difficult to maintain that this kind of situation would be dialogical for everyone, at any rate. During the course of this project the children learned to occasionally maintain respect for others even during a fast-paced, energetic activity. Dialogue in this kind of activity may take more time to mature. Very often in large groups such activities lead to collisions and conflicts.

It is feasible, then, to distinguish qualities that are preconditions for a dialogical atmosphere and for building an enduring dialogical relationship between two persons, like teacher and student. These qualities, like curiosity, openness, security, trust, hope, love and respect, need to be embodied in the teacher. They provide a fertile soil for dialogue to grow.

Next, I intend to extend this discussion into something that I would like to call a ***network of dialogical relationships*** that may evolve when there is a

group of people participating in a shared event. Now, in the orthodox interpretation of Buber's philosophy this may not be called dialogue, as he does not usually refer to a group. When he speaks about the relation in education being of true dialogue he seems to refer to a relationship between the teacher and one student at one time.

However, Buber does not, in my understanding, exclude the possibility of a dialogue within a group of people. This is a significant question for a teacher or anyone who works with a group of people. Two ideas related to dialogue that already have come up help me understand this distinct nature of dialogue within a group of people: first, the human being to whom I am turning towards does not need to be conscious of this (Buber 1937/1970, 60), and second, once a dialogical relationship has been established between two people, their dialogical life can continue even when they are separated in space. Moreover, in one occasion Buber writes about a possibility of a collective dialogue:

There is genuine dialogue – no matter whether spoken or silent – where each of the participants really has in mind the other or others in their present and particular being and turns to them with the intention of establishing a living mutual relation between himself and them. (1947, 19)

Thinking more concretely about a teacher's task with a group of students, it helps me to see that any group in fact, can be thought of as consisting of couples, or pairs of two people. First, the teacher can be seen paired with each student. Wishing to encourage dialogue, s/he needs to build an open, trustful relationship with each student, to respect and love each student unreservedly. She has to be genuinely interested in each student, and be curious about them and their world, as I proclaimed just above. Once this relationship of mutual trust and respect has been established, the dialogical life of the teacher and the student may continue over space and time, regardless of the student being constantly aware of the teacher's turning towards him/her. Buber writes:

Trust, trust in the world, because this human being exists – that is the most inward achievement of the relation in education . . . In order to be and to remain truly present to the child he must have gathered the child's presence into his store as one of the bearers of his communion with the world . . . Of course he cannot be continually concerned with the child, either in thought or in deed, nor ought he to be. But if he has really gathered

the child into his life then that subterranean dialogic, that steady potential presence of the one to the other is established and endures. Then there is reality *between* them, there is mutuality. (1947, 98)

A point that seems to me too rarely discussed is that a relationship of trust between the teacher and each student is not enough for a truly constructive and communal life within a group of students. In order to make dialogue possible within the group, the teacher also needs to support dialogical relationships amongst the students, that is, to strengthen their dialogical network. This, I believe, happens by bringing the students into encounters with each other: physical encounter involving touching, bodily encounters, concrete work towards mutual aims, discussion involving true listening and responding, and so on.

A dialogical network gets constructed gradually through working and doing things together. It happens at a different pace for different couples of students, and there will be differences in the intensity or quality of students' mutual relationships, depending, for example, on friendships. By understanding the nature of children's friendships better I realized that teachers and adults are limited in their means to support children's friendships. Teachers need to understand children's peer culture better and respect its dynamics without trying to "fix" it by intervening in it from above. However, I think that teachers can do a lot to strengthen the dialogical network among children. By practicing inclusion towards their students they provide experiences of reciprocal, respectful relationships for the children; and by allowing children to interact with each other in various ways, practicing decision-making and responsibility, children will learn about living together constructively without having to be friends with everyone.

When there is trust and respect between as many couples as possible within the group, and if each member of the group feels trusted and respected as a person in his/her own right, I believe a basis for a dialogical network exists. This does not automatically lead to collective dialogical moments; some members of the group may enter mutuality at a given moment, some may not.

Although a dialogical network does not necessarily lead to collective dialogical moments (those, indeed, may be quite rare occurrences), it is significant also because it provides space and possibility for one-to-one dialogical encounters. Students may experience these encounters among themselves, in various tones and intensities. A dialogical network also frees the teacher to interact with

individual students without having to fear that the rest of the group becomes unoccupied without the teacher's constant attention to them. Very early in the project I had an inclination toward situations where I could trust the group so that one-to-one encounters within a group situation would be possible. Without trust in the group the teacher needs to look over the whole group constantly, since s/he is the sole source of authority and carrier of responsibility in the situation. Reflecting the second class (October 9, 1997), an incident where a child had bumped his head, I wrote,

I like giving this extended time to just one child. The others were doing fine; they did not need me. I would have heard if something went wrong. This has to do with trust in the children, and trust in the process: the teacher does not have to be overlooking the action all the time.

These one-to-one encounters signified something very important to me throughout the project. Even in a large group of students, even for a fleeting minute in time, a teacher can give all his attention to one student, if the dialogical network is strong enough. These fleeting but ever so intense one-to-one encounters were often characterized by physical proximity, closeness, touching and intimacy. When children came close to me and touched me, I felt that in these moments dialogue happened.

What seems quite clear to me is that building a dialogical network cannot happen by telling the students to interact with each other; rather, it happens by giving space for spontaneously evolving interaction. I have many times attempted to overcome the resistance for physical contact by manipulating or even commanding the students to, say, take hands. Done in a frustrated state of mind ("what in the world is so difficult in holding hands – why don't they just do it!") and in haste, this hardly can lead to dialogue.

There were many occasions even during the first year of this project, when the children worked together constructively. They sometimes initiated small group work themselves and interacted on their own terms. My task here, I think, was to give space for such work. For example, once (February 9, 1998) when I introduced a new activity called "magnet," a group of boys adapted this activity in a way that could have called for teacher interference. Instead, I let them continue their "Egyptian walk" although they had forgotten the idea of the magnet pulling and pushing them. I wrote:

This was their own type of dialogue, interaction on their own terms. New form of dialogue: an idea that started within a group, which grew without teacher interference. They were in their own world, which I did not quite understand. But it looked fun, and even though it was against the instructions (avoiding each other), I did not interfere.

Dialogue within a group can range from just being together to bodily, concrete activity together, and to group discussion. I have noted earlier that conducting a group discussion was often difficult for me. Discussions seemed to work better when I did not have an agenda in my mind, a goal where the discussion should go. Negotiating about the class content or making decisions related to activities often created situations that felt dialogical to me. For instance, once (January 26, 1998) I asked the children if they wanted to have one or two catchers in statue tag: "There were opinions, we discussed. Dialogue!" I wrote. On another instance (February 2, 1998), the children wanted to vote on their suggestions. I wrote: "This is a dialogical situation."

Instead, when I tried to conduct a more sophisticated discussion, I was in trouble. The most obvious case is probably my effort to introduce the friendship theme. I wrote:

Dialogue does not work. Manipulating the discussion is not dialogue!

Buber writes about dialogue that has the appearance but not the essence of dialogue. He (1947, 19) regrets that "at times, indeed, it seems as though there were only this kind of dialogue." He distinguishes different kinds of dialogue, and denotes as genuine dialogue something where each participant has in mind the others and turns to them. But then, Buber points out another kind of dialogue that to him only looks like dialogue. He names this technical dialogue, which is "prompted solely by the need of objective understanding" (1947, 19). Furthermore, there is monologue disguised as dialogue, where "two or more men, meeting in space, speak each with himself in strangely tortuous and circuitous ways" (Buber 1947, 19).

Buber (1947, 19) tells an example of disguised monologue: A debate where thoughts are "so pointed that they may strike home in the sharpest way . . . without the men that are spoken to being regarded in any way present as persons." He also refers to a conversation

... characterized by the need neither to communicate something, nor to learn something, nor to influence someone, nor to come into connexion with someone, but solely by the desire to have one's self-reliance confirmed by marking the impression that is made ... (1947, 19-20)

Buber sums up his view on monologue as opposed to dialogue in the following ways:

He who is living the life of dialogue receives the ordinary course of the hours something that is said and feels himself approached for an answer ... He who is living the life of monologue is never aware of the other as something that is absolutely not himself and at the same time something with which he nevertheless communicates ... being, lived in monologue, will not, even in the tenderest intimacy, grope out over the outlines of the self. (1947, 20)

These ideas lead me to think that classroom discussions are an extremely complex issue if genuine dialogue is a value for the teacher. This is exactly where I think critical pedagogy may easily fail with children; and to that matter, with any group. The problem is, how can the educator be simultaneously inclusive of so many different student realities when s/he also has a reality of her/his own? Even if it would be possible to take into account so many realities, this could easily lead to collecting and storing information about the students, that would again, lead to making the students objects of teacher's knowledge. The point is that the other always remains a secret for me. I can never understand the other objectively and completely. Attempting to understand the other would be using the other. Buber approaches this idea by saying that essential in dialogical relation between two human beings is the lack of experiencing:

The human being to whom I say You I do not experience. But I stand in relation to him, in the sacred basic word. Only when I step out of this do I experience him again. Experience is remoteness from You. (1937/1970, 60)

they could change the material conditions of their lives; instead, they may have, at least for a brief moment, become liberated in a different sense. By this other kind of liberation I mean becoming free of the constraint of being rational. By liberating children, I thus mean helping them to release their imagination and to encounter themselves and the world around them with courage, and with a creative, playful spirit.

When working with children, realizing the difference between adult's and children's way of perceiving the world becomes significant. Adults have a limited access to children's world, since we absolutely are not children any more. In Finland a research movement called "new paradigm of child research" has gained momentum among educational researchers. This paradigm is based on children as agents and experts of their life, and on adults as capable of understanding children through their own history as having once been a child. (Lehtovaara 1994, Hentinen & Korttuluoma 1995, Karlsson 2000) This movement feels very close to my heart, and I surely want to explore this idea more deeply in my future research. There may even be a fascinating link between bodily reminiscence and this new paradigm of child research.

My search for dialogue thus ends with arrival to a very familiar place. Arrival, in a way, becomes transformed into a return to a place in my heart that I call imagination. I now see this place being more than I saw before; it is the starting point for any undertaking in life, be it a solitary act of creation or a mutual effort of achieving a common end. Without a capacity to imagine we could hardly renew our world nor could we appreciate who we are and where we come from. Imagination, embodied in our whole being, is much more than make believe. It is the basis of remembering, creating and understanding others. It is the basis for human life together, and dialogue is imagining together. In a dialogical relation the Other always remains a surprise and mystery to me, and in dialogue the Other cannot be chained nor defined. A dialogical relationship is a constant state of creation and renewal. It is always becoming. Thus the journey continues, and the arrival is a new beginning.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND THEMES

First interview, May 1998

Warm-up questions:

- What do you like in school?/Your favorite school subjects
- What do you not like in school?/Your least favorite school subjects
- What do you like in Physical Education classes?
- What do you not like in Physical Education classes?
- Do you have any hobbies?
- What about friends? Do you think you have enough friends?

Themes for discussing dance classes:

- Partner work, group work, working alone
- Touching
- Showing movements to others
- Inventing movements
- Following and leading
- Moving slowly and fast
- Moving with music

Other issues to discuss:

- Have you done these kinds of things before?
- Have you danced before?
- Did you feel that you could affect the class?
- Are dance classes different than ordinary Physical Education classes?
- If yes, how?
- Do you think you have learned something?
- If yes, what?
- Was it dance?
- If not, what was it?
- Do you want to add something, tell something else?

Second interview, May 1999

Warm-up questions:

Summer plans – what are you going to do this summer?

The past school year: what do you recall about it, what comes to your mind, what have you learned?

Our project:

What do you recall about our performance and preparing for it?

What was difficult, boring, taxing?

What was exciting, fun, interesting?

What did the performance in your opinion tell about?

Was it dance?

What is dance?

If you would have to describe our project to somebody who knows nothing about it, what would you tell?

How did you choose your character?

What would you like to do next year – would you still like to work on the performance, or perform it again?

What comes to your mind when you hear the word art?

Would you like to ask me something?

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the possibility and meaning of dialogue in dance education. Combining various interpretive methods, the author brings into dialogue the voices of children, teachers, critical social theorists and others, along with her own voice. In compiling the study, the author has developed an approach that bears resemblance to autoethnography, a form of critical personal narrative that places the self within a social context. The site of the study was an elementary school in eastern Helsinki, where the researcher worked as a dance teacher in a two-year art education project.

The first task of this study was to elucidate the theoretical and philosophical roots of dialogue. Literature related to dialogical philosophy and critical pedagogy, most importantly, writings of Martin Buber and Paulo Freire, form the theoretical basis for this work. The author argues that becoming aware of the significance of dialogue for human life makes us also more aware of our desire towards dialogue, towards relation. Understanding dialogue leads to critical pedagogical thinking and thus, humanist and critical aspirations become intertwined in this work.

Another task of this study was to describe how dialogue appears in dance education. The author describes real life episodes, and her *ex post facto* reflections related to these episodes. This chronologically flowing depiction is interrupted at times for critical reflections supported by accounts from others, and by theory. The reflections revolve around themes of play, sensing, time, silence, imagination and respect. They represent an interpretative function in the study, tackling questions of meaning: What does dialogue mean for the author, and to others who were involved in this project? This was the third task of the study.

The author arrived at a conception that teaching dialogically cannot be a prescriptive process: it is impossible to tell others how to teach dialogically. Instead, she emphasises the importance of critical awareness about education and teaching. Her search for dialogue has resulted in a process of deconstructing the meaning of being a dance teacher. This became the fourth task for this research.

The author claims that teacher's aspiration towards dialogue transforms

teaching into inherently listening and encountering. Thus, teaching may even appear as doing nothing at all. There may be moments of interference, but these moments must not supersede encountering and listening. How much interference a dialogical relationship endures, is a question only to be solved by dialogue itself. How dialogue comes to be can, likewise, be genuinely understood only by living dialogically.

The possibilities of dialogical life can be outlined, however. This happens in the closing section of the study. In addition to discussing dialogue in relation to themes of play, sensing, time, silence, imagination and respect the author describes spheres of dialogue from private to public, from abstract to concrete and from mutual to one-sided, and discusses tone and intensity of dialogue, dialogical atmosphere and dialogue as network of relationships. This depiction of the manifold and rich nature of dialogue in education hopefully encourages others to search for dialogue in their life and work. The author hopes that the personal will evoke the political, and create a space for conversation, reflection and critique.

The concept of dialogue, essential for this present work, ties together its method and aim. The concluding argument is that dialogue is the means, maybe the only means, by which education can truly be about promoting the good of the student. As it is impossible to know what is good for the other without dialogue, the direction of education must be determined through dialogue. Thus, true education without dialogue is unfeasible. Since dialogue is also an essential quality of human life, dialogue inevitably is also the aim of education.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämä tutkimus tarkastelee dialogisuuden mahdollisuutta ja merkitystä tanssipedagogiikassa. Erilaisia tulkinnallisia tutkimusmenetelmiä yhdistämällä tekijä tuo dialogiin lasten, opettajien ja tutkijoiden äänet sekä liittää mukaan oman äänensä. Tekijä on kirjoittanut ja rakentanut tutkimuksensa tavalla, joka muistuttaa läheisesti autoetnografiaa, kriittisen persoonallisen narratiivin muotoa. Autoetnografisessa kerronnassa minä asettuu sosiaaliseen kontekstiin. Tämän tutkimuksen konteksti oli Itä-Helsinkiläinen ala-asteen koulu, jossa tutkija työskenteli tanssinopettajana kaksivuotisessa taidekasvatusprojektissa.

Tutkimuksen ensimmäinen tehtävä oli perehtyä dialogisuuden teoreettisiin ja filosofisiin juuriin. Dialogisuusfilosofiaan ja kriittiseen pedagogiikkaan liittyvä kirjallisuus, erityisesti Martin Buberin ja Paulo Freiren teokset, muodostaa työn teoreettisen perustan. Tekijän mukaan dialogisuuden merkityksen tiedostaminen tekee ihmisen tietoisemmaksi myös kaipuustaan dialogiin, yhteyteen toisen kanssa. Dialogisuuden ymmärtäminen johtaa kriittiseen pedagogiseen ajatteluun, ja siten humanistiset ja kriittiset pyrkimykset kietoutuvat yhteen tässä työssä.

Tutkimuksen toinen tehtävä oli kuvata dialogisuuden ilmenemistä tanssipedagogiikassa. Tekijä kuvaa projektin kulkua ja tapahtumia sekä hänen pohdintojaan näihin tapahtumiin liittyen. Kronologisesti etenevä kerronta keskeytyy ajoittain ja pysähtyy syvempään, kriittiseen reflektioon. Tähän tekijä liittää projektiin osallistuneiden lasten ja opettajien ajatuksia sekä teoriaa. Nämä reflektiot kietoutuvat leikin, aistimisen, ajan, hiljaisuuden, mielikuvituksen ja kunnioituksen teemojen ympärille. Ne edustavat tutkimuksen tulkinnallista tehtävää ja tarttuvat merkityksen kysymyksiin: Mitä dialogisuus merkitsee tekijälle ja niille henkilöille, jotka osallistuivat tähän projektiin? Tämä oli tutkimuksen kolmas tehtävä.

Tekijä päätyy käsitykseen, jonka mukaan dialoginen pedagogiikka ei voi olla ennalta määriteltyä ja suunniteltua: on siis mahdotonta kertoa toisille, kuinka opettaa dialogisesti. Sen sijaan hän korostaa kriittisen tietoisuuden merkitystä pedagogiikassa. Näin dialogisuuden etsiminen johti opettajuuden merkityksen dekonstruktioon. Tästä tuli tutkimuksen neljäs tehtävä.

Tekijän mukaan opettajan pyrkimys dialogisuuteen muuntaa opettamista niin, että olennaisimmaksi nousee kuunteleminen ja kohtaaminen. Tällainen opettaminen voi ulkoisesti vaikuttaa jopa siltä, että opettaja ei tee yhtään mitään. Opettajan aktiivinen toiminta, väliintulo (interference) on edelleen mahdollista, mutta se ei saa syrjäyttää kohtaamista ja kuuntelemista. Kuinka paljon väliintuloa dialoginen suhde kestää, on kysymys, jonka voi ratkaista vain dialogin kautta. Sen, miten dialogisuus syntyy, voi myös todeta vain elämällä dialogisesti.

Dialogisen elämän mahdollisuudet ovat kuitenkin hahmoteltavissa, ja tämä tapahtuikin tutkimuksen loppuosassa. Sen lisäksi, että tekijä jäsentää dialogisuutta leikin, aistimisen, ajan, hiljaisuuden, mielikuvituksen ja kunnioituksen teemojen kautta, hän esittelee dialogisuuden ulottuvuuksia yksityisestä julkiseen, abstraktista konkreettiseen sekä molemminpuolisesta yksipuoliseen dialogiin. Lisäksi hän kuvaa dialogisuuden sävyä ja intensiteettiä, dialogista ilmapiiiriä ja dialogisuutta suhteiden verkkona. Tämä kuvaus dialogisuuden moninaisesta ja rikkaasta luonteesta voi rohkaista ja auttaa toisia etsimään dialogisuutta niin elämästään kuin työstäänkin. Tekijä toivoo, että hänen henkilökohtainen kertomuksensa avautuu julkiseksi ja avaa tilaa keskustelulle, pohdinnalle ja kriittisyydelle.

Tässä työssä dialogisuuden käsite sitoo yhteen työn metodin ja tavoitteen. Loppupäätelmä on, että dialogisuus on keino, ehkä ainoa keino, jonka kautta kasvatusta voi olla aidosti oppijan hyvän edistämistä. Koska ilman dialogia on mahdotonta tietää mikä on oppijalle hyväksi, kasvatuksen ja opetuksen suunta täytyy ratkaista dialogin kautta. Siten todellinen kasvatusta on mahdotonta ilman dialogia. Koska dialogisuus on myös olennainen inhimillisen elämän laatu, on dialogisuus väistämättä myös kasvatuksen tavoite.

Acta Scenica

1. Knowledge Is a Matter of Doing, editors Pentti Paavolainen, Anu Ala-Korpela (1995)
2. Annette Arlander: Esitys tilana, (1998)
3. Taide, kertomus ja identiteetti, toim. Pia Houni ja Pentti Paavolainen (1999)
4. Soili Hämäläinen: Koreografian opetus- ja oppimisprosessista – kaksi opetusmallia oman liikkeen löytämiseksi ja tanssin muotoamiseksi (1999)
5. Pia Houni: Näyttelijäidentiteetti. Tulkintoja omaelämäkerrallisista puhenäkökulmista. (2000)
6. Riitta Pasanen-Willberg: Vanhenevan tanssijan problematiikasta dialogisuuteen – koreografian näkökulma (2001)
7. Timo Kallinen: Näyttämötaitelijasta teatterityöntekijäksi. Miten moderni tavoitti suomalaisen teatterikoulutuksen. (2001)
8. Paula Salosaari: Multiple Embodiment in Classical Ballet. Educating the Dancer as an Agent of Change in the Cultural Evolution of Ballet. (2001)
9. Tapio Toivanen: ”Mä en ois kyllä ikinä uskonu ittestäni sellasta”. Peruskoulun viides- ja kuudesluokkalaisten kokemuksia teatterityöstä. (2002)
10. Pia Houni & Pentti Paavolainen: Teatteri ja tanssi toimintakulttuureina (2002)
11. Soile Rusanen: Koin traagisia tragedioita. Yläasteen oppilaiden kokemuksia ilmaisutaidon opiskelusta. (2002)
12. Betsy Fisher: Creating and Re-Creating Dance. Performing Dances Related to Ausdruckstanz. (2002)
13. Leena Rouhiainen: Living Transformative Lives. Finnish Freelance Dance Artists Brought into Dialogue with Merleau-Ponty’s Phenomenology. (2003)

In her dissertation Eeva Anttila examines the possibility and meaning of dialogue in dance education. Combining various interpretive approaches, she brings into dialogue the voices of children, teachers, critical social theorists and others, along with her own voice.

Theoretically, the work is largely based on dialogical philosophy and critical pedagogy, especially on writings of Martin Buber and Paulo Freire. Anttila weaves together humanist and critical thinking and illuminates the significance of this connection for educational discourse.

Throughout the work Anttila builds up the argument for critical awareness about education and teaching, and art education. She points out how education neglects relation, imagination, play and art, and raises a concern for educating a conscious body.

Anttila claims that teacher's aspiration towards dialogue transforms teaching into inherently listening and encountering. In the closing section of her work, Anttila portrays the possibilities of dialogical life and illuminates how dialogue ties together the method and aim of education.

