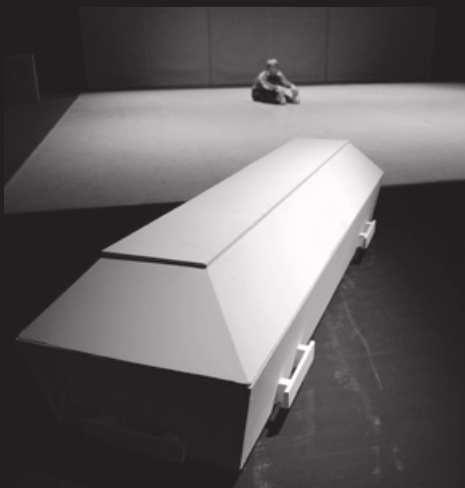




Docudancing Griefscapes

Choreographic strategies for embodying
traumatic contexts in
the trilogy *Life & Death*

PER ROAR | THORSNES



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Abstract

Docudancing Griefscapes – choreographic strategies for embodying traumatic contexts in the trilogy Life & Death – is a self-reflexive artistic research project on developing choreography based on contextual background research and ethnographic fieldwork. From the viewpoint of the choreographer-researcher, I explored this strategy through constructing and embodying three contexts of traumatic grieving: (1) my private grieving, related to the sudden death of a close friend, (2) our mortality, related to facing our finitude, and (3) communal grieving, related to the aftermath of the Bosnian War (1992-1995), whose traumatic events ruptured a whole society's existence. This process resulted in the performance trilogy *Life & Death* with the performances (1) *A Song to Martin* (2003), (2) *A Rehearsal for Mortals* (2005), and (3) *An Unfinished Story* (2006).¹ From this process emerged and evolved an artistic strategy I coined *docudancing*. The term refers to a choreographic approach to address socio-political contexts through drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and utilizing documentary material, both in the creative processes as well as in the performances. Out of this effort also arose the term *griefscape*, which is used here to denote the affective and entangled – though often ephemeral and invisible – impact that traumatic contexts of grieving can have in circumscribing our lives by being present through what is absent. I launched the concept of the *kaleidoscopic optic* to describe the project's transdisciplinary research perspectives, which combine inputs from fields of ethnography and artistic research, choreography and somatics, and trauma and performance studies. This outlook led to the project's choreosomatic approach to movements in which the body is viewed as a somatic subject rather than an aesthetical object, as well as situating the project's expanded notion of what choreography and dancing entail. The focus of this enquiry is therefore on the moves creat-

1 The trilogy is video documented and accessible online at <https://vimeo.com/album/3155472> with the password: docudancing.

ed and reiterated through what is re-sited and recited, and what is practised and performed in this project. In line with this *aesth|ethical thinking*, I conclude by pointing to the politics of choreography, and the political responsibility that comes with a choreographic intervention.

KEYWORDS:

1. Choreography, artistic research, choreographic research, choreographic process, Margareth H'Doubler, André Lepecki, transdisciplinary research, aesth|ethical thinking, docudancing; 2. Trauma, mortality, traumatic grieving, loss, death, dying, mortality, griefscape, communal grieving, the return of the real; 3. Autoethnography, ethnographic, fieldwork, performance studies, the artist as ethnographer, Hal Foster; 4. somatics, embodying, choreo-somatic, body practices; 5. Socio-political context, contextual approach, Martin Hoftun, Wadham College, funeral industry, funeral directors, the Bosnian War, Srebrenica, the Siege of Sarajevo; Per Roar, Per Roar Thorsnes.

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The figures without specified credits are provided by the choreographer-researcher.

Abbreviations

APA	American Psychiatric Association
BDP	Balkan Dance Platform
BKC	Bosnian Cultural Centre in Sarajevo
BMC™	Body-Mind Centering™
CSCE	Commission on Security and Co-operation in Europe
CZDk	Centre for Cultural Decontamination in Belgrade
DOCH	University College of Dance and Circus Stockholm
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
HRHF	Human Rights House Foundation
HC	Helsinki Committee
ICTY	The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
JNA	The Yugoslav People's Army
KA®	Kinetic Awareness
KHiO	Oslo National Academy of the Arts (Kunsthøgskolen i Oslo)
KUVA	The Finnish Academy of Fine Art Helsinki
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NDC	Nansen Dialogue Centre
NGO	Non-governmental organisation(s)
NHC	Norwegian Helsinki Committee
NRK	The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation
NOTAM	Norwegian Centre for Technology in Music and the Arts
NSU	Nordic Summer University
NTNU	The Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim
NYDI	New York Dance Intensive
NYU	New York University
OHR	Office of the High Representative for Bosnia-Herzegovina
OU	Oxford University
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorders
RDC	Research and Documentation Center Sarajevo

RTS	Radio and Television of Serbia
SDS	Bosnian-Serb Democratic Party
SNDO	School for New Dance Development (School voor Nieuwe Dansontwikkeling) in Amsterdam
UiO	University of Oslo
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VRS	The Bosnian Serb Army

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First Part – Framework

1. Facing the end – through a contextual approach to choreography

.... and I faltered, but suddenly something the journalist had said came to mind: there are only given situations and the new givens inherent in them. I too had lived through a given fate. It had not been my own fate, but I had lived through it, and I simply couldn't understand why they couldn't get it into their heads that I now needed to start doing something with that fate, needed to connect it to somewhere or something; after all, I could no longer be satisfied with the notion that it had all been a mistake, blind fortune, some kind of blunder, let alone that it had not even happened.

From *Fateless* by Imre Kertész²

How do we face the end? The end that leaves no space for compromises but demarks a final border for our comprehension: death. How do we deal with this existential premise of death and dying? In what way could this question be artistically as well as contextually addressed in choreographed performance? These are the initial questions that led to the artistic research project in choreography on *Docudancing Griefscapes: choreographic strategies for embodying traumatic contexts in the trilogy Life & Death*. In my study, I will discuss this project based on the experiences from making the trilogy.

This chapter introduces the aims, my research position, and the strategies and methodological approaches that shaped this project and its choreographic processes. The chapter is organized in three main sections. The first (1.1) briefly outlines what the project comprises and addresses, including defining its practi-

2 Kertész (2006: 204).

cal framework and outcome. The second (1.2) identifies and situates my artistic research position and personal background story. The third (1.3) elaborates on the artistic research strategy and methods applied in this project.

1.1. Introducing the artistic research project

Aims and objectives

My main aim in this artistic research project is to explore a contextually based approach to making choreography through looking at traumatic contexts of death and dying. The underlying interest is to investigate how such a socio-political approach might challenge and or augment the concept of choreography, as an artistic practice, including how it could contribute to illuminating and questioning the interrelationship between choreography and a socio-political reality in general, as I view choreography, both as a process and outcome, which simultaneously is shaped but also shapes my understanding of a social context.

This approach builds on the assumption that reflexive thinking and critical knowledge production are integral to a process-oriented methodology for working with choreography and dance. Thereby, it also implicitly challenges the conventional manners in which dance and choreography have largely been understood and conveyed.³ My intention is not to replace or overthrow this specific and craft-based knowledge. I rather want to add to this understanding a more contextual perspective of choreography that destabilizes the borders between aesthetics and ethics and politics.⁴

I approach this objective by looking at situations of grieving caused by traumatic events and losses related to death and dying with the purpose of constructing a choreographed performance trilogy. In this study, I want to describe and discuss my experiences gained from conducting this exploratory artistic research process, including the process of writing this dissertation.

³ For example, in art programs for dance through formalistically run composition classes drawing on the craft-based insight stemming from the legacy of Louis Horst (1975), Doris Humphrey (1956), Rudolf Laban (1922, 1966, 1974), Merce Cunningham (1992), and more recently, from the work of William Forsythe (1992, 1996, 2000, 2003).

⁴ In this effort I draw on the development brought on with the shift in continental European contemporary choreography and dance in the 1990s, marked by a strong conceptual emphasis and leaning, and with a turn towards more collaborative, interactive and interdisciplinary approaches. Shifts described by dance scholars such as André Lepecki (2006), Jeroen Fabius (2009: 346-61), and Jo Butterworth (2009: 177-94).

Project motivation

My interest in the topic of loss and grieving has a personal backdrop. In addition to being born into a family marked by untimely deaths, I grew up facing – far too many – such deaths of young people and friends. Before I had turned thirty, I had been touched by the deaths of more than twenty people who had died under dramatic and traumatic circumstances in my immediate social circles of relatives, friends, neighbours, and colleagues. Only later did I realize that this experience was not normal in a Northern European setting.

This meant that I became attentive to the potential impact of such experiences, but it resulted also in an impatient frustration over the veil of silence and denial that surrounded death in my society. If talked about at all, death would often be conflated with the state of grieving. For example in news coverage on sudden and tragic deaths, I would often hear statements such as: “How could *this* happen?” “We were not prepared for *this*!” These statements puzzled me. What did they refer to with the use of “this”: the shock and surprise that death exists and can hit hard? Or the painful hardship of bereavement and grief caused by facing such sudden losses? Even though death and grieving most often are interlinked as phenomena, they are not the same. Whereas death itself is neither good nor bad, the timing and what causes it can be experienced as either: as redeemable and welcome, or as heartbreaking and shocking, or even as foul and evil. The nature of the grieving process will therefore depend on the circumstances causing the loss, and the bereaved individual’s personal history with loss.⁵

I focus in this study on the complicated and traumatic grieving processes in which the impacts of trauma and grieving are intertwined. By the term “traumatic” I allude here to extremely stressful and life threatening events that rupture the social fabric of an individual’s and or a community’s existence.⁶ As clinical psychologist Judith Herman points out: “traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather as they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life.”⁷ With “grieving,” I refer to the emotional pain and suffering experienced when faced with traumatic losses related to death and dying.⁸ According to the psychologist/researcher Gurli Fyhr, grieving is “one of the most pervasive and ‘deep’ psychological process learned in life, partly due

5 Gurli Fyhr (1999: 35) and William J. Worden (2008: 8-9, drawing on Collin Murray Parkes (2002: 380).

6 On traumatic stress, for example, see Maggie Schauer et al (2005: 5).

7 Judith L. Herman (1997: 33).

8 Grieving is from a clinical perspective seen as an inherent part of the process of recovery from a traumatic experience. See, for example, Herman (1992: 175).

to its ability to activate prior losses.”⁹ In situations of prolonged or complicated grieving processes after traumatic events, this potency can be extremely forceful and overwhelming, and experienced as if unique.¹⁰ Grieving is not confined to the visible and social expression of mourning as it is observed in funeral rituals etc. It rather describes the raw emotion that lives on and abides no time or social limits in the wake of being confronted with a traumatic experience of loss.¹¹

However, it was my observations of the discrepancy and seemingly, dissociated relationship to death¹² and the prevalent uneasiness about grieving at large that provoked me to make this project. Despite being considered the loneliest act that we humans have to face,¹³ death is also a life premise that we all share.¹⁴ As none is exempted, we all have to relate to it in our lives. All in our own way, whether we like it or not. It hence also connects us, not only as human beings, but also to the larger ecology of nature itself with all the other species inhabiting this planet. From this perspective, death is a humbling corrective to an ethnocentric as well as egocentric outlook and policymaking, both on an individual and societal level. I believe that, when we process our personal encounters with death and grieving, this can change our outlook and behaviour. My assumptions are that this can enhance a stronger sense of sensory empathy and even a want to defy actions that could inflict violence and pain onto others.

For this reason, I am similarly interested in how my contextual exploration into death and traumatic contexts of grieving led me to rework the manner in which I approached choreography and viewed the process in this project.

This enquiry has also developed in part as a response to a certain stance on choreography that I have encountered within the mainstream field of dance and choreography over the years. Here, choreography seems to be valued as an artistic medium according to its ability to confirm prevailing norms in the contemporary dance scene about the art of dancing through demonstrating a mastery of

9 In Swedish: "Sorgen är en av de mest genomgripande och 'djupa' psykologiska processarna i livet, bland annat beroende på processens förmåga att aktivera tidigare förluster" (Fyhr, 1999: 33). All subsequent references to Fyhr are my translations.

10 On complicated grieving and bereavement, see, for example, Worden (2008: 1-2, 6-8).

11 Valerie M. Hope (2007: 172).

12 I am talking about my experiences from a European and North American perspective.

13 Jean-Paul Sartre (1984).

14 I distinguish here between an ontological premise for human actions, and simple essentialist claims of universalism and "sameness." Though death in general is a common everyday phenomenon in society, each death is experienced as highly personal and unique. Likewise applies for the grieving process that follows: some are gentle; others become more complex and prolonged affairs. I am focusing on the latter here.

technical skills and displaying the craft of dancing.¹⁵ With my contextual approach in this project, I wanted to escape this craft-driven and self-referential position that often encapsulates choreography. Despite the fact that I hardly challenge the convention of a black box setting in the staging, I nevertheless searched in this way for a less self-referential strategy to choreography. This want grew out of my interest for how we consciously or unconsciously produce or reproduce an outlook on life and society through our artistic endeavours. Though the mass media are presently the most dominating agency in producing and recycling viewpoints that impact us, the performing arts are also intentionally or unintentionally taking part in this with their methods and performances. I believe that these contributions take part in framing our experience of the reality we live within and our vision of what it could be. The project also relates therefore to my underlying interest in the interrelationship between fiction and fact in society – art-making and politics, particularly in the performing arts.

Core content and time frame

In short, this artistic research project on *Docudancing Griefscapes* comes out of my combined interest in both the fundamental and traumatic issues of loss and grieving related to death and dying, and the interrelationship between choreographic practice and society. This contextual approach to choreography is centred on the artistic process of making the performance trilogy *Life & Death*. Here, I approached the finality of death through probing into three specific, traumatic contexts of grieving, which differed vastly in scale and impact, from looking into the context of private loss and interpersonal grieving connected with a sudden accident and the loss of a dear friend, via focusing on our inevitable mortality and *memento mori*,¹⁶ that is, intrapersonal and anticipatory grieving connected to our finitude, to communal grieving. This means the loss experienced when a traumatic event strikes a whole society's or community's existence. The order of these topics was carefully planned: the objectives expanded from the individual interpersonal relation via the intrapersonal to the communal situation of grieving. In facing my own grieving prior to approaching the grieving of others, I sought

15 Susan Leigh Foster (2010: 15) describes, in her reading of the popular TV shows, *So You Think You Can Dance* and *Dancing with the Stars*, a similar phenomenon: how “the emphasis of the competition has remained on the execution of ... tradition.” As Foster underlines, this means that the participants’ work is judged from “their abilities to ‘take class’ – that is, to faithfully copy what another body was doing and then perform that movement fully.”

16 Latin proverb translated as “Remember you will die” or “Remember you must die.”

to enhance a reflexive and critical self-awareness towards the contextual differences embedded in the project. In this way, I wanted to ensure an accumulative progress as I developed the performance trilogy in a dialogical collaboration with the artists, informants and artistic advisers involved in the project. Through this process emerged an ethnographically based research strategy for making choreography. In this study, the core aim is to situate, describe and discuss the accumulated experiences from this composite process and point to some of its main implications. In sum, this artistic research project comprises three main, interwoven components: the choreographed (and video-documented) performance trilogy,¹⁷ the embodied experiences from participating in the process, and this written study.

I have constructed this last component through reflecting on the first two components and their relationship to the main themes of my artistic project, while drawing on a plethora of knowledge and insights, ranging from choreography and somatics, ethnography and qualitative research, to trauma - and performance studies.

Clarifications on the usage of words and concepts

Unless stated otherwise, I will use the words “trilogy” and “process” and “study” as shorthand in my text for these three interwoven components in the project: the choreographed performance trilogy, the artistic research process, and this written study. The word “project” will similarly refer to the artistic research project as a whole, including the process of writing this study. With “artistic research process,” I specifically refer to the series of actions used to create this project, including the fieldwork experiences from approaching three different contexts of grieving, and the processing of this information in order to develop and shape each performance in the trilogy and sharpen my artistic research focus. Through this process, I identified the core material used for constructing the performance trilogy, as well as the subsequent presentations, papers and this study on the artistic research project.

In the study I alternate between using the terms “artist” and “choreographer,” and therefore also between the terms “artist-researcher” and “choreographer-researcher.” The usage depends on what I want to emphasise: the artistic endeavour on the whole, the more craft-related concerns of choreography, or the research component involved in these two.

¹⁷ See <https://vimeo.com/album/3155472>. Password: docudancing

As the performance trilogy is also made in collaboration with artists coming from fields other than those of the performing arts, such as sound- and visual arts, I will normally refer to all of them by the term “artists.” If I specifically refer to those performing on stage, I will mainly use the term “performers,” rather than “dancers,” mainly because the trained dancers involved in the trilogy preferred to describe themselves as “performers” in the programme notes, but also as two of the performers in the last part of the trilogy actually came from a background of plastic theatre and acting. This makes the term “performers” seem more cohesive. The term also correlates with my preference for using the notions of moving and movements rather than dancing and dance to describe the focus of my work.

Overview of time frame, contextual setting, and dissemination of the project

Timewise, the artistic process began with two preliminary studies in 2001 and 2002, while the first framework of the artistic research project was outlined in early 2003 and the trilogy finalized in the period between autumn 2003 and autumn 2006. Then followed an intermediary period for finalizing the accounting and the reports to the funders, editing the video documentation, as well as exploring the possibilities for reworked versions of the performances and preparing for the next phase: the writing of this study, a process I began in 2008 by assessing the pool of material accumulated while making the trilogy.

Despite the fact that I largely developed the project through fieldwork done outside the Nordic countries – including London, Oxford, and Liverpool in England, The Hague in the Netherlands, Banja Luka, Mostar, Srebrenica, Bijeljina and Sarajevo in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Novi Pazar, Belgrade, Triptova/Guca, and Novi Sad in Serbia – the project contextually comes out of the field of contemporary choreography in a Nordic setting.¹⁸ The combination of supervisors involved in this project testifies to this; they came respectively from Sweden,

18 The main arena for the professional training of contemporary choreographers in the Nordic countries is within state-run conservatory-based schools with college or university status. In 2011 Finland, Sweden and Norway all offered an MA programme in choreography. In addition, both Finland and Sweden offer doctoral programmes in artistic research in the field of dance and performing arts. Norway has developed its special interdisciplinary equivalence, recognized by national institutions, though by 2011 it still had not led to a formal degree. The Finnish doctoral programme has been running since 1988, the Norwegian one since 2003, and the Swedish one since 2008. Denmark and Iceland are the exceptions, as they by 2011 had offered neither an MA nor a doctoral programme in choreography and artistic research. With the term Nordic I refer, in fact, mainly to the developments in Finland, Sweden and Norway.

Norway, and Finland: in the trilogy I drew on support from the artistic supervisors, the choreographer and professor Efva Lilja, formerly at the University College of Dance and Circus (DOCH) in Stockholm,¹⁹ and dance lecturer Ingunn Rimestad at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts (KHiO). In writing this study, I was supervised by the dance artist and professor Leena Rouhiainen and the dance historian and lecturer Hanna Järvinen, both at the Theatre Academy (TEAK), the University of the Arts Helsinki.²⁰

With regards to dissemination, the project has been presented both in a Nordic setting and elsewhere through the showing of the performances, press- and television-related coverage,²¹ papers and lecture-demonstrations at international conferences and seminars,²² and publications of articles internationally,²³ as well as collaboration with partners and informants in the course of the artistic research process, in particular, while developing the performance trilogy, which I shall outline next.

Synopsis of the performance trilogy Life & Death

Part 1: A Song to Martin (2003/2006)

The performance *A Song to Martin* addressed a personal experience of loss and mourning. The choreography was developed for a solo dancer and a remote-controlled electric wheelchair supported with video projections and a sound score based on documentary material, and was performed by me, the choreographer-researcher. The performance premiered at the theatre of KHiO in Oslo in October 2003.

The title refers to my friend Martin Hoftun, who died in an airplane crash in 1992 at the age of 28. He was a doctoral student in Oxford, who happened to be severely disabled and needed help in almost everything including turning round in bed during the night. He was dependent on a brace and a wheelchair as well as a closely-knit network of friends for managing his daily life. My bodily memory of his body and the physical handling that I used to assist him, in

19 See, for example, Lilja (2000a, 2000b, 2006) and Grete Refsum and Rimestad (2013).

20 See, for example, Rouhiainen (2003, 2007, 2008) and Järvinen (2006).

21 Including television coverage of the performance trilogy in the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporations (NRK) (Platou, 2006).

22 For example, at the conferences/seminars *Close Encounters* in Stockholm 2007, the *Colloquium of Artistic Research in the Performing Arts* (CARPA) in Helsinki 2009, and at the Nordic Summer University (NSU) 2009. Cf. *References: R6*.

23 See Andrew Morrison and Per Roar Thorsnes (2010: 255-294) and Roar (2010a: 72-81; 2010b: 37-60; 2011: 284-305).

combination with the presence of the loss he left in me, explains the subtitle of the performance: “a study in the anatomy of grieving.” The aim was to translate my private grieving and give it a body in the choreographed performance that could have a public interest and relevance. The performance *A Song to Martin* came out of an auto-ethnographic fieldwork into our shared past and my individual process of grieving. Through this enquiry emerged the artistic strategy and methodological approach to choreography that was grounded on contextual background research. In Chapter 5, I will examine the process that led to the performance and this emergent strategy, which I advanced in the following two parts of the trilogy.

Part 2: A Rehearsal for Mortals (2005/2007)

The performance *A Rehearsal for Mortals* addressed our mortality and finitude. The choreography was made and performed in collaboration with three dancers, two funeral bureau agents or undertakers, and a sound artist (on live-electronic in a surround system), supported by video projections. The premiere was at Dansens Hus in Oslo, the national stage for dance in Norway, October 2005.

Here, I explored how to evolve the artistic research strategy and method that had emerged in *A Song to Martin* through involving other performers in a fieldwork-based, choreographic process, which was based on a fieldwork into the funeral industry. In following the daily work of funeral directors and staff at a crematorium, we probed into the social logistics of dealing with death and its remains. We combined this with exploring the internal physiological processes in the body, especially related to death and dying. This focus explains the performance’s subtitle: a study of the physiology and pathology of dying, and the practical matters related to Death. I will describe and discuss this process further in Chapter 6.

Part 3: An Unfinished Story (2006)

The performance *An Unfinished Story* addressed a situation of communal grieving. The choreography was made and performed in collaboration with five performers and a sound artist. It utilized a manual wheelchair, an installation of chairs, and a video projection, and was devised to have the audience surrounding the performers on a shared floor. The premiere was in Vijecnica, the old national library in Sarajevo, in June 2006.

The performance was developed mainly on location in Belgrade and Sarajevo and with performers and artists from Oslo, Belgrade and Sarajevo. This cross-cul-

tural dimension added a new challenge to the contextually based approach that had evolved in the previous parts of the trilogy. Here, the social-political context was the post-traumatic aftermath of the Bosnian War (1992-1995) in the former Yugoslavia. The objective was to create a performance that dealt with this legacy, and what it meant to live within this traumatic context marked by irretrievable loss and painful memories. Movement wise, we approached this challenge through exploring physically what constituted our physical balance and the bodily states of the psychosomatic reaction patterns that tended to occur when coping with post-traumatic stress. This focus also explains the subtitle given to the performance: “a study in the neurology of loss.” I will situate and discuss this process in more details in Chapter 7.

Research outcome

The trilogy resulted from a process based on transdisciplinary background research and ethnographic fieldwork into the three specific socio-political contexts, marked by loss and grieving, due to the interstice of death and dying. Out of this process, each performance in the trilogy was constructed and embodied. The performances are documented on video, and a three-camera edited version of each has been made available online.²⁴ This video complements my efforts to describe, situate and discuss the processes involved in constructing the performance trilogy and writing this study.

The two key concepts in this project, *griefscape and docudancing*, which will be elaborated throughout the study also emerged from this process as a research outcome, but need to be introduced. Griefscape describes the affective and entangled, though often ephemeral and invisible, impact that a traumatic context of grieving can have in circumscribing and shaping our lives through a forceful presence of what is absent and missing. As a term, griefscape thus refers to the ambient experience of grieving that occur within a socio-political reality or context marked and haunted by an earlier traumatic event. Trauma is here understood as a historical embedded discourse and experience, which, I believe, despite being perceived experientially and subjectively, can be intersubjectively understood and shared.²⁵

24 On <https://vimeo.com/album/3155472> with the password: docudancing

25 On such a socio-cultural understanding of trauma, see, for example, Ann Cvetkovich (2003: 17-18) or Avery F. Gordon (1999) or Diana Taylor (2006: 1674-77).

Through the use of contextual background research, ethnographic fieldwork, and documentary material in this artistic process emerged the other key concept in this project: *docudancing*. The strategy of docudancing provided me with an extensive amount of data and material on each of the three contexts of grieving. Through processing this information, I was able to clarify and delimit my artistic focus in the project, including identifying the bodily perspectives that I pursued in embodying each context of grieving, which resulted in what I call a *choreosomatic* approach to movement development. This meant that I developed and composed movements structures based on a somatic understanding of the body, rather than only on aesthetical grounds, that is, based on a first-person experience of one's own body, rather than only on the visual aesthetics of the dancing body. The contextual and ethnographic approach of docudancing also resulted in a pool of documentary material, which both supported the exploratory studio work and could be used to contextualize the performances in their staging. In this way, my investigative effort into the socio-political contexts became an integral and fundamental part of the choreographic process itself.

In sum, the overall research outcome of my artistic research project therefore lies firstly in the embodied experiences from this process that sharpened and refocused my artistic practice. However, this impact is manifested in the live presentations and the video documentations of the trilogy, the lecture presentations and the articles on the different parts of the project, and in this written study. Here, through reporting on and discussing the artistic processes involved in the project from a choreographer's point of view, I can offer a specific insight into the embodied outcome of this artistic research project and the way in which it augmented my understanding of choreography. On a more general level, through dialoguing with other fields of studies, I can situate and discuss what contextually based choreography entails and how my project has contributed to this with new insight.

The scope of this study

More than a chronological description of the cyclic multitasking involved in creating and producing the actual performance trilogy, this study is a post-reflection on the composite processes involved in the artistic research project. In this study, I self-reflexively attempt to explicate *how* and *in which way* the background research and fieldwork into the three different contexts of grieving became an integral and defining factor for developing the project and its per-

formance trilogy. The Figure below shows a structural overview of this project and its artistic research process:

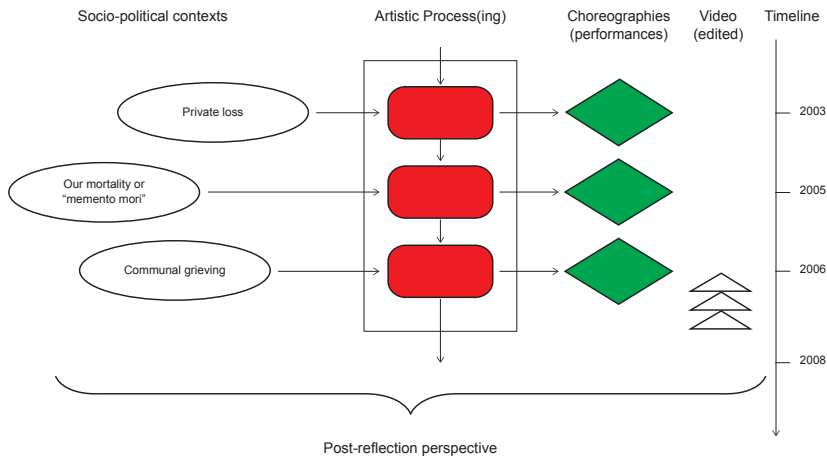


Figure 2. A structural model of the post-reflection perspective.

Through my accounts and reflections on the project, I am giving its ephemeral choreographic processes a body in this study. I therefore consider the writing of this study in itself as a performative act that performs the artistic research outcome of this artistic research project.²⁶

In writing this study, I am venturing into a rather uncharted territory of artistic research in and through choreographic practice and thinking, but through this effort, I hope to contribute to shedding light on the field, its creative knowledge production and practice in a way that can also have a relevance to other practising choreographer-researchers engaged in artistic enquiries. This concern has made me question what insight to include and not to take for granted when I write about the transdisciplinary approach in my project. These considerations have been challenging, because what might seem obvious and superfluous for one researcher or artist is not necessarily for another, just as little as the experience of sensing a perfect equilibrium, while moving at racing speed and in partial vertigo, is common knowledge for everybody.

26 An issue I discuss in Chapter 8.2.

Organisation of the study

The study has eight chapters. They are organised under four sections that I call Parts, ordered from First to Fourth, as performances normally are composed and perceived through their different parts. The *First Part – Framework* consists of the tripartite Chapter 1 *Facing the End – through a contextual approach to choreography*. Here, I introduce (1.1) the project, (1.2) my research position, and (1.3) the artistic research strategy and methodological approach. In the *Second Part – Optics*, which includes Chapters 2 to 4, I survey and situate the main research perspectives that influenced the project and informed my artistic research process as well as the writing of this study. Grouped in pairs of interests and organized in the three chapters, I view these perspectives as lenses that direct my outlook on the socio-political contexts of both grieving and choreography in this artistic research project. Together, these perspectives constitute the kaleidoscopic optic that I launch in Chapter 2 *Ethnography and Artistic Research* as a model for grasping the transdisciplinary nature of this project. Here, I also explain how my understanding of artistic research builds on the developments of self-reflexivity as well as the turn to performance and the performative in qualitative research methodology, as seen particularly within the field of ethnography.²⁷ In Chapter 3 *Choreography and Somatics*, I clarify my outlook on choreography and the body. In the first subchapter (3.1), I trace my understanding of choreography, both artistically and conceptually. Through mapping out my professional background and interest in the field,²⁸ I situate some of the practices and or perspectives that have especially nourished my choreographic approach in this project.²⁹ With this archive, I also ground my interest in somatics, which I highlight in the second subchapter (3.2). Here, I move from an overview of the concept of somatics and its development, to introduce body practitioners and body practices that in particular influenced my understanding of the body in this project. In connecting this impact to the general move towards kinaesthesia in contemporary dance and choreography³⁰, I discuss how somatic practices contributed to redefining my understanding of the dancing body and choreographic practice. In Chap-

27 Ethnography: Norman K. Denzin (1997, 2003), Carolyn Ellis (1997, 2004), and Daniel W. Heaton (2002). Artistic Research: Esa Kirkkopelto (2008), Henk Borgdorff (2004, 2007, 2009) and Brad Haseman (2006, 2007).

28 Informed by Lepecki (2004, 2006), Fabius (2009), and S. L. Foster (1986, 1997, 2011).

29 Such as Margaret N. H'Doubler, see H'Doubler (1940), Janice Ross (2000), and Thomas K. Hagood (2001); Halprin, see Halprin (1995) and Ross (2007); and the Judson Dance Theatre, see Ramsay Burt (2006) and Sally Banes (1987, 2003).

30 Fabius (2009: 346-361).

ter 4 *Trauma and Performance*, I probe into the relationship between these two phenomena. In the first subchapter (4.1), I introduce the concept of trauma, post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD)³¹ and the impact of traumatic events. In comparing this impact with the affective effect of photographic stills,³² I treat and explore trauma as a historically embedded and socio-cultural discourse.³³ In the second subchapter (4.2), I expand on this perspective through looking at how the performative impact of choreographed performances can resemble trauma. Despite being dissimilar categories, they are both experienced bodily, while being grasped only partially and recalled in flashbacks as gestures of the still.³⁴ In this way, they can both rupture the sense of a linear temporality as they may cause an effect long after the original events have taken place.³⁵

In *Third Part – Process*, consisting of Chapters 5 to 7, I focus on the artistic research process: how I defined and approached the socio-political contexts, processed my findings and developed the performance trilogy. I begin with situating my understanding of grieving as a traumatic context in this project, then turn to each part of the trilogy. In Chapter 5 *A Song for Martin*, this means describing how I approached private grieving, as an interpersonal experience brought on from the sudden and violent death and loss of my friend Martin Hoftun in 1992. Through this process of making the first part of the trilogy, there emerged an artistic and methodical strategy for making choreography based on ethnographic fieldwork, background research, and the use of documentary material. In Chapter 6 *A Rehearsal for Mortals*, I explore this emergent artistic research strategy further by including other artists into this fieldwork-based approach that here contextually addressed our mortality, that is, the intrapersonal, anticipatory grieving related to the existential challenge of facing our finitude, which resulted in the second part of the performance trilogy. Here I will outline the practical and

31 Such traumatisation results from exposure to life-threatening events in the past that is re-lived or re-experienced involuntarily in the present as if it was happening all over again, inducing bodily reactions of overwhelming sensorial impact. See, for example, Herman (1992: 33, 47) and Pat Ogden (2006: 3-5).

32 Drawing on Roland Barthes (1981), Susan Sontag (2003), Marianne Hirsch (1999), and Barbara Zelizer (1998).

33 This approach to trauma "emerges in response to the demands of grappling with psychic consequences of historical events," to quote Cvetkovich (2003: 17-18), and draws, like her arguments, on cultural and literary studies influenced by psychoanalysis, post-structural and feminist theory, which, in addition to Cvetkovich (2003), is voiced among others of Peggy Phelan (1997), Cathy Caruth (1995), Rebecca Schneider (2009), and Taylor (2006).

34 Schneider (2009). This phenomenon is also discussed by Lepecki (2000), who builds on C. Nadia Seremetakis ideas on the memory of the senses and the still acts (1996: 23-44).

35 Cf. Tracy C. Davis (2010: 142-167).

conceptual premises that framed this artistic process, and describe how experiences and information were gathered, and the findings handled and processed into the choreographed performance. I end the chapter with discussing the artistic dilemmas of “exhausting choreography” that surfaced in this process,³⁶ and describe the choreographic outcome through sharing personal impressions as the choreographer. In the tripartite Chapter 7 *An Unfinished Story*, I examine the process of making the last part of the performance trilogy. Here, I challenged the previously developed strategy by adding a cross-cultural setting as I approached the socio-political context of communal grieving relating to the traumatic legacy of the Bosnian War (1992-95) and its complicated grieving processes.

In *Fourth Part – Reflections*, composed of the final and bipartite Chapter 8 *Tracing Life & Death: recounting insights, choreographing a future*, I look at the challenges and insights arising from the artistic research process of docudancing griefscapes. In the first sub-chapter (8.1), I discuss the importance of ensuring a critical distance in this contextual approach to choreography,³⁷ and how this need impacted the choreographic process and the conceptual understanding of dancing. In the second sub-chapter (8.2), I focus on the two key concepts, docudancing and griefscape, that emerged as a research outcome out of this project, as well as the significance of this study for creating a space for making observations and reflections that otherwise would have remained unarticulated and lost. In interlinking my thoughts on choreography and context, I will end with a discussion on choreographic practice and the political.³⁸

1.2. My research position

Situated knowledge and the choreographic-I, and my research position as choreographer-researcher

My composite role as an artist and researcher in this project offers no neutral outside position. On the contrary, I side with feminist thinkers such as Donna Haraway, who claims that no knowledge production takes place in a vacuum and, therefore, rather produces “situated knowledges,”³⁹ simply because, as dance scholar Jaana Parviainen points out, “[a]ll knowers are situated – historically, cul-

36 A concept drawing on Lepecki’s notion of “exhausting dance” (2006).

37 I draw here on issues discussed in “the artist as ethnographer” by Hal Foster (1996: 171-204).

38 Especially drawing on Mark Franko (2007).

39 Haraway (1988).

turally, socially, spatially, temporally, and kinaesthetically.” From this viewpoint it follows that “[k]nowledge is always self-referential and reveals something about the knower.”⁴⁰ This study is situated on a similar outlook. Like Parviainen, I am therefore indebted to the paradigmatic shift in social sciences and humanities that occurred in the mid-1980s. This shift was in part due to the crisis of representation and legitimation in qualitative research,⁴¹ and caused a self-reflexive turn that has over the last decades opened up to a different “writing culture”⁴² and produced a methodological plurality.⁴³ In the arts, this development concurs with a similar crisis related to the artistic sign, which subsequently also produced a self-reflexive and critical questioning of the role of the arts and the artists, and the institutional production system of arts etc.⁴⁴ In the field of choreography the impact of this shift can be observed, for example, in the growing interest in artistic-research⁴⁵ and in the conceptual turn towards performative strategies that, according to Lepecki, conceptually exhausted the notion of choreography as it came to be known in the 20th century.⁴⁶

For me as an artist working with choreography the most striking outcome of this shift is seen in the emerging plurality of artistic strategies used for conceiving choreography.⁴⁷ This development resonates with the outcome of the performative turn that artistic- and practice-based research in the arts have taken on in the last decade, with contributions from dissimilar researchers, such as Andrea Bolt, Esa Kirkkopelto, Brad Haseman and Henk Borgdorff.⁴⁸ In this situation of methodological plurality combined with Haraway and Parviainen’s claims on situated knowledge, I will therefore introduce the notion of the *choreographic-I* to better situate my outlook on my research position as a choreographer-researcher here. The notion draws on the concept that autoethnographer

40 Parviainen (2002: 12).

41 This crisis came out of a critical questioning of research methods and means of representation, particular within ethnographic research, voiced by concerns raised by gender studies and post-colonial theory. For an overview, see, for example, Denzin (1997: 3-5, 17-18), or look into the writing of James Clifford and George E. Marcus (1986) and Clifford (1988). I return to this issue in Chapter 2.

42 Clifford (1986).

43 Denzin (1997: 19).

44 See, for example, H. Foster (1996: 71-73, 124).

45 I include in this growing interest not only the research developments conducted through formal degree programs, but also the artistic developments work explored by choreographers in the field such as Heine R Avdal, Boris Charmatz, Meg Stuart, Tino Sehgal, Wayne McGregor to mention a few.

46 Lepecki (2006). Here, in *Exhausting Dance*, he pinpoints this development. See also Fabius (2009).

47 An observation shared with dance scholar Susan L. Foster (2011: 71-2).

48 See Hasemann (2006, 2007), Kirkkopelto (2008), Bolt (2008), and Borgdorff (2004, 2007, 2009).

and sociologist Carolyn Ellis calls the *Ethnographic-I*,⁴⁹ which she applies to situate her autoethnographic approach and research position as a qualitative researcher studying social phenomena through fieldwork. Instead of claiming the role as an objective and neutral observer detached from the researched, Ellis considers the researcher as a self-reflexive and active participant or subject in the research process. She thereby underlines how ethnographic research is always relational.⁵⁰ According to ethnographer Garance Maréchal, autoethnography differs from ethnography as a qualitative research strategy because it focuses on the writer's subjective experience rather than aiming primarily to describe others' social systems of understanding or meaning making. Instead, she states it can be defined as a research strategy that combines and explores the personal experience of the researcher to wider cultural, political, and social meanings and understandings.⁵¹

Though my artistic research project originates and relates to another field of enquiry than ethnography and autoethnography per se, I heavily draw upon ethnographic tools and methods in my artistic research strategy here. This influence is evident, especially in my want to combine the use of fieldwork with autoethnographic self-observations and self-reflexive critique, both in making the choreographed performances and writing this study. Therefore, partly to point out these, perhaps parallaxic, resemblances and features that my composite research position as a choreographer-researcher here has in common with the autoethnographic research position and its ethnographic-I, I introduce the notion of the *choreographic-I*.⁵² Rather than simply evoking associations to another but core function that choreographers normally fill, namely, as the first audience of a choreographic work, I use the notion to steer the attention towards what situates my outlook and embodied knowledge in this project. This explains why I developed this artistic research project in the triangulation between three different but intertwined positions: As an individual with a personal background story; as a choreographer with a professional training and practice⁵³; and as a researcher

49 Ellis (2004).

50 Ellis (2004: xix-xx).

51 Maréchal (2010: 43-35). For more information on autoethnography, see for example, Ellis (2004).

52 For conceptual clarification: whereas the notion of the *choreographic-I* primarily refers to the autoethnographic subject and its self-reflexive role in the choreographic research process, *the artist as ethnographer* refers to the artistic strategy that is applied in this project.

53 Built on a practice-based studio training in an art discipline marked by a history of conflicting traditions.

with a transdisciplinary perspective and approach to artistic research.⁵⁴ In this node of intertwined positions, I am situated as the choreographic-I in my role as the choreographer-researcher in this project.

This view on my role and research position is informed by the methodological plurality that has evolved out of artistic- and practice-based research⁵⁵ as well as critical theory and qualitative research. In addition to the above-mentioned situated knowledge and autoethnographic approach,⁵⁶ this input also includes sociologist Norman K. Denzin's notion of reflexive performance ethnography with his stance that scholarly writing is to be considered as a performative event.⁵⁷ A stance similar to what performance studies scholar Peggy Phelan explores and argues for in her book *Mourning Sex*.⁵⁸ Informed by these influences, I also probingly explore my performative and narrative role and identity as an artist-researcher in this artistic project. However, as my project and its methodological approach did not rise out of a neutral ground or vacuum, but has an autoethnographic backdrop that shaped my research interest, I want to give an outline of this backdrop also in order to better contextualize and situate my research position in this project. I base this background account on particular and significant experiences, which, directly or indirectly, have framed and impacted my artistic outlook. In playfully calling this account "my private bio-politics,"⁵⁹ I point both to the complicated weaving of private and socio-political circumstances that

54 As a choreographer I have to balance the demands of craftsmanship and art, two concerns which at times may come in conflict. In similar way, I pay attention to my individual life story and the distinction between the personal and the private in the arts, or what in psychoanalytical terms are called "projections." My background from social sciences and humanities supports this endeavour as well as reminds me of the rigour required for undertaking a research project.

55 See, for example, Esa Kirkkopelto (2008), Henk Borgdorff (2004, 2007, 2009), and Brad Haseman (2006, 2007).

56 See Haraway (1988) and Ellis (1997, 2004).

57 Denzin (2003).

58 Phelan (1993:143).

59 The concept is a playful elaboration of the notion of "bio-politics" that Michael Foucault employed to address the impact of social and political power on all aspects of human life (2007). Through this focus on power, Foucault stresses the complex interrelationship between biological and historical and political development (1984: 143,151-2). However, I will not discuss his viewpoints further here, as the concept "my private bio-politics" refers firstly to the performance *My private bio-politics*, which was made by the Bosnian-Serbian artist Saša Asentić (2007) in co-operation with performance theoretician and dramaturge Ana Vujanović. According to the programme note, the performance addresses the problems of dealing with macro and micro conditions framing the dance scene in which it appears and, henceforth, questions about how to locate 'one's own (private and public) specificity.'" See *References, R1*.

subtly shape an individual's life in general, and to the entangled issues involved in rendering such a personal background story.⁶⁰

“My private bio-politics” and the autoethnographic backdrop

By growing up on a farm I was raised facing the cycle of life, which included hunting, killing, slaughtering and devouring the prey. Though death and killing were considered a necessary part of life, this part was never something exercised with indulgence, and it always felt like a rupture each time I witnessed it as a child. Nevertheless, I was still exposed to death and dying with all its goriness as an integral part of life. Death and dying was not a topic shunned. Loss and grieving over beloved family members, on the other hand, had affected all the grown-ups in my large and extended family severely. They had few words or concepts for easing that situation. As children, we were kept away from attending funerals, but could freely witness the slaughtering and butchering of animals up close. I grew up in this what I now conceive as a schizophrenic dichotomy: between an integral understanding of being part of the cycle of life with its death and dying on the one hand, and being marked by unmentioned and prolonged grieving on the other.

I did not realize to what extent this background had informed my choice of research topic until I performed the first part of the performance trilogy, *A Song to Martin*, for an audience that included older members of my family. As I came on stage and saw them in the audience, I instantly understood that the performance was not about my loss and grieving over my friend Martin alone. It was simultaneously also my response as a second- and third-generation family member to losses that had never been adequately addressed or articulated – losses that had subsequently remained as unconscious family wounds, without being resolved. It was a powerful sensation and realization. It felt as if I was stumbling onto a larger stage: dancing with ghostly matters and touching upon emotional layers beyond my own immediate context and understanding. This installed in me a hypersensitive reflexivity as I approached the remaining parts of the trilogy.⁶¹

60 Methodologically and epistemologically, such constructions may often raise discussions and questions, for example, related to agency and trustworthiness but, framed in an autoethnographic perspective, these questions also highlight the very issues at stake. According to philosopher Edward S. Casey, the act of remembering and memory involves itself in a “creative transformation of experience.” This potential in the transformational role of memory means that recollection can be seen as a search, which can also be used to reclaim experiences that otherwise would have got lost (Casey 1987: 15-16).

61 The first outline of the trilogy was made in 2001.

Bosnia – and a story about unsettling discoveries

By being born among the fields of the Norwegian countryside in the early 1960s, it was not obvious that forty years later I should find myself in the deep forest of Eastern Bosnia commemorating the victims of the Srebrenica genocide, least of all as a choreographer. This trajectory is what I mainly address here.

The first time I visited the region that is often referred to as the West Balkans⁶² was in 1985. It was before the fall and disintegration of the country we used to call Yugoslavia, which geographically made up the western part of South-Eastern Europe. It was only four years after President Josip Broz Tito's death, and Yugoslavia was still considered as the most open and prosperous of the then-communist-run East European states. Prior to my visit, I had already been taking part in a summer programme in neighbouring Hungary two years earlier, travelled extensively to most of the eastern parts of Central Europe, and gained a scholarship to study at Karl Marx University⁶³ in Budapest for the spring term of 1986.

This meant that when I eventually went to Bosnia for the first time in 1994 I was not a tabula rasa: I was familiar with the area and the recent history of communism in Eastern Europe.

However, this time the situation was completely different. There was a war on. There were no tourists on the Croatian beaches. I came in April 1994 to visit a friend, Anita Schrader McMillan, who was working in one of the several refugee camps that were hosted in the deserted tourists resorts along the Croatian coasts during the war. During a ceasefire, I accompanied her on a mission to Mostar, the main city of Herzegovina, which had approximately 130 000⁶⁴ inhabitants at the outbreak of the war in 1992. The city is situated inland, a three-hour bus ride from the Adriatic coast, which was (and still is predominantly) controlled by the Croatian government. The journey to Mostar would come to leave deep imprints. For the first time, I experienced the totality of war.

I found myself walking in the kind of footage I had seen numerous times on television, only to realize that I had excluded the life of ordinary people while watching such states of emergencies flickering over the screen. I became aware

62 The Balkans is a contested concept among groups of intellectuals in the region, because of its imperialistic connotations fusing exoticism and savagery, marking them as the European 'other.' For insight into this discussion, see, for example, the Bulgarian historian Maria N. Todorova (2009).

63 Karl Marx University was renamed after 1990 and is today called the Corvinus University of Budapest.

64 Source: Bosnia and Herzegovina Federal Office of Statistics, see <http://www.fzs.ba>

of how I conveniently had erased the obvious: that people living under such conditions still had to live their daily lives and provide for themselves, to survive regardless of the circumstances. I realised how the news footages I had seen had been mainly shot from the angle of the protected viewer, depicting helmet-clad soldiers in tanks as a background for war reporters, who wore bullet-proof vests at a safe distance from any possible threats, reporting on the extraordinary incidents and strategic developments, not on the exposed and unarmed civilian who risks his or her life when leaving the house to fetch food or water. The protection shield that the television screen had provided was shattered as I found myself walking along the streets of downtown Mostar with a local survivor. I was warned that any photograph taken could provoke bullets in return from hidden snipers. The streets were scattered with burned-out car wrecks and patrolled by UN tanks and expensive cars. The latter were equipped with dark windows and operated without registration plates, and belonged to the black marketers and paramilitary groups that controlled the area, in stark contrast to the vulnerable situation for civilian pedestrians who were easy preys for the invisible snipers monitoring the streets. Our guide took us through the cityscape while pointing out streets to be avoided due to the likely threat of snipers. I did not see any windows with unbroken glass panes; they all seemed to have been replaced by plastic sheets marked with UN emblems, or simply been boarded up, with either planks, sandbags or bricks.

Armed paramilitary groups roamed the city. They could at any time turn up at people's homes requesting money, television sets and other goods, or simply taking over the flat and evict the owners from their homes. Such situations had become part of everyday life in the city. There was no justice. No police to call on.

It is hard to convey – or understand, for an outsider – what it is like to live under such circumstances. As one of my informants in Belgrade said later in 2000 about her experiences of living under the rule of Milošević during the wars in the 1990s: “Everything seemed so surreal that you thought you were dreaming. You wanted to pinch yourself in order to wake up, but only to realize that the reality that surrounded you was more surreal than one's dreams.”⁶⁵ Despite the feeling of being captured in a reality that seemed too surreal to be true, like a passing nightmare, the situation was nevertheless urgently present and real. In Mostar it all came down to staying alive, physically unharmed.

65 From fieldnotes September 2000.

In the years that followed, the impact of the visit became an experience floating within me as a single fragment of a larger socio-political mosaic, which I could not integrate into the fabric of my busy life at home, but the impression from the visit stayed with me as a nagging friction. The most unsettling feeling was the strange familiarity I experienced in the paramilitary men strutting their machine guns on the street corners in the harbour town of Split. I recognized the kind of brutes I knew from my childhood schoolyard in Norway, ‘small’ minds with big muscles or powerful tools who enjoyed exercising power over others, and holding others’ destinies in their hands. Between the age of 9 and 15 I was trapped in a school where every recess seemed like a living nightmare or *Catch-22*. As I grew up on a farm in the countryside I had little choice of schooling. I was bussed to a school in a proud working class village nearby. Here I was caught up in an inherited class division between farmers and farmhands, those who owned and those who did not own their own land, despite the fact that this division of our grandparents’ childhood had lost its significance due to economic development and changes. The fact that I hated football, wore glasses and enjoyed reading and arts did not ease the tension. The situation offered no easy escape route, only a daily fight for survival. As an individual on a micro level, I learned there in a brutal way how the laws of physical strength and its regime of terror worked; how the past lives on through the passing on of forceful interpretative narratives from one generation to the next; and something about the consequences of not belonging to the majority in a social setting. From a sociological point of view, this taught me something about the impact socio-political circumstances might have on our lives. On a personal level, this situation forced me to face and deal with the hardships of man-made injustice, ignorance and repression in order to survive my early schooldays, with some sense of integrity, respect and dignity intact. I think this experience made me receptive to emotional stress that impacted others in trying circumstances around me. This sensibility and empathy made me particularly perceptible to situations and testimonies of victims and survivors of terror, warfare and or pogroms, such as those I encountered in Mostar.

However, my early schoolday experiences must, in some way, also have influenced my strong interest in politics, which made me, at the age of thirteen, join a political youth movement belonging to one of the major parties in Norway. Due to this political involvement and interest, I majored in secondary school in social sciences, with an emphasis on economics, sociology, statistics, and history, subjects I also studied for my first degree at the University of Oslo. Mainly because I believed that in order to take part in “changing the world,” I needed

to understand it better. In writing this study, I recognize to what extent this background frames the way I perceive the society that surrounds us and shapes my artistic approach to choreography.

Why choreography – from policy making to choreography and the politics of moving

Compared with most children growing up in urban environments, I had -- by growing up in the countryside -- few organized activities to choose from. I had, however, abundant access to outdoor playgrounds, which I could play in and explore spatially, nearly without physical boundaries. This situation offered me as an inquisitive and active child plentiful opportunities for free play and to undertake risky physical operations. As computer games were not yet a reality, we had to create our own, outside, in which moving and imagining were intertwined. The plays we invented were always developed in close relationship to our physical surroundings, thick forests, riverbanks, creeks, water-falls, fields and meadows, bridges, barns and old abandoned houses. This nearly endless physical access to playgrounds gave a sense of freedom that juxtaposed the fact that social life in general was framed and ruled by tight social control. Simply because the area was sparsely populated and topographically varied, it therefore offered playgrounds that escaped the close supervision of adults. In combination with the loss to deal with emotional pain, and a mother who taught my siblings and me social dances and basic gymnastics at home, this made playing and moving somehow an integral and important part of the way in which I could express myself.

In spite of practising basic folk- and ballroom dances from a young age, I first began my formal training in contemporary dance and ballet when I enrolled as a university student in Oslo, mainly because no such programme had existed where I grew up. Even though early on in Oslo I was encouraged by my dance teachers to pursue professional dance training, I did not think it was for me; I was too occupied with making the world more ecologically sustainable and fair. Hence, instead of pursuing dance, I earned an academic scholarship to Budapest and through that the chance to experience life behind the iron curtain and under a totalitarian communist regime. From my Hungarian experience, while studying the Hungarian language and focusing on a comparative study of gender roles and their impact on socialization processes, I learned informally that one should never trust any authority or public claims, without first questioning their political agenda and agencies; furthermore, life cannot be depicted in black and white, right

or wrong, without contorting it.⁶⁶ Just as important in this context, I tapped into the training and performance tradition of the Eastern-European avant-garde⁶⁷ in addition to continuing with my dancing. Even though my new dance teacher in Budapest suggested that I ought to pursue choreography, I had already by then been accepted for graduate studies at Oxford University and made other plans. The encounter with Oxford and the rigid class-divided British society under the hardships of needed reforms and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's iron rule made a tremendous impression on me as a young Norwegian brought up in the social democratic dogma of equality. Paradoxically in 1988, as an Oxford graduate I finally got the momentum at last to make a lateral shift and move to the arts. This was partly thanks to the pragmatic but supportive backing from my contemporary dance teacher in Oxford at the time, Shelley Pinto Duchinsky,⁶⁸ and the fact that I was accepted as one of two students for the choreography programme at the National Academy of Ballet and Dance in Oslo.⁶⁹

However, this shift to the world of professional dance caused another contextual shock. In the professional training in dance and choreography I encountered a completely different learning culture than the one I was used to from the Academic world. The biggest difference related to the use of studio-based teaching in dance, which offers none of the seclusion protecting a student in an academic programme at the University. On the contrary, this studio-based learning situation immediately exposes all the failures and shortcomings of the individual student to the rest of the group, often highlighted by the teachers' individual comments and responses. This extremely volatile position a dance student is studying in puts tremendous responsibilities on the people in charge of the teaching, in particular, as many of the students in the dance programme were still only teenagers when they entered the school. I was therefore struck by the reflexive deficit among the majority of the teachers I encountered. The inherent and unconscious projections of values going on in many of the classes were disturbing.⁷⁰ The only viable solutions at the time seemed to be either to

66 Cf. the work of the Hungarian novelists Péter Esterházy (1995, 2004), Imre Kertész (1996, 1998, 2000), and Péter Nádas (2011).

67 I trained with Gabor Goda and his company Artus in Budapest, see <http://www.artus.hu/en/> (accessed 12 June 2013).

68 Shelley Pinto Duchinsky had trained with Jose Limon and Merce Cunningham, among others.

69 In Norwegian: Statens Balletthøgskole. It merged with five other arts schools into the Oslo National Academy of the Arts (KHiO) in 1996, and I mainly refer to the school by this latter name.

70 See, for example, Telja Löytönen (2008) and Ann Green Gilbert (2005), as well as Solveig Styve Holte with Marte Reithaug Sterud (2014) whose performance lecture addresses this issue. See *References: RI*.

drop out or to dissociate⁷¹ oneself from the situation. As the first was rare, the latter became the norm. This option came with a cost as it created an instrumental, but in my opinion, desensitized relation to the body. These experiential observations reinforced the self-reflexive and critical questioning that had been honed through my earlier studies in social sciences. Together with my previous experiences,⁷² this redirected my attention towards the importance of paying close attention to the socio-political contexts we are situated in and the unarticulated values that frame our lives. This underlying concern has since been a common denominator in my artistic approach to choreography.

Choreographic understanding in transit – expanding perspectives

After a few years as a professional, working independently both as a choreographer and as a dancer for other choreographers,⁷³ I had accumulated more questions and concerns regarding the art of dance and choreography, which created a need for reviewing my artistic outlook and engagement.

In addition to my encounter with the contemporary dance scene in New York, shortly after graduation, which I expand on in Chapter 3, two artistic events in particular would serendipitously bring about major shifts in my artistic orientation that led to the development of this artistic research project. The first was my participation in The International School of Theatre Anthropology's (ISTA) tenth session in Copenhagen in 1996, and the other my participation in the post-graduate pilot project "Art as an Arena for Investigating Conflicts" hosted and organized by KHiO in 2000.⁷⁴

Through ISTA, which included the symposium on "The Performer's Bios" and the conference on "Theatre in a multicultural society," I met the accomplished Balinese dancer I Made Djimat and the theatre director and performance studies scholar Richard Schechner. Respectively, they introduced me to the tradition

71 The term refers to the psychological action of dividing the personality as a defensive response. In this case, I use it to describe a way of viewing and attending to the body instrumentally as an object, apart from oneself and the emotional impact of the situation. For a more clinical or pathological understanding of the term, see, for example, Onno van der Hart et al. (2006: viii) and Pat Ogden et al. (2006: 133-38).

72 That is, from my early school days and later stays in communist Hungary and class-riven England.

73 Such as Kristina Gjems, Lise Ferner, Ellen Johannesen (Karmaconsult), Francesco Scavetta, Anne Grete Eriksen/Leif Hernes (Dans Design), and Deborah Hay.

74 See report of project leader Mette Newth, former Rector of KHiO: http://www.humiliationstudies.org/news-old/archives/2004_02.html (accessed 13 March 2013). The project developed out of an initiative from the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and was funded by the MFA in Norway.

of Balinese dancing and to the field of performances studies. Both encounters would, in different ways, open up completely new horizons for me artistically. In the case of Djimat, this encounter created a sensory and bodily shock in which the difference between an aesthetic and a kinaesthetic response became startlingly real. This experience intrigued me artistically.⁷⁵ In 1996, I therefore went to Bali to study Balinese dance with Djimat. In combination with a course in dance history, and ethnography at The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim,⁷⁶ this gave me a time-out for reflecting bodily as well as conceptually upon my understanding of dance and dancing and the function of choreography, not at least the ethnocentric attitude I had encountered through my training. Hence, after my stay on Bali, I decided to study at the Institute of Performance Studies at New York University (NYU). In addition, to give me an opportunity to probe into questions that had been raised through my artistic practice, including my experience with cross-cultural projects,⁷⁷ the programme more importantly helped me to bridge the gap between my academic past and my professional art training and praxis. Here, I found a place where I could explore my interests in the interrelationship between artistic and performative practices and their socio-political contexts. In my artistic work I had repetitiously returned to intersections and the “no-man’s-land” between notions such as “high art” and “popular culture”;⁷⁸ “inside” and “outside”;⁷⁹ or, as here, between “life” and “death.” In drawing on a plethora of sources, traditions, and disciplines of knowledge and art, I was interested in what could be set in motion

75 The decision to study Balinese dancing with I Made Djimat came out of this surprising sensory experience. After first having watched his performances and found them too remote from my reality to capture me as spectator, I subsequently and half-heartedly participated in his introductory workshop to Balinese dancing, and experienced there a euphoric kinaesthetic shock. My body was totally consumed by the dancing. This contradictory experience between the visual and visceral impact of the dance made me extremely curious. Therefore, upon seeing his incredible performance in an improvisation performance with Steve Paxton among others shortly after, I promptly decided to study Balinese dancing in more detail, and asked I Made Djimat if he would take me on as a student, which he did.

76 See <http://www.ntnu.no/english>

77 Such as the collaboration with Amakhosi Theatre in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, in the period 1995 – 1997 that resulted in the performance *White Lies/Black Myths* that premiered in 1996. See Anne Britt Gran (2000).

78 Such as the performance *Skutt i hagestolen – kunsten med camping* (trl. “Shot in the recliner – the art of camping”) from 2000, which was a site-specific, low-tech, interactive performance happening performed on caravan sites in southern Norway and at the Momentum Nordic Biennial of Contemporary Art in Moss. See Nina K. Olsen (2000).

79 Such as the performance *Fra dalstrøka innåfor* (trl. “From the valleys beyond”) from 1998, which looked into the relationship between patriotism and chauvinism, and the core of xenophobia. See Gran (1998).

in-between these simple contrast ratios or binary positions and dichotomies, in the openings created between our pedestrian, everyday sense of kinaesthesia, “the art of dance,” and our associative cognition. With these preoccupations, few, if any, cities in the world can offer better conditions than New York City for studying contemporary dance and performance. The independent dance scene here carries the legacy and heritage of the Judson group and the Grand Union collective from the 1960s and 1970s,⁸⁰ which I had already benefited from through the professional training in dance, performance and composition I had received there after my graduation in Oslo.⁸¹ Hence, through studying at NYU I also got the chance to continue this training⁸² in the city that also provided a unique backdrop for studying performance studies. Mainly, because of its multicultural reality with a wide range of first-class artists and performers from a large number of cultural traditions and backgrounds, who perform in the city. This was of great importance to me, as I partly also wanted to formalize and ground the knowledge I had gained through extensive work with and within other cultures and in multi- or cross- cultural projects, such as my experiences from Brazil, southern Africa and south-east Asia, which had left a strong urge to challenge the ethnocentric attitudes that I had come across both in my own artistic field and my surroundings. Performance studies offered me conditions for doing this with its non-European and critical post-colonial perspectives on the performing arts, which for me also included studying with the Brazilian theatre director Augusto Boal, who developed “the theater of the oppressed.”⁸³ Together with insights on trauma studies, performativity and performance, my understanding of the history of the avant-garde and the impact of performing arts were challenged and critically reviewed.⁸⁴ In highlighting the complex and dynamic interrelationship between a socio-political context and a performative practice, I became aware of how traumatic events retroactively could lead to trauma cultures and body politics that could reinforce traumatising, while remain

80 I will expand on these groups in Chapter 3.1

81 Primarily linked to the independent study program New York Dance Intensive, which I will expand on in Chapter 3.1, and the Klein School of Movement and Dance. See <http://www.kleintechnique.com/>

82 In particular continuing my studies with Barbara Mahler and Susan Klein at the Klein School of Movement and Dance

83 See Boal (1992, 1995). In addition to: “Performing Black Aesthetics” (with the Kenyan scholar and playwright Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o); “Intercultural Performance” focusing on Latin America and its dance traditions (with Barbara Browning); and “East Asian performance” on East-Asian performance traditions (with Isabelle Duchesne).

84 Thanks to scholars such as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, Fred Moten (2003), Barbara Browning (1995), and May Joseph.

un-recognized or invisible as blind spots in society. This insight enhanced my tacit knowledge of history and sociology, and also pointed to the subversive potential that choreography can play when addressing this no-man's-land between disciplinary forms and genres, cultural differences and politics. In combination with my practices in somatics,⁸⁵ these inputs constituted a solid platform that sharpened my artistic focus, and contributed to my participation in the other major event that would come to shape my artistic direction: "Art as an Arena for Investigating Conflicts" in 2000.⁸⁶ This project involved six professional artists from each of the cities Oslo, Pristina and Belgrade. It commenced just a year after the Kosovo war had officially ended, but while President Slobodan Milošević⁸⁷ and his nationalist regime remained in power in Serbia and Montenegro. The project included a study trip to Kosovo and Serbia, and confronted me with the consequences of another warfare than the one I had seen earlier in Mostar. Instead of a war fought street by street on the ground, this one was settled through air raids and strategic bombing, and then followed with an invasion of international peacekeepers and relief organizations.⁸⁸ Moreover, the trip also exposed me to the consequences of everyday life for people living under Milošević's regime with its ceaseless propaganda and harsh post-war conditions, which, due to the embargo, led to shortages of all kinds. In encountering this complex and multi-layered reality, I benefited tremendously from the insights I had gained through performance studies on the topic of trauma, trauma cultures and body politics, and how post-traumatic stress can affect a whole society.⁸⁹

This project became the starting point for a renewed and ongoing relationship with the West-Balkans and the region of south-eastern Europe. By the end of 2001, I had already visited the region three times: first in March when I was invited to Belgrade to participate as a choreographer and performer in a performance

85 Relates to my parallel track of emerging myself in body practices, such as the Klein Technique, Feldenkrais and Asthanga Yoga that contributed to deepen my embodied insights and somatic perspective on the moving body while in New York.

86 Cf. fn. 74.

87 Milošević served as a president of Serbia and what was later called the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from 1989-2000.

88 On the war in Kosovo and its context, see, for example, Dan Josefsson (2000), Marco Jacquemet (2000), and Aage Borchgrevink (1999).

89 I studied trauma theory under Cvetkovich's supervision, who, from a socio-cultural perspective, treated trauma as a historically embedded phenomenon and discourse and focused on trauma cultures and body politics. My master's thesis built on and explored this approach and was entitled "Roaring Silences: 'Sounds Seen' through single frames. Representations of traumatic events revisited" (Roar 1999).

project,⁹⁰ then in August when I was engaged as an observer and guest teacher at the summer school for the University of Arts in Belgrade in Novi Pazar,⁹¹ and then finally in December when I attended the first Balkan Dance Platform (BDP) in Sofia, which since then has been organized as a bi-annual festival that gathers dance professionals from the whole of south-eastern Europe, including Turkey.⁹² These professional commitments and involvements in the area gave me a network and background that enabled me to take on the last part of the artistic research project on communal grieving after the Bosnian War.

Reviewing my choreographic outlook

When, as a choreographer-researcher, I have revisited my choreographic projects since 1991, I can see that they conceptually share a foundational feature: the artistic interest and need for contextual grounding.⁹³ My projects have therefore always included some kind of socio-political background research or scan that has explored and, hence, situated, informed and framed their thematic focuses and constructions. The artistic outcomes have, likewise, always tended to contain or relate to documentary references, directly or indirectly. This contextual orientation has both manifested and connected the projects to the politics of our everyday lives. As an artistic strategy, this has required of me as choreographer a demanding conceptual rigour in the compositional process, and of the audience a creative effort to complete the artistic work in the viewing situation, through drawing on their life experiences. This feature also points to what I believe is my underlying, core interest in this strategy: to address “the art of living” – our life experiences as human beings⁹⁴ – through choreographic means and the art of dancing, while, artistically, I am carrying on the dance heritage that began unfolding in San Francisco and New York in the late 1950s and early 1960s with its more pedestrian and egalitarian approach to dancing, which I had encountered

90 The performance *Made in Norway* by Mimart and their artistic director Nela Antonovic in Belgrade. See *References*, R1.

91 Invited by the theatre director Professor Ivana Vujic as part of a delegation from KHiO, who included the former Rector Mette Newth and the dance lecturer Ingunn Rimestad in addition to me. For more information on the University of Arts in Belgrade, see <http://www.arts.bg.ac.rs> (accessed 12.01. 2011)

92 I attended every BDP from 2001-2009, that is, in Sofia, Bucharest, Skopje, Athens, and Novi Sad.

93 I can recognize how my composite background may explain some of the recurring themes in my productions since I graduated in 1991. One of these critically relates to the construct of *us* and *the other* and our difficulty in facing “the stranger within,” which Julia Kristeva, as a linguist and psychoanalyst, has pointed out as the core issue of xenophobia (Kristeva, 1991), a topic I dealt with in the performance *White Lies/Black Myths* (1995), see Gran (2000).

94 Richard Shusterman (2000: 11).

first hand through my post-graduate dance training.⁹⁵ In combination with my early encounter with the Eastern European avant-garde and their performance traditions and the imprints from a rural upbringing, this gave me, among other things, a fearlessness: to pursue my objectives and deal with topics that for many affluent westerners might seem too crude or inappropriate, burlesque or macabre, direct or literal.

Despite eventual methodological objections to such renderings, I can see from this perspective how my artistic research position, concerns, and views in this project are intrinsically related to what I describe as “my own private bio-politics:” the socio-cultural circumstances that have impacted my formation as an artist-researcher. However, my main point here is that no artists or researchers rise out of a historical and artistic vacuum. Neither do I. This socio-political and contextual-oriented outlook is integral to my understanding of the field of choreography overall; my partial role in it is as an artist-researcher, as well as other choreographers’ and dancers’ contributions, including those of another generation, such as those involved in the Judson Dance Theater in downtown New York in the 1960s. In short, we all come from and relate to a specific socio-political and historical context. Therefore, as Martha Eddy argues, as a movement therapist-scholar discussing the field of somatics, “we need to establish precedents or the crediting of sources of thought and movement practice in classes, publications, and performance literature. The choice to name those who have taught us clarifies our history.”⁹⁶ For me her suggestion equally applies to the field of dance and choreography. In naming and acknowledging how embodied and bodily knowledge and craftsmanship, or know-how, have been passed on from one generation to the next through direct personal transmission in a studio-based practice, I believe we cannot only clarify our history but also become more aware of our artistic concerns and/or our artistic research positions. In discussing artistic research, Borgdorff points to a similar conclusion:

Artistic practices do not stand on their own; they are always situated and embedded. No disinterested understanding of art practice is possible, or even a naïve gaze. And conversely, no art practices exist that are not saturated with experiences, histories and beliefs. Research in the arts will remain naïve unless

95 It included meeting with Anna Halprin and working with Deborah Hay, Simone Forti, and Steve Paxton among others, who were all part of this unfolding. I will trace and expand on this heritage in Chapter 3.

96 Eddy (2002: 61).

it acknowledges and confronts this embeddedness and situatedness in history, in culture (society, economy, everyday life) as well as in the discourse on art.⁹⁷

His emphasis on the historical embeddedness of artistic practices also underlines my reasons for contextualizing my personal background story here. Like him, I believe such information adds a qualitative difference when one is trying to make sense of an art practice and artistic research, such as in this project. Through acknowledging what has influenced me autoethnographically, I believe therefore that this insight can illuminate the choices made and how my artistic project is situated within the larger realm of arts, both discursively and as a practice. From this research position and background, I will next move on to identify the artistic research strategy and methods I used in this project.

1.3. Strategy and methods

My artistic research strategy in this project evolved out of my choreographic practice and emerged as I developed *A Song to Martin*, the first part of the performance trilogy *Life & Death*, based on the use of contextual background research and ethnographic fieldwork. Through constructing the next two parts of the trilogy, in dialogue with my collaborators, I explored this contextual approach to making choreography. From my perspective as a choreographer-researcher, I will give a methodological outline of this artistic research strategy and approach in this chapter: first, through offering a brief overview of the research methods and tools, as well as the material utilized in this process; then, placing this artistic research strategy in an art-historical context; and finally, describing and discussing how this strategy conceptually framed my understanding of choreography as a situated practice in this artistic research project.

Overview of methods and material used

In the course of this artistic research process, I drew extensively on ethnographic tools and methods. This meant, for example, that during this process I took part as a participant observer; conducted informal and more structured interviews, collected material sources and also utilized multiple modes for taking fieldnotes, including the use of visual means (photographs, video, and drawings), audio recordings (Ipod, phone, and video), as well as writing (personal notebooks, logs, and blogging⁹⁸). The information obtained from these means was supplement-

97 Borgdorff (2007 a: 13).

98 With regards to blogging, see Morrison and Thorsnes (2010: 255-294).

ed with background research, based on extensive web searches and literature reviews,⁹⁹ and further supported by the collecting of information and samples of context specific objects relating to the three contexts of grieving. Such as wheelchairs, coffins, orthopaedic corsets as well as photographs and recordings. The overall purpose was to gain knowledge and understanding about the socio-political contexts that I addressed in the trilogy – for then subsequently to process this insight, in part through discussions and explorative studio work. In this way, I wanted the contextual background research and fieldwork to provide information and material that framed the artistic process, and shaped the development of the choreographic material as well as the construction of the compositional structures of the performances. This process-driven, contextual approach developed in close collaboration with the artists involved, through dialogical exchanges. This dialogue is an integral part of how I work choreographically. For this reason, I wish to stress that, in this study, I do not claim to account for my collaborators' experiences of this process. On the contrary, I approach this task not only with respect for those experiences but also with an awareness of the total outcome comprised in the project, which, in addition to this study, the live presentations and the video documentations of the trilogy, my lecture-presentations and articles on its individual parts, includes the embodied experiences left of its process in my collaborators and me, as well as our audience. In this study, I am therefore primarily focusing on my viewpoints and experiences from conducting this artistic research project, as a choreographer-researcher. From this angle, I look at what emerged through the artistic research process and discuss how these experiences impacted my way of thinking choreographically.

99 Drawing on multiple landscapes of knowledge, including practice as research (Borgdorff 2004 and Andrea Bolt 2004), performance studies (Phelan 1994, Taylor 2006, and Lepecki 2006); trauma studies (Cvetkovich 2003, Caruth 1996, Judith L. Herman 1992, Ogden 2006, Fyhr 1999, Sven-Åke Christianson 2002, and John Preston Wilson 2004); somatic practices encompassing anatomical, physiological and psychobiological insights about the body (Eddy 2002, Don H. Johnson 1995, and Linda Hartley 1995, 2004); qualitative methodological understanding of fieldwork-based ethnography (Denzin 1997, 2003, 2005; Ellis 1997, 2004; Robert Emerson et al. 1995; John Lofland 1984; and John van Manen 1988, 1994); and sociological case studies on how to address socio-political contexts (Gordon 1999, Owe Ronström 1992, and Julia Lawton 2000); while drawing on a socio-cultural understanding informed by postcolonial discourse (e.g. Stuart Hall 1991, 1997 and Frantz Fanon 1967) and queer- and feminist thinking, (e.g. Phelan 1997 and Judith Butler 1993). I expand on these insights in the Second Part.

The web search included sites operated by the major news agencies (the BBC, the New York Times, the Guardian, and Aftenposten et al.), international organizations and institutions (ICTY – United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and OSCE et al.), and various NGOs and companies (ranging from funeral agencies to individual artists). For a more extensive overview of the web sites used in this process, see *References, R1-R12*.

However, my findings here draw heavily on the composite material gathered throughout this process, including the empirical data and documentary material on the different contexts. Together, this constitutes the core research material that I use for writing this study.

The content of this research material is, in part, retrieved from my field notes as a participant observer making the trilogy through exploring the socio-political contexts and processing this accumulated insight into the respective three performances, bodily as well as compositionally. As already indicated, this artistic research process produced a rich pool of visual-, audio-, and written field notes. For example, there were recordings consisting of interviews with my collaborators, including the local informants and the professional experts, and extensive audio-visual documentation from the contextual fieldwork, the studio-based processes, the actual performances, as well as from Question and Answer sessions with audiences. In addition to this material come programme notes and press reviews of the performances, early project descriptions,¹⁰⁰ and articles and presentations produced while I was still in the process of exploring and developing the concept and scope of this artistic research project.

The remaining part of the research material I use in this study draws on the multiple strands of information and insights gained from other disciplines, which largely also supported the artistic process of constructing the performance trilogy. The difference is that the format of the written study allows a more systematic assessment and in-depth survey of this material.

In this operation, I utilized insights not only drawn from choreography¹⁰¹ and somatics,¹⁰² but also from qualitative research, particularly related to ethnographic tools and sociological approaches,¹⁰³ as well as history.¹⁰⁴ However, in

100 I consider the project descriptions sent to the major funds over the years as important field notes that both document and result from the artistic process and my conceptual clarification of the project. From this perspective the writing is not primarily a retrospective activity that takes place at the end of a research project, but a creative practice used to make sense of the process, through contextualizing and producing knowledge about a specific way of conceiving choreography, while in the process of making it. This viewpoint reflects the self-reflexive and ethnographic leaning of the project. Moreover, an application that is granted funding from Arts Council Norway also becomes part of a public record due to transparency reasons.

101 Drawing on a plethora of choreographers and dance artists, including Laban (1922, 1964, 1976), Forsythe (1992, 1996, 2000, 2003), Simone Forti (1974), Deborah Hay (1994), as well as dance scholars such as S. L. Foster (1986, 1997, 2011), Franko (1993, 2007), Lepecki (2006), and Fabius (2009).

102 See, for example, Eddy (2002, 2009), Hartley (1995, 2002), and Johnson (1995).

103 See, for example, Lawton (2000), Ellis (2004), Gordon (1999), Heaton (2002), and Denzin (1999, 2003).

104 Here, I refer both to general insight on relevant socio-political history, such as Tim Judah (2000) and Noel Malcolm (1994) contextualizing the wars on the Balkans in the 1990s, and to art and dance

framing my approach to grieving as a socio-political context, I drew likewise on perspectives gained from post-structural thinking¹⁰⁵ and performance studies,¹⁰⁶ and then especially studies relating to trauma studies.¹⁰⁷ This composite pool of knowledge and methodological influences offered me tools both for retrieving and contextualizing the artistic ideas and the materials I used for creating the trilogy and constructing this study. It is from this vantage point that I am *docudancing* griefscapes.

Mapping and context: the artist as an ethnographer and the realm of trauma

I will describe my contextual approach in this project as a choreographic exploration of “the artist as an ethnographer”: the concept that the art-historian and critic Hal Foster launched in his book *The Return of the Real*¹⁰⁸ to name the artistic strategy in which artists investigate social contexts as an indispensable method and an integral tool in their art-making. I came across his notion shortly after having developed the first work-in-progress of *A Song to Martin*, and was struck by how succinctly it captured the core concerns and dilemmas that I had encountered as a choreographer-researcher in my artistic research process and practice here, including how such an ethnographic approach brought forward insights that in addition to becoming the material for the artistic work also situated the artistic project within a broader historical, political and/or sociological framework. Moreover, Foster’s concept of “the artist as an ethnographer” is, like my project *docudancing* griefscapes, also grounded on an understanding of trauma. In Foster’s case it builds on his interpretation of deferred action, or “nachträglichkeit.”¹⁰⁹ the concept that Sigmund Freud once introduced to address how traumatic events only retroactively affect the individual and acquire a meaning that implodes commonly held notions of causality and temporality.¹¹⁰ The latter are issues that I discuss in Chapter 4 but will leave aside in this overview. Here, I primarily want to highlight how my emergent artistic research strategy in

history especially, such as Burt (2006) and Banes (1995; 2001; 2003) on dance after the Judson Dance Theatre in New York in the 1960s.

105 Such as H. Foster (1996), Barthes (1981), and Welsch (1997).

106 Such as Lepecki (2006), Phelan (1993, 1997), Davis (2010), and Richard Schechner (2006).

107 Including Cvetkovich 2003, Caruth 1996, Herman 1992, and Fyhr 1999.

108 Foster (1996: 171-203).

109 He interprets Freud through the reading of Jaques Lacan and Jean Laplanche, see Foster (1996: 28-32).

110 Odile Lesourne (2005), see also Foster (1996: 28-29).

this project relates and can be situated within a larger art context and discursive realm through this shared interest in trauma as a socio-cultural contingency. In similar ways to Foster's, my project rests on the assumption that the insights on trauma have radically altered how we perceive and understand ourselves as well as our societies.¹¹¹ Foster underlines how this phenomenon can be observed everywhere: "Across artistic, theoretical, and popular cultures there is a tendency to redefine experience, individual and historical, in terms of trauma."¹¹² When this tendency merges with the contrasting psychoanalytic thinking that trauma shatters the sense of self, excludes the subject,¹¹³ this creates a trauma discourse where "the subject is evacuated and elevated at once."¹¹⁴ I side with Foster that this trauma discourse potentially "resolves two contradictory imperatives in culture today: deconstructive analyses and identity politics. This strange rebirth of the author, this paradoxical condition of absentee authority, is" as Foster points out, "a significant turn in contemporary art, criticism, and cultural politics. Here the return of the real converges with the return of the referential."¹¹⁵ This is also the point that, for Foster, explains why in "our current state of artist-theoretical ambivalences and cultural-political impasses, anthropology is the compromise discourse of choice" for researchers, critics, and artist alike,¹¹⁶ despite the methodological and ethical problems that are embedded in the anthropological/ethnographical discourse.¹¹⁷ According to Foster, this ethnographic turn in the arts has created a new paradigm, which he discusses through introducing the notion of "the artist as ethnographer."¹¹⁸ This is the notion I use to illuminate and contextualize my artistic research strategy in this project.

I thereby suggest that the project can be understood as an expression of this ethnographic turn in the arts, in part, because my project is driven by a shared preoccupation for what Foster calls "impossible places,"¹¹⁹ and combines that interest with critical questioning. Hence, this draws on the expanded notion of art that has been emerging since the early 1960s, especially thanks to conceptual,

111 Cf. Chapter 4.

112 Foster (1996: 168).

113 Herman (1992: 52).

114 Foster (1996: 168).

115 Ibid.

116 Foster (1996: 183). He uses the terms anthropology/anthropological, ethnographer/ethnographic without specification. I will refer to the ethnographic and the ethnographer to point to the application of ethnographic methods for conducting fieldwork and qualitative research.

117 See Chapter 2.

118 Foster (1996: 172).

119 Foster (1996: 183-4). He is here quoting Walter Benjamin.

performance, body, and site-specific art investigations in minimalist art.¹²⁰ In questioning all the terms used for defining art, these developments and shifts also contextualize the backdrop for the ethnographic turn in the arts. Of particular relevance for my project here is the way in which these developments also brought forward

a series of shifts in the *siting* of art: from the surface of the medium to the space of the museum, from institutional frames to discursive networks, to the point where many artists and critics treat conditions like desire or disease, AIDS or homelessness, as sites for arts. Along with this figure of siting has come the analogy of *mapping*¹²¹

Both these two notions, “siting” and “mapping,” underpin my approach in this project. The latter, the analogy of mapping, relates to artists such as Robert Smithson and the development of Land Art¹²² that from the mid-1960s made use of such “cartographic operations.”¹²³ More recently, as Foster also emphasizes, this mapping “has tended toward the sociological and the anthropological, to the point where an ethnographic mapping of an institution or a community is a primary form of site-specific art today.”¹²⁴ It is in this respect that the analogy of mapping also came to play a central role for me as a tool for developing the performance trilogy. Here, the ethnographic mapping helped me to delineate my artistic research strategy and focus in this artistic research process as I faced the respective social contexts in this project.¹²⁵

However, unlike Foster, who uses the word “site” to address the social reality in question, I prefer the term “context,” often combined with the descriptive adjectives “socio-political” or “socio-cultural,” to highlight my sociological and anthropological interests and focus in this project. For me the term “context” directly relates to the core topos of ethnography, in etymologically referring to “the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood and accessed,”¹²⁶ while the etymological meaning of the term *site* primarily calls attention to an actual place and, hence,

120 Foster (1996: 184). See here for more on the links to minimalist genealogy of the art.

121 Foster (1996: 184). Italics as in original.

122 See, for example, Michael Lailach (2007) for a brief introduction to this movement.

123 Foster (1996: 185).

124 Foster (1996: 185).

125 I will expand on how and why in the last section of Chapter 8, as this insight came as an intuitive and tacit response to the challenges I faced while conducting this artistic research process.

126 Source: Dictionary, Version 2.1.2 (accessed 3 May 2010)

seems less suitable when applied to issues such as dying, death, and grieving. Instead, through using the term context and contextual, I could include such issues and make a distinction from the better known concept of site-specific choreography, which, despite its spatial focus, is not necessarily based on any ethnographic enquiry or contextual background research as a foundational prerequisite for its' becoming.¹²⁷ Therefore, I rather prefer the term "a contextual, or socio-contextual, approach to choreography."

The artist as ethnographer: a socio-contextual approach to choreography

My interest in viewing aesthetic and socio-political challenges as a composite concern in this project led me to Foster's concept of "the artist as ethnographer." With its significant use of the word "as," it creates a distinction that highlights how this strategy differs from an ethnographic case study *per se*. In the case of my artistic research project on docudancing griefscapes, I am, rather, making use of multiple ethnographic tools *as* an artistic strategy for mapping out¹²⁸ the three actual contexts of grieving in this project in order to make choreographic embodiments of them. However, in contrast to applying this concept only as a tool for reflecting upon this project in retrospect, I was, in fact, primarily exploring it as an artistic strategy for constructing the performance trilogy. As a choreographer-researcher, I was specifically interested in what kinds of insights this socio-contextual approach to choreography could offer as an artistic practice.

I engaged in this enquiry in similar ways to those of an ethnographer exploring these social contexts: through fieldwork in order to construct interpretative renderings of the experiences and insights drawn from these encounters. This process meant that I made observations and wrote fieldnotes, interviewed people and documented the interviews, took audio / video recordings and photographs of the contexts visited, read into their background, and used this as source material for the artistic work. In contrast to familiar artistic strategies of using

127 The term "site-specific choreography" would, in a Norwegian setting, foremost describe a choreographic work that is expected to address compositional issues related to architectural structures, spatial design, and/or ambience and understanding of a specific physical location, not primarily a socio-political and contextual insight into a situation or condition, such as AIDS or death and dying.

128 The mapping or the production of maps implies laying something out, which as artist-researcher Kim Vincs points out "is not time-dependent," as "it doesn't tell you what to read first, or what order to put things together." The map or its mapping is "rather something that connects elements" (Vincs 2007: 104-105).

social contexts only as thematic décor and visual framing,¹²⁹ I actually crafted and constructed the choreographed performances based on these contextual encounters. Moreover, thanks to the insights derived from what is often referred to as the crisis in representation in the social sciences and the humanities,¹³⁰ I engaged in this strategy with an awareness of and concern for the socio-political consequences that my interventions and presence in the environments I explored might have or raise. I discovered how this stance called for a heightened self-reflexive and critical distance – both while in the artistic research process and later when reflecting upon its outcome through writing, utilizing the experiences and the documentary material from the whole process to reflect upon the implications of making contextually based choreography. In short, this artistic approach *as* ethnographer augmented my need for critical distance and to look at the artistic research process both from the “inside” and the “outside” while I conducted the artistic research project.

In the figure below, I graphically attempt to give an overview of this double research position with the help of the two circles, which, as in maps of cityscapes, point out my locations and viewpoints in the project:

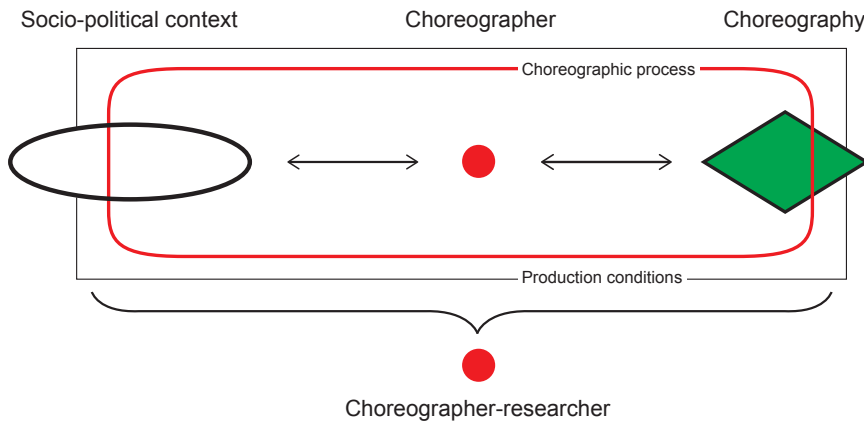


Figure 3. The choreographer-researcher *as* ethnographer

The inner rectangle illustrates here the choreographic process, the outer rectangle points to the production conditions framing and shaping the process, while the horizontal bracket indicates the reflexive and critical viewpoint on the

129 Cf. Hal Foster (1996: 180) on the “flâneries of the new nomadic artist?”

130 See, for example, Denzin (1997, 2005), Peter McLaren (1997), or Thomas R Lindlof and Brian Copeland Taylor (2002).

specific process. The latter is the layer that contributes to make the difference and the project into an artistic *research* project.

However, my recurring use of the notions “viewpoint” in alternation with “outlook” in this study requires a comment. The literal meaning of the two notions refers both to the particular location or place from which something is sensorially perceived. Hence, in an epistemic sense, both notions embed and underline the situated and subjective perspective I apply in my artistic research project here.¹³¹ Moreover, rather than seemingly privileging the visual sense in the choreographic process, I perceive the viewing process involved here as a haptic and multisensorial as well as multi-dimensional engagement that evolves all my senses in a synaesthetic experience while working choreographically.

Choreographing, like ethnographic fieldwork or lived experiences of grieving, will always involve complex regimes of referentiality and as such be embedded in parallaxic motions.¹³² Rather than as totalizing synecdoches, I consider therefore the diagram above and all the similars that follow in this study as models, that is, as tools that can offer simple overviews or still images of elements that actually operate in dynamic complexity.

In the overview created in Figure 3 above, I only point to the central and composite role that the choreographic process has in this process-oriented artistic research project. However, through zooming-in in Figure 4 below, I disclose, in more detail, what this process entails for me as choreographer. In outlining a schematic overview of the multiple components and phases that the choreographic process engages, I attempt to indicate the dynamic mechanisms that make the process unfold and transform itself into a public performance. As the circle indicates, I am, as a choreographer, placed in the midst of this process, which evolves in cyclic and oscillating moves along its trajectory from the fieldwork in a socio-political context to the presentation of the choreographed performance. The process develops through the chain reactions between inputs and responses from exploring the context conceptually and bodily as well as compositionally in a collaborative dialogue with all the participants taking part in the project. Despite the shortcomings from being a static depiction of this process, I attempt

131 As Fredrick Beisler (2011: 27-58) points out in his recent rereading of Johann Martin Chladenius (1710-1758), “viewpoint” was already used as a concept in the 18th century by Chladenius to stress that the world is always seen from a subjective perspective and cannot be seen universally. This makes situated knowledge not a recent thought. However, the word “viewpoint” is also known as the name of the compositional device developed by choreographer Mary Overlie and adapted by theatre director Anne Bogart. See Bogart and Landau (2014).

132 Cf. Hal Foster (1996: 12) on the notion of the double parallax.

in the figure below to indicate the elements that are set in motion and characterize this process.

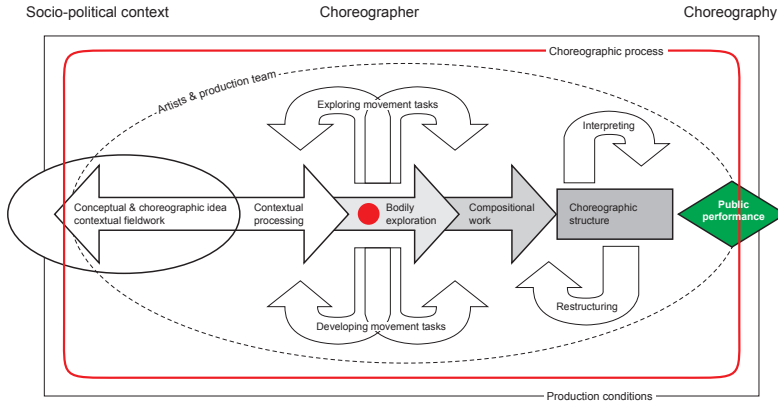


Figure 4. The choreographic process

In addition to exploring what this artistic strategy of the-choreographer-researcher-as-ethnographer would entail for the choreographic process and for me as the choreographer-researcher, I am especially interested in how this strategy would impact my conceptual and methodological understanding of choreography in general. This delineation has its consequences: I am offering neither much consideration to an institutional critique of the production conditions shaping contemporary choreography, nor to the interpretation and reception of the performance outcome, nor the performers' experiences of this process. This is not because these issues are of less importance or interest, or do not have consequences for this choreographic project either, but simply because these concerns would shift the focus and turn the project into something else than what was intended.¹³³ Instead, I will remain primarily focused on exploring the consequences of this ethnographic and contextual approach, and the ways in which it may impact my understanding of choreography and the role of the artist who is choreographing.¹³⁴

In my role as an artist-researcher, I have experienced the importance of approaching the artistic research project with a critical self-reflexivity in which I

¹³³ For example, the didactic and communicational theoretical perspectives involved in the running of such a process could alone provide material enough for a research project in its own rights here. I am leaving that for others to explore.

¹³⁴ Hence, when I intermittently use the term "artist-researcher" or "choreographer-researcher" in the continuation here, this will, unless anything else is stated, refer to the role of "the artist as ethnographer" or "the choreographer as ethnographer."

oscillate between observing the process from inside and outside. In my attempt to illustrate this dual perspective, I have added the horizontal bracket from Figure 3 into the model of the choreographic process below. With the double positions of the choreographer, being both inside and outside the core choreographic process, I point to the critical and self-reflexive viewpoint that the artist-researcher needs in a choreographic research project.

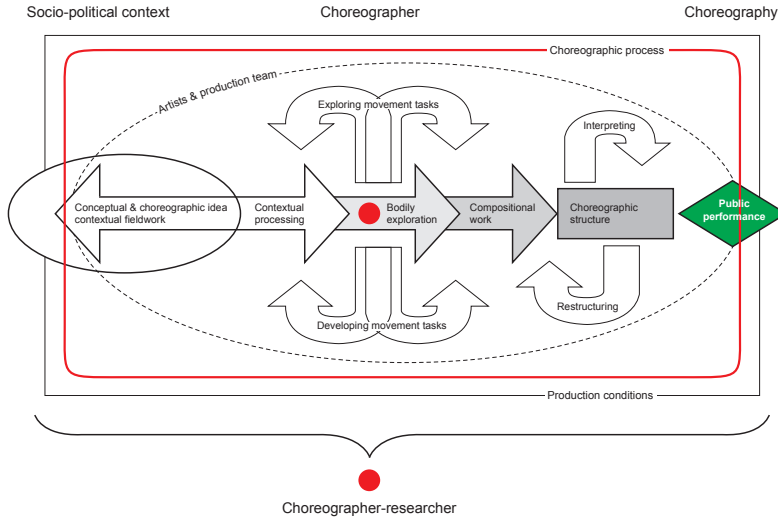


Figure 5. The choreographic process from the dual viewpoint of the choreographer-researcher

It is from this intertwined perspective that I address the artistic research process through a descriptive, interpretive and reflexive account, as the meaning-making took place through a multimethodological approach, anchored in an explorative mode and drawing on ethnographic tools and auto-ethnographic reasoning. This artistic research process bears a resemblance to action research,¹³⁵ as the starting point of the project originated in the urge to deal with certain issues, related to grieving, and as it developed emergent means to address these through drawing on professionals working in related fields. Here, however, the objective is primarily to probe into what it implies to construct contextually based choreography when the artist-researcher operates *as* ethnographer. This artistic approach draws on Walter Benjamin's critical concern and legacy of "solidarity in material practice,"¹³⁶ which challenge artists to address the social reality existing

135 See, for example, Denzin (2003: 113-14).

136 See Walter Benjamin (1978: 220-38).

outside their studio while questioning their artistic practice. For me here this meant a relentless questioning of how to approach, construct, and embody the three actual contexts of grieving. Herein also rests the core of the ethical dilemmas and concerns that this artistic strategy as an enterprise brings forward: to find a critical balance without “over-identifying” or “disidentifying” with the context in question.¹³⁷

Methodological challenges: balancing aesthetic and societal concerns

One of the core challenges in this contextually based strategy relates, therefore, to co-ordination: how to strike a critical balance between the effort spent on the artistic research process of exploring the socio-political context in focus and the aesthetic concerns of one’s art medium. These considerations are decisive for the direction and outcome of the project, and hence represent the major challenges in this strategy.

In the figure below, I attempt to illustrate this challenge by using a co-ordinate system in which the horizontal axis relates to the concerns of a “social context” and the vertical axis to those of an “art medium.”

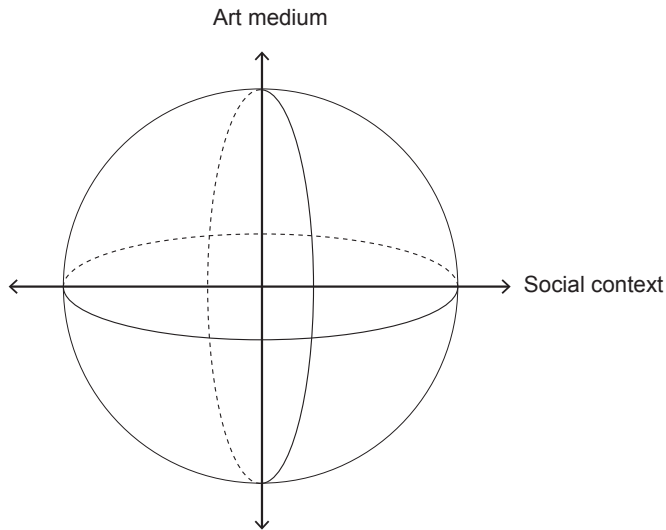


Figure 6. The optic scope of the artist-researcher: to balance socio-political and aesthetic concerns

137 H. Foster (1996: 203).

In the figure above, the two axis represent the two main strands of interests in this project, the artistic-aesthetic and the socio-political concerns, that I explore through my artistic research strategy here. Together, these two concerns create the scope that this project revolves around as I search for a critical balance between them. It is in the intersection between them and my finely tuning and awareness of their interrelationship, as I am probing choreographically and contextually into the trauma of grieving, that the outcome of this artistic research project comes into being.

Conventionally defined, choreography is used as the composite term for the practice and knowledge of how to create movement-based compositions or structures, through utilizing and combining several parameters.¹³⁸ The parameters can be categorized as relating to “time” (that is, the use of temporal aspects, such as timing, rhythm and dynamics), “space” (that is, the use of spatial relationships), and bodily “effort” (that is, relating to the flow and intertwined use of bodily shape, physical tension and weight).¹³⁹ In a strict craft-oriented sense, it can be argued that it is in the tension field between these movement parameters that the core physical body of choreography comes into being.¹⁴⁰ When utilized as tools, these parameters enable us to analyze as well as to develop movement strategies and bodily approaches for producing movement compositions – or compositional structures and social interfaces – that can be shared with others. Their impact as tools is here partly dependent on the selection of other means used in the presentational situation, for example, how audio-visual elements are utilized compositionally in the situation.¹⁴¹ In Figure 7 below, I attempt to indicate how I envision this mesh through mapping out the composite fabric of choices involved in a conventional presentation of a choreographed performance:

138 Daniel Nagrin (2001: 1). I will expand on my understanding of choreography in Chapter 3.1.

139 My conceptual classification of the parameters draws on Laban and his movement studies as a choreographer and dancer in the first part of the 20th century. See Laban (1922, 1964, 1976). For more contemporary interpretations and elaborations of Laban's ideas, see, for example, Valerie Preston-Dunlop (2002) and Forsythe (1992, 1996, 2000, 2003).

140 Cf. Peggy Hackney (1998: 218) on phrasing, in her brief overview of the Laban/Bartenieff Movement Analysis.

141 See, for example, Roar (2004) and Preston-Dunlop (2002:41-59).

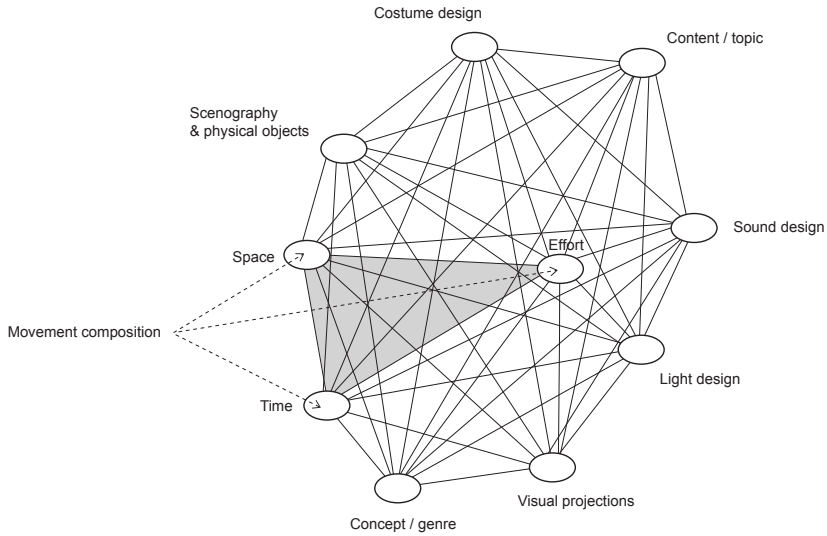


Figure 7. The core mesh of making choreography

In Figure 7, I attempt to exemplify some of the multiple and multidimensional but craft-based micro-concerns that constitute “choreography” as an art discipline and the vertical axis depicted in Figure 6 above. The insights on trauma and the body, however, add other layers and dimensions to the choreographic process than the concerns indicated with the two axis “art medium” and “socio-political context” in Figure 6. Therefore, I add two extra axis named “trauma” and “somatics” as variables and dimensions to the scope of this project, as illustrated in Figure 8 below, hence, building on the concept of four-dimensional space, which, in mathematical terms, refers to a space that needs four parameters to specify a location:

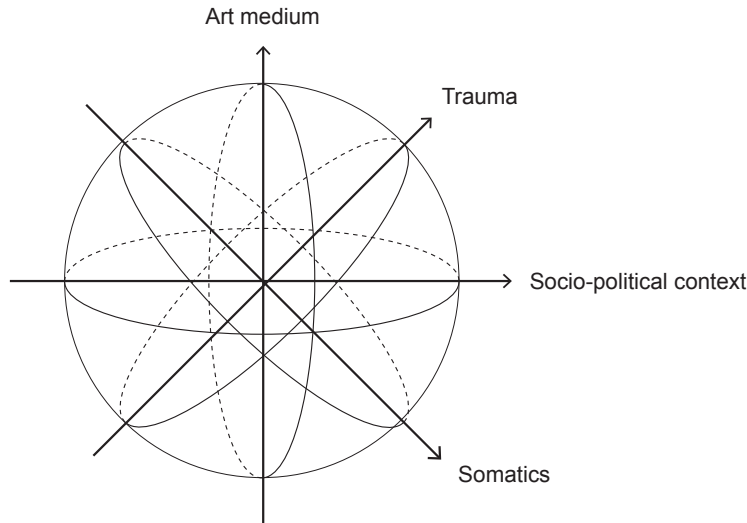


Figure 8. The optic scope of the artistic research project Docudancing Griefscapes

The two new axis relate respectively to the concerns and studies of trauma and the traumatic, and the body experienced from within as a living process, that is, as a *soma*.¹⁴² Hence, the notion of somatics, which the philosopher and body practitioner Thomas Hanna coined in the 1970s, to describe the field concerned with the first person perspective on the living body.¹⁴³ Based on my experiences and the findings of dance scholars such as Soili Hämäläinen and Teija Löytönen,¹⁴⁴ I claim that the implications of experientially studying the body as a soma is often not sufficiently reflected upon in the conventional way in which dance and choreography is conveyed and taught in the performing arts,¹⁴⁵ despite the fact that contemporary dance in the western world in part emerged and developed through questioning prescribed roles and ideas about the performing

142 Hanna (1995: 341-52).

143 Hanna (1995: 341-52).

144 Hämäläinen (2004: 79-108) and Löytönen (2004: 133-54).

145 With “conventional,” I refer to the visually based outlook and mind-set on dance that strongly emphasize mimesis and judge success according to the ability to replicate established dance technique and compositional rules. This attitude and approach to dancing has long traditions and prevailed in my undergraduate programme in Oslo in the late 1980s. Rather than being based on the individual’s ability and interest to reflect, explore, and communicate through movements, the art of dance in this programme depended on the ability to reproduce the prescribed skills of classical ballet, “jazz dance” and modern dance, at the time, primarily Graham and Cunningham.

body on stage.¹⁴⁶ Therefore, as indicated in Figure 8 above, in this project I want to distinguish between the notions of the body as an aesthetic object and as a psychosomatic subject through highlighting somatics in parallel with the bodily concerns of choreography as well as a socio-political understanding of the individual body, concerns that I elaborate on in Chapter 3.2 and expand on through my interest in trauma and traumatisations in Chapter 4, and which for me relate to an understanding of the body as a composite aesthetic, psycho-somatic, and social body. These perspectives surfaced and shaped my contextual approach to choreography and its outcome here. For me it is in the crux between these three intertwined bodily concerns that choreography comes into being. Methodologically, this macro-perspective on choreography also, therefore, emphasizes why the core objective and interest of my artistic research project lies in this interrelationship between bodily and socio-political concerns. As in Figure 6 earlier, the scope of the model in Figure 8 aims to point to this socio-contextual approach to choreography and choreographic thinking.

On this macro-level, the notion of choreography includes more than an emphasis on systemic structure and organization of means;¹⁴⁷ it also relates to the fine-tuning of focal points and to the critical balancing of the concerns at stake in the artistic process. This means that “choreography” is not only about shaping the flow of movements that performs – whether it is on stage or in society in general – but also about the outlook and perspectives grounding and leading to these movements.¹⁴⁸ Therefore, on this macro-level the term “choreography” addresses the artistic intent and ability to investigate social concerns and their impact on us and our surroundings through the developing of artistic strategies for (de-/)constructing and embodying them.

This concern complements the micro-level that I pointed to in Figure 7, which specifically related to the craft-specific knowledge – or the know-how of the

146 Exemplified by the Illinois-born dancer Loie Fuller, who in the late 19th century began to experiment with theatrical light and our visual perception of the body while dancing, such as in her *The Serpentine Dance*, and the Californian-raised Isadora Duncan, who at the turn of the 20th century threw away the corset and the ballet slippers and began dancing her womanhood and “the natural body” (Ann Daly 2001: 288). On Fuller and *The Serpentine Dance* (1892), the latter documented by the film pioneers August and Louis Lumière in 1896, see under *References*, R2, or, for example, Jack Anderson (1992: 166) and Judith Lynne Hanna (1988: 140).

147 As within the field of cybernetics, where the term choreography particularly addresses how interfaces and digital games are structured and function. See S. L. Foster (2011: 2-3, 71-72) for other and similar examples.

148 Including how production conditions and conceptual understanding, that is, values, cultural meanings and interests, determine how the craft-based skills and materials are formed.

skills and tools of basic craftsmanship – used in the creation and the staging of choreographed performances.

In this context, the mastery of these micro-choreographic skills and tools can be likened to the role of writing skills for academics, as they can both be seen as prerequisites that can be honed and tuned by experience. However, this is not enough by itself to ensure that socio-political scenarios at stake will be given sharpened and refined artistic articulations in the artistic propositions presented to a public audience.

For me, choreography is therefore constructed in the tension field between these micro- and macro-concerns. This underlying viewpoint on choreography informs my artistic research project here with its research focus on the artistic research process and its interrelationship between choreographic practice, socio-political context, and artistic outcome, as shown in Figure 4 earlier. I approach this research focus, however, through focusing on the intersection depicted in Figure 8 between the following:

- Craft-oriented probing into choreographic composition,
- Somatic-based movement exploration,
- Reviewing trauma and the impact of traumatic events, and
- Ethnographic fieldwork into social-political contexts.

The optic scope of Figure 8 therefore points to my contextual approach to docudancing griefscapes in this project, which I build on the following assumption: all choreographic projects and practices (with their processes of decision-making) are circumscribed and situated in specific historical and contextual settings that condition the becoming of their choreographic outcomes, regardless of whether the choreographers are aware of this impact or not.¹⁴⁹ In Figure 9 below, I attempt to visualize this macro-perspective on choreography as a contextually situated and embedded practice, mainly through placing the model of the micro-choreographic concerns (from Figure 7) within the oval-shaped circle that indicates the larger socio-political context of the choreographic project. For me this context includes both the presentational setting of the choreographic project as well as the intersecting perspectives coming from the influx of current affairs while creating or presenting the choreographic outcome. The grey rectangle and the

149 Cf. Borgdorff (2007 a: 13). From this perspective all choreographic practice and outcome is inscribed in social contexts – even though not all choreographers and their choreographies necessarily have this as their primary interest and concern.

black pointed arrows in the figure respectively indicate these frameworks, both of which can influence the choreographic outcome.¹⁵⁰

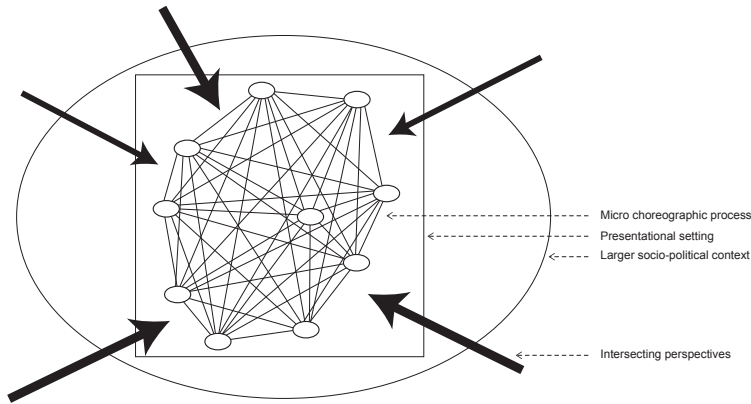


Figure 9. Macro-perspective on choreography as a contextually situated and embedded practice.

In combining together this macro-perspective on choreography (illustrated in Figure 9) and the optic scope of my artistic research project (depicted in Figure 8), I want to convey how my choreographic approach and practice-based conception of choreography in this project is transdisciplinary. This transdisciplinary feature is evident in how I rely on an artistic research strategy that merges a wide range of insights and tools, including the application of contextual fieldworks in the choreographic process.¹⁵¹ I believe this strategy can exemplify what Borgdorff calls a transdisciplinary approach to artistic research.¹⁵²

In this multimodal take on choreography, I extend the disciplinary boundaries of choreography beyond only viewing it as a question of aesthetics, to perceiving it as intertwined with issues related to the political and the ethical. From this perspective, I also view choreography or a choreographic project as an emancipatory and dialogical meaning-making process that can highlight unmarked tensional fields in our societies through questioning its premises.¹⁵³ This contextual

¹⁵⁰ Such as the Tsunami in South-East Asia in 2004, which impacted our process on addressing mortality; I expand on it in Chapter 6.

¹⁵¹ In addition to choreography, it includes insights that draw on somatics, ethnography and qualitative research, and trauma- and performance studies.

¹⁵² Borgdorff (2009a).

¹⁵³ On meaning-making in dance, see also Tone Pernille Østern (2009). These intentions for the choreographic process are added on top of the already extraordinary demands of multitasking and multimodal operations that are required for conducting a choreographic process.

and transdisciplinary approach to choreography raises several methodological challenges that require of me, as the choreographer-researcher, both the critical distance that Foster postulates, and the (self-) reflexive ethnographic outlook that anthropologists such as Ellis advocates.¹⁵⁴

Choreography as a situated aesth|ethic practice and research outcome

With this artistic research strategy, I approach choreography as an “aesth|ethic” practice that both creates and is created as a result of *aesth|ethical thinking*.¹⁵⁵ This means that I explore choreography and the choreographic practice, both as a part of a larger socio-political and ethical perspective, while I simultaneously probe into its art-specific concerns and craft. This composite aim for the choreographic project harbours for me the implications of what the psychoanalyst and philosopher Felix Guattari calls a “double finality.”¹⁵⁶ From this perspective, artistic research in choreography becomes for me an investigatory endeavour that explores the art of dance- and movement-composition with a charged interest for the potential to contribute with new perspectives to a social setting or society through resiting/reciting¹⁵⁷ insights. This artistic research performs not only through the presentation of its choreographed performances, but also through the choreographic practices and the discourse it develops, such as the writing of artistic reports, like this study. This view of choreography as an aesth|etic practice places and embeds the choreographic activity, its operation and outcome, within a political economy, because it engages and interacts with the ongoing making of the society in which it is a part. This role comes with a political responsibility. In *Docudancing Griefscapes*, this responsibility becomes particularly striking, because I choreographically approach traumatic contexts of grieving that, in addition to being deeply emotive, are also, in part, highly politicized, because they highlight issues that question what it means to face such challenges, both as a society and as a human being.

154 Foster (1996: 203) and Ellis (1997, 2004: 45-48).

155 My concept of aesth|ethics draws on the philosopher Wolfgang Iser's notion of ‘aesthet|ics’ (Iser 1997: 60-77). The aim here was to stress my dual focus on aesthetics and ethics in this project, and the fact that I address choreography as a composite of aesthetic and ethic concerns, therefore the concept of aesth|ethics. This focus relates to what the psychoanalyst and philosopher Felix Guattari – coming from another perspective and with other words – describes as a “double finality” (Guattari, 1995: 130).

156 Guattari (1995: 130).

157 The dual concept draws on a notion by the ethnographer John D. Dorst (1989: 206), which I expand on in Chapter 9.2.

However, rather than to offer a comprehensive study on “how to make” contextually based choreography, or to present interpretative dance analyses on the efficacy of the actual choreographies, I seek, instead, to throw light on this aesth|ethical practice and augmented understanding of choreography. I approach this objective of my study through a self-reflexive rendering and discussion of the experiences from conducting this project. Here, I view choreography as a social construct that results from artistic interventions, that is, creative activities with which artists bring about something that was not there before. Regardless of where these creative activities take place,¹⁵⁸ I still see them as interventions that consciously or unconsciously relate to the social reality in which they are created and performed.

My interest in choreography as an aesth|ethical practice thus lies in its potential in being an instigating force as well as a means that can impact what Guattari calls “the forms and significations circulating ... in the social field” around us.¹⁵⁹ I believe therefore that choreography can destabilize the divisions between aesthetical, ethical, and political concerns in the choreographic process; these are arguments that I will expand on in Chapter 4.2 and elaborate further on in Chapter 8.2 through drawing on performance studies scholars such as Lepecki, Phelan, and Tracy C. Davis, and the dance scholars such as Susan L. Foster and Mark Franko.¹⁶⁰ It is also on this basis that I am arguing that the artistic research strategies applied in choreographic processes may generate insights and impact beyond their artistic results as choreographed performances, for example, through the aesth|ethic practices explored and developed. From this perspective the methodological viewpoints and approach to “choreography” I have outlined in this introductory part can also be considered as part of the artistic research outcome of the project itself.

Closing thoughts: Approaching Life & Death

In the First Part I have introduced the project *Docudancing Griefscapes* and outlined the artistic research strategy I have used for exploring this socio-political and contextual approach to making choreography. Here, I have contextualized how this research project evolved from and relates autobiographically to my

158 In this respect, my notion of the term “intervention” is subtler than the most prevalent use of it, which seems to mainly address artistic projects that explicitly intervene in public arenas outside the theatres.

159 Guattari (1995: 130-31).

160 Lepecki (2006), Phelan (1993) and Davis (2010); as well as Foster (2011) and Franko (2007).

personal and professional background. Moreover, I have pointed to how I conceptually and methodologically link this project to Foster's concept of "the artist as ethnographer," and drew on ethnographic tools and methods in order to construct choreographed performances in this artistic process. In short, I have situated my interest for grappling with the interrelationship between socio-political contexts and choreography. I have particularly shown how this choreographical practice and thinking reflect not only my personal autobiography with its need to make sense of the world I live in, but also my educational background as a graduate in choreography with a background in history and the social sciences (that is, sociology, economics, and ethnology) prior to studying performance studies. For me as a choreographer-researcher, this combination offers a critical perspective and interdisciplinary position for exploring choreography at the intersection between fiction and faction, aesthetics and politics, and life and death.





Second Part – Optics

My kaleidoscopic optic and choreographic outlook

In the Second Part, I present and review the main disciplinary fields and references that I draw on in this project. I refer to somatics, ethnography (qualitative research), artistic research, trauma- and performance studies in addition to choreography. Through taking a closer look at my understanding of these six fields, I want to situate the perspectives that inform and ground my outlook in this artistic research project, both in the process of constructing the performance trilogy and writing this study. As each of these fields represents perspectives that, like optical lenses, angles and/or mirrors, influence and shape my outlook on the socio-political contexts addressed here, they therefore constitute for me what I call my “kaleidoscopic optic” in this project. In the still image of Figure 11 below, I can only point to the components that create this kaleidoscopic optic, but not show its operational effect: how my research position as a choreographer-researcher utilizes this shifting blend of disciplinary fields and perspectives to approach, perceive, and embody a socio-political context and its dynamic complexity.

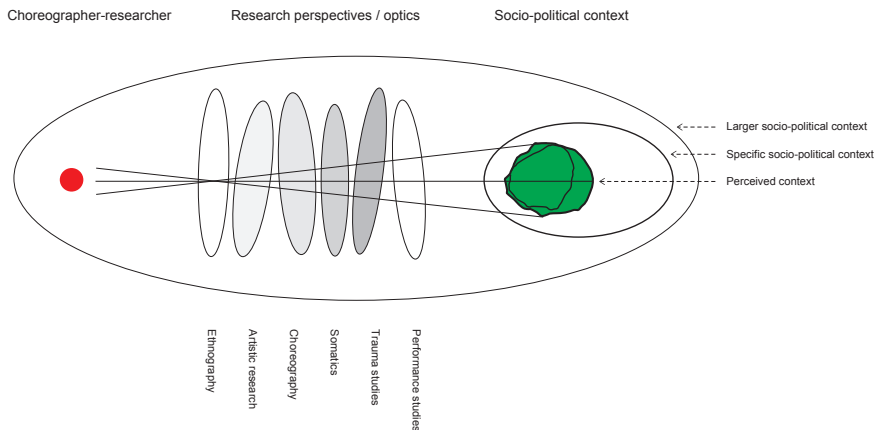


Figure 11. My kaleidoscopic optic

With this figure, however, I mainly want to indicate how my understanding of these disciplinary insights creates filters that colour and shape my contextual focus and approach in this artistic research project. What I refer to as “kaleidoscopic” is, hence, the effect brought on from juxtaposing and combining these different and multiple perspectives. Therefore, with the notion of my “kaleidoscopic optic,” I simply want to draw attention to the impact this effect has on

my outlook, and how this changeable optic can explain the moving mosaic of perspectives embedded in this study.

In the Second Part, through reviewing how I understand these fields, I want to shed light on the major concerns of these underlying perspectives that underpin and shape my kaleidoscopic outlook in this artistic research project. Here, I group these six fields of references in three clusters of interests, which I respectively address in the following three chapters: Chapter 2 Ethnography and Artistic Research; Chapter 3 Choreography and Somatics; and Chapter 4 Trauma and Performance.

2. Ethnography and Artistic Research

Postmodernist ideas about intertextuality and quotation of quotation have complicated the simplistic ideas about plagiarism which were in force in Destry-Schole's days. I myself think that these lifted sentences, in their new contexts, are almost the purest and most beautiful parts of the transmission of scholarship. I began a collection of them, intending, when my time came, to redeploy them with a difference, catching different light at different angle. That metaphor is from mosaic-making. One of the things I learned in these weeks of research was that the great makers constantly raided previous works – whether in pebble, or marble, or glass, or silver and gold– for tesserae which they rewrought into new images. (...). They also recycled ancient mosaic cubes, making transparent what had been a brilliant reflective surface.

At this time I had a recurrent dream of a man trapped in a glass bottle, itself roughly formed in the shape of a man. Sometimes I was blue, sometimes green, sometimes clear with a yellowish cast and flaws in the glass. This man was and was not myself. I was also the observer of the vents of the dream. Sometimes he was cramped by the bottle, sometimes a small creature scurrying at the base of a sheer glass cylinder. I mention this, because it seems to fit...

From *The Biographer's Tale* by A. S. Byatt.¹⁶¹

In Chapter 2, I focus on situating my understanding of artistic research as a research practice. I approach this through a brief review of the developments in qualitative research methodology since the 1980s, which emphasises the moves towards a self-reflexive practice and turns to performance and the performative in ethnography. From this perspective, I define my understanding of artistic

161 Byatt (2001:29).

research in this project and end with a discussion on the relationship between research and performance.

My understanding of artistic research as a research practice

Qualitative research as tacit knowledge

Through writing this study, I became aware of how my artistic research project built on strands of internalized knowledge about methods and tools, especially, from sociological and ethnographic research. This knowledge was obtained largely prior to the start of my professional training in dance and choreography in 1988,¹⁶² but became informed and re-contextualized from my later studies in dance ethnography and performance studies and the experiences gained from my many stays abroad.¹⁶³ Nevertheless, my choreographic approach emerged out of and related to my background in the social sciences and history. Through the reflexive process of writing, I came to recognize how I had taken this accumulated insight on both quantitative and qualitative methods and research skills for granted. Despite that, I had tacitly used it for carving out an artistic strategy for making the performance trilogy. As I began to examine and present my artistic research process to other colleagues both in the fields of choreography and artistic research, two issues became clear to me: firstly, this knowledge was not (tacitly) shared with most of my colleagues working within the arts, and secondly, I recognized – as research scholar Estelle Barrett points out in her writing on creative arts enquiry – that “the opposition between explicit and tacit knowledge is a false one”¹⁶⁴ yet one of mutual interdependency. My background in the social sciences has certainly provided me with a spinal reflex for seeking an *intersubjective* foundation for my *subjective* art projects. Here, this intuitively informed the way in which I searched for voices and sources of knowledge that I needed to get an overview and map out the contextual settings I was addressing. As a strategy, it further helped me to discriminate and make deliberate choices with regard to the value of these sources. For example, in the case of Part Three of the trilogy (on the Bosnian War) this reflex would be reflected in my critical

162 In the period 1979 - 1987 I studied social science and history: first majoring in social sciences, statistics, and history in secondary school, then studying economics, history and sociology as an undergraduate at the university (UiO), and followed up by graduate studies in sociology from Budapest and Oxford.

163 Cf. Chapter 1.3. I studied dance-history and -ethnography at NTNU in Trondheim and Performance Studies at NYU in New York. My stays outside Norway included those in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Namibia, Brazil, Indonesia, Bangladesh, India, Cuba, Guatemala, the USA, and several parts of Europe, in particular the United Kingdom as well as central and south-eastern Europe.

164 Estelle Barrett (2007: 4). Barrett here refers to Barbara Bolt (2004). See also Roar (2004).

approach to assess *how* I was reading statistic material about the war; how I searched for supporting material and information; how I posed and repositioned questions and listened to the many people I met; how I viewed my own role and presence in the different contexts I encountered and created; and how I juxtaposed different sources of information in order to get a sense of the griefscapes I was constructing and embodying.

Though my research methodology in this project evolved intuitively, it did not do so in a methodological or theoretical vacuum.¹⁶⁵ In the case of artistic research done by other choreographer-researchers, it would probably engage completely different constellations of knowledge and faculties. But, as my references stretch from the social sciences via history and the humanities to performance studies and the arts with choreography as a medium: this background explains not only my interest in the interrelation between social context and choreography, but also the references and influences that constitute and situate my transdisciplinary research perspective and choreographic approach for exploring this interrelationship here. From this perspective, I will turn to look at what I understand with the concept of research as a situated practice in this project.

Research as a situated practice

“Researchers are practitioners,” states Donald E. Polkinghorne, as “they engage in a human activity carried out over time in order to accomplish a purpose.”¹⁶⁶ From his social science perspective as a qualitative researcher, the purpose of research is “to produce knowledge and understanding of the human condition.” My study with its artistic research process constitutes, in this respect, a fundamental artefact in this production. But as Polkinghorne underlines, the researcher “does not begin anew, but within his or her historical situation.”¹⁶⁷ So do I here.

With this stance on research, I draw on insights gained from what has been called the “crisis of representation” that occurred in the mid-1980s. At the time, I was only a young undergraduate concerned with questions related to gender roles and identity, who had to study various approaches drawing on ethnographic tools, while the field of ethnography itself was acutely hit by the challenges this crisis

165 I therefore argue that tacit and intuitive knowing is nothing other than the instantaneous application of all one's accumulated insights and experiences while trying to solve a challenge or deepen an insight into a certain question. From this perspective it is an important tool and common denominator shared by artists and researchers irrespectively.

166 Polkinghorne (1997: 3).

167 Polkinghorne (1997: 3).

represented,¹⁶⁸ which was partly brought on by the impact from post-colonial discourse and gender studies that both challenged embedded power structures and agencies in research. These new interdisciplinary subject areas caused a major shift in all fields that drew on ethnographic methods. In addition to producing cross-fertilization between the social sciences and the humanities,¹⁶⁹ the shift highlighted researchers' role and performance in their research projects and the construction of their written representations. This shift towards a more self-reflexive stance meant that researchers had to question how they located themselves and their subjects in their writings.¹⁷⁰ According to William G. Tierney and Yvonne S. Lincoln, this shift leads to following outcome:

the understanding of the nature of knowledge is dramatically reinterpreted so that knowledge statements are no longer considered to be statements that mirror reality; instead, they become constructions or 'maps' of reality. In essence, data are created, rather than discovered, and the reader becomes aware of their creation through the textural strategy employed by the author.¹⁷¹

From this understanding it follows that "all texts are partial, gender-specific, local, and historically and culturally situated,"¹⁷² and the researchers' work cannot be seen as an "objective depiction of a stable other."¹⁷³ It was this insight that prompted researchers to find "alternatives that encourage reflection about the 'politics and poetics' of their work,"¹⁷⁴ simply because it became obvious, as Polkinghorne points out, that "[t]he meaning of research results is not independent of the process that produced them; research findings retain the traces of the productive activities that generated them."¹⁷⁵ For Denzin, it is vital that qualitative research is understood "within this complex historical field."¹⁷⁶ This understanding of knowledge also informs the way I approach the construction or mapping out of the realities of grieving (as griefscapes) in this project, as accounted for in the Third and Fourth Parts of this study.

168 See, for example, Denzin (1997, 2005), Ellis (1997), Peter McLaren (1997), or Thomas R. Lindlof and Bryan C. Taylor (2002).

169 Denzin (2005: 3).

170 Daniel W. Heaton (2002: 4), Polkinghorne (1997), and Denzin (2005: 3).

171 Tierney and Lincoln (1997: xi).

172 Lincoln (1997: xi).

173 Lindlof and Taylor (2002: 53).

174 As expressed by Lindlof and Taylor (2002: 53).

175 Polkinghorne (1997: 9).

176 Denzin (2005: 3).

Through writing this study on *Docudancing Griefscapes*, I want to look at how my contextually based approach to choreography “makes the world visible” for me as a choreographer-researcher.¹⁷⁷ I particularly strive to create accounts that convey the situatedness of this research project. This situatedness relates especially to my embedded role as a choreographer-researcher in my own artistic research process and the usage of transdisciplinary perspectives in exploring the socio-political contexts in question here.

Research as a reflexive, “messy text”

I relate my understanding of artistic research, as a situated practice, to the notion of “messy texts”¹⁷⁸ in the sense used by the anthropologist George E. Marcus. He came up with this concept in the 1980s to describe the innovative or experimental qualities in the ethnographies that surfaced in response to the criticisms of the field. According to Marcus, such studies breached new ways with their critical and reflexive awareness on how to conduct and report on research in a way that was sensitive to how representations and narratives were social constructs of the reality.¹⁷⁹ As Denzin highlights it, messy texts make the writer’s personal experiences a part of the writing process, while, at the same time, they are often being grounded in the study of profound moments that affect people’s lives. This resonates with my project here that focuses on grieving. For Denzin this approach means that “[t]he messy text produces local, situated knowledge,” while he underlines “the historical contingencies and social processes that shape and play on the situations and persons under study.”¹⁸⁰ In this way messy texts can bring out what Marcus describes as “the experiential, interpretive, dialogical, and polyphonic process at work in any ethnography.”¹⁸¹ Through their intertextual constructions, states Denzin, “identities and local cultures are negotiated and given meaning.”¹⁸²

177 Denzin (2005: 4).

178 Marcus (1994: 567), as quoted in Denzin (1997: 225).

179 Marcus (2007). Here, two decades after *Writing Culture* (Marcus, 1986), Marcus introduces “baroque” as a qualifier to demarcate the “messinesses” that only stylistically or aesthetically draw “attention to themselves.” Marcus considers the “baroque” as the prevailing trend within the genre of messy texts in 2007, while arguing that there is a need for channelling “the experimental spirit” back into reinvesting in “the conditions of producing ethnography in fieldwork” (Marcus, 2007: 1127).

180 Denzin (1997: xvii, 225). See Heaton (2002) or Ellis (2004) as examples of autoethnographic elaborations on the notion of reflexive, messy texts.

181 Marcus (2007: 1128).

182 Denzin (1997: 225).

For Denzin the embedded critical perspective in this research strategy suggests that “[t]heory, writing, and ethnography are inseparable material practices. Together they create the conditions that locate the social inside the text.”¹⁸³ In this artistic research project in which choreography constitutes a fourth and main practice, I will argue through paraphrasing Denzin that similar conditions are created here that locate the social inside the contextually based choreographic work and this written study as a text. I will leave aside discussions on semiotics and the notion of dance as a text here, as I am primarily interested in what the concept of messy texts can practically offer me as a self-reflexive and contextually oriented practice. I certainly perceive it as a useful concept for describing the multi-tasking involved in the process of making choreography itself. More importantly, with this concept of the messy, I am provided with a perspective that both augments and challenges my understanding of what “research,” “text,” “ethnography,” and “choreography” can mean. In the case of choreography, this emphasizes for me the fact that choreographies, like “texts, will not be read as just carriers of ideological meanings or just commodities; they will be seen as sites of political negotiations.”¹⁸⁴ From this point of view, the shift in how to understand qualitative and ethnographic research highlights the prospect of “an evocative epistemology that performs, rather than represents, the world.”

¹⁸⁵ This viewpoint connects to an argument from performance studies that anything can be discussed as a performance and viewed through this lens. As a field of study itself, performance studies can be seen as a continuous emergent that comes into being when anthropological concepts like liminality¹⁸⁶ are combined with notions from linguistic philosophy on performativity¹⁸⁷ and engages in a conversation with other disciplines, such as literary studies, feminism, queer theory, and psychoanalysis, to mention some.¹⁸⁸ It therefore makes sense when Denzin draws on the performance studies scholar and ethnographer Dwight

183 Denzin (1997: xii).

184 Denzin (1997: 247). These are issues I have already touched upon and will expand on later, particular in the last chapter.

185 Denzin (1997: xiv). See also Ellis (1997).

186 Turner (1969, 1986). This refers to Turner, who studied the impact of rituals and societal organisations as efficacious performances of values and understanding in a society. Through his collaboration with Schechner, the concept of liminality gained ground and relevance from a performing arts perspective. See, for example, Schechner (1985).

187 Central here is the philosophical contribution of Judith Butler, who in her discussions of performativity also elaborates on the philosopher John L. Austin's speech act theory. See Butler (1994) and Austin (1975). I return to her theories later in this study while writing about trauma and performance.

188 Central here is Phelan with her performative rethinking of the politics of visibility. See Phelan (1993, 1997).

Conquergood to describe the development towards performance and the performative in ethnographic research:

The ethnographer moves from a view of performance as imitation, or dramaturgical staging, to an emphasis on performance as liminality and construction, then to a view of performance as struggle, as intervention, as breaking and remaking, as kinesis, as a sociopolitical act.¹⁸⁹

For one who works with performance, both as a medium and as a tool for making sense of the world, I find myself engaged in all the perspectives that Denzin points to above when I am involved in the messiness of creating performances, though I particularly view it as a socio-political act. In this respect, I am taking on and drawing on performance studies perspectives when approaching my artistic work, which is also the case in this project. However, in contrast to research in ethnography or performance studies, my artistic research is centred primarily on the making of art, or more specifically on making choreography. Therefore, in order to situate my project here, I will briefly point out how I understand and relate to the performative turn in research as such.

A performative turn

When Denzin considers the turn to performance as one of the most prevalent phenomena in qualitative and critical research at the onset of the 21st century,¹⁹⁰ his crux is this: “If we know the world only through our representations of it, then to change the world, we must change how we write and perform it.”¹⁹¹ He argues, therefore, for “an interpretive social science that is simultaneously autoethnographic, vulnerable, performative, and critical.” He describes this approach as “a way of being in the world, a way of writing, hearing, and listening.”¹⁹² I can experientially identify with this outlook in my artistic research endeavour.¹⁹³ As a choreographer-researcher in this project, I am critically aware of how my professional roles as choreographer and researcher are fused with my personal background story, that is, “my private biopolitics,” which conditions how I

189 Denzin (2003: 4). He ascribes the three viewpoints respectively to the sociologist Erving Goffman (1959), the anthropologist Victor Turner (1986), and Conquergood (1998: 32).

190 Denzin (2003).

191 Denzin (2003: 78).

192 Denzin (2003: 105).

193 Though I harbour some reservations about Denzin's rather simplistic notions of performance.

perceive, engage, and respond to the world around me,¹⁹⁴ as the *choreographic-I*. This impact makes the artistic research process vulnerable, but from an autoethnographical perspective also critically potent, because the artistic research process simultaneously transforms and marks me as I construct and embody the inputs of docudancing into performances and this written study. The artistic research process is hence, also on a personal level inherently performative for me. In being sensorially attentive to bodily responses from exposures to socio-political traumas of grieving, I am experiencing a way of being in the world. However, through the choreographed performances and this written study, a condensed and aggregated outcome of these experiences is shared with a larger audience.¹⁹⁵ I therefore consider this artistic research project as performative research that performs: as manifested through its layered process and use of disparate strategies, leading to the performance trilogy and this written study. Within this scope, my outlook and way of thinking about choreography and artistic research in choreography are also conveyed, as underlined in this review of my kaleidoscopic optic.

The turn in qualitative research that Denzin points to, on how to understand research and knowledge production, has engendered a rich undergrowth of experimentations, which is evident in our present-day methodological pluralism of research strategies and writing forms.¹⁹⁶ My understanding of this practice has evolved in parallel with the developments in qualitative research since the early 1980s, when I began my undergraduate studies, and this, my oscillating journey between fields of disciplines, practices and locations, cf. Chapter 1.3.

However, as the knowledge and terms about research in the arts can differ, even within a Nordic setting, I will next briefly outline this field in order to situate my own approach to artistic research more specifically.

194 Cf. Chapter 1.3.

195 This opens out to a wider discussion on the role of the choreographer as an author, (cf. Foucault 1991: "What is an author?"), and the power of writing to establish the choreographer as an author (i.e. Lepecki 2006). Though I will touch upon these issues in the Chapters 3.1 and 9.2, the study is not centred on this discussion.

196 As mentioned by Marcus (2007), Denzin (1997, 2003, 2005), and Lindlof & Taylor (2002), and exemplified by the writings of John Fiske (1990), Ellis (2004), and Heaton (2002). As lately exemplified in ethnography with the emergence of methodologies addressing visual and sensorial aspects in research, which advocate for the importance of paying closer attention to the bodily experiences of the fieldworker as a crucial source for insight. Voiced by social researchers such as Gillian Rose (2007), Sarah Pink (2007, 2009), and Judith Okely (2007).

The move towards research in the arts – evolvement of different strategies

In parallel with the turn in qualitative research, artists began to explore what artistic development and research within higher educational settings could imply for their fields in northern Europe.¹⁹⁷ These moves within the arts towards research come to coincide with a political interest for reshaping the policy on higher education in Europe.¹⁹⁸ From my point of view both strands of development can be seen as indirectly substantiated by the paradigmatic shift brought on earlier by the crisis of representation in the humanities and social sciences. However, regardless of the causes, the outcome was that, in addition to research programmes *about* and *on* the arts, we have, from the turn of the 21st century, seen a phenomenal growth in both degree programmes and publications that address research *in* and *through* the arts,¹⁹⁹ that is, research that explores and builds knowledge in the arts through artistic practice and reflections upon it, which in the Nordic countries is mostly discussed as *artistic research* and mainly conducted and developed by artists within the setting of higher education in the arts. What is noteworthy is that though Great Britain, Australia, and the Nordic countries have been proactive and leading participants in this development,²⁰⁰ their approaches differ rather greatly.²⁰¹ The differences are also reflected in the terminology used. The more instrumental move toward research in the arts, as is often emphasized in the English-speaking part of the world, uses terms such

197 Cf. The Theatre Academy in Helsinki, which was granted the rights to award doctoral degrees as early as 1988. See, for example, Kirkkopelto (2008).

198 Linked to *The Bologna Process* or *Accords* (1999), initiated by the Council of Europe. One of the central issues of the Bologna process was to decree that education at the university level should be based on research. The arts required research that explored and built knowledge about artistic practice. Hence, the Bologna process provided the conditional circumstances for the development of studio-based doctoral programmes by forwarding international quality measures and standardization of all higher education. Built on “a single framework” with Bachelors, Master, and Doctoral degree programmes (Borgdorff, 2007: 4). The political desire to enhance student mobility and accommodate the commercialization of the educational field in Europe drove this policy-making, whilst, according to the American art historian and art critic John Elkins, the educational motivation for implementing this process is steeped in issues related to resources, status and power (Elkins 2009: 278).

199 See Borgdorff (2007), who draws on Christopher Frayling (1993). For a general overview of this development and discourse, see Borgdorff (2009) and Henrik Karlsson (2002); on Nordic viewpoints, see Leena Rouhiainen (2008b), Kirkkopelto (2008), and Grete Refsum (2008); on anglosphere perspectives, see Elkins (2009), Barrett (2007), Haseman (2006, 2007), and Bolt (2007, 2008); and on research in dance specifically see, for example, Jens Richard Giesdorf (2009) and Anna Pakes (2009).

200 Keeping in mind that MFA (Master of Fine Arts) programmes were already around in the United States early on after the Second World War as terminal degrees, which by the 1960s became seen as prerequisites for teaching in higher educational institutions in the arts (Elkins 2009: vii).

201 Cf. Borgdorff (2009), Elkins (2009), Refsum (2008) and Karlsson (2002).

as “practice-based research” or “practice-led research.”²⁰² As Brad Haseman, an Australian practice-led researcher in the arts, points out, these approaches emphasize the methodological commonalities shared with a wider range of professional studies and research interests.²⁰³ This focus has been less predominant in the Nordic context. Here the accent has been on what another Australian artist-researcher, Paul Carter, has coined “material thinking” – focusing on the artistic practice and its outcome.²⁰⁴ This focus harbours similarities with what in the English-speaking context is called “practice-as-research,”²⁰⁵ which pushes for the importance of acknowledging the knowledge involved in the artistic practice itself. The difference to the Nordic approach lies in the latter’s emphasis that research in the arts is done by artists through their artistic practice, which explains why “artistic research” has become the preferred concept used in the Nordic context.²⁰⁶ Therefore, I will next elaborate on how I understand this concept in my project.

Situating my understanding of Artistic Research (AR)

The main difference between research *on* art and artistic research is for me succinctly described by Esa Kirkkopelto. In being both an artist-researcher and a philosopher, he points out how research *on* art is the study of art from the viewpoint of society in an attempt to evaluate it.

Artistic research, by contrast, looks from art towards society and our idea of reality, questioning their existence, and sets them demands according to its own mode of existence.

Consequently, artistic research is, ... ultimately more interested in reality than in art.²⁰⁷

His emphasis on the interest in reality resonates deeply with my approach here. However, this perspective does not imply for Kirkkopelto that “[a]rtistic research and art research do shut each other out,”²⁰⁸ but rather the opposite, but it is of

202 For example, as used by Baz Kershaw (2006).

203 Haseman (2006: 9; 2007: 153, 157).

204 Carter (2004).

205 See, for example, Barrett (2007) and Kershaw (2006).

206 As seen, for example, in the writings of Kirkkopelto (2008), Rouhiainen (2008), and Mika Hannula et al. (2005). This choice of terminology also reflects the situation in the Nordic countries, where the higher education of artists as well as the research initiative in the field has primarily been governed by state funded, but independently designated conservatory-based Arts Colleges or Universities, which offer specialized professional training programmes for educating artists, in contrast to artistic training offered as a component or integral part of another degree, for example in education or as a minor/major option in a more traditional university setting.

207 Kirkkopelto (2008: 18).

208 Kirkkopelto (2008: 18).

utmost importance for him that the “[a]rtistic research must take place where the commitment is not only to produce knowledge but also art and the knowledge required to produce art, that is, in art universities:” simply because

[I]t is sensible for an art university to conduct and promote research which cannot be done elsewhere and is characteristic of the basic principles and needs of an art school, in other words, which: serves the formation of an artist and the development of different forms of art. These objectives can never be unambiguously separated from each other within any form of art.²⁰⁹

My project is based on Kirkkopelto’s assumptions that artistic research differs from “practice-as-research” or “practice-based-research” as it has to be “conducted in an art institute”²¹⁰ or, as Borgdorff states, “performed by artists as a rule.”²¹¹ According to Kirkkopelto, artistic research will methodologically often consist of “three parts or intertwining approaches.” These are related to invention, theory, and artistic work. With “invention,” he denotes “a skilled, applied or technical part” that provides the artist with an apparatus, application or optics through which reality manifests itself or is articulated differently from before. The invention renews the field of art by showing a new way in which art participates in the construction of reality.²¹²

The theoretical part “defines the theoretical dimensions of the technique and skill in question” that are pursued, while the artistic part “form[s] one artistic application of the invented technique or model” or approach. In doing so, it “verifies the fact that the skill has been justified on the basis of artistic practices.”²¹³ Despite the fact that Kirkkopelto generally has a broader definition of artistic research than Borgdorff, this also resonates with what Borgdorff has underlined, “the common factor in all such artistic endeavours is the deployment of art practice itself.”²¹⁴ These methodological deployments are also, in part, outcomes of the research process themselves,²¹⁵ aiming at both “increasing our knowledge and understanding – and, one might add, our insights, comprehension, and experience – as well as enriching our world with new artefacts: compositions, choreographies,

209 Kirkkopelto (2008: 20–21).

210 Kirkkopelto (2008: 24).

211 Borgdorff (2007: 18), though without conflating the general outlooks of Kirkkopelto and Borgdorff.

212 Kirkkopelto (2008: 25).

213 Kirkkopelto (2008: 25).

214 Borgdorff (2009: 4).

215 Borgdorff (2007: 83).

installations, and images.”²¹⁶ In addition to my concern for the larger implications or “impact” of artistic research interventions, I recognize, in Kirkkopelto and Borgdorff’s delineations, despite their eventual other differences, the general concerns that have marked my research project here, in the interwoven exchange and development between the following: inventing a social-contextual approach to address death, dying and grieving processes; requiring the theoretical skills or insights needed to support this approach; and artistically conducting the choreographic processes and making the performances.

Artistic research – an emergent approach

Still, what attracts me to artistic research is the situation of methodological pluralism in which “every research is permitted to argue for its choice.”²¹⁷ As there is no fixed or preset method to follow, it means that the research problem and/or interest require the researcher to clarify and untangle the process of knowledge construction or meaning-making. Though this resembles the situation that I described in qualitative research, Kirkkopelto argues that “[t]he role of the artistic researcher ... follows when one sets oneself in a position between art and the unknown and starts asking questions.”²¹⁸ For the dance researcher Kim Vincs this makes artistic research an “emergent approach.”²¹⁹ The outcome of such artistic research aims, as Borgdorff states, to “enhance the quality of art as such, or at least have some bearing on the art, on the way it is produced, documented, communicated, disseminated and evaluated,” to the extent that it might even impact and “alter our understanding of what art is or could be.”²²⁰

Haseman argues that these emergent characteristics of practice-driven arts enquiries have surpassed the performative turn in qualitative research, and evolved into a research strategy of their own, which he considers as a new research paradigm for creative arts, and calls “performative research.”²²¹ With this claim, he draws on Austin’s speech act theory²²² and the notion of performativity derived from it. His arguments are therefore familiar to me, as they relate to

216 Borgdorff (2009: 4).

217 Kirkkopelto (2008: 26).

218 Kirkkopelto (2008: 26).

219 Vincs (2007: 101).

220 Borgdorff (2009: 4). But as Kirkkopelto rightly points out, it also represents a “paradoxical and difficult state” or enterprise for the artist-researcher to take on (2008: 26). This is challenging, but intriguing for those of us who, as artist-researchers, are triggered by “impossible missions” with juxtapositions and complex layering involved in our projects.

221 Haseman (2006: 98).

222 Austin (1962).

viewpoints that are central to performance studies. Haseman argues that in “the double articulation involved in creative arts research, practice brings into being what, for a want of a better word, it names.”²²³ In this articulation, he argues for the importance of paying attention to the ‘doing’ of what is ‘done’.²²⁴ Consequently, Haseman focuses on practice as the main research activity and considers “the material outcomes of practice as all-important representations of research findings in their own right.”²²⁵ He claims this activity and outcome of practice make “performative research stand as an alternative ... by insisting on different approaches to designing, conducting and reporting research.”²²⁶ For Haseman, who comes from a background in practice-led research, I can see what his concept of “performative research” might add. Despite the shortcomings in his theoretical framing, which the artist-researcher Barbara Bolt has pointed out,²²⁷ and what it has to offer vis-à-vis artistic research (as defined

223 Haseman (2007: 150) while drawing on Austin (1962: 121).

224 Cf. Pollock (1998: 43).

225 Haseman (2006: 105/7).

226 Haseman (2006: 98).

227 Bolt (2008). Though I share Haseman’s overarching objectives, I find that his theoretical grounding that draws on Austin would benefit from some further clarifications, a point made by Bolt (2008). I will leave these reservations aside here as they have little relevance for the overall perspective he is offering in his proposal and for my argument in this study. However, in short, what Bolt questions is the implicit understanding in Haseman’s application of the concept ‘performativity,’ a concept first introduced by Austin in his lecture series *How to do things with words* at Harvard University in 1955. Despite Austin’s unresolved philosophical problems with the term, others rapidly took it on after its publication in 1962. Through the reading and elaborations by later theorists such as John Searle, Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler, and Gilles Deleuze, the term has by now entered the common vocabulary in academia (Bolt: 5). With a Performance Studies background myself, I can confirm this. Bolt’s argument here draws on Judith Butler’s reading of the concept. For Butler performativity is “not a singular ‘act,’ for it is always a reiteration of a norm or set of norms, and to the extent that it acquires an act-like status in the present, it conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition” (Butler 1993: 12). According to Bolt this claim makes performativity “an iterative and citational practice” that “involves repetition rather than singularity” (Bolt 2008: 5). I will come back to this claim later while discussing the relation between trauma and performance. On this basis, Bolt therefore also disputes the dismissal of Judith Butler’s definition of performativity that the theatre scholar Erica Fischer-Lichte (2008) argues for in her book *The Transformative Power of Performance*. Here, Fischer-Lichte claims that Butler’s notion is inadequate “to deal with ‘the aesthetics of the performative’, since it deals primarily with the everyday and not with the singularity of a performative art event” (Fischer-Lichte 2008:12, as quoted by Bolt 2008: 6). Bolt argues, on the contrary, “if the term ‘performative’ is reconfigured as a singular unconventional act, as suggested in Fischer-Lichte’s account, it negates the foundational assumptions that underpin the term performativity – iterability and convention” (Bolt 2008: 6). Hence, when faced with Haseman’s proposal Bolt argues instead that “[t]he performative turn and a performative paradigm are two different, if related, beasts” (ibid). A distinction she claims Haseman seems to conflate. Though agreeing with her theoretical reservations but coming from the performing arts, I wonder whether she forgets the fact that Denzin – while drawing on Butler (1993 b: 644) – points out: “Every performance is an original and an imitation” (Denzin, 2003: 10). With this in mind, I chose to take a different stand to Haseman’s here by focusing on his general concerns, while

by Kirkkopelto) is less radical than Kirkkopelto's stance. Nevertheless, for me it pertinently draws attention to the relationship between artistic research and a performance studies discourse. In his shared interest with both Kirkkopelto and Borgdorff in enhancing enquiries into arts as research,²²⁸ Haseman adds, with the notion of the 'performative,' a dimension to the 'performance of' research. In dance research, choreography is usually thought of as performative only in the sense that it is performed publicly in a performance space or setting, while for Haseman, by bringing forward the notion of performativity, as it is often applied in performance studies, "[t]he research process inaugurates movement and transformation. It is performative."²²⁹ However, as Denzin points out, "performance and performativity exist in tension with one another, in a tension between *doing*, or performing, and the *done*."²³⁰ In this way, for me he draws attention to the tension field between what I do and what is created from my doing. From this perspective, I will argue that an artistic research project in choreography contains both the aspects of performance and performativity: they are composite parts of a tension field in which both the artistic work and research outcome are constructed. My study of docudancing griefscapes is based on such an understanding of artistic research. This approach comes with a risk, because the "performance" of the artistic work is more visible and concrete as an aesthetic product than the general outcome of an artistic research project. In my case, for example, this makes the performance trilogy seem simpler to assess than what my artistic research project sets in motion and contributes with at large, especially related to explorations of contextually based choreography. Despite facing this risk and dilemma in my dual role as a choreographer-researcher, I rather insist, like the dance scholar Anna Pakes, that "the dance work performed as the culmination of the choreographer's process might be judged an artistic or aesthetic failure, but this would not necessarily disqualify the choreography – or the practice-as-research – as intelligent action."²³¹ For me her distinction also points to how artistic research can illuminate and discuss and thereby contribute to rethink what generates developments in the field.

emphasizing the interrelationship between the notion of 'performance' and 'performativity.' In this way I see them as part of a composite tension field in which performing arts and artistic research are constructed and made.

228 Kirkkopelto (2008) and Borgdorff (2009).

229 Haseman (2006: 150).

230 Denzin (2003: 10), italics as in the original.

231 Pakes (2009: 16).

I would like to extend this perspective to what the performance studies scholar and historian Tracy C. Davis introduces with her notion of “performative time.”²³² With this notion, Davis questions our notion of temporality and what a performance is. She does this through exemplifying how a performance or a historical event performatively can have an impact beyond its theatrical or temporal occurrence in time. Likewise, I would argue this could be the case for artistic research projects, which ought to have an impact and a scope that are more than their artistic artefacts, such as the choreographed performances in this project. They result partly from artistic practices and knowledge that are repeated and reinvented,²³³ but they also participate in a process in which they are recited/resited, as performances. In this way, they induce processes that perform by acting and moving others - at least the people involved, such as me in writing this study.

Although I use Kirkkopelto’s term “artistic research” when I present my research here in the form of a written study (supported by video recordings of the choreographed performances), I sympathise with Haseman’s agenda and his emphasis on the activity-driven outcome of research. In stressing the inherent and multimodal potential of artistic research, Haseman makes me think of “research,” - rather than as a noun, as a verb - constituted by its interventional character.²³⁴

232 Davis (2010). I return to Davis’ arguments in my discussion of the relation between trauma and performance.

233 As every performance comes into being through its reiteration of rehearsed action and / or drawing on artistic practices, it reappears with a difference - as not exactly the same. In reference to Butler (1993b: 664), this phenomenon makes Denzin state: “Every performance is an original and an imitation” (2003: 10).

234 In my endeavour to strengthen the position of what Barrett (2007) calls “creative arts enquiry” as a respected option or strategy for research, I have encountered a tendency in the arts world of succumbing to categorizations that reinforce binary and stereotypical views on what research entails. My observation is based on experiences from attending artist-research seminars since 2003. I question the value of such generalized readings of the academic world. My observations correlate to what Borgdorff describes: “The limited scientific notion commonly held...is that of the empirical-deductive approach,” which is often depicted “in the form of an obsolete empiricist caricature” (Borgdorff, 2004: 6). Such statements give a gross misrepresentation of the more nuanced diversity and methodological pluralism presently existing in ‘the academic world’; as reflected in the methodological reflections made of researchers such as Denzin (1997, 2003, 2005), Polkinghorne (1997), Heaton (2002), and Ellis (1997, 2004). The misrepresentation might only contribute to misinform and reproduce a binary thinking among artist-researchers on research and research options. This is unfortunate because many artist-researchers are, as Borgdorff points out, “not yet sufficiently informed” about the plethora of academic research methodologies existing (Borgdorff, 2004: 6). Consequently, they might come to struggle too much with a phantom ghost of what they think ‘research’ is, either by being too zealous in their wish to accommodate it or too ignorant to navigate with ease and benefit from the resources it offers. However, what I do believe the field of artistic

Closing thoughts: “Research is performance”

The emphasis on the performative brings to the fore the importance of the social practices embedded in the research activity. In his article on “Reporting Qualitative Research as Practice,”²³⁵ Polkinghorne describes research as “a performance carried out by investigators. As a performance it takes place within the context of social norms and scripts; that is, it is social practice.”²³⁶ From my point of view, Polkinghorne here describes the performative aspect of conducting research: how research in itself is both a social action and practice that performs within a social context.²³⁷ His view on research challenges me as a choreographer-researcher. Grounded in an artistic practice and engaged in artistic research I need to question both my own practice²³⁸ and the difference it makes when my art-practice also becomes a subject for artistic research itself. Borgdorff has spent considerable effort over the last years on defining this distinction. His criteria are linked to “intent, originality, knowledge and understanding, research questions, context, methods, documentation, dissemination,” and the conscious attention paid to these factors.²³⁹ He proposes the following definition: “Art practice qualifies as research if its purpose is to expand our knowledge and understanding by conducting an original investigation in and through art objects and creative processes.” Further, he stresses the importance for research to raise and address pertinent questions in its context, and to show the ability to employ “methods that reveal and articulate the tacit knowledge that is situated and embedded in specific artworks and artistic processes.” Finally, he requires that such “processes and outcomes are documented and disseminated in an appropriate manner to their research community and the wider

research aims for is to take the need of the arts fields to deepen their understanding of their practices seriously. In this sense qualitative research offers important insights on the challenges embedded in such practice-driven research, though without having all the answers to what it implies for artists to conduct research within their arts media. I therefore find Kirkkopelto’s (2008) delineations of artistic research useful to illuminate the gaps that these artistic enquiries can address, as I believe that the main differences we will find in research strategies and methods will most likely only reflect the different ontological, epistemological and methodological concerns, purposes, and subject matters in question, factors that shape each practice of research according to its terms. (Cf. Trinh, 1989: 141-42 as quoted in Denzin 1997: 231).

235 Polkinghorne (1997: 3-21).

236 Polkinghorne (1997: 10), in connection with presenting action theory.

237 This does not mean that all researchers – or artist-researchers – take a performative stance when doing their research. Their research activity and outcome, however, can be viewed from this meta-perspective.

238 Cf. Joann Kealiinohomoku (2001 [1970]: 33-43), Susan L. Foster (1997: 235-57), and Halprin (1995), just to mention a few contributions by scholars and artists who question the practice of dance and choreography.

239 Borgdorff (2007: 10).

audience.”²⁴⁰ More important than the actual definition Borgdorff provides is his substantial effort of mapping out the issues and premises at stake in artistic research as an emerging discourse. The perspectives raised by his mapping also remind me of the commonalities that artistic research as a practice shares with qualitative research in general, for example, as outlined by Polkinghorne, who, while writing about qualitative research as a performance and social practice, points to sociologist Pierre Bourdieu that describes practice by stressing three features: “(1) it is located in time and space, (2) it is most often guided by tacit understanding instead of rational decisions, and (3) it has purpose and strategies for accomplishing its goal.”²⁴¹ The viewpoints of Polkinghorne and Bordieu here, together with Borgdorff’s clarification above, situate for me the core concerns of artistic research as a practice. The combination tempts me to paraphrase Denzin’s definition of qualitative research as follows (with the alterations in italics):

Artistic research is situated activity that locates the *artist-researcher* in the world. It consists of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into series of *interventions and* representations, including *artistic works*, field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. It is understood, however, that each practice makes the world visible in a different way.²⁴²

In this paraphrased version, I will use the definition to point to how my artistic research project is not only confined to the performances of the trilogy, but extends to their construction as well as the construction of this study. Altogether, this situated activity is what “makes the world visible” in a specific way. For me Bolt further clarifies this viewpoint when she argues that the aim of artistic research is

to recognize and ‘map’ the ruptures and movements that are created by creative productions. Here the work of art is not just the artwork/performance or event, but *is also* the effect of the work in the material, affective and discursive domains.²⁴³

240 Borgdorff (2007: 18).

241 Polkinghorne (1997: 10).

242 The original version is as follows: “Qualitative research is situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. It is understood, however, that each practice makes the world visible in a different way” Denzin (2005: 3-4).

243 Bolt (2008: 13), italics as in the original.

Bolt is interested in the impact that artistic research also creates as an artistic practice, through its artistic approach and process, and as a reflexive outcome. With this impact-driven and change-oriented focus, for me Bolt is pointing to what the performative research paradigm, which Haseman proposes, might potentially lodge.²⁴⁴ I connect this potential to Polkinghorne's claim that "research is a performance," which is embedded in social practices that decide its outcome and therefore asks for a critical questioning.²⁴⁵ In this respect, the aim of artistic research becomes more than a delineated and accountable event, "*but is also the effect of the work in the material, affective and discursive domains.*"²⁴⁶ I share this perspective of and interest in the performative potential of artistic research. Here, I pursue this focus through critically tracing the way I am approaching and thinking choreographically in this artistic research project, while acknowledging that no artist-researcher can possibly account for the overall effect induced by their artistic research enquiry. What I can offer in this study is my partial view as a choreographer-researcher. Here, this research perspective draws on my understanding of both Kirkkopelto and Borgdorff's viewpoints on artistic research,²⁴⁷ Polkinghorne and his reading of Bourdieu,²⁴⁸ and Denzin's reminder that the research process is always a situated activity that locates the researcher in a specific context.²⁴⁹ Based on these methodological strands, I argue that it is through a self-reflexive attitude towards my role in the artistic research project – both in constructing the choreographed performances and writing this study, while questioning my underlying motivation and strategies used to reach my aims²⁵⁰ – that distinguishes this effort as artistic research, apart from art-practice-in-itself.²⁵¹ This self-reflexive attitude relates both to what I did and observed, as well as to how I link these experiences with the methodological strands and kaleidoscopic optic I dialogue with in this study. For as Pakes states: "Research provides a space for reflection, often not afforded in the sphere of professional performance, geared as it is towards the production

244 Despite her reservations about his theoretical understanding of the concept's theoretical base (Bolt 2008).

245 Polkinghorne (1997: 10).

246 Bolt (2008: 13), italics as in the original.

247 Kirkkopelto (2008) and Borgdorff (2007).

248 Polkinghorne, 1997: 10).

249 Denzin (2005: 3).

250 Polkinghorne (1997:10).

251 In this reasoning, I draw on Heaton's (2002: 4) understanding of what constitute a critical post-ethnographic account.

of works that can be exchanged as commodities within the dance market.”²⁵² For me the artistic research project certainly provided a space for reflection that provoked me to rethink what I was engaged in and how and why I was doing it.

252 Pakes (2009: 20).

3. Choreography and Somatics

'Here,' she said, 'in this here place, we flesh; flesh that weeps, laughs; flesh that dances on bare feet in grass. Love it. Love it hard. (...)

Saying no more, she stood up then and danced with her twisted hip the rest of what her heart had to say while the others opened their mouths and gave her the music. Long notes held until the four-part harmony was perfect enough for their deeply loved flesh.

From *Beloved* by Tony Morrison.²⁵³

Body is not a thing, it is a condition: it is our grip on the world and a sketch for our projects.

From *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir.²⁵⁴

In Chapter 3, I will situate my outlook on choreography and the body in this project. The chapter is organized in two parts: (3.1) Choreography and (3.2) Somatics. In this way, I will contextualize my take on choreography and the dancing body, and thereby my choreosomatic approach used in this artistic research project.

3.1. Contextualizing my outlook on choreography

Choreography is not created or practised in a vacuum, nor so in this project. Therefore, in Chapter 3.1, I want to take a closer look at what informed my understanding of choreography here, through focusing on the formative backdrop that contributed to shape my outlook as a student and young professional in the field of Western theatre dance. This focus explains why there are relatively few references to contemporary colleagues and their work in this chapter, and why it is neither an account of my choreographic studio practice as such. Instead,

²⁵³ Morrison (1987: 89).

²⁵⁴ de Beauvoir (1949: 50).

this means that I am looking at values and or practices that inform how I view choreography as a discipline. In filtering through research into the history of this field and taking into account earlier artists' works that I have got to know as a living practice, I want to identify what grounds and situates my choreographic concerns, conceptually as well as artistically here.

The chapter has four entry points: first, I briefly situate my understanding of the term "choreography"; then I map out my own background and training in the field; and next, I probe into the backdrop of my artistic outlook and choreographic interest. This I do through highlighting a fragmented artistic lineage from the legacy of the dance pioneer Margaret H'Doubler via the choreographer Anna Halprin²⁵⁵ to the circle of artists connected to the Judson Dance Theatre and the Grand Union. Finally, I therefore discuss the contemporary relevance of this lineage to my concerns in this project. Through sharing the archival fragments that nourish and situate my choreographic approach here, I also attempt to contextualize and base my interest in somatics in Docudancing Griefscapes.

From etymological meaning to contemporary understanding

My research project is situated in the field of contemporary choreography,²⁵⁶ which evolved as a notion during the last century. There were several dance

255 Anna Halprin was born Hannah Schuman, but changed her surname after marrying Lawrence Halprin in 1940 (Ross, 2007: 43). Before 1972 "Ann" was used as a shortened version of her given name at birth but after surviving a cancer operation that year she modified it by adding the "a" to become "Anna Halprin" (ibid: 363, n1). I have consequently chosen to use this latter version of her name.

256 In order to map out my background and interest in the disparate field of contemporary performance and choreography I will mention some of the performances I have seen while working on this artistic-research project, whose approaches and / or concerns have engaged me. These include performances made by the Finnish choreographer Tomi Paasonen (2004), the Australian performance artist William Yang (2005), the Lebanese artist Walid Raad (2004), the Flemish choreographer Anna Teresa de Keersmaeker (2002), the Singaporean director Ong Ken Seng (2001), the French choreographer Jerome Bel (2004), the Bosnian performance artist and choreographer Sasa Ascentic (2007), the Portuguese choreographer and dancer Vera Mantero (1996), the Dutch theatre company Wunderbaum (2006), the Danish choreographer and dancer Mette Ingvartsen (2005), the Rumanian choreographer and dancer Manuel Pelmus (2007), and the German group Rimini Protokoll (2008). The list of performances is not extensive, and neither will I analyse these works here, but simply leave them as traces to delimit my aesthetic interest and sense of artistic kinship within the contemporary performing arts scene. In spite of their different backgrounds and approaches to making performances, their performances share, from my perspective, some common traits. All are conceptually well crafted and represent contextually oriented projects. The majority draw on either auto-ethnographic or ethnographic research and documentary material. Several of them also relate to death and dying, and traumatic events. However, what they do have in common for me is that they all create a sense of fluidity between the art world displayed on stage in the black box theatre and the socio-political reality that encompasses it, and share a strong anchorage to fundamental and existential human issues. In this respect, the performances have served as

pioneers already operating at the beginning of the 20th century, though, at the time, little of these early efforts and achievements resulted in any explicit body of compositional theory.²⁵⁷ Not until after the blow of the First World War and the cataclysm that followed did the development of modern choreography and compositional theory begin to surface, particularly in the 1930s.²⁵⁸ Emerging from these artistic enquiries and practices, and often in conjunction with testing out new ideas for the training of dancers,²⁵⁹ this development established the foundation for the contemporary notion of choreography as an art medium and its proliferation. At the beginning of the 21st century, the outcome of this development has meant that the notion of choreography as well as that of the dancing body can be understood in multiple ways, as the dance scholar Susan L. Foster points out in her book *Choreographic empathy*.²⁶⁰ In this pluralistic situation, I believe it is important for the further development of choreography as a field, as Eddy has argued with respect to somatics,²⁶¹ to trace and credit the references on which our practices build or rest. I will do this through drawing extensively on research done by other scholars in this chapter. However, the purpose of this review is not to offer a comprehensive historical survey of the development of choreography as such, but rather to account for my partial relationship and understanding of this artistic discipline and practice.

However, when clarifying what choreography means for me as a choreographer-researcher writing this study, I also find it important to connect to the origin of the word *choreography* itself here. As is known, it etymologically describes

significant reference points in the process of clarifying the agendas and concerns in this project. For more information, on each performance, see under the name of the artist in *References, R1*.

257 Dance pioneers such as Loie Fuller (1862-1928), who is known for her experimental exploration of textiles and theatrical lightning techniques, Isadora Duncan (1877-1927), who left a legacy linked to her emancipatory project and dance philosophy, Ruth St. Denis (1879-1968), who is remembered for her appropriation and reinterpretation of rituals and mythology through her dancing, and the Russian company Ballets Russes with choreographers such as Michel Fokine (1880-1942) and Vaslev Nijinsky (1890-1952), who reintroduced the male dancers on to the scene of contemporary dance in western Europe and set new standards for dance as a performing art form.

258 Humphrey (1959: 19). In addition to the significant contributions of Laban, Horst and H'Doubler, there were other pioneers who also contributed choreographically, such as Doris Humphrey (1895-1958), her contemporary Martha Graham (1894-1991), and Mary Wigman (1886-1973) and her student Hanya Holm (1893-1992).

259 For example, Laban started his explorative work as early as 1910 and began his summer school programme in Ascona in 1912 (Preston-Dunlop 1998: 21, 28-33; Hodgson 2001: xv), while H'Doubler, her work in 1916 (Ross 2000: 103; Hagood 2000/1: 32). St.Denis and Ted Shawn started their Denishawn School for Dancing and Related Arts in Los Angeles in 1915, in which Louis Horst worked from 1916 (Madden 1996; Sherman 1983).

260 Foster (2011: 15, 72).

261 Eddy (2009).

the act of writing dance, and derives from the Greek words “choreia” (“χορεία”) for “dancing” and “graphié” (“γραφίη”) for “writing.”²⁶² Early on in our modern era the French dance master Raoul-Anger Feuillet reintroduced the word as a concept when in 1700²⁶³ he began using it as a synonym for *Orchésographie* that his forerunner Thoinot Arbeau had coined in 1589.²⁶⁴ As etymologically indicated, Feuillet’s use of the term “choreography” emerged from a preoccupation with developing a system for classifying and notating dance.²⁶⁵ This meant that the role of the choreographer had to do with the ability to *write* dances, which presupposes that he also possessed the knowledge of how to dance the dances in question. In the book *Dance as text: ideologies of the Baroque body*²⁶⁶ the dance scholar Mark Franko has exquisitely analysed and described this practice of writing dance manuals. Through writing these manuals, the early modern dance masters sought to ensure that other people could learn how to master their dances, in proximity to what was intended. In this way, the dance masters could disseminate their work, also as a commodity, to an extended audience beyond their local and temporal location, into the future. Centuries after Feuillet and his contemporaries, Rudolf Laban (1879-1958) would share this concern with posterity and spend considerable effort as a choreographer on developing a system for dance notation.²⁶⁷ As he states:

The preservation of artistic creations in a form which would enable posterity to study them and also to reproduce them, is one of the chief considerations which led to the study of choreutics and the inventions of dance notation.²⁶⁸

262 The Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd Ed. (1989).

263 Feuillet, R-A. (1968 [1700]) *Chorégraphie: Ou l’art de décrire la danse*, New York: Brode Bros. Feuillet was living from approx. 1653 to approx. 1709.

264 Arbeau, T. (1967). Arbeau lived from 1519 to 1595. The word “orchestography” literally means “dancing writing” (from the Greek words ‘ὄρχησις’ or ‘orchesis’ and ‘γραφίη’ or ‘graphié’), and refers to “the act and/or art of dancing.” See The Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd Ed. (1989). See also Lepecki (2006: 132, n5).

265 The content carried by the spoken word had recently experienced a new role through the technique of book printing. Science was likewise developing and gaining respect through systematic classification. The quest for developing dance notation systems must be understood in this historical context. With the help of printing, dance masters and their funders sought to utilize this means to propagate their dance practices and develop the field.

266 Franko (1993).

267 By developing the system that is known today as Laban notation. See Laban (1928; 1956). For an introduction, see, for example, Valerie Preston-Dunlop (1998: 246-48) and Peggy Hackney (1998: 217-246).

268 Laban (1966: 123). Choreutics is a term invented by Laban to express “the art, or science, dealing with the analysis and synthesis of movement.” It is in itself a multilayered subject. See Laban (1966: 8).

In being a contemporary choreographer-researcher who has never known a situation without access to video as an integral tool in the choreographic process, I do not share the urgency about posterity that Laban experienced. However, I indeed recognize and find highly relevant his additional comments on the impact of writing itself, as a process:

When we write down an idea, whether in words or in dance notation, we are compelled to clarify and simplify our first vague conception. The analysis necessitated by the process of recording unveils the inner as well as the outward nature of the movement.²⁶⁹

In this description of the effect of writing, I can connect to Laban and his predecessors. I have myself experienced how the process of writing clarifies and induces a reflexive analysis. For me this effect applies not only with regard to clarifying movement details, but, even more fundamentally, to identifying the artistic concept or strategy in a project. I have observed this effect in different situations: while writing project logs, project descriptions in applications for funding, conference presentations, and articles and, certainly, more comprehensively through writing this study. Though my interest is not in writing a manual on how to do choreography in the specific sense as the baroque dance masters did through dance notation, nevertheless, I am as a choreographer-researcher in this study taking on a *similar* role to theirs: that is, as choreographer-researcher, I am both a “dance-maker” and “author” engaged in both “dance-making” and “writing.” The difference is that in studying my approach and process for constructing performances I write to clarify my understanding of choreography. This difference is crucial. Rather than capturing sequences of steps, through this writing process I am constructing a choreography of propositions and viewpoints. In this way, in addition to performing the performances I constructed together with my collaborators, I also searched for ways of *performing* these processual and embedded insights through writing. I will return to this argument in the last chapter of this study.

For me this position connects to what Lepecki has argued: that choreography can be viewed as a form of writing that is embedded and embodied in the act of dancing or performing itself. His claim is that “choreography activates writing in the realm of dancing to guarantee that dance’s present is given a past, and

269 Laban (1966: 123).

therefore, a future.”²⁷⁰ I will claim that I contribute to this by embodying my project through the acts of fieldwork, studio-based explorations, staged performances, and this study. Viewed from this perspective, and with this study, I believe that I am both inscribing myself in the tradition of dance-writers as well as contributing to redefining this tradition of “dance-writing.”

In the contemporary usage of the term,²⁷¹ which I also apply in this study, choreography does not relate to the notion of writing or dance notation as such but, as noted by Susan L. Foster, “has come to refer to a plan or orchestration of bodies in motion. And in this refined definition, the plan is distinguished from its implementation and from the skills necessary for its execution.”²⁷² In other words, choreography gives a name to the kinetically (and kinaesthetically) based art medium that offers us principles and tools for analysing and constructing artistic statements and propositions by structuring movements, activities, and effort in time and space. From my perspective this means the notion of choreography encompasses both conventions that, as Foster states, “refer to events in the world” and those related to the “internal coherence and structure” of a choreographic composition or plan. Foster argues that it is in “the tension created between these two kinds of conventions” that the meaning of the choreography occurs.²⁷³ From this it follows that choreography can be seen as a tripartite and composite “product of the choreographer’s creative process,”²⁷⁴ of the conventions that compose it, and of its historical situation.”²⁷⁵ For me this viewpoint highlights how choreography is, as a discipline, steeped in aesthetical values with implicit ideological claims for ways in which to think about choreography and the moving body.²⁷⁶ This has political implications, which I discuss in the Fourth Part of my study, but this viewpoint also obliges me to map out my own background in the field, with the conventions I was taught and relate to, as they frame my outlook on choreography in this project.

Mapping my background and interest in choreography

My professional entry to the field of choreography was as a student in choreography and modern dance at the National Academy of Ballet in Oslo (1988-1991),

270 Lepecki (2006: 125).

271 See, for example, Foster (2011: 15, 72).

272 Foster (2011: 15).

273 Foster (1986: xviii).

274 In this project, it is a result of research and development in collaboration with the performers.

275 Foster (1986: xiv).

276 Cf. Franko (1993, 2007), Lepecki (2006), H'Doubler (1940), and Halprin (1995).

“Statens Balletthøgskole,” which is part of KHiO today. Since this programme was based on extensive production training with dancers, it accepted a maximum of three students at a time.²⁷⁷ The few selected students were taught choreography, through studio-based composition classes and through staging and presenting choreographic assignments, both at the school’s theatre and at site-specific locations, with dancers from the different dance programmes participating. The school’s dance programme offered three specializations: in ballet, “jazz dance,”²⁷⁸ and modern dance. The latter was at the time mainly based on the Graham technique, supported by classes in Cunningham and contact improvisation.

The composition classes in choreography were primarily based on three approaches, or clusters of traditions, related to Laban, Horst, and Cunningham. I received my studio-based introduction to Laban with his movement analyses and concepts of effort, shape, and spatial planes, mainly from the choreographers Anne Grete Eriksen and Ivo Cramér. Eriksen had a background from the Dartington College of Arts and the Laban Centre of Movement and Dance in London (1974-1976), while Cramér from studies with Trude Engelhart, a former dancer of Mary Wigman’s who had run Wigman’s school in Berlin.²⁷⁹ My studio-based introduction to the compositional tools derived from the teaching of Louis Horst that I received primarily from the choreographers Nina Fonoroff, Kazuko Hirabayashi, Stuart Hopps, and Jane Hveding, who were all guest teachers in my programme. As a composer, Horst had worked closely with Martha Graham and her dancers and introduced structures and principles from music composition, which were applied to dance-making and choreography.²⁸⁰ Fonoroff,

277 Prior to 2003, new students in choreography were accepted every third year; after 2003 they were accepted every second year when the programme was restructured as a two-year MA. Prior to starting my studies in Oslo in 1988, I had undertaken a year of part-time professional training at the London Contemporary Dance School.

278 I have added the quotation marks, as I find the term highly misleading. Though the term draws on the dance styles emerging out of the musical roots of jazz, it has methodologically and artistically little to do with how the concept of jazz is commonly understood and taught within the field of music. In a Norwegian setting, “jazz dance” is closely related to the entertainment industry in the performing arts.

279 After graduating, I supplemented my insight into Laban through studying basic Laban notation at NTNU in Trondheim and the choreographer William Forsythe’s application of Laban’s spatial planes, which was introduced to me by the former Forsythe dancers Elisabeth Corbett and Helen Pickett. Laban’s major contribution was to define principles and tools for the analysis of human movement patterns and structures, which enhanced a craft-based professional development of choreography as a field. See Laban (1922, 1966, 1974). For more information on Laban, see, for example, Preston-Dunlop (1998), Hodgson (2001), Eden Davis (2001), and Carol-Lynne Moore (2009). For more on Forsythe, see, for example, Forsythe (1992, 1996, 2000), Fabius (2009, 340-42), Figgis (2007), Weisbeck (2008), Tusa (2003), and Driver (2000).

280 Horst (1975). See also Warren (1998: 20) and Madden (1996: 67).

as one of Graham's early dancers (part of the second group constituting the Martha Graham company), had worked closely with Horst before she began teaching choreography at the London Contemporary Dance School; Hirabayashi was another but later Graham dancer that taught choreography at Purchase College/ SUNY, Alvin Ailey, and the Julliard School in New York, whereas Hopps and Hveding had both studied choreography with choreographers who had been part of the first group of Graham dancers. Hopps had studied with Bessie Schönberg, and Hveding with Anna Sokolow, who had extensively worked as an assistant and demonstrator for Horst.

My studio-based introduction to Cunningham, with the concept of chance operations and "non-representative" dance composition that Merce Cunningham had developed in collaboration with the composer and his life partner John Cage,²⁸¹ I received mainly from Eriksen and in part from Ulla Koivisto at TEAK.

Thanks to the studio-based training with these different choreographers-teachers, I became familiar with compositional tools and methods from these three different approaches to choreography, and acquired analytical skills and the basic craftsmanship for working with movement composition. Despite the increased diversity and development of approaches and programmes in choreography since the late 1980s, various forms of the three approaches still feature as central when one is looking at basic textbooks on choreography and choreographic composition.²⁸² Nevertheless, I leave them aside here, because these approaches did not play a central role in the construction of this project, but I do acknowledge that their tools and methods are integral parts of my choreographic apparatus today. However, I think the context within which these artistic practices were introduced to me is of relevance. In my case, they took place within a programme at a national institution whose main responsibility was to educate dancers both for the national ballet and the contemporary dance scene, as well the entertainment industry in the performing arts. These different aesthetic ambitions within one institutional framework, in combination with the dominant role of the dance programmes and their emphasis on the students' ability to copy and execute dance routines, rather than to create and develop them, created a tension. Thanks to my choreography programme, I would participate in a spring course at the School for New Dance Development

281 Cunningham (1991; 1992). See also Kostelanetz (1992). For more on Cage, see, for example, Cage (1981).

282 For example, those of Lynn Ann Blom and L. Tarin Chaplin (1982), Jacqueline M. Smith-Autard (2000), Daniel Nagrin (2001), and Sandra Cerny Minton (1986).

in Amsterdam (SNDO) in 1989 and in a joint Nordic programme that took place both at DOCH and TEAK in 1990. With this, I got insights into other learning cultures. I remember being struck by the differences I experienced between the institutions on how dance was taught and understood. Both SNDO and TEAK were based on the study of contemporary dance and, at SNDO particularly, the creative process was at the core, whereas at my institution the field of choreography was treasured as long as it facilitated or did not disrupt the conventional dance training that was taught. At the time, this training heeded a regimen of subservience and modernist aestheticism, geared towards expressive virtuosity, and enveloped by evaluative judgements and attitudes, with a deficit of self-reflexivity. Its physical training made me paradoxically feel more disembodied, rather than embodied to trust and sense my body and my improvisational abilities, which had been my strongest asset as a mover when I entered the school. In combination with my exposure to these other learning environments and my background in studies of socialization processes in sociology,²⁸³ this spurred me on to question the embedded values and the premises of choreography and dance. My encounter with the body practice Kinetic Awareness (KA®) soon after graduating became, in this respect, an important turning point.²⁸⁴ It felt like a homecoming and set me off on the long journey of reconnecting to my body and rethinking the understanding of dancing and choreography. Elaine Summers, one of the leading figures in the Judson Church Theatre, had developed the practice. I was introduced to this work through Frances Becker, a Master Certified Kinetic Awareness Teacher (MCKA) and dancer, who together with Nina Martin had co-founded the New York Dance Intensive (NYDI).²⁸⁵ Through my studies of KA® at NYDI, which was a programme integrating traditional and innovative training for the study of contemporary performance, I was introduced to the independent and experimental part of the dance scene in New York City. The combination showed me that there existed different and alternative ways of approaching the art of moving than the hegemonic models I had primarily been subjected to until then. The explorative mood and blend of body practices, improvisation, performance traditions and dancing I encountered there felt liberating. In addition to KA®, particularly my improvisation studies with Steve

283 First at the UiO, then at the OU.

284 Becker is one of Summers' few Master Certified Kinetic Awareness Teachers (MCKA).

285 NYDI is not related to current the New York Summer Intensive organised by Dance New Amsterdam (DNA). I studied at the NYDI for two terms in 1992 and 1993, then again for a half term in 1995, before it closed in the late 1990s.

Paxton, Lisa Nelson, Yoshiko Chuma, and Deborah Hay, and the Klein technique with Barbara Mahler and Susan Klein, and Developmental Movements (based on BMC™) with Wendel Beavers had a decisive importance and influence on my further development.²⁸⁶ Through these artists and their artistic practices I found important insights and inspirations for how to work artistically with personal integrity in a non-judgemental and pragmatic way, while searching for a more finely tuned attentiveness and precision in my artistic enquiries. For me they all contributed to show me, in different ways, how dance and choreography could transcend a quest for perfecting aesthetic skills, to embed an outlook on life as such. This stance captured me. From getting to know more about their artistic interest and how they pursued their artistic concerns, I learned, in addition to new skills and movement strategies, something about being an artist and trusting my own moves and approach to dance and choreography. This experience also informs my approach to choreography in this project. Rather than seeking to develop a “best practice” or handbook of “how-to-make” choreography,²⁸⁷ I primarily explore choreography here as an artistic medium and a tool for engaging in and making sense of the world around me, through exploring how I perceive it, express and give shape to my impressions, and reflect upon the experiences of performing these outcomes. In this respect, choreographing is “as a way of seeing the world,” as the choreographer-researcher Michael Klien has stated;²⁸⁸ or a way of thinking, if I may reinterpret Yvonne Rainer’s famous statement: “the mind is a muscle.”²⁸⁹

That said, my intention with this project is neither to replace nor overthrow the compositional skills and knowledge that can be gained about choreography through the teaching drawing on Laban, Horst, Cunningham, or others. On the contrary, I rather want to challenge and supplement this knowledge and outlook

286 Paxton and Hay had like Summers been part of the Judson Dance Theatre. Nelson is an improviser who was a part of Grand Union and has remained since then a close collaborator of Paxton. See, for example, Wendy Perron (2003: 147). Chuma’s work is known from her performance company The School of Hard Knocks; Mahler developed together with Klein what is known as the Klein technique. See Chapter 3.2, fn. 450. Beavers was one of three major teachers at the NYDI, together with Becker and Martin. He had created his Developmental Movements based on BMC™ and his studies with its founder, Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, which I return to in Chapter 3.2. He was also one of the developers of *The Viewpoints*, along with the originator Mary Overlie and the director Anne Bogart. My other main dance teachers in this period included several former Trisha Brown dancers, firstly Shelley Senter, but also Randy Warshaw, Stephen Petronio, Irene Hultman, and Vicky Shicks.

287 Cf. existing manuals in the field of dance composition, such as Jacqueline Smith-Autard ([1976] 2000), Lynne Anne Blom & L. Tarin Chaplin (1982), Sandra Cerny Minton (1997) and Pamela Sofras (2006).

288 Klien (2008: 27).

289 Rainer (1999: 27-46).

on choreography as an artistic medium. In drawing on anatomical and physiological knowledge of the body, I search for a more contextual and socio-political approach to dance and choreography that destabilizes the borders between aesthetics and ethics. This socio-political approach stems from my intertwined interest in politics, bodily movements and arts. Despite the fact that these concerns have often historically been juxtaposed in the craft-oriented discourse on choreography,²⁹⁰ they exist for me in a symbiotic interdependency and tension field, as explained in Chapter 1. From my viewpoint choreography will always come into being in a socio-political context charged with political agencies and power structures that will influence the choreographic focus and, hence, impact the artistic process and outcome, as well as the reading of it, regardless whether it is explicitly or implicitly expressed as a major concern of the choreographer. The effect will most likely be reflected in the choreography's contribution to meaning-making in the field and or in society at large. From this perspective choreography can, as an art medium – through choreographers and performers – be seen as both an active subject and a passive object, which can either make a difference and challenge, or simply partake in preserving the dominant (body) politics that govern a society.²⁹¹ In accordance with this perspective and my own choreographic practice, I consider choreography to be emergent, in the sense that its significances, in building meaning, creating structures, and causing ruptures, including those unintentionally created, are contained in its outcome.

Tracing my artistic lineage through reviewing past practices

Through developing this project and writing this study it became clear to me how we are all part of artistic trajectories. I therefore began to pay especial attention to the artistic practices and positions that have informed and shaped my choreographic thinking and interest here. In doing so, I recalled how Ingunn Rimestad, my artistic supervisor at KHiO, in late 2005 after a fruitful discussion

290 The separation of concerns that can be defined as strictly compositional and aesthetical from those considered as content-driven, and hence might relate to politics and ethics entailed in a choreographic project. This juxtaposition has been circulating at least since the French dance master Jean-Georges Noverre wrote *Lettres sur la danse et sur les ballets* in 1760. Here, he advocated the need of purging dance of its excessive artificialities and conventions. The remedy was to avoid superfluous movements and actions. Instead, he emphasised the need for developing logical plots and sincere (gestural) relationships between the characters in the ballets. With this came the foundation of what would later develop into the narrative ballets in the 19th century. See Noverre (2004).

291 An extreme example here is the claims of Lilian Karina and Marion Kant on the German Modern dance as Hitler's willing executors of the racial politics under the Third Reich in the 1930s (Karina & Kant 2004).

in the studio with the performers, gave me a copy of an article she had found, which she thought was very relevant to my choreographic approach and project, especially the strategy I had used in my artistic research project on constructing the performance *A Rehearsal for Mortals*. I became attentive, because her recommendations of this kind were few, but usually very succinct. The article was on the legacy of Margaret H'Doubler (1889-1982) by Thomas K. Hagood.²⁹² At the time, I could not recall having seen her name before, but through reading about her approach to dance, it was as if a complex puzzle had begun to make sense for me. I understood something about the values that motivated me in my own artistic work, as well as sensing a lineage I could trace in my own training. Likewise, I understood something more about my reservation towards the dance training and the three choreographic approaches that I had been taught as an undergraduate (derived from Laban's research, Horst's compositional understanding, and Cunningham's experiments). More importantly, I could connect the powerful impression from my meeting with Anna Halprin at Performance Studies in 1999, my experiences from improvising in Simone Forti's studio in New York and at Steve Paxton's farm up in Vermont in the early 1990s, to this frail glimpse into what for me then was an unknown past. In short, at the core of H'Doubler's thinking about how to approach dancing, which I encountered nine decades after she began her work in a completely different context, I found a deep resonance to my own artistic work and research process. Thanks to the research of scholars such as Janice Ross and Thomas K. Hagood in combination with her own writing, I can patch together and construct my own partial understanding of this trajectory here. Through this mapping, I will situate contextually the conceptual backdrop for my choreographic outlook and approach to movement developments in this project.

H'Doubler and her legacy via Halprin to the paradigmatic shift in the 1960s

In contrast to Laban, Horst, and Cunningham, H'Doubler developed her thinking under a completely different pretext and social circumstances.²⁹³ H'Doubler

292 Hagood (2001).

293 Laban was a central-European cosmopolitan nomad (he lived over the years in Vienna, Paris, Munich, Zurich, Hamburg, Berlin and London) who came to dance and choreography with a background in visual arts and architecture. See, for example, Preston-Dunlop (1998) and Hodgson (2001). Horst was a composer and musician based mainly in Los Angeles and New York. He worked as a musical director, first at the Denishawn School of Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn in Los Angeles, where both Doris Humphrey and Martha Graham were students, and then for Graham in New York (Madden, 1996).

was born in the Midwest of the USA, and lived and worked most of her life in Madison, Wisconsin, far removed from the cosmopolitan cities and the troubling times in Europe at the start of the twentieth century. She had a background in studies in biology, philosophy and physical education.²⁹⁴ However, she was urged to switch from being a basketball coach to take up teaching dance by her mentor and superior Blanche Trilling at Wisconsin University in 1917 when returning to Madison after graduate studies in New York. In a 1963 interview H'Doubler recounted how it all began: "I didn't have a thing but an idea, and no music whatsoever but fortunately the summer group that came to study was a marvellous group, and they too were dissatisfied with this other kind of dancing."²⁹⁵ What got my attention was that she took up teaching dance, not based on a pool of different routines of movements to teach, but with an idea, or rather an attentive questioning. Despite being anchored in teaching, and not artistic production, this starting point resonates for me with what I consider artistic enquiry and research. Though less concerned with identifying structural laws and principles for moving than, for example, Laban, she drew on anatomical and physiological knowledge about the body to facilitate movements. Her focus was more on developing each individual's movement potential in dancing, rather than a performance-driven training in skills to display the art of dancing. This interest led to a task-oriented approach and exploration through improvisation. This explorative approach is what especially resonates with how I approach this project with the use of physiological knowledge for creating tasks and situations for individual movement explorations. In H'Doubler's case, this approach meant that "the actual designs and physical 'how-to' evolution of a specific dance class are almost never described," which frustrates Ross as a dance scholar,²⁹⁶ but for me as a choreographer-researcher familiar with sensory-based body practices, this seems logical, as such work, rather than developing a pre-set regime of exercises, is firstly concerned with defining some basic premises or tasks for setting off a movement exploration, an approach I heavily rely on in my choreographic process in this project. From my experience, such an approach relies on clear and poignant conceptual focuses that offer starting points for doing

Cunningham was a dancer and choreographer based in New York, who after leaving the Graham Company developed his own work in close proximity with the avant-garde artists such as his partner John Cage, and visual artists such as Robert Rauschenberg, Bruce Nauman, and Jasper Johns.

294 Ross (2000: 105, 110).

295 H'Doubler as quoted by Ross (2000: 190).

296 Ross (2000: 190).

exploratory and improvisational movement work. What remains then for me as a choreographer responsible for the process is to stay attentively present to observe, guide, and facilitate the actual work unfolding in the studio. According to Hagood, the essence of H'Doubler's inspiration for conducting her work was based on the vision that "studies in dance must be grounded in knowledge of the moving body itself. At the heart of the issues of dance in education was learning about the body: joint actions, neuromuscular relationships, the physiology of movement, kinesiology."²⁹⁷ For Ross, this focus demonstrates the importance of H'Doubler's "background as a biologist" for explaining how she came to create "a dance education in part as a *hybrid* between dance and physical education." I have added the italics to "hybrid," as from my perspective, this notion is central to capture what distinguishes H'Doubler's approach. For me it is in the intersection between her knowledge of biology, philosophy, and physical education that she arrived at the corporeally grounded and content-driven focus that Ross and Hagood describe.²⁹⁸ With my own mixed background, I feel an affinity to this methodological approach to dance, which, according to Hagood, "led H'Doubler toward an approach to dance that she could associate with substance; it led her toward a science of dance." From this platform, "she felt she could begin to explore her role in conceptualizing ... dance."²⁹⁹ As a choreographer-researcher in this project, I recognize the sense of substance when the exploration is grounded on thorough background research. In the case of H'Doubler, Ross claims that her approach brought forward "a new conception of dance,"³⁰⁰ which "peeled away (...) some of the veneer of mystery from the art of dance. In her classroom, dance became a tool for bodily, kinaesthetic, and cognitive discovery,"³⁰¹ a place for young dance students to discover their sentient body. Form for H'Doubler was, as she put it herself, "a projection of neural focus within."³⁰² For me this is not only about corporeal knowledge and awareness, but also about conceptual clarity, which I consider as crucial in a choreographic process, as well as in teaching.

In summing up her motivation for working on defining what dance in the university could be and how the curriculum would best accommodate this, she

297 Hagood (2001: 36).

298 Ross (2000: 210) and referring to Hagood's quote above.

299 Hagood (2001: 36).

300 Ross (2000: 213).

301 Ross (2000: 7).

302 H'Doubler (1940: 147). Research into cellular and cognitive neuroscience on the functions of neurons has given a more solid grounding for her claim, as the work by the neuroscientist Antonio Damásio (2005) has shown us.

states: "I wanted to put the art back in, so students could go where they wanted when they left."³⁰³ In this respect, she remained, first of all, a coach,³⁰⁴ and by that also pointing towards another way of conveying and thinking about dance in a period still marked by a strong emphasis on the genius of the individual choreographer and his or her "prescribed regimen of exercises."³⁰⁵ Through the emphasis on making each student the subject of his or her own dance, H'Doubler's approach points to an emancipatory strategy that would eventually lead to a redefinition of the dance training, as well as the concept of virtuosity, and the role of the dancer.³⁰⁶ In this respect, H'Doubler left a legacy that positions the individual as a dancing subject with its questioning as the driving force in the artistic process, issues that also challenge me to question how I conduct the choreographic process in my project. From her experimentation on how to release the students' bodily movement potential, H'Doubler envisioned in 1940 "the future of dance as a democratic art activity"³⁰⁷ in which "a student should be taught to teach himself."³⁰⁸ When looking into the ways in which many conservatory programmes and companies in dance are run today, her ideas still offer a radical and potent proposition that question the value systems and practices in operation and the role of the dancers in them. However, her vision resonates with values that would later surface out of the student riots in 1968, as well as the more recent discussions related to the philosopher Jacques Rancière's writing on intellectual emancipation and how everybody in essence could teach themselves.³⁰⁹ So, when Ross states, "H'Doubler's actions opened the door for a fresh valuing of dance as a means for gaining mediate and immediate understanding of the world,"³¹⁰ it makes sense to me twofold, especially when taking into ac-

303 H'Doubler as quoted in Ross (2000: 205) in an interview with a former student and dance lecturer Alma Hawkins.

304 Ross (2000: 214).

305 Foster (2011: 47). H'Doubler's contemporaries were choreographers such as Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey and Hanya Holm.

306 Cf. ideas voiced later by the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1996 [1970]). H'Doubler's approach indirectly points to educational programmes in dance, like those that have emerged within the visual arts during the last decades, which are less occupied with disciplinary borders than to provide conditions for transmitting traditions and knowledge about the changing ideas and practices that artists are pursuing.

307 H'Doubler (1940: xii).

308 H'Doubler (1940: 97).

309 Rancière (1991). In his analysis of Joseph Jacotot's unconventional teaching method.

310 According to Ross, by demonstrating "that dance could be a means for developing the capacity in students to physicalize experience," H'Doubler "showed that dance could be used as a non-, pre-, and post-verbal medium of expression that made possible kinds of articulation not possible elsewhere" (Ross 2000: 216).

count that the central tool and method of working for H'Doubler was the use of improvisation,³¹¹ though the artistic potential of her approach was first tested with Halprin's reinterpretations and elaborations. In forwarding H'Doubler's approach with a corporeal grounded enquiry that was based on improvisation, Halprin, like H'Doubler, was influenced by the writing of Mable E. Todd,³¹² who was one of the major contributors to the development of ideokinesis – an influential school of body practices.³¹³ I will not go into this practice here, but merely focus on Halprin's reasons for taking up the work of Todd and H'Doubler. For Halprin the modern dance scene at the time when Graham and Humphrey dominated the dance stage in the United States felt overwhelmingly confirmative and limiting: "So all had to be re-examined."³¹⁴ I can connect to that feeling: as a young choreography graduate in Oslo more than three decades later, in the early 1990s, I felt in a similar way overwhelmed by the prevailing conventions I faced in Norway. Most of my choreographic work in the 1990s was therefore made without involving trained dancers. Faced with the limiting situation in her context, Halprin explains:

That's how the whole idea of task-oriented movement and my particular interest in Mabel Todd and her approach ...arose at the time. I was interested in going back to my roots with my original teacher, Margareth H'Doubler, where we really looked at movement from the point of view of anatomy and kinesiology with strong emphasis on creativity. And so I started doing improvisations as a way of getting away from a-b-a forms. Looking at space differently. (...) And along with that you began to take issue with what your role was as a dancer. Who said we couldn't speak, sing, build environments? You didn't have to go around with bare feet, you could wear shoes, dresses, or no clothes at all and go naked.³¹⁵

In her explanation, I particularly connect to her task-oriented approach and how the enquiry came to play a central role in her artistic development. How movements, movement strategies and performing practices were developed through drawing on the methodology of H'Doubler: combining knowledge on the body with the help of creative explorations that used improvisational tools.

311 Interestingly H'Doubler did not use the word improvisation or choreography much as explicit terms. Both remained implicit or as a consequence of the study of movement and dance, see, for example, Ross (2000: xvi, 181) and H'Doubler (1940: 78, 91, 147).

312 According to Halprin (1995: 6) and seconded by the dance scholar Ramsay Burt (2006: 56).

313 See Todd (2008 [1937]).

314 Halprin (1995: 6).

315 Halprin (1995: 6).

I find it interesting how this approach led Halprin to question the role of the dancers and the art form itself with the agencies that were embedded in its conventions. In my own contextually based strategy, I feel deeply connected to such an inquisitive and explorative approach. Her statement here also underpins the claims that Ross makes about the importance of the H'Doubler legacy: how "H'Doubler's antitheatrical bias and her focus on internal feeling became the basis for the 1960s revolution in dance" in the United States.³¹⁶ For Ross this is evident and underlined by the fact that Halprin's artistic approach directly came to influence this paradigmatic shift through the involvements of her students and collaborators, such as Simone Forti and Trisha Brown.³¹⁷ Ramsay Burt is another dance scholar who similarly points to this link, and then again, especially to the role that improvisation played here. He states:

It is with Halprin and Forti³¹⁸ that this approach to improvisation made the transition from a practice within dance pedagogy ... to a far more radical, avant-garde performance practice. Forti was a key member of Halprin's group "The San Francisco Dancers' Workshop" in its early days.³¹⁹

On her official homepage, Halprin contributes to reinforce this reading of her ties to the dance revolution in the 1960s:

Anna Halprin founded the groundbreaking San Francisco Dancer's Workshop in 1955 (...). Her students include Meredith Monk, Trisha Brown, Yvonne Rainer, Simone Forti, (...) and who become involved in the progressive and experimental Judson Church Group.³²⁰

The history connected to what Halprin refers to as the Judson Church group, or the Judson Dance Theater as it was formally named, is well known,³²¹ and therefore I want to give my rendering of this story exactly in order to make clear what aspect of it I refer to and treasure.

316 Ross (2000: 8).

317 Ross (2000: 8).

318 Simone Forti was one of Anna Halprin's early students.

319 Burt (2006: 56). Simone Forti moved on to New York in 1959 and became a central figure in the Judson Dance Theater. Cf. Forti (1974: 2009).

320 For published sources on Anna Halprin's homepage, see < http://annahalprin.org/about_bio.html > (Retrieved 5 February 2010). According to Sally Banes Meredith Monk first joined the 'Judson circles' later in the 1960s, and she refers to her as the "second generation" of Judson dancers" (Banes 2001: 357).

321 See, for example, dance scholars such as Banes (1987; 1995; 2001; 2003) and Burt (2006).

Revisiting the story of the paradigmatic shift

The Judson Dance Theater is one of the key markers of this paradigmatic shift that changed the understanding of what dance and choreography could be in the late 20th century. In short, their work contributed, as Burt stresses, “to open up new sets of parameters through which to rethink the social and political relevance of the dancing body.”³²² Here, I will first situate this claim, then turn to my relationship to this shift.

Their artistic exploration was grounded on interdisciplinary artistic collaborations that were framed within a countercultural identity and emancipatory perspective.³²³ Their first concert took place on 6 July 1962 in Judson Memorial Church on Washington Square in Lower Manhattan, New York.³²⁴ It sprang out of the legendary composition workshop conducted by the musician and composer Robert Dunn (1928-1996), a former student of John Cage, at the Cunningham studio in 1960-62. Those who participated in the group, in addition to those mentioned by Halprin above, were, among others, Deborah Hay, Steve Paxton, and Elaine Summers.³²⁵ The group was inherently linked to Merce Cunningham and John Cage, especially as several of them either studied with or danced in Cunningham’s company, a fact Hay emphasises in describing the Judson Dance Theatre as “a group of experimental artists that was deeply influenced by Merce Cunningham and John Cage.”³²⁶ Cunningham and Cage themselves drew inspiration from East-Asian philosophy, as well as pre-war avant-garde artists, such as Marcel Duchamp and Eric Satie.³²⁷ However, as Burt stresses:

It is also necessary to recognize that, just as Cage and Cunningham developed their own, quite individual readings of Duchamp and Satie’s work. So the younger generation of dancers sometimes picked up on tangential and unexpected aspects of Cage and Cunningham’s

322 Burt (2006: 117) – in connection with a comment on the programme notes by Yvonne Rainer to her presentation of *The Mind is a Muscle* in 1968. Rainer, Forti and Brown were prominent members of the Judson Dance Theatre as well as being former students of Anna Halprin. See, for example, Halprin (1995: ivx) and Rainer (2006: 190-5).

323 See, for example, Jill Johnston (1998).

324 The group existed in 1962-1964. See, for example, Baner (1987: 11).

325 Other central participants were Alex Hay, Robert Morris, Lucinda Childs, Douglas Dunn, David Gordon, Robert Rauschenberg, and Carolee Schneeman. See Baner (1987: 11-15; 2001).

326 Deborah Hay states this in the biography on her homepage: < <http://www.deborahhay.com/bio.html> > (Retrieved 8 February 2010).

327 On East-Asian influences, see, for example, Brown et al. (1992: 48-49); on Duchamp, see Vaughan (1992: 66-70); and on Satie, see Brown et.al. (1992: 61). Duchamp and Satie belong to what Peter Bürger calls the historical avant-garde. I will refrain from discussing the art-historiographical problems related to this term here. See Bürger (1984) and Foster (1996: 8-20).

practices. Cage and Cunningham therefore derived a cluster of avant-garde strategies and aesthetic sensibilities from the work of Duchamp, Satie and other avant-garde artists from the early twentieth century, which were in turn taken up and transformed by the younger generation of dancers associated with Judson Dance Theater.³²⁸

The transformation that Burt points to here is, in my opinion, emphasized by the dry remarks made by Steve Paxton on his experiences from dancing with Cunningham from 1961 to 1964:³²⁹

The thing that surprised me the most about working in the company when I started.... was that we didn't all sit around and throw coins. I had expected that we would all do that, and what we *did* was come and learn steps. ³³⁰

With the throwing of coins Paxton refers to the radical stance of chance operations advocated by Cunningham and Cage and the use of dice to make the compositional order of the material. What Paxton suggests is that there was more to it than what the dancers were invited to take part in and, further, that their roles were still within the normative hierarchy of workers executing the master's material. Despite the radical rethinking of choreographic form and composition, it seems as if the dancers' role was mainly to execute set material, in this case, stylistically related to abstract shapes and directions in space. The work was not about probing into other bodily qualities.³³¹ With Halprin the focus was different. According to Ross, her workshops created the context for

dancers to find themselves, the content of their dances, and to reach toward a new definition of the performing body that was highly individualistic, attentive, responsive, and resilient. The body in this model has its own intelligence, and the self emerges as each dancer physically negotiates her or his relationship to objects, other dancers, and the encumbrances of the assigned tasks. As in contact improvisation, which would develop a

328 Burt (2006: 33).

329 The composer Steve Reich, who, based on his personal observations, argued in 1974 "the Judson group was the dance equivalent to the music of John Cage" – and then adds poignantly in a parentheses "even more so, curiously, than Merce Cunningham." He support his argument by saying "think of Paxton's *Satisfyin' Lover*, the walking piece, and Cage's *4'33*", the silent piece" (Reich 1974: 41, as quoted in Burt 2006: 33). Reich's argument also underlines what Burt states on the transformations of impulses taking place.

330 As quoted in Brown *et al.* (1992: 104-5). The emphasis is as in the original and is also referred to by Burt (2006: 41).

331 Brown *et al.* (1992: 104).

decade later out of work done by Steve Paxton, Nancy Stark Smith, Lisa Nelson, and other members of the Judson dance circles, one learned why to move, rather than absorbing a set vocabulary of actions.³³²

Here, Ross highlights the two key issues in Halprin's work that contributed to the developments that followed: the sensory-based questioning and the use of improvisation for studying movements subjectively as an individual. With both factors, Halprin carries on the legacy of H'Doubler's thinking on dance in which the question "Why move?" is crucial. This inquisitive approach to dance and movements is also, for me, what contributes to make the art discipline into a creative artistic medium that can present new knowledge and expressions, and not just attend to perfecting skills or compositional arrangements. In this respect, Halprin's approach points to what was about to emerge during the early 1960s: the questioning of the art form, the setting in which to perform in, and the role of the audience in it, as exemplified in this statement:

I don't want spectators. Spectators imply a spectacle that takes place to entertain and amuse and perhaps stimulate them. I want witnesses who realize that we are dancing for a purpose – to accomplish something in ourselves and in the world.³³³

For Halprin the role of witnessing radically differs from the role of spectators, who "sit back and watch and judge to see if what is done lives up to their pre-conceived notion of a particular, very culture-bound idea of a certain kind of 'art.'"³³⁴ The role of the witness implies an active engagement and responsibility on the audience's side to partake in the event by being receptive to the challenges the performers have undertaken. This outlook also opens up another way of approaching the art of dancing, performing, and making choreography.³³⁵ I think these impulses from Halprin were important. In reinterpreting and carrying on the legacy of a sensory awareness-based, emancipatory project, Halprin's workshops provided experiential skills in improvisation, which her students brought with them into the Judson Dance Theatre and Dunn's compositional classes.

332 Ross (2007: 153).

333 Halprin (1995: 249).

334 Halprin (1995: 249).

335 Issues I have explored in my recent project *If this is my body*. See Roar (2015), as well as <http://www.ordogbevegelse.no/projects/Per-Roar/> Roar and <https://www.facebook.com/hvis.dette.er> (Only in Norwegian) (accessed 10 January 2014).

Here, they were merged with the structural and compositional concerns of Cage and Cunningham and their fusion of early European avant-garde strategies and Asian philosophy.³³⁶ Together with the growing socio-political unrest of their time, this combination provided a fertile ground for young and independent-minded artists and dancers. As Ross simply states it,

In Ann's³³⁷ workshops the instantaneous image became a new starting point for dance.

Dunn's class led these sensitized bodies to find structure, limits, and form.³³⁸

In this intersection, structural concerns for compositional form and scores amalgamated with the individual explorative approaches that had been emphasised by H'Doubler and Halprin. This combination of focuses connects to my interest in relating choreography and somatics in this project. However, another side to this amalgamation that captures me is its contextual setting: how the development of the Judson Dance Theatre echoes the current "zeitgeist" or ethos of their time. It encompassed events such as the post-war euphoria of launching the first astronauts into space, the mounting tension of the Cold War with the threat of nuclear destruction, and a series of assassinations of central political leaders, while burgeoning social movements were fighting for social equality, including the Civil Rights Movement, which played a central role in questioning the existing social order in the US by demanding freedom, equality and democracy. By the late 1960s, their struggle coincided with the waves of student-led protests against the establishment and the anti-war rallies against the Vietnam War. It is within this shifting socio-political context that the paradigmatic shift in dance emerged in parallel with other major developments and movements in the arts.³³⁹ Though the Judson Dance Theatre did not contribute to breaking the white dominance in contemporary dance at that time,³⁴⁰ their experimental questioning of the aesthetics hegemonic rules did make a difference and contributed to changing the field of dance, choreography and performing arts, in the wake of the Judson Dance Theatre, partly thanks to the furthering of their experimentation through

336 Cage was particularly inspired by Taoist and Zen philosophical and religious practices. See, for example, Foster (2011: 64) and Cage (1981). Cunningham used the principle from the Chinese classics *I Ching* in his work for developing the chance operations. See, for example, Brown et al. (1992: 48).

337 By "Ann" she means Anna Halprin, referring to the name she used prior to 1972.

338 Ross (2007: 153).

339 Especially Fluxus, as exemplified by Burt (2006:100, 105), Nick Kaye (2000: 119), and Carolee Schneemann (1997).

340 See, for example, Foster (2011: 64).

the improvisational dance company or performance collective that derived from Rainer's company, known as the Grand Union, which existed from 1970 to 1976. The core members included Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown, Douglas Dunn, Meredith Monk, Nancy Stark Smith, Lisa Nelson, and Steve Paxton.³⁴¹ One of the best-known outcomes from their explorations was the development of Contact Improvisation (CI). It was motivated by Paxton's idea that non-dancers should be included in the new dancing evolving after Cunningham.³⁴² With this emancipatory drive, as the dance scholar Ann Cooper Albright points out, CI can be seen as a direct continuation of the social and aesthetic upheavals that surged in the late sixties, while simultaneously, in choreographic terms, CI "embraces the casual, individualistic, improvisatory ethos of social dancing in addition to the experimentation with pedestrian and task-like movement favoured by (...) the Judson Church Dance Theater."³⁴³ Artistically, as Phelan states, the Grand Union was

trying to present dance as neutral movement, trying to create spectacles of movement rather than shrines to display movers. The Grand Union made dances in which people literally were moving mattresses across a loft and dances in which people simply walked.³⁴⁴

In this project, my primary interest in their artistic work relates to their pedestrian and task-oriented approach to movement with an emphasis on the doing while moving, though, from the emphasis on neutral movements that Phelan highlights above, it could seem as if the Grand Union mainly dutifully aligned with Rainer's famous No-Manifesto from 1965: "No to spectacle no to virtuosity no to transformations and magic and make-believe no to the glamour and transcendency of the star image etc."³⁴⁵ However, from my personal encounters with several of those who were involved in this work at the time, I find it unlikely that they were stuck in an orthodox subservience to a dogma. Eyewitness accounts, such as Banes's, seem to confirm my inkling here. Phelan also contributes to nuance this impression when she refers to how Rainer retrospectively "discover[s] that there is no such thing as a 'neutral,' expressionless movement within the

341 See, for example, Banes (1987: 203).

342 This is a dance form, which emphasises "the primacy of touching," the social aspect of dancing, and hence relies on the trust and support of other dancing partners in combination with gravity for locomotion. For more information on CI, see Cohen-Bull (1997: 275-278; 2001: 405-407).

343 Albright (1997: 84). See also Cynthia Novack (1990).

344 Phelan (1995: 206).

345 Rainer (1998: 35).

frame of dance.”³⁴⁶ As Rainer underlines it herself: “One of the reasons Steve Paxton’s (...) walking people were so effective was that the walk was so simply and astonishingly ‘expressive of self.’”³⁴⁷ This observation Phelan connects to the phenomena that “the representational frame, ‘dance,’ always invites an interpretation of the activity” taking place.³⁴⁸ I share this outlook. Therefore, I also believe, as Banes has argued that, in trusting the sensory physicality of their bodies and the audience’s ability to co-create, the Judson Dance Theatre and the later Grand Union subversively transgressed the existing conventions for a dance performance.³⁴⁹ To the extent that they were “outrageously invalidating the very nature of authority,” as the dance critic Jill Johnston had already written about the Judson circle and their work back in 1968. She adds:

The thinking behind the work goes beyond democracy into anarchy. No member outstanding. No body necessarily more beautiful than any other body. No movement necessarily more important or more beautiful than any other movement.³⁵⁰

In my project, especially related to the first part of the trilogy in which I address the loss of my differently bodied friend Martin, I am deeply attuned to this attitude toward the body that Johnston describes here. Her claim about the radical stance of this circle resonates with the observations that the dance scholar Noël Carroll made of their contribution when comparing it to that of Andy Warhol, their contemporary in the arts. He states:

They, too, demonstrated that anything could become dance no matter how it looked – from Contact Improvisation to we know not what. In retrospect, they have extended the range of possibilities for contemporary dance momentarily. They have opened a new world of dance, not an end, but perhaps a new beginning.³⁵¹

Banes similarly emphasises this prospect of possibilities embedded in the dancing when she describes the pedestrian and task-oriented approach to movement that Rainer used in *Trio A* (1966):

346 Phelan (1995: 206, italics as in original).

347 Rainer as quoted by Phelan (1999: 7).

348 Phelan (1995: 206).

349 Banes (1987: 49, 218).

350 Johnston (1998: 117) as quoted in Burt (2006: 11).

351 Carroll (2003: 96).

The possibility is proposed that dance is neither perfection of technique nor of expression, but quite something else (...). It is not simply a new style of dance, but a new meaning and function, a new definition of dance, that has appeared.³⁵²

Despite the tendency to limit these developments with her reading,³⁵³ Banes underlines here what also Carroll states above when he points to the radical potentiality for future developments harboured in this legacy.

This potentiality of the legacy is what particularly interests me here. In constructing contextually based choreography, I am especially interested in exploring choreographically what it means to merge the emancipatory thinking that motivated Paxton to develop CI, with the pedestrian and task-oriented approach to movement that Rainer used to construct *Trio A*.

Despite the fact that I was a small toddler on another continent when Rainer did her *Trio A* in Judson, and in primary school when Grand Canyon was “contacting,” I nevertheless feel artistically intimately connected to the description that Banes gives in the quote above. It describes how I relate to the aggregated outcome of these moves associated with the Judson group and the Grand Union. In reading Banes’ assessment, I recall my experience from a workshop with Lisa Nelson in October 1992 up on Mad Brook farm in Vermont where she lives. In my memory, it seems as if her assignment that specific morning made me spend the whole morning in the crisp autumn air alone, sniffing the smell and touching the texture of wood, grass, and leaves in the landscape outside the wonderful studio. Coming directly from conventional modern dance training, this experience brought about similar reactions to those Banes describes, only more bewildered. For me this was “quite something else” that was not about stylistic choices, but, as Banes suggests, was related to “meaning and function” that redefined what dance could be. At the time, I could not make much out of it, but the experience gave me a distinct reference point and left an imprint that moved me profoundly and physically stirred me in a new direction. I was left with a similar, but still completely different experience, two years later after working with Deborah Hay in her reworked staging of *Lamb, lamb, lamb...* performed at the Danspace project in St. Marks Church in-the-Bowery in New York. Here, I encountered Hay’s precise score and performance meditation on living and dying. With the help of “*ah ha/nada*, perceived inseparably,” I was guided

352 Banes (1987: 49).

353 For more on this critique, see, for example, Burt (2004) and Susan Manning (1988).

towards a state of being/performing/dancing where conceptualization becomes meaningless, but not without meaning.³⁵⁴ As performers, we were asked to do less and to focus on doing the score, not “performing” it, and were paradoxically in this action completely exposed as performers and individuals. From Banes’s experiences of the Judson group and the Grand Union, she concludes: “A new world of possibilities for dance, performance, art had come into being.” For Banes this gives reason to spend time on this period of contemporary dance history.³⁵⁵ As a choreographer-researcher in this project, I return to this period out of a deeply personal artistic interest: because the developments that emerged out of this melting pot play an important role as reference points for my own artistic development. Thanks to my embodied experiences from my encounters with several of the artists involved and / or their practices. This explains the emphasis I have given here to the legacy that they came out of, or rather the part of it that resonates with my own artistic outlook. When rewriting the first draft of this chapter, I experienced this connection as a bodily sensation. In conjunction with the opening of the Oslo Kunsthall in September 2010 I had the chance to see *Trio A* - both in a video version (performed by Yvonne Rainer in 1965) and through a live performance by Shelley Senter.³⁵⁶ The experience overwhelmed me:

I felt again as if I was kinaesthetically coming “home,” and, at the same time, as if I was “set free” – as a choreographer, dancer, and human being, inspired to find my own way onwards in collaboration with others. In seeing Shelley, the former Trisha Brown dancer who had once also been my dance teacher in New York, perform Rainer’s choreography, I felt a rush of temporalities through my body all the way back to a woman in the Midwest who began her engagement in dance with an idea, 93 years earlier. I was back at Earthdance in 2008 dancing with Simone Forti while exploring her concept of logomotion; Tanz im August in Berlin in 2007 listening to Yvonne Rainer speak about her latest work; Saint Marks Church in-the-Bowery in 1994 performing with Deborah Hay in her *Lamb, lamb, lamb, ...*, and attending the discussion between Deborah and Trisha Brown on their different “Paths from the ‘60s to the ‘90s”; I recalled seeing Trisha Brown dancing her solo and Steve Paxton doing his English Suite, and participating in

354 Hay (1994: 95).

355 Banes (1987: 218)

356 Shelley Senter is one of the few dancers who are authorised by Rainer to perform this piece live. The video screening and the live performance took place as part of the opening of the Oslo Kunsthall 17th September 2010. Senter “was a member of the Trisha Brown Company from 1986-91. She continues to be involved with the Company as a guest artist, reconstructing, adapting, and staging choreography on professional companies.” Source: www.trishabrowncompany.org (accessed 30.09.2010)

a talk where they were prompted by Meg Stuart to discuss the role of emotions in dancing at Impuls Tanz in Vienna in 1995; before spiralling further backwards in time, beyond the premiere of *Trio A* at Judson Church in 1965 and my physical realm to Halprin's workshop on a deck in the bay area of San Francisco in 1960: to steps and enquiries of another time and place.

Without knowing the exact movement sequence of *Trio A*, but watching Senter doing it, it still felt as if I connected to this choreography in my bones, as a living practice through my own breathing. My deep personal resonance with this living archive underlined for me the importance of identifying the larger context of this archive that informs and situates my artistic enquiries in this project. It is not about imitating strategies for questioning conventions and authorities that existed in the US in the 1960s and the 1970s, but simply because I live under other circumstances that ask for different questions and propositions to be made.

With this rendering, however, I try to get a better understanding of the background that informs my embodied perspective to make my own moves here. In this respect, it is about understanding a legacy as an archive rather than as a canon. With the term "legacy", I refer to the artistic mindset, practices and approaches that emerged out of a developmental process in time, not only the body of choreographic works, but likewise the body of experiences taught to new generations. From this perspective, the experimental and emancipatory legacy of the Judson circle and the Grand Union still provides the field of choreography with important insights and challenges, when treated as an archive, rather than a canon, for explorative research and reinvestigation in choreographic strategies. At the turn of the 21st century in Europe, I am not alone with this agenda. A new generation of artists emerged, who did exactly that: approached this heritage as an archival resource for their artistic questioning.³⁵⁷ I could, like Burt, point to artists such as Boris Charmatz, Tino Seghal, Mårten Spångberg, Xavier Le Roy, and Jérôme Bel,³⁵⁸ or with Lepecki focus on the last two and add Vera Mantero.³⁵⁹ From watching and discussing their works,³⁶⁰ they have without

357 Burt (2006: 188).

358 Burt (2006: 193-97).

359 Lepecki (2006). Whereas Burt (2006) refers to Charmatz, Seghal, Spångberg, Le Roy, and Bel, Lepecki gives a close reading of some of the work by Le Roy and Bel in addition to works of Mantero. I will return to Lepecki's arguments in Chapter 4.2.

360 Charmatz (2004) – seen in Utrecht; Seghal (2007) – seen in New York; Spångberg (2007) – seen in Graz; Le Roy (2007) – seen in Berlin; Bel (2004) – seen in Utrecht; and Mantero (1996) – seen in Oslo. I will not describe or analyse each of the artists and their works mentioned here, as that would be beyond the scope of this enquiry, but for more information on them, see *References, R1* and *R4*.

knowing it helped me to sharpen my artistic moves and clarify my own thinking on choreography. For me their projects connect to the investigative and risk-taking mood of the Judson circles, but are still thoroughly rooted and motivated in their critical artistic interest in our contemporary dance / arts scene, not reverences to a heritage as such. They are part of the conceptual shift in continental European choreography during the last decades, which has led to a plethora of choreographic strategies and methods, and made contemporary choreography into a more collaborative, interactive and interdisciplinary art form.³⁶¹ However, I view these developments as elaborations of the earlier artistic ruptures, such as those launched by Halprin and the Judson Dance Theatre/Grand Union, but investigated in new socio-political contexts.³⁶² These contemporary advances show evidence that the dormant potential of these ruptures is not exhausted,³⁶³ but can be reinterpreted and reconceptualised into new artistic proposition and refined practices in new contexts. I am with my artistic-research project taking a small part in this process.

Reviewing the act of choreographing: a shift in choreographic approach

So then, what was at the core of these ruptures that emerged out of Halprin's workshops and the Judson Dance Theatre/Grand Canyon's experimentations, which created these new stances towards dance and dance-making that capture me as a choreographer decades later? I will begin answering that by quoting Susan L. Foster, who states:

Because they simply present individual people in motion, ... they cast the human being as a maker of patterns within a world of patterns and pattern makers. And although they insist on the validity of presenting articulate movement, they do not presume to tell the viewer what and how to watch. The patterns created by the dance are consciously and wilfully composed as an assemblage of independent, individual offerings, one that includes the readings of the viewers themselves.³⁶⁴

361 Changes discussed, for example, by Lepecki (2004a; 2006) and Fabius (2009).

362 See, for example, Burt (2006: 193-97). Other artists could have been specifically mentioned. However, my main interest is in the overall developments and practices that have impacted my artistic formation process and surfaced as relevant in this study.

363 Cf. Hal Foster who look at the relation between historical and neo-avant-gardes as that of a deferred action. See Foster (1996: 28-32). I discuss this issue in Chapter 4.2.

364 Foster (1986: 185).

However, what strikes me as particular relevant for my own choreographic enquiry and practice are the embedded values in their approaches, which respect/trust the individual human being in the creative process, whether as a maker, doer and viewer; to participate in the making of the outcome. In the choreographic strategies that evolved, especially out of the Grand Union, these perspectives were crystallized. As Foster pinpoints, they not only

remind us that self-definition depends on the human being's social circumstances, they also demonstrate that each of us is multiple bodies. ... When the body is allowed to develop a polyvalent significance, dance likewise becomes a practice or activity rather than a contained object.... from a single phenomenon into a countless different forms for making meaning. The body, no longer the stylus, the parchment, or the trace, becomes the process itself of signing, a process created mutually by all those - choreographers, dancers, and viewers - engaged in the dance.³⁶⁵

This perspective on dance and our multiple bodies also informs me how I view choreography as a practice or activity for meaning-making and not only as a “contained object.” As a dance scholar, Foster launches an “interdisciplinary choreographic model” in order to grasp the new perspectives she describes. It shares the stance towards movement linked to the Judson group, but in addition, it also “assumes that the body will inevitably refer to other events, and because of this asks how those references are made.” She describes this as a “reflexive choreography,” which both invites the viewers to perceptually witness and “involves the[m] in the task of sorting through and synthesizing the multiple interpretations it identifies.”³⁶⁶ In docudancing this project, I have as a choreographer-researcher explored the implications of creating a reflexive choreography, but firstly through looking at how, as the choreographic-I, I think choreographically, conduct choreographic processes and construct choreography, including the writing of this study. In reporting on these processual experiences, I consider myself as also participating in dancing the becoming of my choreographic outlook. With this dancing, I hope to contribute to further enhancing a shift in choreography towards a kinaesthetically based reflexive praxis. However, as Halprin underlines when discussing her own practice in an interview with Schechner:

³⁶⁵ Foster (1986): 227).

³⁶⁶ Foster (1986:187-8).

Certainly there are many ways to find our commonalities and to explore the basic principles of movement. I feel very encouraged that so many dancers are now turning to the work of Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, Moshe Feldenkrais, Mable Todd, and others who approach movement from the point of origin, evolution, and structural integration.³⁶⁷

As Halprin, I am also encouraged by this interest towards a more physiological or kinaesthetically based approach to movement within the field of dance and choreography. With her observations from the field, Halprin points to a tendency that the dance scholar Jeroen Fabius describes as a shift “from a more ocular-centric approach to choreography in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries” to a focus on “the material experience of the body” in the twentieth century. In making “the focus on kinaesthetics central,” Fabius argues that these developments both “propose new notions of subjectivity”³⁶⁸ and provide a different outlook on choreography:

Different approaches to space and relations with the spectator, creating new perspectives on embodiment of subjectivity, less focused on body images, body language, representation and distance but rather on process and the dynamic connections between action and reflection, material and virtual, in a movement ... where inside and outside keep feeding back into each other.³⁶⁹

From my point of view, what Fabius outlines here is also the premises that grounds “social choreography.”³⁷⁰ In this concept spatial and aesthetical concerns merge to create dramaturgical structures and plans for social interventions,³⁷¹ which seek to “represent, produce or prompt” inter-human relationships,” to cite art critic and curator Nicolas Bourriaud, who in his interest for *Relational Aesthetics* forwards similar concerns.³⁷² I share this interest in merging concerns to highlight inter-human relationships. In this project, however, my main choreographic focus is on what Fabius describes as “the dynamic connections” between what I consider as external inputs and internal experiences; and how they blend

367 Halprin (1995: 249).

368 Fabius (2009: 343).

369 Fabius (2009: 343).

370 See, for example, Michael Klien (2008), Kirsi Monni (2007), and Andrew Hewitt (2005).

371 This broader notion of choreography aligns more closely to the application of the term in cybernetics, which often uses it to describe the structural design of an interface, for example, on a web site or in a computer game.

372 Bourriaud (2002: 112).

to create new perspectives, cognitively and empathetically, as well as kinaesthetically. These concerns are for me more important than how the spatial and relational organisation of the staging expresses the social interventions of the project. With this priority, my choreographic interest manifests itself differently from what is associated with the concept of social choreography. Nevertheless, I feel conceptually connected to this broader notion of choreography, especially when it spurs out of an ecological thinking about interconnectedness and movements that is voiced in system theories, such as those advocated by the anthropologist and social scientist Gregory Bateson.³⁷³ From this viewpoint choreography can be seen, as highlighted by the choreographer-researcher Michael Klien, “as the offering of territory – a physical, habitual, perceptual opening – to the ones who will be dancing: a gesture of submission.”³⁷⁴ Conceptually, from this perspective choreography is based on the understanding that

We ourselves are parts of larger choreographies and our acts are acts upon them. This requires responsibility and creative action. It requires a thorough exploration into the wider grammar of patterns, their proportionality and their paradoxes, in order to discover the frames that bind us together and subsequently reveal to us the dances we dance.³⁷⁵

In these “frames that bind us together,” I also include the openings that are created conceptually as territories or proposals to relate to, or consider, such as those I offer through constructing and embodying the griefscapes in this project. In docudancing, I therefore connect to the notion of “choreography as a preparation for change” that Klien outlines from his reasoning.³⁷⁶ With this notion, his choreographic focus lies on generating processual or transformative situations or experiences, which for me evokes what Halprin calls “transformational dance.”³⁷⁷ For Klien, however, this performative perspective redefines the artistic artefact or outcome of the choreographic process, as it both relates and reinserts choreography into a larger field of interest in which we all participate in making. In sum, for me his perspective harbours an emancipatory gusto, which I feel deeply connected with as a choreographer. It is also this emancipatory

³⁷³ See, for example, Bateson (2000).

³⁷⁴ Klien (2008: 29).

³⁷⁵ Klien (2008: 8).

³⁷⁶ Klien (2010) in a presentation at the “Contemporary Dance Practice and Research Seminar” at TEAK, 8. March 2010.

³⁷⁷ Halprin (1995).

gusto with its relational and systemic way of thinking about dance and choreography that explains my interest in looking back at H'Doubler's approach, and how it can be seen manifested artistically through the works of Halprin and the explorations of the Judson Dance Theatre and Grand Union. Klien's discursive perspective, however, critically reinterprets for me what this approach might imply today, in order to choreographically provide circumstances that empower the individual as an artist and audience member alike. In this way, he is, as a choreographer-researcher, adding on a more nuanced reflection and systemic understanding of the layering involved and the motivation behind these kinds of choreographic strategies. As a choreographer-researcher in this project, I limit this focus mainly to look at the implications of my contextually based approach on the choreographic process. Klien's concerns, however, also exemplify for me the strong and proliferating undercurrent in Europe at the beginning of the 21st century that reinterprets our understanding of choreography. This undercurrent is a substantial part of what Fabius addresses when he discusses what he calls the moves toward kinaesthesia. In referring to Boris Charmatz, Meg Stuart and William Forsythe, Fabius exemplifies how the "notions of conventional choreography" in a European context during the last two decades have been challenged through dissimilar kinaesthetically based artistic strategies in which "Charmatz strives for illegibility; Stuart wants to reduce 'danciness'; Forsythe explodes ballet vocabulary into an effect of disappearance."³⁷⁸ Despite these differences, Fabius' interest is in the implications of such moves for the field of choreography. As he states, when

contemporary choreographers investigate [kinaesthesia's] role in human movement, and as they share their findings with spectators, there is a need for greater understanding of the ways in which kinaesthetics contributes to issues such as how movement is perceived and executed, how choreographers see a bodily move, and how choreographers want the audience to experience bodies moving.³⁷⁹

Fabius suggests here that a kinaesthetic emphasis requires that choreographers reflect upon the tools and potentials offered by our art medium, as well as how we conduct our movement praxis and approach dancing, which is in fact what Klien also does in his work and thinking. This push towards a more critically driven

³⁷⁸ Fabius (2009: 343).

³⁷⁹ Fabius (2009: 343).

questioning is also at the core of my kinaesthetically driven and contextually based approach to choreography in this project. It is present in the underlying concerns that fuel my questioning of choices when faced with the socio-political contexts and my collaboration with the performers in the choreographic process. As the tools and skills I apply in the choreographic process convey and perpetuate attitudes and meaning production, they have consequences for the work that can be made. However, drawing on my observation as a choreographer-researcher, both from what I see performed by colleagues and what I have experienced in my own work processes, it seems as if it is easier to emphasise either a more conceptual reflexive praxis, or a more kinaesthetically based understanding of movements, than to combine the two concerns, which is my interest. Rather than simply being seduced by the virtuosity of the dancers involved and or heeding dance conventions, including deliberately seeking to create a breaking away from conventional formats, I advocate a shift to a more conceptual and critical questioning: what is artistically needed in a project and how can this be kinaesthetically implemented in the choreography.

Closing thoughts: reflecting on the relevance of the archive for my choreographic outlook

In examining my own outlook on choreography, I have, in this chapter, tried to connect this to a larger artistic tradition. This process led me back to the work and legacy of H'Doubler, whose conceptual approach to moving resonates with interests that I pursue in this project. Her approach was grounded on personal creative investigations that drew on experiential studies of anatomy and physiology,³⁸⁰ and focused more on intentional clarity than on the imitation of perfect visual aesthetic forms, or on identifying some universal concepts or principles for classifying movement patterns.³⁸¹ Through knowledge about her approach and legacy, I could better contextually place and understand my own artistic research project as part of a larger developmental trajectory in choreography and dancing. Thanks to the research of other scholars, I could trace the lineage from H'Doubler via Halprin to the amalgamations and developments

380 Halprin (1995: 3).

381 The latter may be argued to contrast the legacy of Horst, Humphrey and Laban. Nevertheless, H'Doubler was as much as Laban, engaged in studying movements as an autonomous artistic medium through analytical means, while arguing for the societal impact of such knowledge. See, for example, H'Doubler (1940: xi-xii, 70, 78). Her interest in this respect evokes what Laban argued that the study of bodily movement surpasses the interest of only enhancing an art field, as it addresses the premises of life more generally (Laban 1966: 114).

that emerged in New York in the early 1960s and 1970s with the Judson Dance Theatre and the Grand Union, in which several of Halprin's former students had crucial roles.³⁸² Several of the artists who participated here have through their artistic practices, works, and / or teaching influenced my outlook on dance and choreography. For me the connection between H'Doubler, Halprin, and the Judson Dance Theatre/Grand Union lies in the inquisitive questioning and the individual's role as a subject in the creative process. Both H'Doubler's task- and sensory-oriented physiological approach to moving, and the use of structural scores in the idiosyncratic experiments of the Judson Dance Theatre/Grand Union therefore share for me an ideological ground for dancing. On this basis, the individual is not reduced to becoming a subjugated object to an aestheticized ideal body, but participates as an active agent and subject in investigating his or her moves. This underlying but embedded socio-political outlook interlinks for me their similar but still disparate approaches. From my perspective, the relevance of Halprin is not only in bridging the legacies of H'Doubler and the Judson group, but in her social or relational approach to choreography, or what she calls transformational dance,³⁸³ as exemplified in her performative works related to socio-political contexts such as cancer in the 1970s and the AIDS crisis in the 1980s.³⁸⁴ These early social and political choreographic interventions and strategies point to what we today describe as social or relational choreography. Despite the differences between our projects, such as Halprin's work on involving communities to participate in the artistic event as she did in San Francisco,³⁸⁵ I relate to Halprin's merging of choreographic and socio-political concerns in my effort of docudancing grieving. Here it is foremost the inherent questioning of the sensory and kinaesthetic motivation for moving, the individual performer's role in the process, and the application of improvisation as a methodological tool, which explicitly connect this project with the legacy and thinking of H'Doubler. For me this legacy - with its augmented concept of choreography and questioning of the dancing body - opens a doorway for situating and addressing choreography as an action that performs in society, which "looks from art towards society" by

382 Such as Simone Forti, Trisha Brown, Yvonne Rainer, Meredith Monk etc. See Anna Halprin's homepage: http://annahalprin.org/about_bio.html (retrieved 5 February 2010).

383 Halprin (1995). The subtitle of her book *Moving toward Life* is "Five Decades of Transformational Dance."

384 Exemplified by the *Circle the Earth: Dancing with Life on the Line* from 1989 on the AIDS crisis. See Halprin (1989; 1995: 21-24; 69).

385 For example, as seen in her audience's participatory works, such as *CityDance* from 1976-7. See Halprin (1995: 170-80).

constructing moves and images of a becoming.³⁸⁶ I will next look specifically at my understanding of the body in this endeavour.

3.2. Situating my approach to the body

I will now turn to what defines my understanding of the body in this project. Here, I will first briefly draw up an overview of the concept of somatics, how it is understood, and how such approaches evolved. Then, I will contextualize this insight through introducing three body practitioners and their practices, which in particular have influenced and grounded my choreographic approach and studio work in this project. The three practices are the Jacoby-Gindler work – also called Sensory Awareness, KA®, and Body-Mind Centering (BMC™). With this background, and after having situated the contemporary move in dance and choreography towards kinaesthesia, I will discuss how somatic practices may redefine our understanding of the dancing body and choreographic practices.

Somatics: Introducing psycho-biological approaches to the body

The movement therapist Linda Hartley describes somatics as “a field of enquiry concerned with the experiential study of the body.”³⁸⁷ The philosopher and movement therapist Thomas Hanna (1928-1990), who introduced the term somatics in 1976, defines and explains the term as follows:

The Greek word ‘soma’ is defined as ‘the body experienced from within’ and reflects the efforts of modern bodywork practitioner and somatic movement therapists to move away from the dualistic splitting of mind from body: towards a model of integrated functioning of the whole person, psyche and soma.³⁸⁸

According to Hartley the term “has come to represent a whole field of enquiry concerned with the experiential study of the body.”³⁸⁹ Such studies are based, as the dance researcher Leena Rouhiainen points out, on holistic bodily approaches through movement or touch that enhances well-being,³⁹⁰ while the body is “perceived from within by first-person perception,” as Hanna underlines.³⁹¹

386 Kirkkopelto (2008: 18).

387 Linda Hartley (1995:4).

388 Hanna (1994: 4) as quoted in Hartley (2004: 11).

389 Hartley (2004: 4).

390 Rouhiainen (2010: 58).

391 Hanna (1995 [1986]: 341).

Hartley claims that this first-person perspective sets somatics aside from “traditional studies of medicine, movement education, physiotherapy,” which have approached the body as an object and studied it “as something external and separate from the self.”³⁹² For Hanna these viewpoints radically differ, as this latter “third-person viewpoint can only observe a human body,” while the somatic “first-person viewpoint can only observe ... one’s own.” This is what constitutes somatics as the “field of study dealing with ... the human being as experienced by himself from the inside.” This distinction is crucial for Hanna, and should not be confused, nor believed to imply being indecisive or vague. Rather, he argues that “the human is not merely a self-aware soma, passively observing itself (...), but it is doing something else simultaneously: it is acting upon itself; i.e. it is always engaged in the process of self-regulation.”³⁹³ This self-regulating and self-sensing awareness is at the core of somatic practices: “It is only through the exclusionary function of awareness that the *involuntary* is made *voluntary*, the *unknown* is made *known*, and the *never-done* is made *doable*.” Hence, in somatics “awareness serves as a probe, recruiting new material for the repertoire of voluntary consciousness,” which, he explains, means “the *unlearned* becomes *learned*.”³⁹⁴

According to Hanna, this learning should not to be confused with the conditioning produced by “Pavlovian or Skinnerian models of learning.” On the contrary, their “manipulative techniques of forcing an adaptive response on the body’s involuntary reflex mechanism.... opposes the function of somatic learning...[as] their aim is to create an automatic response that is outside the range of volition and consciousness.”³⁹⁵ For Hanna this contrasts the somatic learning that expands the “range of action as well as perception” for the individual. This implies that “the more that is learned in this manner, the greater will be the range of voluntary consciousness for the constant task of adaption with the environment.” Such a state has consequences not only for the individual involved, but also from “a third-person, bodily viewpoint” as it enhances “a state of maximal efficiency and minimal entropy.”³⁹⁶

This makes the somatics scholar Don Hanlon Johnson claim that Hanna, owing to his double position as philosopher and practitioner, contributes not only to the acknowledgment of the “practical healing significance” of the many

392 Hartley (2004: 4).

393 Hanna (1995: 343-44).

394 Hanna (1995: 348-9), italics as in the original.

395 Hanna (1995: 349).

396 Hanna (1995: 351).

body practices, but through his perspectives on the body, Hanna also directs our attention to the more socio-political potency of such practices in “their larger implications for understanding reality.”³⁹⁷

Hanna is not alone in acknowledging the complexity of human nature. Similar concerns have been raised and addressed by others, for example, the philosopher Mark Johnson and the linguist George Lakoff in their *Philosophy in the Flesh*.³⁹⁸ They suggest “that there are at least five interwoven dimensions of human embodiment,³⁹⁹ which respectively relate to the biological, ecological, phenomenological, social, and cultural dimensions of the body.⁴⁰⁰ For M. Johnson, the core issue here is that the body cannot be assumed from a “simplistic or monolithic reductionist conception” and, therefore, cannot be reduced to any one of these dimensions.⁴⁰¹ On the contrary, our bodies are constituted of our physical, biological, social and cultural environments, as well as our ability to sense the tactile-kinaesthetic body’s “being-in-the-world.” This means “our most central sense of the ‘human body’ is the living biological-ecological body as we experience it phenomenologically through proprioception, kinaesthesia, and feeling.”⁴⁰² In this study, I am particularly concerned with the embodiment relating to the interrelationship between the body as a somatic being, aesthetic conception, and socio-political reality, which is always in a state of becoming, and therefore especially responsive to traumatic events. This may also explain why I am drawing on several somatic practices that are all based on a multidimensional understanding of the body and our human embodiment in my choreographic approach. Their different outlooks and practices ground and inform my choreographic processes in this project. In order to contextualize these practices, I will therefore first briefly outline the backdrop that the field of somatics emerged out of, before I turn to describe the actual practices that I relate to in this project.

397 Johnson (1995: 339).

398 Johnson and Lakoff (1999).

399 Johnson (2008: 164).

400 “1. *The body as biological organism*,” meaning its flesh, tissues, bones, and fluids; “2. *The ecological body*,” referring to its dependency of the environment; “3. *The phenomenological body*,” being “our body as we live and experience it”; “4. *The social body*,” attending to the fact that “our bodies develop in and through our interpersonal dialogical relations with our social others”; and “5. *The cultural body*,” connecting it to the “cultural artifacts, practices, institutions, rituals, and modes of interaction that transcend and shape any particular body and any particular bodily action.” Johnson (2007: 274-8).

401 Johnson (2008: 166).

402 Johnson (2008: 165).

The development of somatics

The field of somatics today includes a large number of different body practices. Several of them precede the term “somatics” itself and were established long before the term was coined in 1976. Some had already emerged in the early 20th century alongside or out of programmes for improving public health and well-being through physical education and gymnastics. These precursory developments took place in parallel with both the ideological and economic battles for socio-political rights and freedom that marked Europe and North America at the time,⁴⁰³ and the growing interest among scholars to study how we as individuals perceive, become aware, and interpret external stimuli. In philosophy, this interest led to the development of phenomenology, and in medical science emerged the new fields of psychology and psychoanalysis that forwarded a re-evaluation of the body and the conception of the self.⁴⁰⁴ Altogether, these socio-political developments and intellectual advances directly constitute the contemporary backdrop for one of the body practices I draw on in this project. In being one of the earlier body practices in the 20th century, it developed in tandem with, or as a responsive act to, this ideological climate in European culture and society. This climate was charged with a dual fascination and caution towards the rapid modern technical developments and the urbanization that were taking place.⁴⁰⁵ A Zeitgeist Benjamin captures in his critical concern of “the age of mechanical reproduction.”⁴⁰⁶ The focus on mechanics and functionality of machines with the development of systematic processing and synergistic interactions was spilling out from the factories and the laboratories into the realm of societal organization, public images and thinking. This framework of mind shaped both society in general, as well as the arts.⁴⁰⁷ In the field of movement studies and body practices, the mechanical and technological advances in science and industrial production therefore seemed to have inspired systematic approaches to comprehend the me-

403 For example, the labour movements’ fight for more just working conditions, political power, influence, and social welfare programmes; and the struggle of women for the rights to vote, to take higher education, and own property etc.

404 The philosophical school of phenomenology was introduced by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) (1973 [1913]). It was furthered and challenged by his students Martin Heidegger (1996 [1927]) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1994 [1945]) among others. The field of psychology and psychoanalysis is foremost linked to the contributions of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), Alfred Adler (1870-1937), Carl Jung (1875-1961), and Wilhelm Reich (1897-1957) etc. See Eddy (2009).

405 Berman (1988).

406 Benjamin (1968: 217-252).

407 Cf. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1973) with his futurist manifestos. For a historical rendering on the interrelation between the organization of work life and dance, see Franko (2002).

chanics of the body. This inspiration often seems to have been translated into the terminology used in these emerging, new practices or programmes, for example, in the Pilates Method with its concept of *Contrology*, which was a body training programme devised by the German physical educationalist Joseph Pilates (1882-1967),⁴⁰⁸ in *The Biomechanics*, a physical training programme developed for the performing arts by the Russian theatre avant-garde director Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874-1940),⁴⁰⁹ and in “Spanningsregulering,” the Norwegian strand of the Jacoby-Gindler body practice that I practise, which was coined and developed by the German dancer and movement therapist Elsa Lindenberg (1906-1990). The term derives from the German word “Spannungsregulierung,” meaning “Voltage / tension regulation,” and thus brings association to electrification processes.

Without disregarding the differences between these three dissimilar approaches, but judged by their respective names and or use of terminology, I would argue that they share some commonalities that reflect the ethos of their time of conception with its emphasis on modernity and progress and “the task of building a new society.”⁴¹⁰ Viewed contextually, I would argue that most of these early body practices drew, either directly or indirectly, on the advances gained from the socio-political developments of their time, including the general progress made in fields like psychology, medical science, and engineering.

The body as a subject: a breathing and living organism

Several of the first pioneers were trained in physical education, and their somatic practices partly emerged in the “gap between the luminosity they found in bodily awareness and the sterility of existing methods of teaching exercise, dance, and physical manipulation.”⁴¹¹ In this way, their somatic practices can be seen as a reaction to the instrumental approach to the body that they faced⁴¹². As Hartley points out, they instead approached and studied the body as a “subject experienced from within rather than observed from without” in the third-person

408 See: Pilates (1998 b [1945]: 9). Pilates immigrated to New York around 1923 and furthered there his training system, which would have a great impact on dancers, coming both from Graham and Balanchine’s companies. For more on the Pilates method, see Rouhiainen (2010).

409 For more on Meyerhold, see, for example, Alma H. Law (1996) and Edward Braun (2003). Meyerhold was the teacher of the avant-garde film director and theorist Sergei Eisenstein (1898-1948), who in the early period of the Soviet Union made his name by films such as *Strike*, *Battleship Potemkin* and contributed greatly by his writing about the concept of montage in film. See Eisenstein (1972) or (1999).

410 Paul Wood (1992: 3).

411 Johnson (1995: xi).

412 See, for example, Eddy (2009: 6).

perspective.⁴¹³ According to D. H. Johnson, this meant that these innovators “challenged the dominant mode of exercise, manipulation, and self-awareness that alienate people from their bodies.”⁴¹⁴ They did this by offering a more holistic perspective on the body, based on insights tried by their own personal studio observations and experiences. This somatic turn to bodily awareness was often brought on by an urgent need felt by the practitioners themselves: “Many were faced with a physical dysfunction or illness which threatened their life and work, and for which their physicians could offer no relief.” Thus, as D. J. Johnson polemically puts it, the development of somatic practices can be seen as a result of pioneers who were “unwilling to take at face value poor medical prognosis, a dull exercise class, [and] ordinary states of consciousness.”⁴¹⁵

This was indeed the case for the founders of the Jacoby-Gindler work,⁴¹⁶ whose heritage has profoundly influenced this artistic research process, firstly, in the process of developing strategies for constructing the last part of the performance trilogy, then in coaching the performers in performing the completed trilogy, and finally in writing this study. In this chapter, I will first describe what this practice is based on, and then discuss its relevance here, including how I encountered and utilized it in this project.

The Jacoby-Gindler approach

The name Jacoby-Gindler derives from the founders, the German body practice innovators Elsa Gindler (1885–1961) and Heinrich Jacoby (1889–1964), who started their collaboration in Berlin in 1924.⁴¹⁷ They had a background and training respectively as a physical education teacher from the Rothenburg School,⁴¹⁸ and

413 Hartley (2004: 4).

414 D. H. Johnson (1995: xvi). In order to get a sense of this historical period and its ideological strives, for example in Germany, see the account based on Laban’s work there by Dunlop-Preston (1998: 97–118, 165–203), combined with eyewitness accounts of the societal developments, such as those given by Friedrich Reck-Malleczewen (2000 [1947]) and Victor Klemperer (1999).

415 Johnson (1995: x–xi).

416 See, for example, Loukes (2006) or Gindler (1995).

417 For further information, see sources published by The Jacoby-Gindler foundation: <http://www.jacobygindler.ch/> and <http://www.jgstiftung.de/> (Accessed 18 February 2010).

418 Johnson (1995: x). Clara Schlaffhorst and Hedvig Andersen who had trained with the Austrian emigrant Leo Kofler in New York ran the Rothenburg School. Kofler had developed a method to strengthen the lungs by freeing it from its restrictions, and hence, fighting tuberculosis through breathing exercises.

as a music teacher teaching at the Emile Jaques-Dalcroze training college for music and rhythm in Dresden-Hellerau.⁴¹⁹

Their work emphasized a holistic approach to the body that through questioning and physical tasks explored the quality of breathing as well as the level and pattern of tension in the body in relation to the force of gravity. As the theatre scholar Rebecca Loukes has summarized, the approach is “focused on exploring the sensitive relation between gravity and breathing” by letting the force of gravity experienced through the body serve as a core reference point.⁴²⁰

Gindler offered the people who came to work with her “the possibility of being responsible to themselves in simply finding out how it is, and how it wants to change.”⁴²¹ Hence, the body practice is simply inviting people to experience their bodily being through task-based experiments offered by an experienced practitioner.⁴²² Particular attention is given to the way one yields to or resists gravity in the body, and to acknowledge the respiratory patterns that occur, which sustain us whether we walk, stand, sit, lie down, get up etc. As Gindler writes: “When we breathe, we do not learn fixed exercises, rather exercises are the means of our getting acquainted with our lungs, either through inducing or releasing holdings.”⁴²³ The practice confronts me as a practitioner with the habitual and conditioned pattern of holding-on to tension in the body. This holding comes with a cost, as it limits the body’s velocity and ease while moving, but also shapes the physical bearings of an individual. The approach thus appeals to our senses and human ‘nature’ as an organic psycho-physiological being. By merging the ‘subject’ and the ‘object’ into being ‘I-my-body,’ the individual body is regarded as a complete, sensing, thinking and breathing entity. The Jacoby-Gindler work fascinates me as it seeks out a psychosomatic approach to the body that is ultimately holistic, while at the same time strives to be anti-instrumental and anti-reductive. I will try to unpack and situate this claim, helped by an example. In the middle of the Second World War in Berlin Gindler notes down, with a finely

419 See introduction published by The Jacoby-Gindler foundation: <URL:http://www.jacobygindler.ch/jacoby_einfuehrung.html> (Accessed 18 Feb 2010).

420 Loukes (2006: 396).

421 Mary Alice Roche, ed., (1978: 24) in *Elsa Gindler 1885-1961*, Bulletin, Number10, Volume I. Caldwell; Charlotte Selver Foundation, as cited in Loukes (2006: 392). Referenced also by somatic practitioner and scholar Judyth Weaver (2006). See sources published at: <URL: <http://www.judythweaver.com>> under “writings”: “The Influence of Elsa Gindler-Ancestor Of Sensory Awareness (2006).” (Accessed 10 March 2010). Published also in USABP Journal (The USA Body Psychotherapy Journal) 2004, Volume 3: No. 1.

422 For further description of a work session, see Gindler (1995: 7).

423 Gindler (1995: 6).

tuned sensitivity, her sensorial experiences from conducting the task of lifting the arm. Her observations subversively contrast the ruling ethos of Berlin at the time and its harsh censorship. In focusing on “the smallest details” of our awareness, Gindler manages to connect these experiences to a “larger life question:”⁴²⁴

When I move my arm, notice how the weight gives power instead of pressure that can become ‘tension.’ This can become an interesting question of life. I do not work on the arm to reach a better condition for health, but to identify for myself my tasks in life, and be better able to fulfil them. However, my arm also changes through this and it too will be healthy.⁴²⁵

The task in question might be simple to do, but the experiences are overwhelmingly complex to take in, and in this respect typical of the basic, but fundamental, tasks explored by Gindler. The task described seems particularly interesting taking into account the fact that during the Nazi regime the raising of the arm was also a common greeting gesture often required in public places. By deconstructing the actual effort required by the act of lifting the arm itself, the task resonates beyond the immediacy of the movement exploration in her studio, but simultaneously also points to the core of Gindler’s concerns. As one of her students, Gertrud Falke-Heller, describes it when accounting for her bewildered encounter with Gindler’s approach:

Eventually I discovered that this sensing oneself is not a technique and it is nothing dramatic. It is very simple and there lies its difficulty. I had to learn to reduce my efforts to absolute simplicity – the most difficult thing in the world.⁴²⁶

Through practising this sensory awareness, I believe one might be better equipped to respond adequately to the challenges one faces, whether politically or in mundane everyday life, such as the task of lifting an arm. However, rather than teaching the right way of doing this task, the emphasis is on (re-)exploring the execution of the defined task and, through that, being attentive as a practitioner to the sensory experiences this practice causes. This attitude might explain why Gindler and Jacoby refused to give their work a specific name or to formalize

424 Loukes (2006: 394).

425 Gindler in her notes, dated 24 June 1942, Berlin, as quoted in Loukes (2006: 394).

426 Falke-Heller (1983: 4), as quoted in Loukes (2007: 81).

their work to become an official school with a teacher training programme,⁴²⁷ in fear of reducing the work to a mechanical method, rather than being a laboratory-based and ongoing experiential and experimental practice.⁴²⁸ The contemporary version of the work in Berlin is, therefore, also simply called in German “Kurs in Fragen und Aufgabenstellungen von Elsa Gindler und Heinrich Jacoby”, meaning “a course in questions and tasks by Elsa Gindler and Heinrich Jacoby.”⁴²⁹ The work is often also just called “Gindler work”. This approach corresponds to attitudes and values I sought to embody in this project, including the fact that I was not interested in making this study into a report on “best practice,” or a manual on how to make choreography, but rather view it as an opportunity to explore choreography as a way of thinking and relating to the world around me. Retrospectively, when examining the process of developing movement material in this project, I recognize that I am drawing on a strategy that resembles the Jacoby-Gindler work, in relying on a strategy of devising simple movement tasks that the performers could explore while attentively paying attention to the sensory experiences these tasks released within them.

Body politics and dissemination in exile

Several of the people who practised with Jacoby and Gindler had to flee Berlin and Germany due to the political situation under the Third Reich with its racial laws, including Jacoby himself who resettled in Switzerland.⁴³⁰ Paradoxically, this contributed to the dissemination of the Jacoby-Gindler work outside Germany. I will mention three of them here: Charlotte Selver (1901-2003), Carola Speads (1901-1999), and Elsa Lindenberg (1906-1990).⁴³¹ All three took part in the

427 According to Loukes abolished Gindler her teacher training courses in the mid 1920s, soon after she began her collaboration with Jacoby. See Loukes (2006: 392).

428 This ‘no-naming’ policy and dismissal of educational programmes also probably saved Gindler: whilst all schools would be made subject to direct control under the Nazi regime, Gindler could maintain her studio practice. See Loukes (2006: 393-4). However, Jacoby left Germany soon after Hitler seized power in 1933 and settled in Switzerland. They continued their work through summer programmes there until the War began in 1939, but resumed their collaboration soon after the War had ended. Sources published by the Jacoby-Gindler Foundation Switzerland: <URL: <http://www.jacobygindler.ch/gindler.html> > (accessed 4 March 2010). Though Gindler stayed on in Berlin, she decisively rejected the Nazis and helped the politically and racially persecuted. See various testimonies quoted by Loukes (2006: 393-4).

429 See schedules published by the Jacoby-Gindler Foundation Germany: <URL:<http://www.jgstiftung.de/termine/termine.html> > (Retrieved 4 March 2010).

430 See Johnson (1995: 30-1) and Brooks (2007: 2262-3).

431 On Selver, see Brooks and Selver (2007). On Speads, see Speads (1978). On Lindenberg, see Karina (2004: 54-55), Michael Coster Heller (20007), and Courtenay Young (2009). I will stress that there were several other Jacoby-Gindler offspring who could have been mentioned such as the body

practice in Berlin; each furthered the explorative approach in exile; and in their own way, all came to influence the field of contemporary dance and my work as a choreographer and performer here. I encountered the practice first in 1992 through the lineage of Speads and Selver in New York, but at the time, through the reworked interpretation of it, that is, in the Kinetic Awareness. Only later did I encounter the direct lineage from Gindler to Lindenberg in Oslo, under the name *Spenningsregulering*.⁴³² I have taken part in this practice since 2005 under the guidance of one of Lindenberg's apprentices, Gro Z. M. Torgersbråten.⁴³³

Lindenberg was educated as a dancer at the Laban School in Berlin and worked in the Municipal Opera when she encountered the Jacoby-Gindler work. As she belonged to the politically left that fought the Nazis, she lost her job at the Opera in 1933 when the Nazis seized power. She went to Oslo with her lover, the Austrian psychoanalyst, Wilhelm Reich, in 1934.⁴³⁴ In their Oslo exile, they both became seminal figures in, respectively, developing the field of dance and movement studies, and psychoanalysis.⁴³⁵ While Reich later on left for the United States, Lindenberg stayed on until her death in 1990 and hence ensured that Jacoby-Gindler work gained a solid basis in Oslo.

Selver and Speads, on the other hand, were the ones who took the work to the United States.⁴³⁶ There, they developed and furthered their practices according

therapist Marion Rosen (1914 -2012) and the psychoanalyst Laura Perls (1905-1990). The latter trained with Gindler/Jacoby from 1931-33 in Berlin. She was married to the psychologist Fritz Perls. In their exile in the United States, they developed gestalt therapy, which they cofounded in 1952. Perls later became an important mentor for Halprin. See Ross (2007: 154-4, 174-80). Marion Rosen had a background from studying with the Gindler-trained practitioner Lucy Heyer in Munich in the 1930s, before escaping the racial persecution by emigrating to the United States. Here she developed her own influential bodywork practice, called the Rosen Method. See Johnson (1995: 51-64).

432 The word "spenning" in Norwegian has several meanings, including "voltage," "tension," and "excitement." A literal translation would be "tension regulation."

433 Torgersbråten began the work as a teenager, and was authorized by Lindenberg in 1981 to lead groups in the practice. Source: Informal interview.

434 Sources: Karina (2004: 54-5), informal interviews with Torgersbråten; and *Store Norske Leksikon* – retrieved from <http://snl.no/Elsa_Lindenberg> (2 April 2011). Lindenberg and Reich came to Scandinavia in 1933, and arrived in Oslo in 1934. Reich moved on to the United States in 1939.

435 According to the Norwegian dance historian Valdemar Hansteen, Lindenberg created choreographic work with the amateur group within the Labour movement in Oslo. Judged from the photos, the work resembles the dance choir works made famous by Laban earlier. Unfortunately, the leaders of the union did not approve of the work and it was not continued. The Nazi occupation of Norway that soon followed would have put an end to the work in any case. Lindenberg had to flee to Sweden during the war to escape the Gestapo. She returned after the war, despite the fact that being a German in Norway after the war was not so simple. She chose to stay and make her life there, but by focusing on her bodywork practice. Source: Hansteen, 1989: 83-85) and Young (2009).

436 Both Selver and Speads left Germany in 1938. Selver came to United States the very same year, while Speads stayed in France until 1940.

to their own understanding of the Jacoby-Gindler work. Selver coined it *Sensory Awareness*,⁴³⁷ while Speads called her practice *Physical Re-Education*.⁴³⁸ Through their practices both would subsequently inspire and further new developments in the field. I have already mentioned one of these. It is the body practice of Elaine Summers (1925-2014), who through her work with Speads and Selver developed the practice she coined *Kinetic Awareness*, KA®.⁴³⁹

Reinterpretation and regeneration: Elaine Summers and Kinetic Awareness

Besides being one of the key figures in the Judson Church Dance Theatre circle, Summers had, as a young dancer, been diagnosed with a degenerative joint disease and therefore sought somatic approaches that could help her to continue dancing.⁴⁴⁰ This led Summers to Speads and her breathing exercises in the Physical Re-education system and further to Selver's Sensory Awareness. Drawing on these experiences in New York in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and amalgamated through her experimental studio work, Summers created *Kinetic Awareness*®, KA®. The somatics scholar Jill Green briefly describes this body practice as a system for "body discovery and therapy that calls attention to the simplest components of movement and explores emotional attitudes toward the body."⁴⁴¹ KA® is often called the "ball work," because it applies soft "rubber balls to enhance body awareness and release excess muscular tension." Through placing balls under various parts of the body, they create both tactile pressure, thanks to gravity, and opportunities for moving, because of the balls' mobility. Together, this triggers proprioceptive sensing and "contact with inner sensations." In combination with the extensive use of anatomical reference books to illuminate the body parts in focus, this can bring, as Green points out, "awareness to the inefficient patterns and psycho-physical processes," while also providing "an opportunity to explore movement potential and develop movements possibilities."⁴⁴² As observed by the arts critic Ann-Sargent Wooster, "By learning how the body works physically, physiologically and psychologically" from inside, while

437 Brooks and Selver (2007) See also published sources on Charlotte Selver's work by The Sensory Awareness Foundation <<http://www.sensoryawareness.org>> (Accessed 2 April 2011).

438 Johnson (1995: 31) and Speads (1978).

439 I encountered the approach through one of Summers' few Master Certified Kinetic Awareness Teachers (MCKA), the dancer Frances Becker, as mentioned in 3.1.

440 Eddy (2009: 16).

441 Green (1992: 61).

442 Green (1992: 61).

supported by anatomical knowledge, the practitioners “can reclaim their bodies as their own.”⁴⁴³ I know this to be true from personal experience and studies of KA®. In contrast to Jacoby-Gindler work, a group session in KA® will typically start by studying anatomical drawings and models of the body part or systems in focus for the actual session. Then follows the individual exploration, which is started with the help of the rubber balls that are placed underneath certain body parts to enhance the chosen focus. This explorative work can move on into a movement improvisation based on the experiences from this investigation. The group session ends with an exchange of experiences while the participants revisit their anatomical starting point. Altogether, it will last from two to two and a half hours.⁴⁴⁴ Over the years, the practice has proved beneficial for somatic treatments, and has been applied by dancers and performers, like Trisha Brown,⁴⁴⁵ in order to deepen their understanding of the body and their ways of moving. In my case, the practice certainly helped me improve my understanding and articulation of my moving body while dancing and, in this way, to mature as a performer.⁴⁴⁶ I thus built on this platform, my background in KA®, as I approached my tasks as a solo performer while constructing the first part of the performance trilogy. I will return to the more general relevance of somatic practices for dance shortly, but to summarize KA®, I side with Green who points out that “it helps individuals in three ways: (1) facilitates proprioceptive communication; (2) fosters movement ease, flexibility, and mobility; and (3) helps students experience the interrelationship of the overall body systems.”⁴⁴⁷

The latter also points to why I want to highlight the Body-Mind Centering® (BMC™), developed by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, as the last body practice in this chapter. My insights from this practice⁴⁴⁸ became particularly pivotal for the movement exploration and development of *A Rehearsal for Mortals*, part two of the performance trilogy.

443 Wooster (1980: 59-70).

444 Based on my experiences from the teaching of KA® by Frances Becker.

445 See, for example, Goldberg (2002: 30).

446 For example, in KA I would for the first time explicitly be told as a dancer “Stay away from the areas of discomfort. Seek those that allow you to move with ease.” This was mind-shattering, though obvious in retrospect. As one organism it was all connected. By staying away from the painful area, other areas would be given a chance to step in and move me on.

447 Green (1992: 62).

448 My insights is primarily based on my studies with Wendel Beavers and Erika Berland in New York combined with studio-based self-studies and reading.

BMC™ – an synthesized approach to somatics

BMC™ represents what D. H. Johnson calls “synthesized approaches” in somatics that emerged after the 1960s, that is, practices developed and based on the advantage of having access to impulses and inspiration from several different schools and traditions.⁴⁴⁹ Bainbridge Cohen (1943-) exemplifies this development with her practice of BMC™, which evolved from such a vantage point in the 1970s.⁴⁵⁰ Like Summers, Bainbridge Cohen also had a background in dance, and first began her bodily explorations as a dancer in the 1960s. Here, through her studies with the choreographer and dancer Erick Hawkins (1909-1994) and ⁴⁵¹ the performer André Bernard (1924-2003),⁴⁵² she was introduced to ideokinesis and neuromuscular re-education deriving from Mable Todd’s work, which had also been important for H’Doubler’s approach to dance. Thanks to Hawkins and Bernard’s movement studies with Barbara Clark (1889-1982), who as a protégé of Todd had furthered this work.⁴⁵³ Bainbridge Cohen also studied the Laban Movement Analysis under the tutelage of three Laban protégés in New York: Irmgard Bartenieff, Warren

449 Johnson (1995: xv). A dominant feature here seems to be the impulses drawn from non-European martial art forms that can be traced in many of the body practices that developed in latter part of the 20th century, particularly Asian practices that view the body as a holistic whole that can be rejuvenated physically as well as spiritually through working and interacting with the forces encountered in one’s environment. This understanding of the spiritual as an integral part of the bodyworks adds a dimension that was not taken into consideration in many of the early Eurocentric practices.

450 Another example is Susan Klein, who developed the Klein Technique and matured it in collaboration with Barbara Mahler. Klein, who trained with Laban’s protégé Irmgard Bartenieff, draws on Bartenieff’s elaborations of Laban’s movement analysis as well as the heritage of Todd through the lineage of Barbara Clark and her ideokinesis. Klein fuses these sources with her knowledge on oriental medicine and therapy into what became the Klein Technique, which she describes in following way:

“Klein Technique™ is a process through which the body is analyzed and understood to improve and to further movement potential. It is intellectual in that it uses anatomical realities. It is corporeal in that we strive for an internal knowing, an understanding which is integrated into the body. It is a movement education and re-education, that can be an underpinning for all movement styles, improvisations, athletics, and for the general health of the body in everyday movement. It is a technique that honors the individual. Klein Technique™ works at the level of the bones, to align the bones using the muscles of deep postural support: the psoas, the hamstrings, the external rotators, and the pelvic floor. We don’t work to exercise these muscles but rather to wake them up, to become conscious of their role in the support and movement of the body. We work for the body to become elastic, responsive, and open to choices and expression” (Klein 1998). Published by The Klein School of Movement and Dance, see <<http://www.kleintechnique.com/about.html>> (Accessed 3 March 2010).

This understanding of the moving body has also influenced my view on moving and dancing. Klein has taught on a weekly basis in New York since the early 1980s, and partly at Trisha Brown’s Studio.

451 Bainbridge Cohen (1995). For more information on Hawkins, see Hawkins (1993).

452 Bernard (2006).

453 See: Eddy (2009: 17) and Matt (1993). Todd had, through her work a generation earlier, inspired H’Doubler in her parallel explorations. For more information on the work of Todd, see (Todd: 1937).

Lamb and Judyth Kestenberg.⁴⁵⁴ As a former Laban student and with support from Lamb, who had assisted Laban in developing the Effort/Shape Analysis in his exile in England, the German émigré Bartenieff developed Laban's work into what is now called the Laban-Bartenieff system.⁴⁵⁵ Bainbridge Cohen studied this system and developed aspects of it, particularly the developmental thinking of Bartenieff fundamentals.⁴⁵⁶ In her effort, she also drew on the work of Judyth Kestenberg (1910-1999), an Austrian émigrée and psychoanalyst, who, based on Laban motion factors, had developed the Kestenberg Movement Profile and enhanced the development of dance therapy.⁴⁵⁷ Bainbridge Cohen combined these inputs with insights from "neurodevelopmental therapy – a method of restoring developmental movement patterns in children with brain injuries," founded by the psychiatrist Karel Bobath (1907- 1991) and the physiotherapist Berta Bobath (1906 – 1991), who lived in exile in London.⁴⁵⁸ More extensively than Summers in developing KA®, Bainbridge Cohen drew heavily on insights and practices offered by war refugees from continental Europe. However, unlike the development of KA® and the Jacoby-Gindler work, Bainbridge Cohen directly combines her Eurocentric sources of knowledge with Asian body practices and martial arts traditions, such as *yoga*; *t'ai chi* and Chinese medicine, *Aikido*; *Zen* meditation; and most importantly, *katsugen undo*, "a Japanese method of training the involuntary nervous system," which she has practised daily since the early 1970s.⁴⁵⁹ She was introduced to this practice while living in Japan between 1970-1973, which also explains the strong Japanese influence on her work.⁴⁶⁰

In comparison to the earlier pioneers Bainbridge Cohen and her generation had radical different opportunities for gaining information and access to a wide variety of body practices, including traditions born outside the Western hemi-

454 Bartenieff and Kerstenberg had a history with Laban going back to before the Second World War, while Lamb first met Laban after he went into exile in England.

455 See Bartenieff (1995: 221-37), Hackney (1998), and Preston-Dunlop (1998: 272). Lamb played an important part in the dissemination of the Effort/Shape analysis and for the developments made by Irmgard Bartenieff and Judyth Kestenberg. On Lamb, for example, see Davies (2001), Hodgson (2001), and Preston-Dunlop (1998).

456 For an introduction to this, see Hackney (1998: 217-248).

457 For more information on Judyth Kerstenberg and The Kestenberg Movement Profile, see under *References*, R9.

458 See Batson (2009: 4) and Kleinschmidt (2005).

459 According to the somatic scholar Glenna Batson, Bainbridge Cohen encountered *yoga* through Yogi Ramira in New York; her knowledge of *t'ai chi* and Chinese medicine through Professor Cheng Man-Ch'ing from China, among others; she studied the Japanese martial art discipline *Aikido* with Michio Hikizuchi; the practice of *Zen* meditation with Eido Roshisee; and the training in *katsugen undo* with Noguchi Sensai, the founder of the practice (Bateson, 2009: 4), see also Bainbridge Cohen (1995).

460 Eddy (2002: 51-53).

sphere. Partly thanks to the development of aviation and communication in combination with growing affluence, traditions or practices had become accessible in a way they had not been for earlier generations, although, likewise and more importantly, this might also reflect a change in the willingness and the interest to learn from traditions outside the Western hemisphere and to unlearn Western assumptions. Whatever the reasons, these multiple sources of influences behind the development of BMC™ create the foundation that speaks of what Johnson calls synthesized approaches to understanding the body's soma. Bainbridge Cohen acknowledges this precondition for her work by writing *Lineage of BMC – Homage to My Teachers*. Here, she cites more than forty professionals that have played an important role in her development.⁴⁶¹ Her many references to Southeast - and East Asian traditions and practitioners in the conception of BMC™ seem to support Eddy's claim that "the profound influences" from non-European "movement concepts and practices have been seminal in the development of European and American somatic paradigms" since the late 1960s⁴⁶². Since then, Eddy claims that students in the Western world have had "the privilege of studying dance, martial arts and other movement practices from teachers around the world."⁴⁶³ With the word 'privilege,' I also hear another story, which is not told, related to the undercurrent dynamics of class, power, and economy in a post-colonial world that impact all body politics, including those creating refugees and migration. However, I will leave these socio-political issues aside here, and simply point to the fact that upon returning from Japan to the United States in 1973, Bainbridge Cohen founded The School for Body-Mind Centering⁴⁶⁴ and, with it, a practice devoted to a cellular understanding of breathing and being. I first encountered this practice in 1992 through two of her former students, Wendel Beavers and Erika Berland.

The core concerns of BMC™ are described by Hartley in a way that both correlates to my own experiential experiences of the practice and, more importantly, explains why this practice became crucial here, in my artistic process on

461 See: Bainbridge Cohen (1995: 159) and Eddy (2002: 51).

462 Eddy (2002: 9). One of the first European bodyworks founders to draw on Asian marital art practices was probably Moshe Feldenkrais (1904–1984), who developed the Feldenkrais method. He was the first European with a black belt in Judo. He had already won this in 1936. Source: Feldenkrais (1981: 2). For more information on the bodywork of Feldenkrais, see Feldenkrais (1981; 1991), Batson (2009), and under *References*, R9.

463 Eddy (2002: 47).

464 In Amherst, Massachusetts. Batson (2009: 4).

the dying body and the psycho-biological impact of trauma in the two last parts of the performance trilogy. Hartley states:

In body-mind centering practice each body system and tissue layer, including skeletal, muscular, connective tissue, organ, endocrine, circulatory fluid and nervous systems, and the special sense organs are systematically studied and embodied through touch, movement, and focused awareness. Anatomical pictures and models are studied; then the structures are located within the body, using the visual information as a guide to contacting the actual tissues. Practice trains the sensory feedback mechanisms of the nervous system and the cells so that the presence, location, size, shape, density of energy, and quality of movement or stillness of the tissues can all be perceived with some accuracy.⁴⁶⁵

In short, the combination of using systemic insights and visual information in a practice to guide and support an exploration of our soma, aiming to enhance sensory perception and understanding, also captures the core of my work method in this project on dying and grieving. With this effort, I strived to create an artistic process for the performers involved that resonated with the aim described by Hartley: “To move towards a deep democracy of the body where each part is acknowledged.”⁴⁶⁶ However, such a creative and integrated approach to the body requires “a learning environment [that] ensures a space for non-judgmental self-discovery and openness.” In this project, the learning environment relates to the process with the performers involved and how it was conducted. In BMC™ this non-judgmental and open space is considered pivotal for bringing about any “transformative experience through movement re-education and hands-on re-patterning work.”⁴⁶⁷ This movement work implies working “directly with the body tissues to effect changes in the quality and movement energy within and through them.”⁴⁶⁸ In this artistic process, the study of the cellular level in the body, or what is called “cellular breathing” in BMC™, struck me as particularly potent and relevant. In BMC™ cellular breathing refers to the “basic life processes [that] are carried out within the membranous boundaries of the cells, made possible by the process of internal respiration that enables the cell to absorb oxygen and nutrients from the surrounding fluids, and release wastes.”⁴⁶⁹ Through

465 Hartley (2004:169).

466 Hartley (2004:169).

467 Batson (2009: 4).

468 Hartley (2004: 173).

469 Hartley (2004: 100).

experientially studying these interconnected and interdependent micro-units in the body I experienced the fact that I was offered a different “body image,” or a way to perceive my body,⁴⁷⁰ which was both composite and multiple-layered. For example, through experientially exploring the concept of cellular breathing, I could, as a performer, enhance a sense of my body as a multiple subject that could breathe and relate to the world within and outside me, thanks to the infinite numbers of cells that constitute me. In this simultaneously inside-outside perception, or what I call the “double gaze” of the performer, the verb ‘looking’ is replaced with ‘perceiving’ or ‘sensing.’ My understanding of what it means to perform was turned upside down by this experience.

One of the reasons for this is that the sensory awareness of the cellular level and - breathing⁴⁷¹ going on within the body releases the pressure on the ‘I,’ the self-image and ego, of the performer in a performance situation, thereby also easing the tendency to be too self-centred. Mainly, due to this sensory-based body image, my perception is not limited to what the mastermind with two eyes monitoring the outside world can behold. Rather, my awareness rests in the sum of numerous cells orienting themselves in a more porous and fluid relationship to space and others in it. On a cellular level I am interconnected to other constellations of cells outside my body, while at the same time I am contained and held together by the cells that constitute me as my body. From this latter biological perspective, the body can also be perceived as a container with a content that is defined by the physiological surfaces that hold its inner parts together, with its organically layered and interconnected complexity. This perspective induces a three dimensional perception of the body that offers me as a sense of a bodily volume. According to cognitive science, the individual’s perceptive awareness of his or her body only reflects “the manner in which a person has learned to organize and integrate his body experiences.”⁴⁷² The strength posited by the BMC™ practice for dancers and performers lies exactly in offering them a more conscious awareness about this layered and complex body they are.⁴⁷³ I believe that such an insight into the physiological body can add a sense of a three-dimensional depth

470 I refer to the term “body image” as understood by the psychologist Seymour Fisher as a way to describe, “how the individual perceives his own body” (Fisher 1972: 113), as quoted by Shaun Gallagher (2006: 20).

471 The cellular breathing constitutes “the first of developmental movement patterns, the first movement made by the new life forming in the womb,” according to Hartley and the BMC™. Cf. Hartley (2004: 100).

472 Seymour Fisher (1972:113), as quoted by Shaun Gallagher (2006: 20).

473 Cf. Johnson and Lakoff (1999) and Johnson (2007).

and volume to the dancing and performing body, as a composite *being*. According to Hartley, Bainbridge Cohen calls “the process of kinesthetically experiencing the body tissues and cells *somatization*; it is the sense of experiencing cell, experiencing body from within, rather than the dualistic stance of observing the body and its structures as if from outside” that makes the difference.⁴⁷⁴ The process of *somatization* would, in my opinion, complement conventional dance training, which most commonly relies on copying the pictorial and visual appearance of body forms and or emotive-based understanding of the body. The process of somatization could provide us with a more kinaesthetically and holistic view of the body.⁴⁷⁵ For me this kind of sensory focus evokes what Selver describes as being attentive to what “all our molecules can hear.”⁴⁷⁶ From a strict scientific point of view this kind of sensing, on the cellular level in the body, is perhaps not possible. However, I think that one of the cruxes of BMC™v is its experiential approach to perceiving the anatomy of body, as Selver suggests above. Through its use of visualization, I believe that BMC™ as a body practice can approach what is going on within the body and thereby impact the processes that are experienced, and hence heighten our sensory attentiveness. As Hartley states, I think such attentiveness can potentially educe a more “dynamic, alert, and fluid quality of mind by which we can adapt moment to moment to our internal and external environment out of free choice rather than habitual patterning.”⁴⁷⁷ I am interested in creating choreographic conditions in which the performers can participate in the creative process and perform with such attentiveness. This explains why the investigation of the socio-political contexts in this project is paired with a probing into the understanding of the body as soma.

The somatic perspective: I-my-body in dialogue with the surroundings

Body practices such as BMC™, Jacoby- Gindler work and KA® are supported by knowledge drawn from physical education and therapy, psychology, and physiol-

474 Hartley (2004: 100).

475 Than, for example, the conventional classical dance training, which relies on imitational practices and mirroring of externally viewed body forms with a strict codex for what is considered desirable body images and bodily ideals. See, for example, Foster (1997: 241-3).

476 Brooks & Selver (2007: 59). Selver stresses, however: “One of the things which is difficult to bring about is that people learn to differentiate between sensation and emotion. Most of those who come to our work have been in psychoanalysis, or have worked with psychotherapists, and they slide very easily into the emotional experience rather than into the sensory experience” See Selver (1995: 18).

477 Hartley (2004: 173).

ogy in their task-based practices. The practices are grounded on psychosomatic attentiveness to the individual's bodily responses and experiences.⁴⁷⁸ Central to their experiential work is a perceptive awareness of our breathing and the ways in which the laws of gravity and the principle of basic physical mechanics work through the body.⁴⁷⁹ This attention given to the living body experienced individually at the first person level, as an "I," could be seen as empowering a self-centred and navel-gazing attitude towards the body. On the other hand, D. H. Johnson links the somatic practices to a subversive counter-culture, as they often emerge out of and reflect an altruistic individualism rooted in the drive towards democracy, equality, and empowerment. Without entering into a discussion on the premises for his claims related to democracy and power, I agree that the practices can inherently promote an ecological, holistic perspective,⁴⁸⁰ especially when the individual is viewed as an active agent and nucleus, not as an instrument for executing an imposed normative ideal, but understood and experienced as a co-player in the societal field. Through stimulating sensory awareness and paying attention to internal sensations, the individual is here tuning in to the experiential and sensorial living experiences of being *I-my-body* in a dialogical relationship with the challenges that we as human beings meet in our lives.⁴⁸¹ This effort implicitly enhances empathy for others and their being.⁴⁸² Rather than viewing this effort as an essentialist strive for a core-self or a navel-grazing approach to reality, but informed by Johnson and Lakoff's view on the body's interwoven dimensions,⁴⁸³ I therefore view somatic practices as a life science, which complements my contextually based approach to choreography here. Consequently, despite the fact that these practices were developed primarily for other purposes, I will next look at the possible enhancement that can be gained from applying and integrating somatic practices and perspectives in the field of choreography and dance. Here, I am especially interested in to what extent a deeper somatic understanding of the body integrated in the training regimen of dancers can contribute to augmented knowledge and concepts of the body and thus, subsequently, impact how dancers can contribute and participate in making choreography. Hence, my concern for their training

478 See, for example, Selver (1995: 21).

479 See, for example, Gindler (1995: 13) on gravity, and Speads (1978) on breathing.

480 Johnson (1995: xi-xiv). On holistic perspective, see also, Hartley (2004: 5).

481 See, for example, Bainbridge Cohen (1995: 185-186).

482 On empathy, see, for example, S.L. Foster (2012: 165-8).

483 Johnson (2008: 164), see also Lakoff and Johnson (1999).

regimen here relates primarily to the fact that it directly frames the conditions for choreographic development.

The concept of the somatic body in dance and its implication for choreography

The turn to the somatic and kinaesthesia in dance and choreography gradually evolved in the 20th century. The philosopher Maxine Sheets-Johnstone writes about it as the “corporeal turn,”⁴⁸⁴ whereas Fabius calls this shift “the turn to kinaesthesia,”⁴⁸⁵ which he claims produced “new notions of subjectivity” in the field.⁴⁸⁶ However, in comparison to the general development of somatic body practices that emerged in the 20th century, the shift to kinaesthesia in choreography and dance somehow became delayed, despite the fact that, since Isadora Duncan, many dance pioneers had made use of experiential and proprioceptive approaches. The reason for this delay may, in part, reflect the fact that the early modern dancers, though looking into the felt-sense of the body, primarily viewed this focus as a question of emotion and expression, while mainly leaving these dance-related body practices peripheral to the field of dance and choreography itself, as the dance scholar Isabelle Ginot stresses, when pointing out that these practices first find their way into the field as means to prevent accidents or provide rehabilitation following injuries.⁴⁸⁷ This trajectory may also, in part, reflect the fact that the somatic practices challenged aesthetic ideas about virtuosity and the body image that did not support but rather threatened the prevalent approaches to dance and choreography that existed. This reading seems fitting, if I draw on my own experience in Norway since the late 1980s. Here, the turn to a more somatic understanding of the dancing body was, until recently, met with sceptical resistance from the established educational institutions and the major dance companies in Norway, unless it was applied instrumentally as alternative training in the case of injuries, or as supportive means for efficiently

484 Sheets-Johnstone (2009).

485 Kinaesthesia is by Fabius understood as “the ability to feel movements of the limb and the body,” as defined by Jeffry Scott Longstaff (1996: 34) and quoted by Fabius (2009: 331). See: Longstaff (1996) *Cognitive structures of kinaesthetic space; Reevaluating Rudolf Laban's choreutics in the context of spatial cognition and motor control*, PhD thesis, London, City University London / Laban Centre. For another and more thorough introduction to the concept of kinaesthesia in a dance perspective, see Foster (2011: 73-125).

486 Fabius (2008: 343).

487 Ginot (2010).

shaping and preparing bodies.⁴⁸⁸ This institutional scepticism and conservatism created an incitement to dancers who thought differently to branch off and start their own independent projects and practice of training,⁴⁸⁹ in similar ways as the Judson group had done with their workshops in the 1960s and, thereby, through their questioning of the performing body, had come to mark a visible turn towards a new attitude to the lived body that was also more perceptive of its social functions.⁴⁹⁰

The shift to kinaesthesia, hence, likewise alters the view on, and thus of, the role of the performing body. Without going into more details or a more substantial review of the many body practices that exist today, I will mainly point to how this development of somatic practices has challenged the understanding of the body in dance and choreography. According to the dance scholar Soili Hämäläinen, this development has particularly effected the training regimens of contemporary dancers, in offering the instrumental tradition new approaches and perspectives on the moving body in which “the body is treated as a subject, as a lived body.”⁴⁹¹ This “lived body,” as Hämäläinen stresses, is “revealed to the dancer through bodily awareness and knowledge,”⁴⁹² through what Ginot calls a more exploratory experience.⁴⁹³ In Hämäläinen’s observation I recognize a connection that resonates with the lineage I have traced in this study, from H’Doubler’s teaching of dance, inspired by Todd’s concept of “the thinking body,”⁴⁹⁴ and explored through dance studies “grounded in knowledge of the moving body itself.”⁴⁹⁵ This kind of approach to the body defies the tendency of objectification, and at its best, overcomes the judgmental attitude that has often guided the ocular-centric training in dance technique traditionally. In making the lived body and its experience the subject in both the dance training and in

488 This in accordance with the normative visual and virtuosic ideals of the dancing body, which in spite of stemming from the 18th and 19th century, also excelled in the 20th century. As evident both in the technical development within classical ballet, as well as in proliferation of similar body ideals in popular culture with TV shows such as *So you think you can dance* and in the fitness industry. See, for example, Foster (2011: 14, 120).

489 Such as the studios for new dance development “Danseloftet” (1976-1999), “Studio B – rom for ny dans” (1995-2002), and “Skolen for Samtidsdans” (from 2000 -) in Oslo. For the latter, see: www.samtidsdans.no.

490 See, for example, Burt (2006: 19-21; 116-117).

491 Hämäläinen (2007: 59). See also Johnson (2008: 164).

492 Hämäläinen (2007: 59).

493 Ginot (2010).

494 Todd (1937).

495 Hagood (2001: 36).

the choreographic process, this approach in my opinion also forwards another way of thinking about the body on stage.

I am interested in this cross-fertilization between somatic practices and dancing and in exploring its consequences for choreography. For example, thanks to the efforts of the German refugees such as Selver and Spread insights from the Jacoby-Gindler work were reinterpreted and amalgamated with traditions, such as those related to H'Doubler and Todd, in the United States in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Artists and practitioners, such as Elaine Summers and Trisha Brown participated in this process.⁴⁹⁶ Through their investigatory interest in the somatics of the body, both Summers and Brown contributed with their artistic moves to translate these impulses into their contemporaneity. With this effort, they contributed to setting new standards for the ways in which to perform dance. The arts scholar Marianne Goldberg exemplifies this when discussing how Brown “released the dancer’s set.” By “set” Goldberg here refers to the conventional and “particular tensile way of holding the body” that dancers applied in the 1940s and 1950s. In this way, Goldberg points to a change in the very quality of moving and carrying the body, which is an issue that also touches upon a core concern for me as the choreographer-researcher in this project. In Brown’s case, Goldberg relates this change to Brown’s engagement with body practices, especially the Alexander technique⁴⁹⁷ and her “intensive, long-term study of another emerging form, Kinetic Awareness.” For Goldberg this engagement explains how

Brown began to initiate movement from very different kinesthetic knowledge. These newly surfacing somatic ideas offered alternatives to how to hone her body for dancing. She shed the stylized use of her muscles and the tensile alertness through the spine and skin. Focusing instead on subtleties of elegant, relaxed alignment of her spine and limbs, she moved with ease and a spatial clarity that stemmed from innovative inner imagery. Brown looks at home physically in these moves, and a different virtuosity and creativity emerged, grounded in anatomically clear and efficient action. New sensations, perceptions, and energy developed within her body and between body, space, time, and geometry.

496 Other core members of the Judson group, such as Simone Forti, Deborah Hay, and Yvonne Rainer are not mentioned explicitly here, because for me their contributions were primarily more significant for the structural and conceptual way of approaching choreography and constructing performances than taking part in the explicit investment in the interrelationship between somatics and dancing.

497 The Alexander Technique is bodywork practice developed by the Tasmanian actor Frederick Matthias Alexander, who considered the individual’s use of the head/neck region as of great importance for psychosomatic wellbeing and functioning. See Alexander (1985).

These changes became a technical breakthrough for dance in America. They separated many in the sixties and seventies generation from others who stayed with Cunningham or Graham techniques.⁴⁹⁸

I have experienced this split between traditions that Goldberg describes at the end here, both on my own body through my dance education, which in Oslo was based on the Graham and Cunningham techniques, and in the Norwegian dance scene that I have been a part of since the late 1980s. On a personal level I also have a bodily memory and sensation of the ease and spatial clarity in moving that Goldberg ascribes to Brown's somatic investments, thanks to my experience of a shift through encountering the KA[®] practice and having many of Brown's early company members as teachers.⁴⁹⁹ In this respect, with the help of Goldberg's observations, I can activate and situate my personal impressions and experiences in relation to a larger but specific dance context. In combination with my own experiences and her account of Brown's early development, I can connect the recent past to the present day's plethora of choreographic strategies that blend somatic concerns with dance at the threshold of the 21st century.⁵⁰⁰ In addition to Brown's in-depth studies as a catalyst for creating new strategies for moving and developing choreographic works,⁵⁰¹ other dance artists have contributed with their strategies of blending somatics and dance, such as Summers developing KA[®] as well as engaging in early intermedia experiments, Paxton drawing on insights from martial art practices such as Aikido in his (ongoing) explorations of anatomical principles for moving,⁵⁰² and Bainbridge-Cohen, who moved entirely from dancing into somatics in developing BMC[™]. All three represent a living archive of experiences I have embodied in my learning process as an artist.

As a choreographer-researcher engaged in somatic practices, I find it inspiring to trace the background of these different but often interconnected practices

498 Goldberg (2002: 30).

499 First of all Shelley Senter, but also Randy Warshaw, Stephen Petronio, Irene Hultman, and Vicky Shicks.

500 For a discussion of some of these strategies, see, for example, Lepecki (2006) and Fabius (2009).

501 Goldberg (2002: 30).

502 I have myself on several occasions practised the Aikido-derived rolling with him in workshops at his farm in Vermont (1992; 1993) and in Vienna (1994). See also Paxton (2009a, 2009b, 2001: 421-6) and Baner (1987, 57-70; 203-217). Paxton's application of Aikido also exemplifies and points to how the field of dance and choreography would increasingly be influenced by non-European movement traditions. These include both the martial arts tradition from the Asian hemisphere and the social dance tradition from South America, or a participatory Afro-American community-oriented perspective.

I have experienced, in particular, to register that the dance field began transforming when dance artists discovered the potential of somatic practices – as means to enhance their dance training and further “the creation of choreography.”⁵⁰³ Like the Finnish dance artist and scholar Riitta Pasanen-Wilberg, I believe this shift came about simply because it felt meaningful, although I side with her when she stresses the distinction between somatic practices and dance, and states: “Somatic practices are not necessarily dance.”⁵⁰⁴ They have firstly a therapeutic purpose that appeals to the healing intelligence of the body. Nevertheless, they can provide a focus on the body that surpasses the strictly aesthetic concerns and ocular-centric tradition⁵⁰⁵ that most often has governed dance and choreography. In this dominant tradition, as Pasanen-Wilberg points out, learning has mainly been based on “visual perception and a superficial imitation and repetition of movement.” In contrast, somatic practices offer her “the opportunity to learn the principles of bodily function and to utilize them in my own movement as well as to understand the depth and quality in other people’s movement,” to the extent that it “requires changing the perspective from which one observes dance and dancing.”⁵⁰⁶ Like Pasanen-Wilberg, I have had similar experiences with this kind of experiential learning,⁵⁰⁷ and therefore find its explorative process both equally meaningful and relevant to this project. Here, the somatic practices offered me analytical tools for exploring movements and constructing choreography when faced with highly emotional contexts, and this approach would come to challenge my perspectives both on choreographing and dancing, as well as the actual contexts of grieving. Moreover, the somatic approaches to the body definitely liberated me both as a choreographer and a performer from the aesthetical grip of the ocular-centric dance tradition that I met through my dance education in Norway.

Through the turn to kinaesthesia and my engagement with somatic practices, particularly the three I have accounted for in this chapter, I entered another paradigm. It opened up infinite opportunities for questioning and experimenting with movements and moving that probed me to re-examine and re-visit one of the constitutives of choreography: the breathing body with all its layers and

503 Pasanen-Wilberg (2007: 14).

504 Pasanen-Wilberg (2007: 15).

505 Cf. Fabius (2009: 343).

506 Pasanen-Wilberg (2007: 14-15).

507 Cf. my experiences from the workshop with Lisa Nelson mentioned in Chapter 3.1.

cultural baggage. As Bartenieff said to her students when they got bewildered with the infinite options in the movement work: “There is always more than one thing going on.”⁵⁰⁸ This complexity is also quintessentially what I want to explore in docudancing grieving, through probing into how our body and its complexity might express itself contextually, in the intertwined spheres of politics, aesthetics and somatics involved in this choreographic process.

Closing thoughts: elaborating on the somatic perspective in choreography

While I was already preparing for this contextually based approach to choreography it became obvious that the body was something I could not take for granted. The recycling of aestheticized figures from studio-based training in dance seemed meaningless here. I therefore needed another approach to the body, which made my practice and background from different body practices relevant and important. Likewise this explains my introduction here to somatics and somatic approaches on what it means for me to be attentive to the sensory experiences of moving and being a body, and how this understanding can impact the way of thinking about dancing and choreography. In this chapter, I have focused on the three experiential and holistic body practices: BMC™, KA®, and Gindler-Jacoby work (or Sensory Awareness). Supported by physiological and anatomical resources, these practices most explicitly influenced my approach to the dancing body in this project, and hence also to the development of its artistic research process. In my contextually-based approach to grieving, I drew on my embodied knowledge from these somatic practices to empathetically connect and analytically deconstruct and, thereby, identify and pursue the bodily focuses embedded in the three contexts of grieving. From this perspective, I also connect to the claims in *The Thinking Body*, where Todd links the sensory experiences of the body to memory:

Memory likes to recall the whole body. It is not our parents’ faces that come back to us, but their bodies, in their accustomed chairs, eating, sewing, smoking, doing all the familiar things. We remember each as a body in action.⁵⁰⁹

508 Hackney (1998: 44).

509 Todd (1937: 1).

Combined with the insights about our psychosomatic beings reviewed in this chapter, Todd's observations create a bridge between the body and our corporeal sensing of it, and the sensations evoked in grieving and the challenges of trauma addressed in this project, which I will turn to next here.

4. Trauma and Performance

“I had finally learned the lesson taught me, years after they’d died....There are no miracles, no magical coincidences. There is only looking, and finally seeing, what was always there. For everything, in time, gets lost: (....) But for a little while some of that can be rescued, if only, faced with the vastness of all that there is and all that there ever was, somebody makes the decision to look back, to have one last look, to search for a while in the debris of the past and to see not only what was lost but what there is still to be found”

From *The Lost: A search for six of six million* by Daniel Mendelsohn⁵¹⁰

An introduction to the combination of trauma and performance

“Trauma inevitably brings loss,”⁵¹¹ states the psychiatrist Judith M. Herman. This relationship to loss also explains why insight and knowledge of trauma and the traumatic became one of the core research perspectives that grounded my project on docudancing griefscapes.⁵¹² Therefore, as a resource for my choreographic enquiry, it was vital for me to understand better how trauma can have an impact both on an individual level, as bodily reaction patterns, as well as on a socio-cultural level in society. The word *trauma* itself derives from Greek and means ‘a wound’ or ‘a blow.’⁵¹³ Consequently, the traumatic describes something “pertaining to, or caused by a wound, injury, or shock,” as the contemporary meaning of the term “trauma” is twofold: pathologically, it refers either to “external bodily injury in general,” or alternatively, as the focus is in this project, to psychological damage and emotional wounds.⁵¹⁴ In the latter meaning, “trau-

510 Mendelsohn (2007: 486-487).

511 Herman (1997: 188).

512 I discuss grieving as an issue more specifically in Chapter 5 and 6. In Chapter 4, I primarily focus on how I understand the concept of trauma and the traumatic in general, as a research perspective informing this project.

513 In Ancient Greek ‘τραυμα.’ Source: The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles. Vol. II (N-Z). Edited by C. T. Onions (1947: 2235).

514 Ibid.

ma expresses itself viscerally, through bodily symptoms, re-enactments, and repeats,⁵¹⁵ and thereby “as an acting out in both the individual and the social body,” according to the performance studies scholar Diana Taylor.⁵¹⁶ I find her description of trauma particular relevant to this project with my interest in the different ways in which trauma can manifest itself and perform both bodily as well as socially through its traumatic repeats, and hence destabilize the (linear) sense of temporal borders between past, future and present.⁵¹⁷

This perspective on trauma also offers a Meta text to the phenomenon I discovered while editing this chapter: I found out that I had not only relied on some references and quotations more than others but also returned to some of them more than once in my text. The finding intrigued me: it seemed as if the traumatic repeat had found its way into the writing itself while I was reflecting on the relationship between trauma, soma, and performance in the project, as if the focus on trauma and the traumatic had impacted the very structure of this study itself through creating patterns of repetition in the text. In tracing these patterns, some of the repeats crystallized into optical prisms that subtly made me re-see what I thought I had already seen in the text. I therefore decided to carefully keep some of them out of respect for what their repeats convey about trauma and traumatic matters.

With a similar awareness and the perspective described above, I want to explore the relationship between trauma and performance in order to relate to what the sociologist Avery Gordon calls “Perceiving the lost subjects of history – the missing and lost ones and the blind fields they inhabit” – which – “makes all the difference to any project trying to find the address of the present.”⁵¹⁸

The chapter has two parts: (4.1) Trauma and the traumatic and (4.2) Performance and the performative.⁵¹⁹

4.1. Trauma and the traumatic

In this first subchapter, I will situate my conceptual understanding and socio-political perspective on trauma and the traumatic. Because of my specific interest in the psychosomatic reaction patterns in the body, I will begin with drawing

515 For examples, as nightmares and flashbacks, drawing on Bessel van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart (1995: 172).

516 Taylor (2006: 1675).

517 Issues I address more concretely in Chapters 6 and 8.

518 Gordon (1997: 195).

519 Drawing on performance studies, in particular: Phelan (1993, 1997); Lepecki (2004, 2006); and Davis (2010).

up a brief overview of the clinical background history as well as the current understanding of the terms “trauma” and “the traumatic.” The central point here is the introduction to the clinical diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD).⁵²⁰ Then, through emphasising what is called the “dialectic of trauma”⁵²¹ and how traumatising is expressed psychosomatically, I will move on to look at how traumatic events may impact society long after they initially take place. In combining this insight with the affective effect that photographic stills can harbour and the concept of “identification at distance,”⁵²² I will approach and discuss my socio-cultural perspective on trauma in this study.⁵²³

Approaching the body in pain

With the concept of trauma, I approach the body in pain.⁵²⁴ According to two specialists in the field, Bessel A. van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart, trauma implies exposure to a traumatic event, that is, “a frightening event outside of ordinary human experience.”⁵²⁵ However, as Herman underlines: “Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life.”⁵²⁶ This means that they unsettle the traumatized individuals’ and their “sense of control, connection, and meaning” in their lives.⁵²⁷ Most often, they stir existential questions as the traumatic events “generally involve threats to life or bodily integrity, or a close personal encounter with violence and death.”⁵²⁸ According to van der Kolk such traumatic exposures may be experienced as “speechless terror”⁵²⁹ that resists or cannot be accommodated within existing meaning schemas. This “causes the memory of these experiences to be stored differently and not be available

520 Such traumatising results from exposure to life-threatening events in the past that are re-lived or re-experienced involuntarily in the present as if they were happening all over again. Inducing bodily reactions of overwhelming sensorial impact. See, for example, Herman (1997: 33, 47) and Pat Ogden (2006: 3-5).

521 Kaja Silverman (1996: 185).

522 Herman (1997: 2, 47-50).

523 This viewpoint on trauma relates to trauma theory familiar from cultural and literary studies, which draw on, among other sources, psychoanalytic, poststructuralist and feminist theory. See, for example, Phelan (1997), Taylor (2006), Cathy Caruth (1995), Marianne Hirsch (1999), Ann Cvetkovich (2003) and Rebecca Schneider (2009).

524 Elaine Scarry (1987).

525 Van der Kolk and Van der Hart (1995: 172).

526 Herman (1997: 188).

527 Herman (1997: 33).

528 Herman (1997: 33).

529 Van der Kolk (1995: 172).

for retrieval under ordinary conditions.”⁵³⁰ So, instead of being integrated into a person’s ordinary social life story and narrative memory, the traumatic event rather remains as a fixed and not-integrated experience. That is, as a traumatic memory,⁵³¹ “dissociated from conscious awareness and voluntary control.”⁵³² In contrast to ordinary - or narrative - memory, the traumatic memory is distinguished by being an experience that “cannot be organized on a linguistic level, and this failure to arrange the memory in words and symbols leaves it to be organized on a somatosensory or iconic level: as somatic sensations, behavioral reenactments, nightmares, and flashbacks.”⁵³³ However, these “memories are reactivated when a person is exposed to a situation, or is in a somatic state, reminiscent of the one when the original memory was stored.... as if faced with past threat” again.⁵³⁴

From observation of traumatic memory to official recognition

The knowledge on trauma came out of a development that began in the late 19th century. I will briefly outline some of the major events that shaped this trajectory here,⁵³⁵ relating to Pierre Janet’s observations of the dynamics of traumatic memory in 1889, which he made after having followed for some years the work of the neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot in Salpêtrière in France.⁵³⁶ Particularly central in Charcot’s studies was the question of how the mind processes memories;⁵³⁷ nevertheless, he is mostly known for his study of hysteria. As Herman underlines, this disorder was predominantly linked to women and commonly known in the late 19th century, but prior to Charcot, any serious scientific considerations were dismissed: the hysterical women were simply considered malingers.⁵³⁸ Charcot named hysteria “the Great Neurosis,” and was preoccupied with categorizing

530 Van der Kolk (1995: 160).

531 As stated by the French psychiatrist and philosopher Pierre Janet: “It is only for convenience that we speak of it as ‘traumatic memory.’ The subject is often incapable of making the necessary narrative which we call memory regarding the event; and yet he remains confronted by a difficult situation in which he has not been able to play a satisfactory part, one to which his adaptation had been imperfect, so that he continues to make efforts at adaptation.” Janet as quoted in van der Kolk (1995: 160).

532 Van der Kolk (1995: 160).

533 Van der Kolk (1995: 172). Van der Kolk refers here to E. A. Brett and R. Ostroff (1985).

534 Van der Kolk (1995: 174).

535 For more, see, for example, Herman (1997) and Caruth (1995).

536 See: van der Kolk (1995: 159-163). The work conducted in Salpêtrière attracted prominent researchers from all over Europe, in addition to Janet, people such as Sigmund Freud and William James. See: Herman (1992: 10) and van der Kolk (1995: 164).

537 Van der Kolk (1995: 158).

538 Herman (1997: 10).

his external observations of his clients. In contrast, Janet was more concerned with understanding the mental and emotional world of the people he observed. By the early 1890s Janet and Sigmund Freud⁵³⁹ had “arrived independently at strikingly similar formulations,” concluding that “[h]ysteria was a condition caused by psychological trauma.” Unbearable emotional reactions to traumatic events produced an altered state of consciousness, which in turn induced the hysterical symptoms. Janet called this alteration in consciousness “dissociation.”⁵⁴⁰ He had already observed in 1893 that the suffering individual seemed to be stuck in their trauma, or “attached” as he described it. To Janet it appeared “as if their personality development has stopped at a certain point and cannot expand any more by the addition or assimilation of new elements.”⁵⁴¹ However, the phenomenon of “traumatic memory” that Janet had observed would firstly appear on a scale that was difficult for society to ignore in connection with the First World War, when soldiers began returning from the trenches with what was called “shell shock.”⁵⁴² The psychological damage suffered by many of the surviving soldiers was immense. They reappeared from the slaughterhouse-like warfare that had taken place on the fields of Verdun and similar locations.⁵⁴³ Large numbers of the returning soldiers were not only physically maimed, but also appeared to be haunted by the horrors experienced in the trenches and the memories of the nearly ten million young men who did not return.⁵⁴⁴ As Herman

539 Freud’s development is in itself interesting, but has less relevance for the scope of this overview; For a more information about Freud’s position versus Janet, see, for example, Herman (1992: 7-50) and van der Kolk (1995: 159-169).

540 Herman (1992: 12). According to Herman Freud and his collaborator Joseph Breuer in Vienna did call it “double consciousness.”

541 Janet (1893: 138) as quoted by van der Kolk (1995: 164). Janet indicated by this that hysterical phenomenon had a traumatic origin. However, according to van der Kolk, already in 1895 made Freud his first moves “away from the theories of trauma-induced dissociation and hysteria” of Janet and his collaborators. Instead Freud claimed that these symptoms were caused by repression” (van der Kolk, 1995: 165). Van der Kolk claims that this brought on two fundamentally different models for understanding traumatic memories that are difficult to relate to each other (van der Kolk, 1995: 168-169), but the findings of modern neuroscience have now arrived at similar conclusions as Janet with regard to the way traumatic memory functions and operates (van der Kolk, 1995: 176).

542 The named derives from the British psychologist Charles Myers. Source: Herman (1992: 20). For more information about the background for the term, see for example, Spencer Tucker and Priscilla M. Roberts (eds) (2005: 1080-86).

543 For references related to the shell-shocked soldiers, their state and the implications for the understanding of trauma, see, for example, Nils Johan Lavik (1994: 94), Caruth (1995: 5) and Herman (1997: 20-23).

544 Military historian H. P. Willmott (2003: 307). Military historian Guy Hartcup (1988: 82-86, 154) reminds us how the war was ignited by pride and honour codes and began with cavalry on horses, but ended with aircrafts, tanks, submarines, and wireless communication, offering unprecedented means to kill. Run by military tactics developed in the 19th century but with technological resources

describes it, English psychiatrists of the period would report on how “many soldiers began to act like hysterical women. They screamed and wept uncontrollably. They froze and could not move. They became mute and unresponsive. They lost their memory and their capacity to feel.”⁵⁴⁵ This also explains why the surviving soldiers would often become referred to as “the lost generation.”⁵⁴⁶

However, the return of these war veterans contributed to advances in the theory and understanding of traumatic memories within psychology and psychoanalysis. It was no longer a phenomenon limited to ‘female hysteria,’ but included male subjects at their best age,⁵⁴⁷ although, as Herman points out:

Within a few years after the end of the war, medical interest in the subject of psychological trauma faded once again. Though numerous men with long-lasting psychiatric disabilities crowded the back wards of veterans’ hospitals, their presence had become an embarrassment to civilian societies eager to forget.⁵⁴⁸

With the Second World War and its horrors “came a revival of medical interest” in what was by then called “combat neurosis.”⁵⁴⁹ However, the topic was not really taken on board in a more thorough and “large-scale investigation of the long-term psychological effects of combat” until much later, and in the United States not only until the Vietnam War. In contrast to the Second World War, where the veterans in the US had been celebrated as heroes upon their return, the Vietnam War had been lost, and veterans were let down by both left and right. Nevertheless, it turned out to be difficult to ignore the impact of the Vietnam War on the returning veterans. Herman ascribes this to the struggle of the veterans themselves for recognition,⁵⁵⁰ in combination with the developments within the field of psychology and psychiatry at the time, particularly, related to the rediscovery of the legacy of Janet,⁵⁵¹ which, according to van der Kolk, had in large

of the 20th – it produced meaningless suffering and horrors that exceeded the imagination of most civilians, as well as conditions that led to the next World War.

545 Herman (1997: 20).

546 The expression has been attributed to Gertrud Stein, the American author who lived in Paris. For more on the application and meaning of the term, see: <http://www.aftermathww1.com/lostgen.asp> (Accessed 15 March 2010).

547 Herman (1997: 9, 20-1).

548 Herman (1997: 23).

549 Herman (1997: 24).

550 Herman (1997: 26-27). According to Herman, the veterans refused both to be stigmatized because of the loss of the Vietnam War, as well as being forgotten – in the way their fathers and grandfathers had been after the two preceding World Wars and the Korean War (1950-1953).

551 Attributed to Henri Ellenberger (1970): *The Discovery of the Unconscious*. See van der Kolk (1995: 159).

been “crowded out by psychoanalysis” and descriptive psychiatry, and “largely forgotten.”⁵⁵² This included “the fact that actual memories may form nucleus of psychopathology and continue to exert their influence on current experience by means of the process of dissociation.”⁵⁵³

In short, the developments taking place in the 1970s in the United States brought acknowledgment to the combat veterans’ situation⁵⁵⁴; in 1980, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) included what they called “the characteristic syndrome of psychological trauma as a diagnosis in its official manual, as “a new category, called ‘post-traumatic stress disorders,’” or simply PTSD.⁵⁵⁵

Soon after the concept of PTSD had been legitimized, “it became clear that the psychological syndrome seen in survivors of rape, domestic battery, and incest was essentially the same as the syndrome seen in survivors of war.”⁵⁵⁶ The work done by the women’s liberation movement in the 1970s had paved the ground here with their consciousness-raising and attention given to violence committed against women. This effort had sparked off research into the field, including related issues such as the sexual and psychological abuse of children.⁵⁵⁷ This claim to include the insidious traumas that invisibly exist among us in our everyday lives re-contextualized both the work on hysteria and the reactions it had caused a century earlier. This led to a heated debate, particularly among clinicians, about the criteria for diagnosing PTSD, and made it a contested diagnosis. Thirty years later, despite still important disputes about criteria, this has changed. The phenomenon itself is now acknowledged and the criteria are more finely defined.⁵⁵⁸ Trauma can result from exposure to traumatic events, such as combat situations and sudden exposure to violence, or more complicated and prolonged situations, known from the Holocaust and the concentration camps,

552 Van der Kolk (1995: 159).

553 Van der Kolk (1995: 159).

554 “The clinical features of this disorder were,” according to Herman, “congruent with the traumatic neurosis” already outlined in 1941 by the American psychiatrist Abram Kardiner in his study *The Traumatic Neuroses of War*. (Herman 1997: 28, 24).

555 APA (1980) *Diagnosis and Statistical Manual of Psychiatric Disorders*, vol. 3 (DSM-III), Washington D.C. Traumatic events were here described as “outside the range of usual human experiences.” See APA (1980: 236), as quoted in Herman (1997: 33).

556 Herman (1997: 32).

557 Examples mentioned here could be the works of Ann W. Burgess & Lynda Holmstrom (1974), Susan Brownmiller (1975), Judith Herman & Lisa Hirschman (1977), and Leonore Walker (1979).

558 According to APA’s news bulletin is the new revision of the diagnostic and statistic manual of mental disorders prepared for being released in 2013. See <http://www.apapracticentrall.org/update/2010/02-28/call-comments.aspx> (Accessed 5 October 2010). I will go into a further discussion on these criteria here, as it suffices in this context to identify the core features ascribed to PTSD.

hostage situations, and torture, and also from domestic abuse stretching over years.⁵⁵⁹

For me, approaching traumatic contexts of grieving, and especially those caused by the Bosnian War, it was crucial to know of the characteristic features of PTSD and what this could imply on an individual and clinical level in the body.

Characteristics features of post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD)

According to APA and their manual for the diagnosis of psychiatric disorders, DSM-IV-TR, the main criterion for PTSD is defined by “the person [who] experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of the self or others.”⁵⁶⁰ However, as not everybody exposed to such experiences will necessarily develop a chronic or more complicated PTSD,⁵⁶¹ other qualifying criteria were also needed. They include the conditions that “the person’s reaction involves fear and horror (emotions), helplessness (a learned behaviour), or denial (cognitive alterations and ego defenses),” and that the person suffers from these reactions over a certain minimum of time.⁵⁶²

The implications for individuals suffering from PTSD can be severe and affect every aspect of coping with their daily lives. As the psychotherapist Pat Ogden, who has developed a psychosomatic approach to trauma treatment, points out:

Through nonverbal remembering triggered by reminders of the event, traumatized individuals relive the emotional tenor of previous traumatic experiences, finding themselves at the mercy of intense trauma-related emotions. These emotions can lead to impulsive, ineffective, conflicting, and irrational actions, such as lashing out physically or verbally, or feeling helpless, frozen, and numb. Emotional arousal in an individual with unresolved trauma thus often provokes action that is not an adaptive response to the present (nontraumatic) environment, but is more likely a version of an adaptive response to the original trauma.⁵⁶³

559 Or over decades, as in the two famous cases discovered in 2010: the Fritzl case in Austria where a father had kept his daughter locked up in a cellar for 24 years, see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/7371959.stm>, and the equivalent British case, see <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/politics/lawandorder/7415723/British-Fritzl-case-Timeline.html> (Both accessed and retrieved 22 March 2010).

560 APA (2000: 467). See also, for example, John Preston Wilson (2004: 8).

561 Schauer (2005: 12).

562 APA (2000: 467). See also Wilson (2004: 8) and Schauer (2005: 8).

563 Ogden (2006: 11).

Ogden highlights how trauma can trigger emotional stress and lead to a wide variety of psychosomatic reactions that respond to previous traumatic events, rather than to the present surroundings of the traumatized person. As a non-integrated experience in the life narrative of the traumatized person,⁵⁶⁴ trauma is therefore “known only by the nature of its repeats,” as Taylor underlines.⁵⁶⁵ This effect causes a ripple of psychobiological processes in the body that sets it “ready to face a state of emergency,” as the trauma specialist and psychologist John P Wilson observes. He states:

one of the unique aspects of PTSD is that the stress-response program may not switch off but continue to operate as if the threat were actively persistent and still present as an anxiety- or fear-provoking danger.⁵⁶⁶

This uncalled-for activation of the adaptive, psychobiological stress-responses results in the fact that the traumatized individuals “characteristically lose the capacity to draw upon emotions as guides for action.”⁵⁶⁷ The insight that Wilson and Ogden highlight was important for me to keep in mind while doing my fieldwork, especially in Bosnia, where I was the least familiar with what was considered an adequate response in different situations of interaction. However, it was equally important for me to have an understanding of what these neurological processes innately implied in order to work on the corporeality of trauma choreographically.

According to Wilson, when looking into the “innate factors” of these psychobiological processes, they are divided into two interdependently connected cores: the biological core that affects the brain, the central nervous system, the sympathetic nervous system etc., and the psychological core that relates to learning, meaning, cognition perception, the self and the ego processes, personality, and the unconscious mental processes. Together, the two cores constitute the “two primary psychobiological substrates of the underlying neurohormonal engineering systems of the body,”⁵⁶⁸ which are responsible for the “organismic processing” taking place within the body.⁵⁶⁹ The multileveled impact of PTSD on these functions produces stress responses that develop into symptom clusters.

564 See, for example, Ogden (2006: 3) and von der Kolk (1995: 176).

565 Taylor (2006: 1675).

566 Wilson (2004: 13).

567 Ogden (2006: 11).

568 Wilson (2004: 17).

569 Wilson (2004: 9).

The “triad core of these symptoms relates to (1) re-experiencing, reliving, or re-enacting traumatic memories, (2) avoidance tendencies, psychic numbing, and coping behaviours, and (3) psychobiological changes and physiological reactivity (hyperarousal).”⁵⁷⁰ Herman refers to these simply as *intrusion*, *constriction*, and *hyperarousal*. Intrusion “reflects the indelible imprint of the traumatic moment; constriction reflects the numbing response of surrender,” while “[h]yperarousal reflects the persistent expectation of danger.”⁵⁷¹ Rather than ‘constriction,’ in this study I refer to this cluster as ‘avoidance,’ as the traumatologist Maggie Schauer does.⁵⁷² Nevertheless, from a diagnostic point of view, the core concerns are that

These integrated symptom clusters are unique to PTSD as a psychiatric disorder because they: (1) were not present before the traumatic event and (2) are specific manifestations of the normal, adaptive stress response pattern in a prolonged and potentially impairing way to psychological functioning.⁵⁷³

However, in complex cases of PTSD, experts on trauma find that these effects may first surface years after the event itself, or when a certain level of safety is assured.⁵⁷⁴ This information was highly relevant and important, as two of the three contexts I investigated in this project related to traumatic events that had occurred ten years prior to the beginning of my research process. In combination with my focus on trauma as a bodily reality, the phenomenon of delay reinforced my interest in knowing more about how post-traumatic stress manifests itself. Wilson emphasises that the effects of PTSD are a result of “a synergistic syndrome,” which implies that “the symptom clusters that develop have reciprocal, interactive influences on each other.” This means that they will manifest themselves in what Wilson calls behavioural adaptations that bring about “impaired self-function and effects on interpersonal relations” for the traumatized individual.⁵⁷⁵

⁵⁷⁰ Wilson (2004: 17).

⁵⁷¹ Herman (1997: 35).

⁵⁷² Schauer (2005: 8).

⁵⁷³ Herman (1997: 41).

⁵⁷⁴ See, for example, Herman (1992: 154-172), Fyhr (1999: 72-3), and Sven Åke Christianson (2002: 403).

⁵⁷⁵ Wilson (2004: 40).

“The dialectic of trauma”

For Herman, the core dynamics of trauma – based on the fact that “the traumatic event surfaces not as a verbal narrative but as a symptom” – imply that it “simultaneously calls attention to the existence of unspeakable secrets and deflects attention from it.”⁵⁷⁶ Herman refers to this antagonistic paradox as “the dialectic of trauma,” because the traumatized is caught between the need to speak and the inability to do so. This dialectic “gives rise to complicated, sometimes uncanny alterations of consciousness,” while the traumatized survivor struggles “to find a language that conveys fully and persuasively what one has seen.”⁵⁷⁷ The paradox of this dialectic calls for a heightened sensitivity to this difficulty of relating to a past when engaging in fieldwork in traumatic contexts, such as I did in Bosnia.

Whereas both Wilson’s and Herman’s descriptions point to the problematic interaction between a traumatized individual and his or her social environment, Herman also writes explicitly about the embedded societal implications of trauma on the wider environment. For Herman it is of the utmost importance to reveal how trauma and the traumatic memory impact the social fabric of a culture not only by destabilizing and blurring the boundaries between private and public concerns, but in having societal consequences.⁵⁷⁸ These are concerns I also share and elaborate on in this study, especially in Chapters 7 and 8.

The problematic interaction – between traumatized individual and social environment

Traumatic reminders affect traumatized individuals and will often produce immediate responses that are related not to the social circumstances in which they are occurring, but to past traumatic events, as if they were happening again. Those in their surroundings, who happened to witness such reliving and re-enactments of traumatic events, are left to wonder. They may have no clue of what is going on within the traumatized individuals, especially if they have no knowledge of the traumatic events that caused these reactions. This makes the traumatized individuals appear to those witnessing their relived reactions from outside, at best, as a bit awkward, or more seriously, as if they are losing control of the situation, or worse, as if they are insane. In the latter case, the traumatized individuals might be considered as a physical threat to themselves and or their

576 Herman (1997: 1).

577 Herman (1997: 2). Trauma and traumatisation can also come as a result from being a witness to atrocities. It is not necessarily conditioned by being the direct target for the violations committed.

578 Herman (1997: 2-3).

immediate surroundings. If the traumatized condition is not recognized, the trauma survivors are at risk of being misread and misdiagnosed as suffering from various personality disorders. This situation is particularly pertinent in cases of prolonged domestic abuse or terror in families that appeared from the outside to function as normal, but which, in fact, were warped by extreme stress experiences.⁵⁷⁹ The risk of not recognizing or misreading is a major concern for Herman and a danger acknowledged by Wilson.⁵⁸⁰ Remembering this risk also helped me in my fieldwork, especially in Bosnia, because it kept me alert to the sudden possibility that traumatic reminders and reactions could be triggered in the people I encountered. The only thing I could do to prepare myself was to stay tuned to the somatic reactions I registered in our interaction and the body.

The traumatized body speaks in somatic patterns

Trauma has a body. As Taylor pinpoints: “Before it can be talked about, trauma manifests itself as an acting out” in the individual body.⁵⁸¹ These bodily manifestations interconnect my concern for trauma with my interest in somatics and sensory awareness in this project. As van der Kolk points out: “The legacy of trauma is that these somatic patterns can be triggered by the slightest provocations, reactivating the physical response of the organism to past terror, abandonment, and helplessness, sometimes in exquisite detail.”⁵⁸² Discernible through different combinations of reoccurring nightmares, flashbacks, emotional detachment or numbing feelings, insomnia, avoidance of trauma reminders and extreme distress when exposed to them, denial, irritability, hyper-vigilance, memory loss, and excessive startled responses are a few known behavioural reactions to trauma.⁵⁸³ However, Van der Kolk claims that psychology and psychiatry for a long time underestimated the significance of the muscular and organic responses, and, instead, “narrowly focused on either the neurochemistry or the emotional states associated with the reminders,” to the risk of missing out on the obvious, namely, that both “neurochemistry and emotions are activated *in order to* bring about certain bodily postures and psychical movements that are meant to protect, en-

579 Herman (1997: 123).

580 Herman (1997: 116) and Wilson (2004: 33). In the cases of complex and delayed traumatic reactions, according to Wilson, the symptoms of trauma may surface without any apparently logical reasons, resulting in pathological diagnosis for the altered “personality characteristic and self-structures” (Ibid.).

581 Taylor (2006: 1675).

582 Van der Kolk in the foreword to Ogden (2006: xxi).

583 See, for example, Schauer et al. (2005: 8, 13), Herman (1997: 121), and Wilson (2004: 7-44).

gage, and defend.”⁵⁸⁴ In combination with the realization that the feeling of being re-traumatized is not countered simply with insight and understanding, some clinician began, according to van der Kolk, “to explore techniques that offer the possibility of reprogramming these automatic physical responses.” This development drew on somatic practices,⁵⁸⁵ like those mentioned in the previous chapter. However, despite the sophistication and meanings of these approaches, their effects are, as van der Kolk underlines, “not easily articulated,” nor “captured in the dominant intellectual categories” used in science.⁵⁸⁶ Nevertheless, this influence of somatics gave birth to body-oriented therapy, or what is called sensorimotor-based psychotherapy, advocated by therapists such as Ogden and Peter A. Levine.⁵⁸⁷ For van der Kolk, the strength of these body-oriented approaches to trauma treatment is that they directly address “the fact that the traumatic past continues to influence how people perceive themselves and their surroundings, and how they position themselves in relationship to the world around them.” Primarily, this means that these “body-oriented therapies are predicated on the notion that past experience is embodied in present physiological states and action tendencies.” This means that trauma is perceived as

re-enacted in breath, gestures, sensory perceptions, movement, emotion, and thought. The role of the therapist is to facilitate self-awareness and self-regulation, rather than to witness and interpret the trauma. Therapy involves working with sensations and action tendencies in order to discover new ways of orienting and moving through the world.⁵⁸⁸

I drew on this bodily understanding with its holistic or ecological view of trauma in my striving to embody traumatic contexts in this project. As van der Kolk suggests, this view of trauma also has implications for knowing how to understand the role of the therapist and the aim of therapy. Interestingly, I also find this to be the case when examining my experiences in this project: how this somatic and socio-contextual viewpoint had consequences for my role as choreographer and

584 Van der Kolk in the foreword to Ogden (2006: xxi).

585 Van der Kolk in Ogden (2006: xxiii). He refers here to practices such as: “Sensory awareness, Feldenkrais, Rolfing, the F. M. Alexander technique, body-mind centering, somatic experiencing, Pessio-Boyden psychotherapy, Rubenfeld synergy, authentic movement, the Hakomi method, Middendorf breath work.”

586 Van der Kolk in Ogden (2006: xxiii), referring to D. H. Johnson (1995).

587 Ogden (2006) and Levine (1997). Levine draws on the work of bodywork practitioner Ida Rolf and psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich.

588 Van der Kolk in the foreword to Ogden (2006: xxiv).

the clarification of aims in the choreographic process and output. Particularly when engaged in the third part of the trilogy (see Chapter 7) – on the communal grieving caused by the Bosnian War – I was forced to develop a way to facilitate a “self-awareness and self-regulation” for the performers involved, this with regard both to their understanding of their dancing body and to the socio-political trauma they were witnessing in Bosnia and Serbia. The process made me become deeply involved in “working with sensations and action tendencies in order to discover new ways of orienting and moving through the world” choreographically.⁵⁸⁹ In this way, my choreographic approach resembled what van der Kolk states about body-oriented trauma therapy. Though the role of the choreographer and the aim of the choreographic process radically differs from the therapeutic context van der Kolk addresses, the role of the choreographer mirrors in some respect that of the therapist. In my case, it was about facilitating a process into “new ways orienting and moving through the world” with the performers involved. In Van der Kolk’s description, I therefore recognize traits of the altered role for choreographers and the new strategies for working choreographically that have emerged over the last decades in the field of contemporary choreography. In this role the choreographer is firstly a facilitator responsible for leading a group of collaborating artists through an explorative work process.⁵⁹⁰ Despite the obvious differences with a therapeutic setting, the choreographic process shares the existential objective expressed by van der Kolk, that is, in being conducted “in order to discover new ways of orienting and moving through the world.”⁵⁹¹ By running a fieldwork-based choreographic project that searched for strategies to embody traumatic events, the facilitating role in my case became of the utmost importance, in order to enhance in the choreographic process both a sensory self-awareness and a close listening to the “sensations and action tendencies” surfacing from encountering the contexts of traumatic loss and grieving.

Such an approach not only questions the concept of the dancing body, but also alters the perspectives on how to view and understand choreography as a tool for partaking in constructing our cultural memory. This turns it into a politicized field for change itself, rather than a sole tool for the aestheticization of matters related to politics. I will elaborate on this political perspective on choreography in particular in Chapter 8. As for now, it suffices to say that though van der Kolk

589 Van der Kolk in the foreword to Ogden (2006: xxiv).

590 Cf. Butterworth (2009: 178). See also, Steven Spier and his discussion of the work process with William Forsythe (Spier, 2000: 111).

591 This also corresponds to the aim of somatic practitioners. Cf. Hartley (2004, 2005).

primarily discusses the therapeutic aim related to an individual's process and change, his observations above also highlight the repercussions for the social interaction and the context involved. In doing so, this therapeutic focus and objectives intersect with my core interest in the social-cultural implications of trauma and the traumatic. I discuss this further in Chapters 5-8 by describing how the somatic and the socio-contextual approach connect in my choreographic approach, whereas here, to situate this choreographic approach, I will shift from a therapeutic-clinical to a socio-cultural perspective on trauma. With this complementary perspective, I am interested in addressing what Herman writes about as "restoring connections: between the public and private world, between individual and community."⁵⁹²

Trauma viewed from a socio-cultural perspective

In the book *Trauma: Exploration in Memory*, the literary scholar Cathy Caruth stresses an interest in trauma studies that focus on the social impact of trauma. In defining trauma as "unclaimed experiences," she suggests approaching the "surprising impact" of trauma and a traumatic past by viewing it from a bodily and socio-cultural angle. She wants us especially to "examine how trauma unsettles and forces us to rethink our notions of experience, and communication."⁵⁹³ Like Caruth, I am particularly interested in the social impact of trauma, which I consider essential for making sense of our socio-political reality. In the remaining part of this chapter, I will situate what shapes my socio-cultural perspective on trauma, which conceptually frames my approach to traumatic contexts in this project. In this review, I will refer to contributors and important works that influenced my outlook and hence artistic practice, such as Ann Cvetkovich, who, as a queer theoretician, with her book *An Archive of Feelings* furthers Caruth's perspective. Cvetkovich treats trauma "as a social and cultural discourse that emerges in response to the demands of grappling with psychic consequences of historical events."⁵⁹⁴ Though Cvetkovich acknowledges how, for the most part, such "socio-cultural approaches to trauma have been overshadowed by psychoanalytical and psychiatric discourse" on the pathology involved; her strategy is "to resist this tendency, ... by holding on to trauma's historical embeddedness not just in

592 Herman (1997: 2-3).

593 Caruth (1995: 3-4).

594 Cvetkovich (2003:18). She does so by referring to contributors such as Allan Young (1995), Ruth Leys (2000) and Benjamin (1968).

modernity but in a range of historical phenomena.”⁵⁹⁵ I share this concern for the historical embeddedness and her emphasis on the importance to “remain alert to the historical locations out of which theories of trauma arise,” whether they are related to the shell shock in the First World War or from studies of domestic abuse in the 1980s. This position also makes Cvetkovich critical of Caruth for not always paying enough attention to the historical origins in her work, and hence risks flattening out “the specificities of trauma in a given historical or political context.”⁵⁹⁶ In sharing Cvetkovich’s concern, this also explains why in this study and project I give substantial attention and space to contextual information and research that situate the socio-political backdrops of the contexts I approach, including my own autobiographical background as an artist. These contexts all relate to specific and given historical and political settings.

In this effort, I am at the same time also interested in how trauma’s historical embeddedness becomes noticeable in the rupturing slit the traumatic event tears through the social fabric and the linear conception of time in societies: how trauma - by its repetition - distorts the linear categories of time and connects places and situations that otherwise would have been perceived as unconnected.⁵⁹⁷ This issue resonates with Cvetkovich’s claim:

Defined culturally rather than clinically, trauma studies becomes an interdisciplinary field of study for exploring public cultures created around traumatic events. Trauma becomes a central category for looking at the intersections of emotional and social processes along with the intersections of memory and history; it gives rise to what Marita Sturken and others have called “cultural memory.”⁵⁹⁸

In this project I crisscross these intersections of disciplines, socio-emotional processes, and issues of memory and history that Caruth refers to, as I move from a personal grieving process via a physiological and logistical exploration of death and dying to a situation of communal grieving. In this respect, I am like Cvetkovich “compelled by historical understandings of trauma as a way of describing how we live, and especially how we live affectively” – which for me,

595 Cvetkovich (2003:17).

596 Cvetkovich (2003: 19).

597 Cf. Tracy C. Davis (2010). I will further discuss Davis arguments in Chapter 4.2.

598 Cvetkovich (2003: 18) refers to Sturken (1997), whose concept of cultural memory I will return later in this chapter.

in this case, is about how we live with traumatic grieving.⁵⁹⁹ This perspective on trauma contextualizes for me what Benjamin once famously stated on history:

To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it ‘the way it really was.’ It means to seize hold of memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger. (...) In every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it.⁶⁰⁰

For me who looks at socio-political implications of grieving, his call for an awareness to recognize the agendas at stake when past events are reiterated and articulated is highly relevant. It appeals to my sensitivity to question what happens when past events take hold of me in the present. Therefore, through referring to these perspectives of Cvetkovich and Benjamin, I also point to concerns that frame, as an optic angle, my socio-political interest and outlook in this study. Firstly, on trauma, but also on choreography, somatics, and the socio-political contexts involved in this project.⁶⁰¹ With this optic angle, I attempt to pay attention to the composite layering of insights and disciplines involved in my choreographic constructions. Like Cvetkovich, Marita Sturken shows me as a cultural theorist both the importance and challenges embedded in such transdisciplinary endeavours related to trauma and traumatic memory. In her book *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering*,⁶⁰² Sturken points out how crucial it is to “distinguish between cultural memory, personal memory, and official historical discourse.” She uses the term cultural memory “to define memory that is shared outside the avenues of formal historical discourse yet is entangled with cultural products and imbued with cultural meaning.” Hence, when engaging with cultural memory she speaks of entering “a field of contested meanings ... particularly in events of trauma, where both the structures and the fractures of a culture are exposed.”⁶⁰³ In drawing on Freud and his notion of the unconscious, she sees all experiences or memories of past events as accumulating in the individual and social body. She even includes those impressions we might not have direct access to but which nevertheless “remain present within” us.⁶⁰⁴

599 Cvetkovich (2003: 19). To convey such a perspective affectively through a performance demands of me as a choreographer to work really specifically and concretely.

600 Benjamin (1968: 255), who quotes the German historian Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886).

601 The socio-political contexts involved in this project will be addressed in Chapter 5.

602 Sturken (1997).

603 Sturken (1997: 2-3).

604 Sturken (1997: 4).

This perspective on the accumulation of memories in the body also informs me as I approach the grieving processes in this project. Without going into a closer discussion of her highly politicized framework, I find Sturken's overall concern and argument pertinent here. It actualizes for me Benjamin's perspective on history – that “memory is a narrative rather than a replica of an experience that can be retrieved and relived.”⁶⁰⁵ This viewpoint might seem to contrast with what Caruth describes as the effect of trauma and the traumatic memory: to shatter a narrative, because trauma does not “simply serve as record of the past but precisely registers the force of an experience that is not yet fully owned.”⁶⁰⁶ However, as I view it, Sturken's main concern with her tangled memories is to point to ways of addressing such gaps, which is an interest I share with her in my enquiries in this project. In order to seek out such tangled perspectives in this study, I will first account for how traumatic memory, marked by its repeats with flashbacks and sensorial reactions, can collapse a narrative.

Tracing “the force of an experience that is not yet fully owned”

The traumatic memory is often triggered by sensorial inputs - images, smells, sounds, or certain physical conditions – which bring forth psychophysical reactions ranging from panic, sense of constriction and contractions, or numbing and inner paralysis, as described earlier on, while leaving the trauma as such as “an experience that is not yet fully owned.” This is demonstrated in the following story told me by a young father I met in Sarajevo in 2006. During the war he had been taking part in combats up in the mountains above the besieged city in an attempt to breach through the Serb nationalists' control. He described in words and gestures to me how more than ten years after the war had ended he was struck by flashbacks and intrusive memories when he went with his family to the ski resorts in the mountains above Sarajevo: “I find it so difficult to go skiing up there with my six-year-old son,” he said, while pointing to the mountains above us, “as the combination of the cold and the smell of snow and pine tree makes me feel as... “He shows me how he feels by letting his whole body contract from its centre. “It makes me ... , “ – while in an extended pause he holds his breath as if he had frozen to ice and lost the capacity to breath. “My son is too little to

605 Sturken (1997: 7).

606 Caruth (1995: 151).

understand why it is so hard for me to be up there. It just reminds me of the whole thing.”⁶⁰⁷

After my grandmother died in 2008 I experienced something similar – though on a wholly different scale: Several months after her funeral I received a package with some old porcelain of hers in a closed plastic bag. As I opened the bag in my flat in downtown Oslo, my grandmother’s smell came to me as each piece was wrapped in her tea towels. Four months after she was gone and her home had ceased to exist the smell took me back to her warm kitchen in the countryside. There was no way to prevent the flash of memory to appear and the wound to rip open and transgress time and place. I was in an instant back in her kitchen, both as an adult and as her little boy “coming home,” while at the same time clearly at home in Oslo, ashamed about my deep and profound sense of loss – as I know what I have been told: “she was after all, nearly 101.” All these emotions and sense of temporalities run simultaneously thorough me without any connecting bridge; just a sharp, stabbing sense of loss is felt.

This rupturing breach between a traumatic experience and the survivors’ everyday life is the core here, as is also suggested in the findings of Lawrence L. Langer’s study of oral testimonies by Holocaust survivors.⁶⁰⁸ The rupturing impact of trauma has been extensively studied in conjunction with the Holocaust. This explains why I draw on some of these studies here, like Langer’s, to illuminate the issue of trauma in this project.⁶⁰⁹ In the case of the survivors Langer interviewed, they struggled but in vain to bridge the traumatic “existence in the death camps with their lives before or after.”⁶¹⁰ However, what Langer observes is “a permanent duality, not exactly a split or a doubling but a parallel existence” in which the survivor “switches from one to the other without synchronization because he is reporting not a *sequence* but a *simultaneity*.”⁶¹¹ Despite the different circumstances surrounding the losses, I recognize this sensation both from my own grieving processes and in the accounts given by survivors I met in Bosnia. This oscillating pattern observed by Langer is also a phenomenon, described by Fyhr in her writing on clinical experiences and research on grief.⁶¹² As a survivor poignantly describes it to Langer: “I live in a double existence. The double of

607 Field notes, Sarajevo, 23 March 2006.

608 Langer (1991). See also Claude Lanzmann (1995: 213).

609 These studies are especially relevant for my project on communal grieving after the Bosnian War with its ethnic cleansing and political violence.

610 van der Kolk (1995: 177).

611 Langer (1991: 95). Italics as in the original. Quoted also in van der Kolk and van der Hart (1995: 177)

612 Fyhr (1999).

Auschwitz doesn't disturb me or mingle with my life. As if it weren't me at all. Without this split, I wouldn't have been able to come back to life."⁶¹³ I am interested in the bodily consequences of living with this split, or simultaneity, which Van der Kolk and van der Hart see as "related to the fact that the traumatic experience/memory is, in a sense, timeless. It is not transformed into a story, placed in time, with a beginning, a middle and an end. If it can be told at all, it is still a (re)experience."⁶¹⁴ This feature makes the traumatic memory different from the narrative memory, a fact also noted by van der Kolk and van der Hart.⁶¹⁵ Their observation is echoed in the psychoanalyst Dori Laub's findings on what he calls "the imperative to tell," which compels Holocaust survivors, but yet leaves them with a feeling of an impossibility of doing so: "There are never enough words or the right words, there is never enough time or the right time, and never enough listening or the right listening to articulate the story that cannot be fully captured in thought, memory, and speech."⁶¹⁶ This implicitly results in what Laub calls the "collapse of witnessing."⁶¹⁷ For the survivors of rape in wartime, incest, sexual abuse and domestic violence, the element of shame often overruns all other impulses and forces the survivors to silence,⁶¹⁸ despite what Laub describes as "the need to *tell* and thus to come to *know* one's story, unimpeded by ghosts from the past against which one has to protect oneself."⁶¹⁹

In response to this, Caruth therefore suggests, another approach to the traumatic memory: "by carrying that impossibility of knowing out of the empirical event itself, trauma opens up and challenges us to a new kind of listening, the witnessing, precisely, *of impossibilities*."⁶²⁰ She explains this by stating:

613 Langer (1991: 6). Quoted also in van der Kolk and van der Hart (1995: 178).

614 Van der Kolk and van der Hart (1995: 177).

615 Ibid. For me this feature parallels how choreography is conveyed and witnessed: through the performers re-experience of the movement patterns used in the choreography – whose compositional structure primarily encircles and dwells on different states or ambiances, rather than on story-telling.

616 Laub (1995: 63). Italics as in the original.

617 Laub (1995: 62-65).

618 As in the case of Muslim women raped during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, according to one of our expert informants on trauma, the psychologist Tim Brennan, Professor at the Center for the study of Human Cognition at the University of Oslo, who has closely followed a rehabilitation programme in Tuzla in Bosnia. See *References*, R8. This combination of shame and guilt is also stressed by other clinicians, such as Herman (1997) and Jane Middleton-Moz (1990), and by the cultural theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003).

619 Laub (1995: 63). Italics as in the original.

620 Caruth (1995: 10). Italics as in the original.

The attempt to gain access to a traumatic history, then, is also the project of listening beyond the pathology of individual suffering, to the reality of a history that its crises can only be perceived in unassimilable forms. The history may speak through the individual or through the community, which in its own suffering ..., may not only be the site of its disruption, but (...) help us to recognize that this task may take place not only in relation to a traumatic past not yet acknowledged, but....., in relation to an address that attempts to speak out from a crisis that is not yet over.⁶²¹

As Caruth underlines, the effort of attempting to gain access and seizing hold of a traumatic history not merely relates to the data about a past event itself, but to the ongoing repercussions of it that still affect bodies and communities. In this effort, terms such as “listening” and “witnessing” become crucial, because the effort asks for a more perceptive and holistic attentiveness to what is neither “yet acknowledged” nor “over.” It is from this perspective that my project connects to trauma studies. This connection makes me critically aware of the challenge of choreographically constructing and embodying griefscapes, since “crises can only be perceived in unassimilable forms.” Nevertheless, the fact remains that trauma inflicts wounds, not only in the individual person, but also in the whole fabric of society:⁶²² These wounds affect and eat their way into the heartbeat of an individual and a culture alike. The question for me in this project is how to listen to such wounds and bear witness to their effects choreographically.

In asking for a “listening beyond the pathology of the individual suffering,” Caruth also suggests a subtle approach to bridging what Theodor Adorno, as a social theoretician, once considered an “unbridgeable gulf”,⁶²³ the gap experienced after Auschwitz “that eats away also at that insight that explains why it has become impossible to write poetry today [after Auschwitz].”⁶²⁴ Though the magnitude and multidimensional consequences of the Holocaust are extraordinary, I do believe that prolonged, repeated traumas in general easily escape any totalizing attempts – exactly because such traumatic events tend to penetrate all aspects of life. Despite the differences between my two previous examples, the stories of my Bosnian interviewee and of my grandmother, what they both bear witness to is how *all* our senses are at play in creating flashbacks, not only the visual. Hence, Caruth’s call is for another kind of “listening” that attempts

621 Caruth (1995: 156).

622 According to the sociologist Kai Erikson (1995: 183-199).

623 Adorno & Tiedemann (2003: xvi).

624 Adorno (1955: 30-31).

to take into account and trace the tangled memories involved in “the force of an experience that is not yet fully owned.” Therefore, when in the remaining part of this chapter, I probe from a socio-cultural perspective into the impact of trauma and the traumatic through looking at the photographic image⁶²⁵ and its interrelationship to trauma, I do this with an awareness of the composite sensorial effects that traumatic flashback can induce.

Connecting to trauma through photography and “identification-at-distance”

Through the ability to capture documentary snapshots, photography⁶²⁶ can – despite being a different kind of phenomenon than trauma, evoke past events, and, hence, stir haunting affects, which create bodily reactions that perform. The moves these create provide intersections and material for me as a choreographer-researcher to engage with and respond to choreographically.

Roland Barthes as a cultural theorist has pinpointed this potency of photography in *Camera Lucida*.⁶²⁷ Here he reflects upon his observations from looking at an image of his mother, taken while she was a young child, which provokes the shock of loss that he experienced when she died.⁶²⁸ He calls this haunting effect “the movement of the Photograph.”⁶²⁹ He writes: “In front of the photograph of my mother as a child, I tell myself: she is going to die: I shudder; like Winnicott’s psychotic patient, *over a catastrophe which has already occurred*.”⁶³⁰ He describes how he is struck by the photograph’s embedded power, “which produces Death while trying to preserve life.”⁶³¹ With this contradiction, Barthes’ description of how photography works through its ability to arrest a moment in time resembles how trauma affects survivors of traumatic events. Their survivals are often intercepted with such involuntary reminders that trigger flashbacks and psychobiological reactions, as if the traumatic events were reoccurring.⁶³² However, while the effect induced by the photograph can seem as a kind of resurrection, Barthes notes that “[t]he photograph does not necessarily say *what is no longer*,

625 Which also is the nucleus of film and video.

626 I do not distinguish here between film and photography, as film technically speaking also consists of still images, just running in a sequence, cf. the term video stills.

627 Barthes (1981).

628 Barthes (1981).

629 Barthes (1981: 71).

630 Barthes (1981: 96). Italics as by Barthes, who refers to the British psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott.

631 Barthes (1981: 92).

632 On neurobiological processes in complex trauma, see, for example, Ogden (2006: 139-161).

but only and for certain *what has been*.”⁶³³ As he writes: “I can never deny that *the thing has been there*. There is a superimposition here: of reality and of the past.”⁶³⁴ In the case of his mother, he knows she is dead, while the photograph only shows her alive. At the same time this superimposition transforms photography for him into “a kind of primitive theatre, a kind of *Tableau Vivant*, a figuration of the motionless and made-up face beneath which we see death.”⁶³⁵ Like Barthes, this performance and the movements embedded in the photograph strike me, but rather differently: In what were once there, in the traces of lives once lived, I first of all see the intangible life itself, hence, *life and death*. This “kind of primitive theatre” affects me, therefore, both in relation to my personal memory, but connects me also to a cultural memory.

As a media researcher, Barbie Zelizer elaborates on this when looking at how images can capture losses, not only for our personal memory, but also for what she calls our ‘collective’ memory. In helping us to “stabilize and anchor [its] transient and fluctuating nature in art, cinema, television, and photography,” the images can be “aiding recall to the extent that images often become an event’s primary markers.”⁶³⁶ This means, in becoming shared culturally, whether cinematically or photographically, the images can serve an important function for carrying our collective or cultural memory. Therefore, photography has also been used in war and political conflicts as documents of the real,⁶³⁷ since it became mobile and independent of a tripod. This function has formed our cultural - and at times official - memory of such conflicts. This was also the case in the Bosnian War,⁶³⁸ as Susan Sontag reminds us of in *Regarding the Pain of Others*,⁶³⁹ when she points out how the potency of a photograph is conditional on its contextual framing, as ascribed in its captions. Her example relates to a captivating photograph of a little child killed in shelling during from the Bosnian War, which circulated on all sides of the war, only with a different caption. As an example of the enemy’s ruthlessness and brutal warfare, all parties claimed the child as

633 Barthes (1981: 85). Italics as in original.

634 Barthes (1981: 76).

635 Barthes (1981: 32).

636 Zelizer (1998: 6).

637 I will not go into the issue of falsification and fabrication of photographic images themselves here – or their captions – though it also is highly relevant in the case of the Bosnian War as indicated by Sontag’s example below, but stay with the photography’s power to evoke memory.

638 I will return in more detail to the Bosnian war in the next chapter and in Chapter 8.

639 Sontag (2003).

theirs. In such situations, states Sontag, it is as if the slaying itself is not enough, but all that matters is the national, or the ethno-cultural, identity of the victim.⁶⁴⁰

As artists, we actively partake in this process of creating, challenging or reconfirming our cultural memory, also with regard to the impact of traumatic events – as demonstrated several times in films about the Holocaust. As my project on grieving in the aftermath of the Bosnian War also relates to the trauma of ethnic cleansing, this explains why I repeatedly draw on examples related to the Holocaust here. One of those who have managed to render the unaccountable or “unbridgeable gulf” of this trauma better than the most is the French-Rumanian film *Train de Vie* from 1998, written and directed by Radu Mihaileanu.⁶⁴¹ The film cleverly deploys the common cultural memory about the Holocaust, while it tells a contrasting and highly entertaining story about everyday life in a little Jewish village, a shtetl, somewhere in the backwater of Central-Eastern Europe in 1941 in which the inhabitants set out to procure a train and organize a fake deportation so that they can escape the Nazis and flee to Palestine. The film follows the inhabitants in their work and setbacks to complete this plan and the journey. Through a surprising shift of focus at the end, we realize that the film’s narrator, the village’s storyteller Shlomo,⁶⁴² whose voice and face we know well by then, is just telling us what could have happened, not what actually happened. As the camera starts to zoom out from the close-up of his face, we recognize too well the barbed wired he is behind and his prisoner’s outfit, and what was not told in his story. This creates a gap, which leaves me as a viewer not only with a stark sense of the reality following the extermination of East-European Jewry, but also as if ‘pierced’ by the losses it caused, and the future it cancelled. Through the narrative strategy with the use of an individual as narrator, the film gives us a sense of this particular and lively little shtetl, which, portrayed as only one among several, brings our attention to the many whose communities and cultural heritage were erased by the Holocaust. Hence, in portraying the individual loss of Shlomo, the film transforms the loss of the Other into a story about the socio-cultural loss of Europe as well, as it draws attention to the future we lost with the forgotten ‘many’ that died in the Holocaust.⁶⁴³ With the use of fictional layers or juxtapositions,

640 Sontag (2003: 9).

641 Mihaileanu (1998).

642 Performed by Lionel Abelanski.

643 Anti-Semitic movements such as Jobbik in Hungary and Golden Dawn in Greece might view this differently. However, as the historian Gunnar S. Paulsson argues in the introduction to Barbara

the film accomplishes the communication of this merciless void and makes it impossible to ignore its traumatic presence among us. Similarly, I sought to apply fictional tools and juxtapositions in order to conceptually construct and embody the presence of past traumatic events in this project. In my attempt to capture the multilayered impact of the loss involved in these contexts of grieving, I sought to avoid reducing the traumatic presence, for example, in the case of *A Song to Martin*, to an issue of self-pity, or in *An Unfinished Story*, to one of victimhood. My reading of the film therefore highlights my artistic and socio-political concerns when addressing trauma and the traumatic through artistic interventions, and likewise exemplifies my specific interests in the interrelationship between artistic work and cultural memory.

Partly thanks to Butler, who in her reading of Emmanuel Levinas, suggests that his philosophical notions of the “face” and the “other” can serve: “to explain how it is that others make moral claims upon us, address moral demands to us, ones that we do not ask for, ones that we are not free to refuse.”⁶⁴⁴ In coming from the outside, the face of the other interrupts for Butler the “narcissistic circuit,” and, as she states: “calls me out of narcissism towards something finally more important.”⁶⁴⁵ In her reading, I can recognize and make sense of the sensation that compelled me to address the traumatic contexts in this project. It was neither about bad conscience nor self-preservation; it was about something else: “To be in relation with the other face to face.”⁶⁴⁶ In the case of the film, this does not mean for me that the face of the other is represented in the final close-up shot of the storyteller Shlomo, “rather, the human is indirectly affirmed” in what Butler describes as

that very disjunction that makes representation impossible, and this disjunction is conveyed in the impossible representation. For representation to convey the human, then, representation must not only fail, but it must *show* its failure. There is something unrep-

Engelking's book *Holocaust and Memory*: “It is not in the area of individual, subjective experience that the Holocaust is incomparable to other events, but in the horrible yet objective historical fact of the destruction of an entire people. That people's customs, language and future are gone for ever.” Engelking (2001: xx).

644 Butler (2004: 131). Butler refers to Levinas and Richard Kearney (1986: 23-24) “Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas,” in *Face to Face with Levinas*, Albany: SUNY Press; and Levinas (1985: 87) *Ethics and Infinity*, tr. Richard A. Cohen, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press; (1996: 167) “Peace and Proximity,” in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, ed. Adrian T. Peperzak et al, Bloomington: Indiana University Press; and (1999: 24-5) *Alterity and Transcendence*, New York: Columbia University Press.

645 Butler (2004: 138).

646 Levinas as quoted by Butler (2004: 138).

resentable that we nevertheless seek to represent, and that paradox must be retained in the representation we give.⁶⁴⁷

Here the core for me lies in the claim that “to convey the human” the representation must both fail and show its failure. In addressing traumatic contexts, this challenge is present twofold. Therefore, I use the film *Train de Vie* as an example. For me the film conveys this paradox that Butler describes in representing the unrepresentable, which is also the challenge I face in this project. As an artist probing into the impact of trauma and the traumatic, I am confronted with similar challenges to those Marianne Hirsch discusses in her article “Projected Memory:” on how to reanimate memories of traumatic events without appropriating them. This becomes particularly important when as an artist, I search to embody spaces for remembrance of traumatic events that I have not experienced myself, as in the case of the Bosnian War. For Hirsch the challenges are “to find the balance that allows the spectator to enter the image, to imagine the disaster, but that disallows an overappropriative identification that makes the distances disappear, creating too available, too easy an access to this particular past.”⁶⁴⁸ Hirsch builds her argument on what Kaja Silverman as a film theorist calls “identification-at-distance” and coins as “heteropathic memory.”⁶⁴⁹ This conceptual framework complements for me the concerns, which Hal Foster points to, that artists need to find a critical balance between over- or under-identifying with

647 Butler (2004: 144).

648 Marianne Hirsch (1999 10). Hirsch discusses here the challenges of what she calls the “postmemorial” artist. She uses the term postmemory here to describe the kind of “recollection” developed by children with parents who were survivors “of cultural or collective trauma.” These children never experienced these events themselves – only through the images and stories surfacing from their parents. Nevertheless, the impacts of these impressions were monumental enough “to constitute memories in their own right.” The term conveys the “temporal and qualitative difference from survivor memory,” marked by its displacements and belatedness, although still constituting a powerful form of memory, “precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection, but through projection, investment and creation.” Hirsch stresses that she conceives the term “postmemory ... not as an identity position, but as a space of remembrance, more broadly available through cultural and public, and not merely individual and personal, acts of remembrance, identification, and projection. It is a question of adopting the traumatic experiences – and thus also the memories – of others as one’s own, or, more precisely, as experiences one might oneself have had, and inscribing them into one’s own life story. (...) more specifically, of an ethical relation to the oppressed and persecuted other for which postmemory can serve as a model” (Hirsch 1999: 8-9).

649 Silverman (1996: 185). The term heteropathic memory is borrowed from Max Scheler (1970 [1923]: 18). *The Nature of Sympathy*. Trl. Peter Heaten. Hamden, Archon.

their chosen context when artistically approaching socio-cultural settings.⁶⁵⁰ With “identification-at-distance,” this heteropathic memory, artists like me are offered a position to “participate in the desires, struggles, and sufferings of the other.” As Hirsch, I understand this to mean the ability to say, “‘it could have been me; it was me, also,’ and, *at the same time*, ‘but it was not me.’”⁶⁵¹ This viewpoint provides for Hirsch a conceptual framework for getting at what she advocates, and thereby, enhancing a process “whereby we can ‘remember’, through seeing, the memory of another.”⁶⁵² In particular, in the parts of my project relating to the grieving caused by the Bosnian War as well as the process of dying, I similarly drew on this “identification-at-distance” which offered me a way of connecting to “the memory of another.”

Viewed from this conceptual framework, I would say that the makers of *Train de Vie* not only paid homage to the inconceivable number of lives and the culture that were annihilated and erased in the Holocaust, but they also directed my attention to its social-political consequences. Through paying attention to the layers of individual -, official-, and popular memory implicated in our culture memory,⁶⁵³ they construed a heteropathic rendering of the story about the Holocaust with their medium of film.

Nonetheless, I would argue that arts projects that address trauma in order to create a space for remembrance are often not only more contested,⁶⁵⁴ but also more demanding to make, at least emotionally. This is simply because encountering trauma, even as a second- or third-hand witness to the trauma of others, can be painful,⁶⁵⁵ and at times even dangerous,⁶⁵⁶ something I experienced while conducting this project, including the presence of danger while working on locations in Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

650 Foster (1996: 202). The importance of a critical balance became apparent for me already while working on *A Song to Martin*, and followed me throughout the project, experiences that I will share in more detail in Chapters 6-9.

651 Silverman (1996: 185). As quoted in Hirsch (1999: 9).

652 Hirsch (1999: 22 n. 6).

653 Sturken (1997: 2-7).

654 Such as the artistic intervention of the AIDS Memorial Quilt (1985-1987). See Sturken (1997: 183-219).

655 See, for example, Christianson (2002: 314-15), who points to the psychobiological research on the impact of trauma and the hardships of listening to traumatic accounts, and Herman (1992: 140-1), who addresses the issue of traumatic countertransference, that is, the emotional cost of witnessing trauma.

656 See, for example, the anthropologist Parvis Ghassem-Fachandi (2009), whose anthology addresses the violence and danger that anthropologists are exposed to when doing their fieldwork in precarious contexts, such as civil war or states of emergency and crisis.

However, I will stress that even “identification-at-distance” can have an impact, as I have experienced myself, for example, in the way I was stirred by photographs in this artistic research process. Based on similar experiences, Barthes differentiates between those photographs that create “certain shock ... but no disturbance,” or as he describes “can ‘shout,’ not wound,” and those whose impact causes a “*punctum*,” this is, creating a rift or friction that ruptures and wounds the fabric of reality.⁶⁵⁷ Seen from a socio-cultural perspective, Zelizer, Hirsch and Sontag expand on Barthes’ idea and claim that certain photographs can become “emblems of suffering” in the cultural memory.⁶⁵⁸ These images will stand in for and become representations of wounds. In drawing on the concerns behind the concept of “identification-at-distance” – the “heteropathic memory” – and on Barthes’ differentiation, I will argue that it is possible to connect to such images through a kind of listening or an attentive tuning to the resonance brought forward within us of those images that impact as a punctum.⁶⁵⁹ For Sontag these “emblems of suffering” become what she calls “secular icons,” that is, objects for contemplation to deepen one’s sense of reality. As an example of such a secular icon, Hirsch and Sontag both refer to the well-known snapshot of the little Jewish boy, who, marked by the Star of David and with his arms raised above his head, is herded out of a building in the Warsaw ghetto in 1942 or 1943 under the guard of Nazi soldiers.⁶⁶⁰ Generations after it all happened, his capture still resonates in our cultural memory. I think images, such as this one, or the one of the child killed in Bosnia,⁶⁶¹ can also move us to unrest and action. When the shock effect that Barthes writes about is transgressed,⁶⁶² a photograph can become a wound that pricks, as a punctum or rupture that will not leave us untouched, but speaks to our sensorial being. This sensation can be perceived as a haunting shift within me. For me this suggests that a photograph can “turn an event of a person into something that can be possessed,” as Sontag notes;⁶⁶³ it can equally capture the living, as Barthes reminds me; and potentially evoke “the face of the Other.” That is, to impose an ethical demand, which as Butler underlines

657 Barthes (1981: 26-27, 41).

658 Zelizer (1998), Hirsch (1999), and Sontag (2003: 107).

659 I first discussed this claim in *Roaring Silences*, my MA thesis in performance studies at NYU, where I used the concept of “roaring silences” to discuss the sensorial experience of encountering past trauma, and how a photographic image can be experienced as an affective soundscape. Roar (1999).

660 Sontag (2003: 107) and Hirsch (1999: 2-3).

661 Sontag (2003: 9).

662 Barthes (1981: 71).

663 Sontag (2003: 72).

in her reading of Levinas, calls the self “out of narcissism towards something finally more important.”⁶⁶⁴ For me an image, as well as a meeting, a movement and other sensorial inputs, can bring forth such a call and its transformational shift: the impact of being in relation with the other face-to-face, which, as Butler stresses, creates “an ethical claim upon us precisely because, prior to speaking, something is spoken to us.”⁶⁶⁵ This impact calls for a deeper understanding of trauma and how such testimonies of traumatic events might contribute to enhancing solidarity and increasing attention to “that vocalization of agony that is not yet language or no longer language.”⁶⁶⁶ In docudancing grieving, I search for the means to enquire and embody this, which is spoken to me and that “is not yet language or no longer language.” In addressing traumatic contexts and invisible issues like loss and grieving, I am challenged to think through and justify my approach to choreography as well as artistic research.⁶⁶⁷ In this endeavour, Caruth, who cautiously positions and describes the potential for doing such enquiries, inspires me when she states:

This speaking and listening – a speaking and listening *from the site of trauma* – does not rely, I would suggest, on what we simply know of each other, but on what we don’t yet know of our own traumatic pasts. In a catastrophic age, that is, trauma itself may provide the very link between cultures: not as a simple understanding of the pasts of others but rather, within the traumas of contemporary history, as our ability to listen through the departures we have all taken from ourselves.⁶⁶⁸

In my “speaking and listening from the site of trauma,” I seek to move with this potential that trauma can provide to link individuals as well as cultures. It is from such a perspective I approach the three contexts of grieving in this artistic research project. In interpreting what this “prior to speaking, something is spoken to us”⁶⁶⁹ means for me in this project, I let the sense and notion of *listening* guide me as I approach the three contexts of grieving. Here, I do not refer to listening only in its literal sense, but more as an attentive and empathetic attitude and tuning towards the resonance that my encounters with these traumatic con-

664 Butler (2004: 138).

665 Butler (2004: 138).

666 Butler (2004: 139).

667 As argued by cultural theorists such as Stuart Hall (1997: 9) and Gillian Rose (2007).

668 Caruth (1995: 11).

669 Butler (2004: 138).

texts produce in me. In this listening, I merge a self-reflexive introspection and an ethnographic sensibility with my embodied insights from somatic practices, like the sensitized awareness to shifts in tension levels and breathing patterns in the body that I got from practising the Jacoby-Gindler work and KA®, and from sensorially exploring the developmental process and the cellular level of the body through BMC®.⁶⁷⁰ This awareness offers insights that recent findings in neurological research have provided with a new conceptual grounding and backdrop.⁶⁷¹ In my merge of perspectives, and with the help of Silverman's concept, I situate and describe how this sensorial listening to photographic imagery enhances my "heteropathic memory," or "identification-at-distance," with the traumatic contexts that I address in this artistic research project. In this way, I also attempt to articulate conceptually how I grapple with the issues of identification and proximity in relation to trauma and traumatic contexts. Therefore, in spite of coming out of choreography and artistic research in choreography – understood through somatics and conceptualized through drawing on insights from performance studies and ethnographic methods – the project is contextually speaking, intrinsically linked to trauma studies.

“A speaking and listening from the site of trauma” through iconographic signs

Three photographs would especially *speak* to me in the artistic process, to the extent that I came to see them as iconographic signs for the respective griefscapes I constructed and embodied in the trilogy.⁶⁷² For me they crystallized what a “speaking and listening from the site of trauma” can imply.⁶⁷³

The first photograph captures the site of the plane crash in the Himalayas where my friend Martin died in 1992. The photograph was taken shortly after the accident from a helicopter flying over the area. The black circle where the

670 Cf. Chapter 3.2. On “sensing” especially, see Stark Smith and Bainbridge Cohen (1993).

671 A development particular enhanced by the discovery of mirror neurons in the brain, which, as Susan Leigh Foster explains, are engaged both “when a subject performs an action” and when it witnesses one. (Foster 2008: 54). As the scientist Vittorio Gallese describes it: “It is as if neurons in [corresponding] motor areas start to ‘resonate’ as soon as the appropriate visual input is presented. This ‘resonance’... is an internal motor representation of the observed event.” (In G. Rizzolatti et al. 2002: 253, as quoted by Foster 2008: 54). This prompts Gallese to postulate that this kind of “kinesthetic simulation.... establishes an empathetic connection.” (Gallese 2001: 41-2, as quoted by Foster 2008: 55).

672 The photographs are respectively displayed between the different Parts of this study.

673 Caruth (1995: 11).

plane hit the mountain wall and the scattered white debris in the greenery below manifests the crash and speaks of the terminus for the 110 people onboard.

The second image shows the skull of a burning human corpse in the process of being cremated. The image is a video still shot through the peephole in a crematory oven. With this image, our mortality as an irreversible process becomes irrevocably real.

The third image depicts bereaved mourners sitting next to two empty graves, awaiting the coffins. The photograph is taken at the Srebrenica-Potočari memorial cemetery for the victims of the genocide in 1995 in Bosnia. The vacant graves in the centre of the photograph remind me of the reason why ten thousands of people still gather in mourning there annually on 11 July. The black holes of the graves speak of the hurtful and wounding abyss left in the wake of this genocide and the Bosnian War.⁶⁷⁴

Each of the three photographs captures an event in the past ruptured by death and dying. My awareness of this fact makes a difference that affectively charges them.⁶⁷⁵ The spectral presence of what is absent evokes the traumatic loss connected to each of these snapshots. Despite pointing to past events, the photographs keep rupturing the present and my outlook on the future. They also remind me of the mass of similar or parallel grieving processes that rupture into being everyday around us, as new people are forced to face their traumatic confrontations with death and its finality.

In other words, the photographs stir the raw core that sparked off this artistic research project. They set off rushes of movements and intensities - visually, aurally, and sensorially - that radiate within me, as traumatic experiences. The photographs are therefore for me performing death.⁶⁷⁶ They confront me with the rupture that makes the distinction between life and death clear and ends life irreversibly.

I therefore think of them as 'iconographic containers' in this project. This means that the photographs stand in for the complexity each of these three situations of grieving holds for me. They do so not only through non-verbally capturing core events and or parts of their contextual backdrops, which instigated my work with the performance trilogy here, but also as emblematic signs

674 The photograph was taken in July 2005. The Bosnian War (1992-1995) culminated with the genocide in Srebrenica in July 1995.

675 Cf. Barthes (1981: 76, 85).

676 Cf. Eduardo Cadava's analysis of the relationship between photography and history in Benjamin's writing (Cadava 1992: 91).

on to which I can attach the information gathered about each context of grieving. They function hence as iconographic centre points in my cognitive mind map in this artistic research project. Through these images, I encounter the initial impetus and motivation behind each part of the performance trilogy. In part, the photographs were not chosen: they simply kept resurfacing in my memory as a rupture, wound, or punctum,⁶⁷⁷ which I could not let go off or discard.⁶⁷⁸ They are therefore not merely symbols, but rather contextual agents in my contextually based process.

Likewise, as trauma manifests itself most often through ‘snapshots’ or ‘frozen imagery’ that affectively rupture and impact our understanding of the present, I believe that my personal memory is also largely constituted in snapshots, whether they are based on only mental imprints or actual photographs. Despite the significant differences between personal recollection and traumatic memory, the ‘snapshot’ images have a significant role for both: to hold and transmit information, even if fragmented. They make me recall, whether I like it or not, specific information, situations, and impressions stored in their compressed format of the still image. As my interest lies in the relationship between trauma and performance, the reflections on photography, which I have referred to earlier, here became valuable input as I probed into my study on Docudancing Griefscapes. This input became particular relevant as photographic imagery generally came to serve as important sources and tools, both in constructing and embodying the griefscapes in this artistic process. Here, I used photography as a help to

- Visualize physiological information about the body to support the movement explorations;
- Recollect memories of a specific body or event;
- Situate the social-political contexts approached; and
- Structure and frame the staging of the performances.

I will expand on how in more details in Chapters 5 to 8. However, as an example here, I will elaborate on the extensive usage of documentary films included in my artistic research process, in particular, related to the trauma of the Bosnian War (discussed in more details in Chapter 7), such as the documentary “Crime

⁶⁷⁷ Cf. Barthes (1981: 41).

⁶⁷⁸ As an artist, I find it particularly useful to return to these sensorial snapshots or images, as sources, when I am in need to clarify my concept or focal points in the artistic process.

and Punishment: witnessing the massacres in Srebrenica” by Maria Fuglevaag Warsinski.⁶⁷⁹ This kind of material added a sensorial input to the information obtained through background research and made a major difference for those of us in the project that had not experienced the war. In this respect, the documentary material helped me in the artistic process both to ground a heteropathic memory, that is, “identification-at-distance,”⁶⁸⁰ and to grasp a sense of the cultural memory of the war.

Thanks to its specific technical means, the cinematic medium can create juxtapositions in time and space that resemble the haunting quality of traumatic memory and, therefore, it can rupture our perceptions and outlooks through its combination of imagery. However, as the photographic image has this ability to capture visceral complexity of a specific moment, the outcome can, at times, be mistaken for conveying the whole truth of a situation, which it is not, as demonstrated by Sontag, in her story about how a photograph showing a child killed during the Bosnian War could change its truth claims with its different captions.⁶⁸¹ In a similar way, I am aware of the fact that the photographic image always only depicts a partial and situated point of view, just as I am doing in this work. Nevertheless, as Sontag emphasises in her story, one fact remained: the child was killed. The photograph is therefore both a document of a traumatic event, but also a traumatic reminder that can evoke the trauma within it. In this respect: “There is a superimposition here: of reality and of the past,”⁶⁸² as Barthes stated. However, in contrast to Barthes’ stress on the impossibility of return, Sontag’s story demonstrates for me how this superimposition also could mean something more dynamic and ongoing: that the photograph is not only a document of what was once there, which reminds us of what is not any longer; it also points to the rupturing instability caused by trauma, which performs through its return, its repetition and reappearance. From this perspective, I draw on Rebecca Schneider’s suggestion to view the two media, photography and live performance, “as intimately related, even co-constituted, in the gesture of the still.”⁶⁸³ The virtue of the still, or being a gesture of it, is for Schneider about those postures or enunciations that become visible through repetition

679 Warsinski (1998).

680 Cf. Silverman (1996: 185).

681 Cf. Sontag (2003: 9). See also Zelizer (1998), Ariella Azoulay (2001) and Janina Struk (2004).

682 Barthes (1981: 76).

683 Schneider (2011: 148).

and reappearance and allow for citationality.⁶⁸⁴ In this junction, the photographic still emerges as a bridge between trauma and performance.⁶⁸⁵ With the help of this bridge, I will proceed to review my understanding of performance and the performative in relationship to trauma.

4.2. Performance and the performative

Next, I want to connect the haunting effects and sensorial impact attributed to trauma and traumatic flashbacks, not only to photography as previously described, but also to the performative potential of choreography and performance. This connection is based on the assumption that a performance resembles trauma in being performed through the body and can affect other bodies, while being grasped only partially and recalled in flashbacks as gestures of the still.⁶⁸⁶ This implies – though on a different scale – that performance may rupture our sense of temporality through affecting our understanding and perceptions of the world long after the event has taken place. I will elaborate on this performative perspective and through that highlight and situate my own understanding of performance and its interrelationship to trauma and the traumatic, and what grounds and informs my approach to docudancing grieving in this project.

On trauma and performance – and the act of disappearance

Just as trauma speaks through its repeats, performance – within the context of performing arts – acts by its re-enactment.⁶⁸⁷ Both trauma and performance impact people through a sense of liveness experienced in the present, while originating in events that took place in the past.⁶⁸⁸ For the traumatized faced with the unclaimed experiences of trauma, the impact can certainly evoke strong

684 Schneider (2011: 143) Italics as in original.

685 Cf. Barthes (1981: 32).

686 Cf. Chapter 4.1, drawing on, among others, Herman (1997), Caruth (1995), Christianson (2002), and Wilson (2004).

687 As expressed in Schechner's definition of performance as "restored behavior" or "twice-behaved behavior" (Schechner 1985: 36-7). With these terms, as performance studies scholar Joseph R. Roach has pointed out, Schechner stresses that performance as a behaviour "is always subject to revision,' ... [as it] must be reinvented the second time or 'the nth time' because it cannot happen exactly the same way twice, even though in some instances the 'constancy of transmission' across decades or even generations may be 'astonishing'"(In Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach 2007: 460 n. 1, quoting Schechner 1985: 36-7). Schechner points to the difference between (1) the rehearsed and repeatable action in a performance, and (2) its first occurrence while improvising in the rehearsal period.

688 As exemplified, for example, by Taylor (2006), Cvetkovich (2004), and Davis (2010).

sensations and feelings, which often induce a sense of singularity and uniqueness that sets this experience apart from anything else.⁶⁸⁹

In performance theory similar viewpoints surface when performance as a phenomenon and its impact as a 'live' event are discussed. Though performance has the ability to conjure an evocative sense of 'presence' and 'realness,' the discussions have primarily pivoted around the ephemerality of such events.⁶⁹⁰ As Philip Auslander critically has emphasised, this reasoning "often invokes the performer's materiality and mortality to describe liveness in existential terms."⁶⁹¹ For example, by construing 'performance' as a phenomenon that is becoming through its disappearance, as Phelan famously articulates it in her ontology of performance⁶⁹² – where she reflects on how to write about performance arts. Here, loss and erasure are seen as inherently implicated to create the exclusive singularity of a performance, which is ascribed to its 'liveness' and 'becoming.' Hence, with this emphasis on its ephemeral temporality, how the "performance's being, ... becomes itself through disappearance."⁶⁹³ Therefore, Phelan argues: "Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations *of* representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance."⁶⁹⁴ For me her viewpoints evoke arguments known from trauma studies on the impossibility of witnessing trauma, for example, as addressed by Laub.⁶⁹⁵ However, as discussed in Chapter 4.1, this impossibility does not mean that the trauma is not real, or that the need to witness is not there.⁶⁹⁶

A similar paradox is at the crux of Phelan's understanding of performance when she stresses immediacy as a constituting factor for her ontology. For her the performance's "only life is in the present" with an audience present at the time and place of the performance. In other words, the irretrievable nature of

689 Cf. Chapter 4.1.

690 As related to Phelan (1993: 146-166), and discussed by scholars such as Auslander (1999: 7), Amelia Jones (1997: 11-18), Lepecki (2004: 124-139), Roach (2007: 28-9), and Davis (2010: 154-5). I am not attempting to give a full account of this discussion here, mainly drawing on some of these key contributors in order to situate and hopefully clarify my own understanding of performance and the traumatic – as it has evolved and framed my work in this project.

691 Auslander (2007: 530).

692 Phelan (1993: 146 -166). Like Joseph R Roach, I understand the term ontology in the following way: "Ontology concerns itself with the nature and relations of being; it is the philosophy of what actually is" (Reinelt and Roach 2007: 522).

693 Phelan (1993: 146).

694 Phelan (1993: 146). Italics as in original.

695 Laub (1995: 64-65).

696 Cf. my discussion in Chapter 4.1.

performance cannot “enter the economy of reproduction” without “betray[ing] or lessen[ing] the promise of its own ontology.”⁶⁹⁷ In the junction between the “performance of negativity” – its becoming through immediate disappearance – and the outcome of shared immediacy its ephemeral impact is fleetingly present. As Phelan emphasizes,

As an act, the performance of negativity does not make a claim to truth or accuracy. Performance seeks a kind of psychic and political efficacy, which is to say, performance makes a claim about the Real-impossible. As such, the performative utterances of negativity cannot be absorbed by history because their affects/effects, ... are always changing, varied and resolutely unstatic objects.⁶⁹⁸

However, despite her stress on the impossibility of seizing whatever is “real,” she underlines the fact that “this is not to say that the real does not exist. It does. But it is to say that it cannot be seen, arrested, fixed with the ‘slower’ I/eye.”⁶⁹⁹ This remark on “the real” resonates with my viewpoint on the reality of grieving – its griefscapes – as a socio-cultural phenomenon in this project,⁷⁰⁰ which frames my approach to the traumatic contexts addressed here.

Unmarking the disappearance – and choreography as invocation and haunting

With her ontology, Phelan advocates for a scholarly and critical writing on performance that respects it as a live act through “unmarking” its intentional thrust and core, rather than preserving its form and appearance and “fall[ing] in behind the drive of the document/ary.”⁷⁰¹ As I am writing this study from the ‘inside-out,’ as the *choreographic-I* reflecting on my choreographic process, I want primarily to give a body to the artistic processes involved. Through reflecting on the ‘doing-thinking’ behind the becoming of these performances, I want in this way to examine the performance of my choreographic practice. My relation to the document/ary side is different, as these processes and their layers are perhaps more transient and ephemeral than the performances themselves, and hard to get

697 Phelan (1993: 146).

698 Phelan (1993: 165).

699 Phelan (1993: 167).

700 In this study, I will not go into the Lacanian thinking that grounds Phelan’s arguments here. On trauma as a socio-cultural phenomenon, see, for example, Caruth (1995), Hirsch (1999) and Cvetkovich (2003).

701 Phelan (1993: 147).

at without reducing them to educational examples or methodological showcases, and as Phelan poignantly posits “an attempt to write about the undocumentable event of performance is to invoke the rules of the written document and thereby alter the event itself.”⁷⁰²

Like Andrew Hewitt, I understand Phelan’s stance here as “a refusal to reduce the aesthetic performance to the level of ‘document.’”⁷⁰³ Phelan calls my attention to the dilemma of “the undocumentable event,” and its need for another approach to writing, which, she emphasizes, will have to keep in mind that “The act of writing toward disappearance, rather than the act of writing toward preservation, must remember that the after-effect of disappearance is the experience of subjectivity itself.”⁷⁰⁴ As in our lives, ‘a beginning’ and ‘an end’ set the premises that frame the experiences of a performance. Phelan expands on this later by stating:

The enactment of invocation and disappearance undertaken by performance and theatre is precisely the drama of corporality itself. At once consolidated fleshly form and an eroding, decomposing formlessness, the body beckons us and resists our attempts to remake it. This resistant beckoning was the lure for this writing, a writing toward and against bodies who die.⁷⁰⁵

Her observations on the relationship between performance and writing parallel my outlook on the relationship between choreography and movement development in the making of the performances in this project. In probing into the ghostly matters marked by death and dying, I searched for ways to facilitate for the performers involved to find other avenues to experience their bodies and for moving than the one offered by the pre-scripted “dance technical” repertoire. Following Phelan, “this resistant beckoning was the lure” for this choreographic approach, and hence a dancing “toward and against bodies who die.”

However, my take on Phelan’s ontology is modified through taking into account more recent developments in trauma studies and digital media that have surfaced since the ontology of Phelan was published in 1993. The proliferation of trauma studies is evident both in the volume of research as well as the attention

702 Phelan (1993: 148).

703 Hewitt (2005: 9).

704 Phelan (1993: 148).

705 Phelan (1997: 4).

given to trauma in popular media.⁷⁰⁶ In parallel, the rapid emergence of digital technology and media⁷⁰⁷ has also brought about radical changes that have directly influenced the field of performing arts in ways that were unforeseeable in the early 1990s when Phelan published her ontology. Twenty years later, after the first commercial web browser was first launched in 1994,⁷⁰⁸ this digital revolution created new means for interacting and working that has resulted in a complicated multimodal and polyphonic literacy.⁷⁰⁹ This development has impacted our everyday lives (at least in the affluent parts of the world) as well as how to work academically⁷¹⁰ and artistically. In a Nordic context of choreography, the work of choreographers like Åsa Unander-Scharin, Amanda Steggell, and Heine Avdal can exemplify the latter: how this digital development can radically impact the choreographic outcome.⁷¹¹ Central for me in this context is, however, to point to how this media development also opened up other ways of thinking about “liveness” and performance that blur the distinction between what is live or not,⁷¹² as voiced, among others, by Auslander and Amelia Jones.⁷¹³ This renewed understanding of liveness and performance substantiated a criticism of Phelan’s definition of and reliance on immediacy as a conditional criterion for the ontology of performance.⁷¹⁴ This criticism includes a concern for what Hewitt describes as a “possible fetishization of the unrepeatable, undocumentable moment of the performance itself”⁷¹⁵ – the potential to enhance an anti-reflexive stance that romanticises the ephemeral and tacit aspects of the performing arts. I have

706 This proliferation since Herman first published *Trauma and Recovery: The aftermath of violence – from domestic abuse to political terror* in 1992 has been substantial. See, for example, contributions by Caruth (1995), Silverman (1996), Zelizer (1998), Gordon (1998), Hirsch (1999), Leys (2000), Cvetkovich (2003), Taylor (2006) and Ogden (2006), to mention a few I have referred to here. This development is also marked in Phelan’s later reflections (Phelan 1997).

707 See, for example, Auslander (1999, 2006) and Birringer (1998).

708 Netscape was launched in December 1994. See: http://www.livinginternet.com/w/wi_netscape.htm (retrieved 26 March 2010)

709 See, for example, Morrison & Roar (2010) and Morrison (2010).

710 Such as in history and ethnography, see, for example, with regard to history, Davis (2010: 142-167), Della Pollock (2008: 120-135), and Roach (2007); with regard to ethnography, Bruce Mason and Bella Dicks (1999: 1-13), Christine Hine (2000), and Sarah Pink (2007).

711 All three choreographers have extensively used digital technology to create their choreographic interventions. More specifically, this has meant for Unander-Scharin, how to combine sensor-controlled robots with opera; for Steggell with her Emotion Organ (2007), how to create a synaesthetic simulacrum machine; and for Avdal, how to create environments exploring the relationship between performer and spectator. See *References*, R2 and R4.

712 Auslander (2008: 109).

713 Auslander (1997, 2006, 2008) and Jones (1999, 2008).

714 See, for example, Auslander (1997, 2006, 2008), Jones (1999), Hewitt (2005), Lepecki (2006), Bodil Marie Stavning Thomsen (2005: 51-83; 2010: 18-28), and Davis (2010: 142-167).

715 Hewitt (2005: 9).

come across such anti-reflexive arguments at dance institutions and festivals,⁷¹⁶ where they support a conservative force within the professional milieu geared towards the preservation of dance techniques. To connect this stance to Phelan's is a misreading of her argument, which on the contrary calls for a critical re-view of knowledge production and re-thinking of how to address the ephemeral embedded in performance.⁷¹⁷ However, in view of the insights I have gained from collaborating with media researchers⁷¹⁸ and from engaging with trauma studies, I think a more performative perspective is required on how to perceive performance, whether it originates from a rupture brought on by an artistic work/intervention, or from a traumatic incident that took place in the past. I suggest that thanks to Phelan's ontological delineations, something was unmarked and left out, which by her writing was made visible. This 'something' resides not only in its surplus, but also in its deficit, hence making Phelan an important liaison for re-viewing through critical writing the notion of performance and liveness.

Choreography as invocation and haunting

In his discussion of dance and choreography in *Exhausting Dance*, Lepecki also suggests a modified view on Phelan's ontology, as I do here, so as to "not to confound Being with being-present, disappearance with invisibility, the past with memory."⁷¹⁹ This position leads Lepecki into a discussion on the economy of haunting, which according to him "messes up time and accounts for apparitions when we least expect them"⁷²⁰ and which tie us to "historical and social effects."⁷²¹ However, by questioning the emphasis given to the ephemeral aspect of dance,

716 These voices are not normally articulated in writing, but that does not mean that they are not influential. They are, for example, often voiced by key figures in the performing arts conservatories that appear as ideal examples for the students due to their strong and compelling skills, technique and charismatic nature. Hence, their viewpoints play an important part in shaping the attitudes of the future in performing arts. Unfortunately, this fetishization of the tacit knowledge also provides, in my experience, an ideological justification for maintaining control within the institutions themselves by discarding questioning and unwanted changes in methodological approach.

717 Phelan (1993: 166). Phelan is explicit in this respect and writes that the institutions "whose domain is the reproduction of knowledge must re-view the theoretical enterprise by which the object surveyed is reproduced as property with (theoretical) value." I think this also applies to dance institutions.

718 Through my connection with the interdisciplinary research centre InterMedia at the UiO and media researchers such as Andrew Morrison who are engaged in interdisciplinary research on design and digital environments used in communication, interaction and learning.

719 Lepecki (2006: 128). He is referring here to the following quotation of the French Philosopher Gilles Deleuze: "We have great difficulty in understanding a survival of the past in itself because we believe that the past is no longer, that it has ceased to be. We have thus confused Being with being-present." From Deleuze (1988: 55) *Bergsonism*. New York: Zone Books.

720 Lepecki (2006: 28). He is drawing on Gordon's (1997) definition of haunting.

721 Gordon (1997: 190).

Lepecki challenges the theoretical base of dance (performances) through probing into its' implications for the politics of movement and the notion of choreography as such. In doing so, he links choreography to the project of modernity. His argument builds on "the fact that the ground of modernity is the colonized, flattened, bulldozed terrain where the fantasy of endless and self-sufficient motility takes place."⁷²² His argument "turns around the formation of choreography as a peculiar invention of early modernity, as a technology that creates a body disciplined to move according to the commands of writing."⁷²³ He draws this lineage back to Arbeau's concept of *orchesographie* from 1589 with its attempts to transmit the dance master's steps and movement sequences through the means of writing,⁷²⁴ thus, "accessing absent presences" that allow for dissemination of dances without being dependent on the dance master physical presence.⁷²⁵ With this effort, the dances are given a promise of rescue from the prospect of being obliterated and forgotten in posterity. Arbeau underlines this as he lets his student Capriol exclaim:

Do not let this happen, Monsieur Arbeau, as it is within your power to prevent it. Set these things down in writing to enable me to learn this art, and in so doing you will seem reunited to the companions of your youth and take both mental and bodily exercise, for it will be difficult for you to refrain from using your limbs in order to demonstrate the correct movements. In truth, your method of writing is such that pupil, by following your theory and precepts, even in your absence, could teach himself in the seclusion of his own chamber.⁷²⁶

The traumatic prospect of erasure and disappearance propelled Capriol towards arguing for the importance of writing out the choreography. Lepecki argues therefore that Capriol "perceives in choreography a performance of melancholia, a mechanism that will prevent the loved object to depart forever, thus identifying a morbid core in dancing itself."⁷²⁷ However, the outcome of this effort also becomes what allows Capriol "to cite, to quote, to repeat the foundational gestures,

722 Lepecki (2006: 14). His arguments are based on his study of the melancholic project in dance. I will not discuss the premises behind this study here.

723 Lepecki (2006: 6).

724 As mentioned in Chapter 2 on Choreography.

725 Lepecki (2006: 26).

726 Arbeau (1966: 14), quoted by Lepecki (2006: 26-7).

727 Lepecki (2006: 27).

the absent presence, and the cadence of a dance's originary force."⁷²⁸ For Lepecki this possibility points to "the deep connection between choreography and the performative speech act [as] both can enforce themselves properly only under the condition of their citationality."⁷²⁹ Through repetition and reappearances, its citationality, choreography can have an impact that extends beyond its theatrical time, or duration, and into a future.⁷³⁰ However, in offering a continuation that transgresses the immediacy of performance, Lepecki stresses how choreography enters into the economy of haunting. For me this effect relates to how past traumatic events reappear through flashbacks and impact the present by letting the traumatized relive past experiences. I find it therefore interesting when Lepecki emphasises that his "use of the term 'haunting' has a double intent: one is ... to emphasize the choreography's capacity to invoke absent presences; another intent is to propose an epistemological accounting of the particular circulatory capacity for haunting history [itself]."⁷³¹ From this viewpoint, through examining the work of contemporary choreographers and performance artists⁷³² whom he claims challenge the understanding of dance by exhausting the concept of movement;⁷³³ Lepecki is reinterpreting choreography as a critical practice. In particular, I think his reiteration and reading of the outdoor city crawls by the Afro-American performance artist William Pope L. has links to my interest in the relationship between trauma and performance. By inserting his black body horizontally on the ground, crawling in the cityscape's verticality, Pope L is re-framing his black body, readdressing its movement, and in this way, questioning the body politics in society.⁷³⁴ Lepecki points out how Pope L's move hence evokes the haunting casts by the legacy of slavery on the black male subject in contemporary USA. In being performed on the streets as an artistic statement, it persuasively demonstrates the politics in movement – and how ghostly matters might be inscribed in the very materiality of such work: the skin colour, gender, and

728 Lepecki (2006: 27). Lepecki does not distinguish here between "dance notation" and "dance making" when discussing choreography, that is, paying attention to the distinction between the process of preserving and creating choreography. I have made this distinction as I think it is important, and will return to the reason why later in this chapter.

729 Lepecki (2006: 27-8), while referring to Butler (1993: 12-16).

730 Cf. Davis (2010: 140-167).

731 Lepecki (2006: 28).

732 The choreographers Jérôme Bel, Juan Dominguez, Trisha Brown, La Ribot, Xavier Le Roy, Vera Mantero, and the visual and performance artists Bruce Nauman and William Pope.

733 Franko (1993, 2007) and Foster (1995, 1997, 2011) are examples of two other dance scholars who have contributed to enhance a critical conceptualization in the field of choreography and dance.

734 Lepecki (2006: 87-105).

the juxtaposition of planes, that is, horizontal versus vertical planes. However, Lepecki's reiteration and reading contribute not only to amplifying the potency of Pope L's work through connecting its performance to a larger discourse drawing on post-colonial theory and critical race theory.⁷³⁵ In contextualizing Pope L's performance as choreography, Lepecki also challenges conventional notions of choreography and the 'dancing body,' by offering an augmented and performative understanding of what choreography and dance might imply as political moves. This outlook highlights perspectives that I subscribe to as a choreographer, in my composite role as the choreographer-researcher in this project.

Though Lepecki and Phelan have a different definition of ontology and angle for their readings of performance, both share an emancipatory agenda (with me) in writing on it. This political concern resonates with Benjamin's proposal: "To articulate what is past does not mean to recognize 'how it really was.' It means to take control of a memory, as it flashes in a moment of danger."⁷³⁶ From my viewpoint, this urgent socio-political concern that Benjamin expresses parallels the effort that traumatized individuals chased by unclaimed experiences have to undertake individually in order to survive. For me it is in this need "to take control of a memory" that the public and the personal connect, as Taylor discusses in "Trauma and Performance: Lessons from Latin America,"⁷³⁷ when she points to "[t]he image of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo walking ritualistically around the central square of Argentina demanding information about their disappeared children," who got 'lost' in the Dirty War in Argentina (1976-1983).⁷³⁸ Their action has, as Taylor states, "become emblematic of trauma-driven performance protest" that use personal traumas politically to "mobilize collective acts of condemnation."⁷³⁹ Through linking the personal grievance to politics and "the state of emergency,"⁷⁴⁰ individual loss gives force to a collective act of mourning and resistance. From her social-political perspective on the relationship between the

735 Lepecki (2006: 14). Lepecki is drawing on sources such as Frantz Fanon (1967), Mark N. C. Bessire, ed. (2002), Paul Carter (1996), Fred Moten (2003) and Alan Read, ed. (1996).

736 Benjamin (1968: 255).

737 Taylor (2006: 1674).

738 For more information on "The Dirty War," see Taylor (1997) *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's "Dirty War."* Durham, Duke University Press.

739 Taylor (2006: 1675).

740 Referring to the quote of Benjamin from his famous essay "Theses on the Philosophy of History" in which he is stating: "The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that 'the state of emergency' in which we live is not the exception but the rule. We must attain to a conception of history that is in keeping with this insight" (Benjamin 1968: 257).

traumatic and performance, Taylor likens the effect of the traumatic memory to that of performance. So, do I, and as Taylor emphasises:

Before it can be talked about, trauma manifests itself as an acting out in both the individual and the social body (....) viscerally, through bodily symptoms, reenactments, and repeats. The fact that we cannot neatly separate trauma from posttraumatic stress points to the centrality of the reiterated effects that constitute the condition. Richard Schechner's definition of performance as 'twice behaved behavior' and 'never for the first time' holds equally for trauma⁷⁴¹ Trauma is never for the first time.⁷⁴²

Here, with the help of Schechner's definition, Taylor draws attention to an interrelationship between performance and trauma through reiteration: "Thus trauma is known only by the nature of its repeats. Like performance, trauma always makes itself felt viscerally in the here and now," 'as if' it was for the first time. While, in fact, what it manifests is the impact of how "[p]ast blows haunt our present and shake the individual and social body."⁷⁴³ From his emancipatory outlook on choreography in rendering Pope.L's crawls, for me Lepecki captures how a performance can evoke such past blows that still impact both individuals and their society. It is in such a historical grounded perspective, and the junction between the personal and public memory - through reiteration and citation, performance as a phenomenon gets its momentum and force for me.⁷⁴⁴ I want next to elaborate on this potential.

741 Taylor is referring to Schechner (1985: 36).

742 Taylor (2006: 1675).

743 Taylor (2006: 1675).

744 From my point of view, this means that the work of choreographers and performance artists, hence, lives in a symbiotic relationship – not only with their audiences and funders – but also with the writings of performance theorists, dance scholars and critics such as Phelan and Lepecki. Lepecki writes about this relationship in *Of the presence of the body* by stating: "What came first? Dancing as writing or écriture as dancing? My point is that both are absolutely co-dependent, reshaping each other's blindness and ontology in an ongoing ontolinguistic duet" (Lepecki 2004: 138). This makes sense, for example, when looking at the role that Banes' *Terpsichore in sneakers: Post-modern Dance* (1977) played in highlighting and disseminating information as well as a reading of the Judson Dance Theatre and the Grand Union's legacy and impact. Banes' writing contributed to transforming these events from being local off-off Broadway phenomena to reach people elsewhere in the world who were not there at the time. Through this action of writing, Banes articulated and took control of memory as it flashed (Cf. Benjamin, 1968: 255). From this perspective, and in junction with Benjamin's postulate, it makes sense when Lepecki argues: "Dance as critical theory and critical praxis proposes a body that is less an empty signifier than a material, socially inscribed agent, a non-univocal body, and open potentiality, a force-field constantly negotiating its position in the power struggle for its appropriation and control" (Lepecki 2004: 6). I will expand on the relation between politics, agencies, and choreography as a practice, related to this project, in Chapter 8.

Performative time – and coimpossibilities of temporalities

With Phelan's concerns for the unmarked in mind, I will connect the emphasis on reiteration and citation, the performative perspectives of Taylor on trauma, and Lepecki's arguments on choreography and performance, to the notion of *performative time* introduced by Tracy C. Davis.⁷⁴⁵ As a theatre- and performance studies researcher, Davis distinguishes between 'theatrical time' and 'performative time' in order to engage all three temporalities – present, past, and future – in an alternate model for perceiving and writing about history. In short, theatrical time relates to the duration that defines a performance or event that takes place in real time while being experienced by an audience and delimited by a beginning and an end.⁷⁴⁶ Theatrical time makes us therefore "recognize the 'before' and 'after' as distinct from the 'during' of performance." Hence, when "the performance ends and its audience disperses, particularities can be recalled, the afterlives of characters can be contemplated, the story may endure, but the audience cannot add to the performance *per se*."⁷⁴⁷ Performative time, on the other hand, "invokes another relationship to temporality." For Davis, it operates "as a function of citationality,"⁷⁴⁸ which also is the underlying concept that Butler used in her explanation of performativity,⁷⁴⁹ grounded on reiteration and citation.⁷⁵⁰ Thus, what the notion of performative time enables Davis to do is through citationality to "track the production of perceptible consequences without necessarily warranting an attribution as strong as causality."⁷⁵¹ For Davis this makes performative time "more ontologically complex" than theatrical time with its emphasis on the serial repetition,⁷⁵² as performative time not only offers "a distinct way to account for people's location in history," but also "allows for

745 Davis (2010).

746 Davis states: "By remaining in the theatre, an audience submits 'to be present to what happens while it is happening'; likewise, when the play is over the audience recognizes the resumption of the ordinary – and singular – rules of temporality" Davis (2010: 147).

747 Davis (2010: 147).

748 Davis (2010: 149).

749 See: Butler (1993).

750 Davis (2010: 161, 149). See also my discussion in Chapter 2. The concept of performativity is as pointed out by Joseph R Roach: "Notably derived by Judith Butler from J. L. Austin's speech act theory, which foreground 'performative utterances' that bring into being the condition they iterate, such as 'I do thee wed,' performativity is defined as a reiteration of norms by the citation of them. With the performance, the performer makes the acts; with performativity, the acts make the performer" (Roach 2007: 457). See, also Austin (1975), Butler (1993), and José Muñoz (1999: 80).

751 Davis (2010: 149).

752 Davis (2010: 153). Davis considers in her reasoning the concept of "twice-behaved behaviour" by Schechner (1985: 36), referred to also by Taylor (2006: 1675), as defined by the framework of theatrical time.

non-linearity, or non-seriality, as a factor in perception, as well as the teleology of time's asynchronicity, poly-chronicity, and achronism."⁷⁵³ Thanks to these features, performative time has "a fulcrum in the present yet receives appreciable force from both past and future,"⁷⁵⁴ which allows for construction of other and more relationally based, co-emergent temporalities.⁷⁵⁵ As Davis stresses, "whereas theatrical time has definitive markers, the performance begins, transpires, has convention-bound interruptions, resumes and ends – performative time may reverberate indefinitely."⁷⁵⁶ This concept therefore enables Davis to address situations where an event may create an impact, not only on the people involved there and then, but also by transgressing our linear perception of time and perform with consequences into futurity. I connect this perspective to the way trauma is socially re-enacted across temporalities, what Toni Morrison has coined as a *rememory*. For her a rememory does not only strike individuals, but can rupture the fabric of our societies, and ultimately who we are as human beings.⁷⁵⁷ As an Afro-American author, Morrison uses this concept to describe how we may bump into something of past traumas in our daily lives, with an impact that defies orthodox historiography. The concept emerges from her search for a truth that speaks of unaccounted human experiences. This relates rememory to the term "haunting," which Gordon applies sociologically to address these experiences that will not go away and through which "something lost or invisible or seemingly not there makes itself known or apparent to us."⁷⁵⁸ As she states: "To be haunted is to be tied to historical and social effects."⁷⁵⁹ Likewise Morrison, Gordon therefore argues for why the effort of "[p]erceiving the lost subjects of history – the missing and lost ones and the blind fields they inhabit – makes all the difference to any project trying to find the address of the present."⁷⁶⁰

In Davis' notion of performative time, I have a conceptual tool to address my socio-cultural interest in this project for these kinds of cross-temporal relationships, concerns I also find embedded in Phelan's ontology and Lepecki's premises for discussing dance and choreography, as well as in Morrison's search

753 Davis (2010: 149).

754 Davis (2010: 149).

755 Davis (2010: 150).

756 Davis (2010: 153).

757 Morrison (1990). Exemplified in her novels on the legacy of slavery. See, for example, Morrison (1987: 35-4).

758 Gordon (1997: 63).

759 Gordon (1997: 190).

760 Gordon (1997: 195).

for creating what Lepecki calls a friction that “point simultaneously toward yet unthinkable ontological coimpossibilities of pastness, presentness and futurity.”⁷⁶¹

With performative time as a conceptual tool, I will exemplify my understanding of cross-temporal relationships through outlining some ‘coimpossibilities’ that I have experienced while working on this project. One of these simply relates to the fact that I perceive choreography as an act of becoming at the crux of such temporal “coimpossibilities.” For me this means that choreography is not only the result of the knowledge and practice that supports me in the present when I am acutely faced with the process of getting at the not-yet made, but simultaneously relates to my negotiations with my collaborators and myself in order to tackle the ghosts of our past experiences and training, as we are making ‘the new,’ the future, through reiterations and citations. I am therefore in my artistic practice compelled by the haunting “coimpossibilities” that Lepecki envisions.

Another example from this artistic research project relates to my experiences from constructing the last part of the trilogy, on the situation of communal grieving after the Bosnian War (1992-95). Here, as part of my extensive background research on the Balkans, I was reading Greek tragedies written in the region nearly 2500 years earlier. They captured me with another set of coimpossibilities, which over time were woven into a cross-temporal web of coimpossible connections related to grieving. Besides being stunned by how some of these old classic texts permeated a profound understanding of the politics of grieving in a state of emergency, I was struck by how the role of the chorus in these tragedies brought to mind contemporary counterparts in the region. These included my experience with the prevalent use of traditional chain dancing that is still a part of popular culture in the Balkans today;⁷⁶² my knowledge of the public acts of the *Women in Black* in Belgrade who defiantly protested against the outbreak and conduct of the Bosnian War; and my encounters with the *Women of Srebrenica* who fight the impunity in post-war Bosnia of perpetrators who destroyed their lives and families.⁷⁶³ Both initiatives create for me movements that intertwine with the performance of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo and Taylor’s political reading of them. However, when these cultural practices and recent political

761 Lepecki (2004: 137).

762 This is based on personal experiences and testimonies from informants. The chain dances play an important role in popular culture in the Balkans. In Serbia, they function on multiple levels: as a tool for empowerment and identity, or as a means for enjoyment or for coping with hardships. This also explains why they became politically used over the years for different political reasons, issues that I touch upon in Chapter 8.

763 Both organisations represent civic protests. For more information, see *References*, R 12.

situations bump together and intermingle with strands of knowledge about the past, such as those related to the ancient past of the Balkans and the role of the chorus in the Greek tragedy, and are juxtaposed with recent insights gained on the trauma of loss and grieving, and contemporary understanding of choreography and performance theory, and my fieldwork experiences in the region, all this offered me a maze of coimpossibilities which, on a meta-level, informed and nourished my artistic project, as I constructed the performance trilogy and later wrote this study.

Through pointing to these coimpossibilities of connections, I hope to share a sense of this cross-temporal and kaleidoscopic optic at work in Docudancing Griefscapes. Here, I interlink my awareness of our own *memento mori* to a larger historical continuum of human experiences related to suffering and pain inflicted by violent deaths and dying.⁷⁶⁴ I likewise connect the notion of ‘choreography’ to practices that take place outside the traditional performance venues (such as Pope.L’s crawls), or took place further back in time than the beginning of modernity in France:⁷⁶⁵ As outlined in Chapter 3.2, the term choreography itself relates to the role and the practices that evolved in the Balkans around the ‘chorus’ in the ancient Greek theatre. Like the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, this period of ancient Greece was marked by the hardship of wars and losses. According to the classicist Nicole Loraux, this situation gave the chorus in the tragedy a pertinent role to play in channelling mourning and grieving publicly in the ancient city-state. Because social life was strictly governed by moral conventions, and public display of grieving was not seen as appropriate or even tolerated, this context made the chorus in the tragedy become “the mourning voice” of the community.⁷⁶⁶ As Loraux states:

In short, the city had two means of urging the families of the dead to transcend their personal grievances: first, through political sublimation, and adherence to civic idealism; and second, through forgetting, releasing all sadness through tears shed for the suffering of others.⁷⁶⁷

764 For example, the legacy of the deceased in Ancient Rome would be subject to elaborated attempts to inscribe it into History for posterity. See, for example, the classicist historians Johan Schreiner (1985) and Valerie M Hope (2007).

765 Cf. Lepecki (2006).

766 Loraux (2002).

767 Loraux (2002: 19).

In this situation, the tragic theatre became an arena that perhaps was “best-equipped to deal with issues that the citizens of Athens preferred to reject or ignore.”⁷⁶⁸ In sum, this meant that in addition to being an intermediary between the audience and the unfolding of the play, the role of the chorus also became intrinsically linked to containing the grieving on behalf of the community who had experienced devastating battles and losses. Obviously, this latter challenge connects cross-culturally to my own struggle in this project to construct a performance on communal grieving. However, the more significant and important issue here in relation to the chorus is, as Loraux stresses: “the profound ambiguity in the fact that theatrical performance was at once a civic event and also quite open to noncivic features” in its dealing with issues of loss and grief that the citizens of Athens were facing.⁷⁶⁹ From this perspective, the ‘choreography’ becomes not only a technological device for preserving actual movement scores, or for keeping alive the memory of a dance master.⁷⁷⁰ It rather points to a performative role of choreography that is also politically subversive, a role similar to that of the jester in royal courts in the centuries to come, the ritualistic performance of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, or William Pope.L’s crawls that attempt to articulate the unmarked and hence illuminate the blind spots in our societies.⁷⁷¹ In this way, Loraux’s claims about the role of the chorus in the ancient city-state on the Balkans indirectly augment for me the reading of “the melancholic core of the choreographic” offered by Lepecki.⁷⁷² Thus, in addition to situating the choreographic project in a larger historical trajectory, her claims also align it with a subversive and performative force for me, because of its capacity to harbour a ghostly double and other ghostly matters in its live manifestation. This is, to bring forward the paradox of the dying in the living and the living in the dead, and the potential for transgressing even life and death “through an intimacy to whatever insists to keep happening”⁷⁷³ – including dancing with the ghosts. In short, this confronts me with past centuries’ experiences in a coimpossible proximity with the present and my concerns with the trauma of grieving in this project.⁷⁷⁴

768 Loraux (2002: 15).

769 Loraux (2002: 21).

770 Cf. the early dance masters Arbeau, Feuillet, and Noverre.

771 Cf. Gordon (1997: 195).

772 Lepecki (2006: 28).

773 Lepecki (2006: 130).

774 In perceiving the act of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo (to publicly mourn traumas denied a public recognition or just closure) coexisting with the subversive role of the ancient Greek chorus and my choreographic process on the Balkans.

This paradox of performance underscores core concerns in both Lepecki and Phelan's respective readings, while it challenges what Phelan calls "the fundamental binary of Western culture – the living and the dead." As she remarks

this binary is crumbling. Legislatively, psychically, and emotionally, we are beginning to face the uncertainty of our notion of when and how the body lives and dies, who does and does not inhabit it, who can and cannot speak for it when it is beyond the comforting amplifications of metaphor. ... And so sometimes the body goes. Disappears. But the witness remains.⁷⁷⁵

Without going into the psychoanalytical framework grounding her arguments, I recognize in this questioning of the binary between the living and the dead viewpoints that fuel my own project and approach in this study on the relationship between trauma and performance. For me these connections ultimately relate to how to grasp the presence of the absent. I will elaborate on what this implies for me and then, sketch out what might emerge and be perceived if I let the divide between the living and the dead crumble.

Moved by the failure of grasping – and the dead performing in the present

In my attempt to embody the performance of trauma, both on an individual and a societal level, I tuned in to the presence of the dead among the living, and thereby the presence of what is absent. This focus made me question the divide between the living and the dead,⁷⁷⁶ and recall the possibility that Butler in her reading of Levinas points to when discussing what it might entail to face the other. She states:

the human is not identified with what is represented but neither is it identified with the unrepresentable, it is, rather, that which limits the success of any representational practice. The face is not 'effaced' in this failure of representation, but is constituted in that very possibility.⁷⁷⁷

⁷⁷⁵ Phelan (1993: 177).

⁷⁷⁶ A phenomenon common among mourners, see, for example, Tony Walter (1999: 17-116) "Living with the dead."

⁷⁷⁷ Butler (2004: 144).

What Butler identifies with this possibility has for me a parallel potential in this study: it illuminates for me what is at stake when I try to pursue both the presence of the absent and how to make choreography through docudancing griefscapes.⁷⁷⁸ However, as a choreographer-researcher, it is challenging to grapple with this possibility she describes. Butler's emphasis on "that which limits the success of any representational practice," therefore calls on conceptual and critical attentiveness. Here, in part, this relates for me to how juxtapositions can create coimpossible situations and frictions compositionally,⁷⁷⁹ which in their 'failures' can constitute the very possibility of facing the other. In exploring a connection between my interest in this potential and my questioning of the divide between the living and the dead, I find Davis' notion of performative time necessary and useful. The notion harbours this failure in its cross-temporal perspective, precisely because it "recognizes the simultaneity, difference, separation, overlap, and pretences of citation through, as, and across temporalities to build upon and multiply the experience of theatrical time's doubling of represented and durational time."⁷⁸⁰ This also means, as Davis underlines, that "performative time may reverberate indefinitely." This cross-temporal perspective allows me to conceptualize how artistic works or interventions can rupture the continuum of linear time and transgress their theatrical time frame through entering the economy of circulating representations, while also revealing their failures. In this way, the artistic works (as interventions) may continue to have an impact (cross-temporally) as long as new readers are reimagining them.⁷⁸¹ Moreover, as Davis argues, I also believe that this "[c]itationality ... complicates Phelan's

778 For me choreography can at its utmost a/effectively induce permeable and transmutable propositions in which sensory awareness, aesthetic sensibility, and traumatic repeats blend together in a contextual setting that engage my bodily and cognitive memory. This impact might ripple beyond the delineation of its temporal theatrical framework.

779 Cf. Lepecki (2004: 137).

780 Davis (2008: 153).

781 As examples of such works, I will point to three that are made by artists I referred to in Chapter 3.1. They are the following: Duchamp's *Fountain* – the rotated and signed urinal – from 1917; Cage's conceptual composition for piano *4:33* from 1952 – four minutes and thirty-three seconds of silence in front of a grand piano; and Rainer's choreographic project *Trio A* from 1966. In addition to challenging the artistic conventions of their time, and subsequently contributing to changing their respective arts field and the relationship between arts and society in general, these canonized arts works, more importantly in this context, also have an impact on me. From time to time, I can find myself returning to these works conceptually, not to venerate the ruptures they once respectively created, but as they still move me and provide me with reference points for my (artistic) questioning. In this way, on a personal level, they exemplify how artistic interventions can perform cross-temporally. In particular, this is the case of Duchamp use of ready-mades, such as the urinal, which questioned our very concept about art and art production. See, for example, Foster (1996: 4, 17, 20).

contention...that performance is ephemeral.” Likewise this citationality opens up to new questions, such as: “What gets to count as citational, and for how long?”⁷⁸² From this perspective, “performative time [also] calls attention to who has agency to convey history, as well as how evidence for history is generated, and gives a rationale of what, by other criteria, is vulnerable to accusations of missampling.”⁷⁸³ Without going further into historiography, my main point here is to draw attention to how an artistic intervention or performance can, in a performative time frame, have a cross-temporal impact that resembles how a traumatic event can live on in an individual or society as a trauma. For as long as an event can be re-evoked, through traumatic reminders as in the case of trauma, it calls into question what constitute the present. In this interstice, trauma and performance are communing, and the presence of what is absent blurs the divide between past and present, living and dead. This possibility constitutes for me a potential for addressing grieving and being human.

In paying attention to the performance of trauma with its traumatic repeats in this project, I have experienced it at times as if I was listening to the past in the present while engaging with futurity. For me this is about an empathetic tuning in to rememories of those absent and dead. As Phelan poignantly remarks in her *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories*: “We bury more than bodies.”⁷⁸⁴ In Docudancing Griefscapes, I therefore wanted to listen to what this surplus might have to convey to me, and about us as a society. This meant to be attentive to what emerged from these ‘unclaimed experiences’ and how those absent and dead might perform through the living in the present. For a start, the physical decomposition of the dead performs, because it reminds everybody around it of their own awaiting death. Thematically, this is also what I address contextually in the second performance of my project here. Death, however, in spite of terminating the physical appearance and the being of the individual dying, does not necessarily obliterate the deceased presence among the living, which is thematically what I contextually investigate in the first and the last performance here. As exemplified in the latter, relating to the context of communal grieving and the Bosnian War, the dead may still arrest us, the living, in unresolved dilemmas or disputes related to the political and social responsibility caused by

782 Davis (2010: 155). By drawing on studies interested in how memory haunts performance, such as Schneider (2009) and Geraldine Cousin (2007). See Davis (2010: 165, n. 41).

783 Davis (2010: 161).

784 Phelan (1997: 19).

their deaths.⁷⁸⁵ In the context of the Balkans, Sophocles had already addressed this arrest in his tragedy *Antigone* at 442 BC through pointing to the dilemmas and difficulties that the claim of the dead on the living might bring upon us.⁷⁸⁶ As his *Antigone* demonstrates, listening to the dead performing in the present is not necessarily pleasant, but may challenge the listener to the core of his or her being. However, the challenge of perceiving this presence of absence and how it impacts the present is at the heart of what I try to pursue artistically in docudancing griefscapes.

The presence of absence as a choreographic challenge

Just as a newborn always announces a forthcoming death, for me choreography not only speaks through the bodies of the performers present, but also through those bodies that are absent in the performance. According to Gordon, the absences are social figures that can haunt us like ghosts.⁷⁸⁷ These absences can be linked to dead persons, as largely in this project, or to the kinds of bodies that are made socially absent, such as those of the old, the obese or the differently bodied.⁷⁸⁸ For me these absent bodies are always present in their negation to the dominating force presented on the dance stage, which up till recently has been a scene primarily dominated by the virtuosity of exuberant youth. Fortunately, this hegemony has been questioned over the last decades and resulted in a wider range of bodies seen performing.⁷⁸⁹ But the paradox still exists for me: when dance captures the audience with breathtaking physical stunts – death, decay and dying dance, too – as the dancers’ shadows, as their ‘doppelgänger.’ Hence, choreography always seems to perform the question of agencies for me: not only in what is actually displayed, but also through what is not and those who are absent in it. In this way, the choreography can equally point to politics of body

785 For example, as the protest against President Bush’s response to 9/11 and particularly the war against Iraq demonstrated.

786 Sophocles (2003). In *Antigone*, Sophocles portrays through his characters and the plot how the dead may impact the living. When the play is experienced as relevant today, it demonstrates how, across centuries and in different socio-political contexts it has been able to speak to the actors and audiences involved. According to Loraux (2002), the play was written in a time of imperialistic ambitions and extensive wars, which emphasised civic duties on the expense of loss and mourning suffered by the citizens.

787 Gordon (1997: 8).

788 Cf. Østern (2009).

789 In addition to the study of Østern (2009) and the works of Halprin, as documented by Halprin (1989) and Ruedi Gerber (2009), for example, the works by Ong Keng Sen (2001), Alain Platel and Frank van Laecke (2010), Mathilde Monnier and La Ribot (2008), and Pina Bausch (2000, 2008) to mention a few. For more details, see *References*, R1 and R2.

and cultural memory, and with that, to the conflicting hegemonic structures in the politics of accounts and the economy of history on who are seen and heard. Decisions ‘not-made’ can here become as visible as those deliberately made.

In a cross-temporal perspective, I perceive our history of “improperly buried bodies”⁷⁹⁰ as a continuum of cries, wounds, and losses that stretches from the past into our time. This includes unknown destinies, such as those behind Sophocles’ story about *Antigone* to the many who vanished unaccounted for in Treblinka, Sobibor, and Belzec,⁷⁹¹ and the more recent losses like those voiced by the Mothers’ of Plaza Mayor in Buenos Aires and the Women of Srebrenica. These cries are haunting, but as Gordon stresses, such haunting can draw us affectively into “a transformative recognition” of a reality of experience.⁷⁹² In paying attention to the particular way of knowing which haunting is, this “can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life.” Hence, it can transform our recognition of what constitutes social life. This perspective also calls for a more complex and multidimensional understanding of choreography that involves more “dancers” than the ones’ we visually can see on any stage. This view on choreography relates to the gaps between the agencies involved that we can visually see, and those we cannot, but are revealed through their absence. In crossing temporalities and contexts, they come into being through the ruptures of density in the intersecting interests that constitute the choreographic web.

In taking Lepecki’s advice, I want “to track the coexistence of multiple temporalities within the temporality of dance, to identify multiple presents in the dancing performance.”⁷⁹³ I am artistically intrigued by this choreographic challenge of tracking realities that coexist and intersect across temporalities. I am not talking about choreography here as a metaphor, but as a way of thinking about and approaching the complicated webs of interconnecting nodes and interfaces in the social fabric surrounding us. In this case, I work artistically through developing choreographic strategies for constructing physically based compositions based on contextual background research in an attempt to embody a sense of this multidimensional reality. By blending experimental studio work

790 Gordon (1997: 16).

791 To name some of the extermination “camps” made by the Nazi regime, made solely for killing Jews and other “unwanted.” Few stayed alive there more than a few hours after arrival, hence leaving few stories behind (Martin Gilbert 1986: 425). In Treblinka alone approx. 900 000 were killed. Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. “The Holocaust.” Holocaust Encyclopedia: <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/?ModuleId=10005143>. (Accessed on 2 May 2012).

792 Gordon (1997: 8).

793 Lepecki (2006: 131).

and imaginative perception with experiences from ethnographic fieldwork, while relying on documentary and contextual references in the artistic process and the staging, choreography becomes expressions of what I call docudancing. It is a choreographic strategy for addressing particular socio-political issues or situations, whose outcome may add a contribution, if small, to a cultural memory. In this project, I focus on contexts struck by death, dying and grieving (through constructing and embodying griefscapes) in order “to enact and mimic the losses that beat away within them. In this mimicry, loss itself helps to transform the repetitive force of trauma and might bring about a way to overcome it.”⁷⁹⁴ I am talking about a transformative recognition.⁷⁹⁵

The return of the real – a conceptual perspective on trauma and performance

In an interview published in *Vagrant* in 1997 Hal Foster argues that terms such as ‘experience,’ ‘the lived,’ the ‘experiential’ have “come back with a whole other meaning” at the turn of the 20th century. Though acknowledging that these returning concerns with ‘the real’ are linked to the notion of authenticity and the ‘authentic,’ he claims a major difference: the concerns have returned “in an absentee way,” fuelled “by the authority of the traumatic,”⁷⁹⁶ which he states “throws over any simple scheme of before and after, cause and effect, origin and repetition.”⁷⁹⁷ Foster refers to this move within the arts as a “the return of the real.”⁷⁹⁸ His analogy here is drawing on the Freudian concept of ‘deferred action’

794 Phelan (1997: 12).

795 Cf. Gordon (1987: 8).

796 Foster (1997: 5-6).

797 Foster (1996: 29).

798 Foster (1996). In unpacking this claim, Foster advocates for another reading of the avant-garde than those raised by disparate arts critics such as Clement Greenberg and Peter Bürger. For Foster, Greenberg advocated “the doctrine of the aesthetic autonomy” and therefore considered artistic expressions that challenged this paradigm as unreadable, as not-art (Foster 1996: 53), while Bürger distinguished between the historical pre-war avant-garde and the post-war elaborations. The latter he termed neo-avant-garde, and those he dismissed as merely repetitions that “cancel the pre-war critique of the institution of art” (1996: 8, as quoted by Foster). This position “lends Bürger to present history as both punctual and final” (1996: 10). Foster hence rejects both Greenberg and Bürger’s readings of the avant-garde, and in particular the view of Bürger that the work of the post-war avant-garde was something secondary to “an absolute origin” (1996: 8). On the contrary, Foster argues that the repetition of concerns manifesting avant-garde strategies from the early 20th century rather demonstrates that the project is not completed; and that these strategies still carries unexplored relevance in its new contemporary setting. Foster crux’s is, as he states, “the avant-garde work is never historically effective or fully significant in its initial moments. It cannot be because it is traumatic – a hole in the symbolic order of its time that is not prepared for it, that cannot receive it, at least not immediately, at least not without structural change” (1996: 29). In short, as the art

and its' complex relay in which "one event is only registered through another that recodes it."⁷⁹⁹ For me the consequences of this thinking also ground the notion of performative time and reflections on the relationship between performance and the traumatic.⁸⁰⁰ However, according to Mark Franko, this traumatic and psychoanalytic dimension is largely left untouched in dance studies, despite the fact that it "opens onto memory and how the body remembers," as well as how it forgets.⁸⁰¹ In contrast, I directly relate this dimension and the presence of bodies absent in a performance to the questions of agency and politics of memory in choreography, and what is referred to as the 'Antigone's dilemma.' This dilemma describes a situation of decision-making where all available choices have ethical and or socio-political consequences. In the case of the Bosnian War, the question of how to respond became an issue both on a public and private level, as it challenged a whole world with distressing images, such as those, showing starved people kept behind barbed wire in camps in 1992, or beheaded men from Northern Bosnia in 1993.⁸⁰² These images evoked and still evoke traumatic events that resist being silenced and forgotten, but silently 'speak' by making past horrors reappear. As traumatic reminders, their return of the real have a haunting effect that call upon us, and at the time of the war, called upon our response.

In the 'Antegonian dilemma' lies the core of politics: to make discriminatory decisions – which in Sophocles' *Antigone* has grave consequences as two sisters forced by circumstance to take a stand make different choices on how to live with the 'improperly buried' dead in a state of emergency. My thesis is that if we start to pay attention to our unburied dead, that is, the traumatic past and the

scholar Charles Harrison renders it: "Foster's argument is that the traumatic effect of avant-garde activity is only fully registered in subsequent workings out" (Harrison 1996: 1). Hence, the expression "the return of the real" that is also the title of Foster's book. For me this argument is pertinent and grounds my artistic outlook in this study. It also resonates well with a comment made by Paxton to a question on why the applications of Duchamp's ideas from the beginning of the 20th centuries first suddenly took off in the 1960s and '70s. He laconically answers: "the popular media and critical establishment were ready ... after more than a half-century gestation period" (Paxton 2001: 424). I share Paxton's reading here, and believe like Foster that the traumatic effect of the avant-garde is only fully registered in such returns. With the exception of this comment, I will leave Foster's art historiographic context aside in this study.

799 Foster (1996: 29).

800 Cf. Davis (2010).

801 Franko (2006: 13).

802 I am referring specifically to images from Omarska/Trnopolje camps in 1992, such as those captured by the British television team from *ITN* and Ron Haviv for *Newsweek*, and from Northern Bosnia (Vreme) in 1993 by Vican Vicanovic. For the latter, see Judah (2000: photograph no. 44 between pages 238-239). A more recent example of traumatic images that arrested an audience worldwide came from Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq in 2004 and showed American soldiers brutalizing Iraqi prisoners. See, for example, Seymour M. Hersch (2004).

stories of unresolved losses and deaths, it has consequences for our own lives. It might haunt us to act, just as the return of our own future death might make us rethink our actions. This relates to the interrelationship of trauma and performance that I am concerned with in this project, in which choreography, more than announcing a forthcoming death and the presence of absent bodies and haunting absences, is foremost moving into the economy of representation, body politics and the politics of public or shared, cultural memories. The insights about how trauma – with the traumatic repeats and the performances of unclaimed experiences – are seeping into and inflicting the fabric of society, demonstrate this politics.⁸⁰³ Moreover, what ‘Antigone’s dilemma’ then suggests, among other things, is that trauma and the traumatic offer no outside position, that we are all implicated, bystanders, protagonists and antagonists alike. With “the return of the real” and the ‘Antigonian dilemma,’ ethics resurface as an integral and inseparable part of an artistic project, hence the notion of ‘aesth|ethics.’⁸⁰⁴ These concerns on trauma and performance merge and ground my project of docudancing grieving, and on this basis I search for an artistic strategy, similar to what Lepecki proposes for

The activation of all that is not properly supposed to be there at the moment of its assigned temporality, the expansion of presents towards the past and the future, their coexistence, indexes the possibility for an ethical remembering necessary for a politics of the dead, for accessing the endless motility of absent presents. It points at the possibility for an accounting of the ghostly that could dispel the morbid forces of melancholia, and propose a joy at the edge of the temporal abyss.⁸⁰⁵

Or as I would say, that is making the ghosts move so we can see the flickering shadows that haunt us from the abyss we have ignored, and dance with their instable lament in a choreography that enables a future, as the performers summon the audience to do by including them into the moves that unfolds towards the end of *An Unfinished Story*.

803 See, for example, Sturken (1997), Gordon (1999), Taylor (1999, 2006), Phelan (1997) and Cvetkovich (2003).

804 I am drawing on Wolfgang Iser’s notion of “Aesthet/hics” here, while stressing the politics and co-dependency between ethics and aesthetics. See Iser (1997: 60-78).

805 Lepecki (2006: 130).

Closing thoughts: rethinking the relationship between trauma and performance

In this chapter, I have looked at the entangled relationship between performance and trauma. Starting from somatics and how traumatic memory operates and functions,⁸⁰⁶ I have questioned the notion of performance by listening in to Phelan's concern for "the unmarked," and Lepecki's search for "alternative modality of time" in dance and performance studies that "track[s] the coexistence of multiple temporalities."⁸⁰⁷ In my questioning, I have connected these perspectives to Davis' notion of performative time and application of citationality,⁸⁰⁸ and Foster's conceptual understanding of the return of the real.⁸⁰⁹ In a theatrical time frame, performance is defined as an act of disappearance, and trauma as an inaccessible and unclaimed experience of the past. In contrast, in a performative time frame trauma and performance can both be viewed as performative acts, which through reiteration and citationality can transgress and have an impact beyond the definite boundaries set by theatrical time. In this intersection of perspectives, I identify a framework and potential for choreography as a critical and socio-political aesth|ethical practice.⁸¹⁰ While docudancing grieving, this meant that I kept in mind Caruth's claim: "By carrying that impossibility of knowing out of the empirical event itself, trauma opens up and challenge us to a new kind of listening, the witnessing, precisely *of impossibility*."⁸¹¹ This outlook on choreography and performance situates my artistic aim and approach here on docudancing grieving. In Part 3 of this study I will contextualize what this outlook come to imply for me in practice.

806 See: Chapter 3.2 and Chapter 4.1.

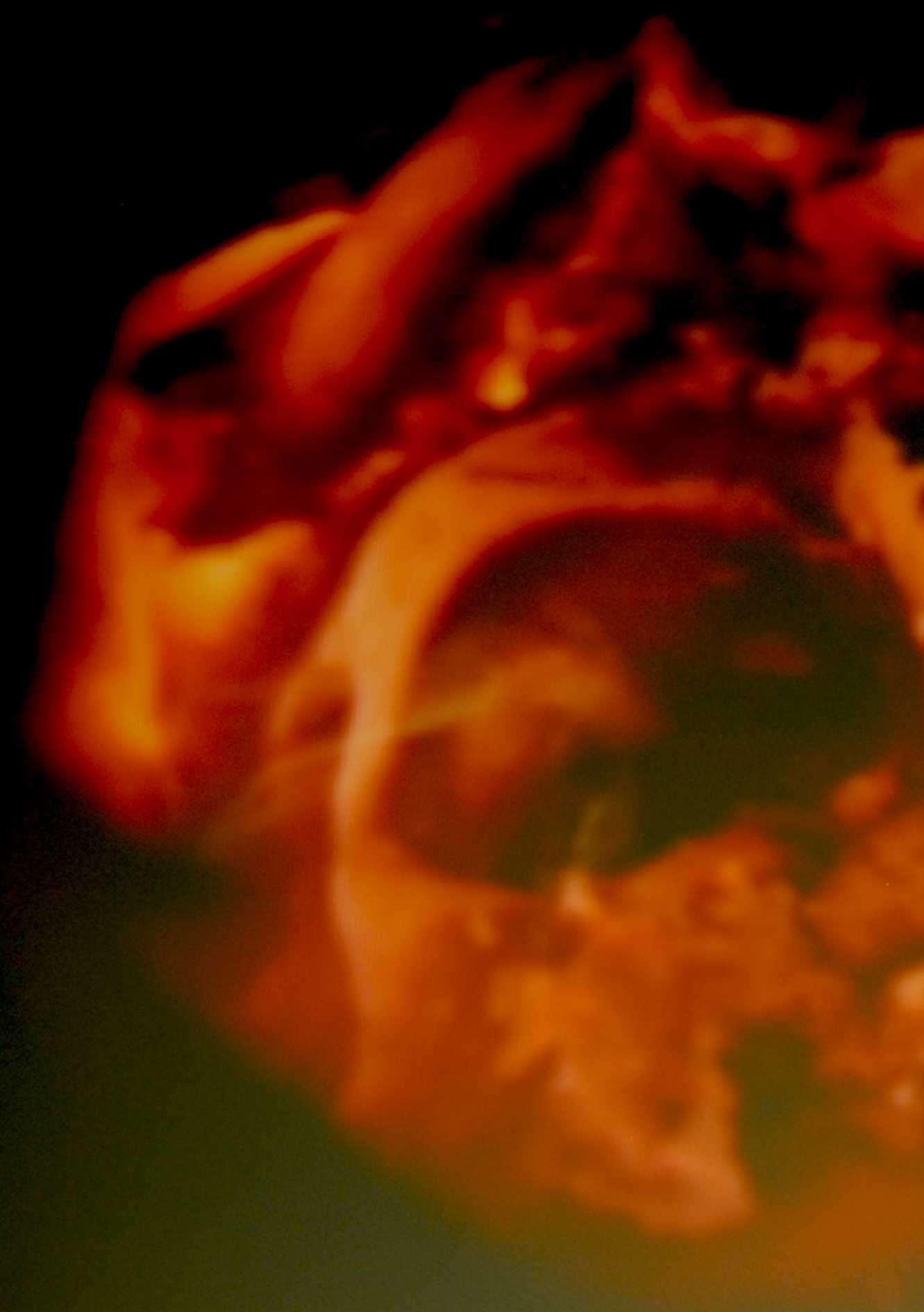
807 Lepecki (2006: 18, 131). See also Phelan (1993, 1997) and Lepecki (2004).

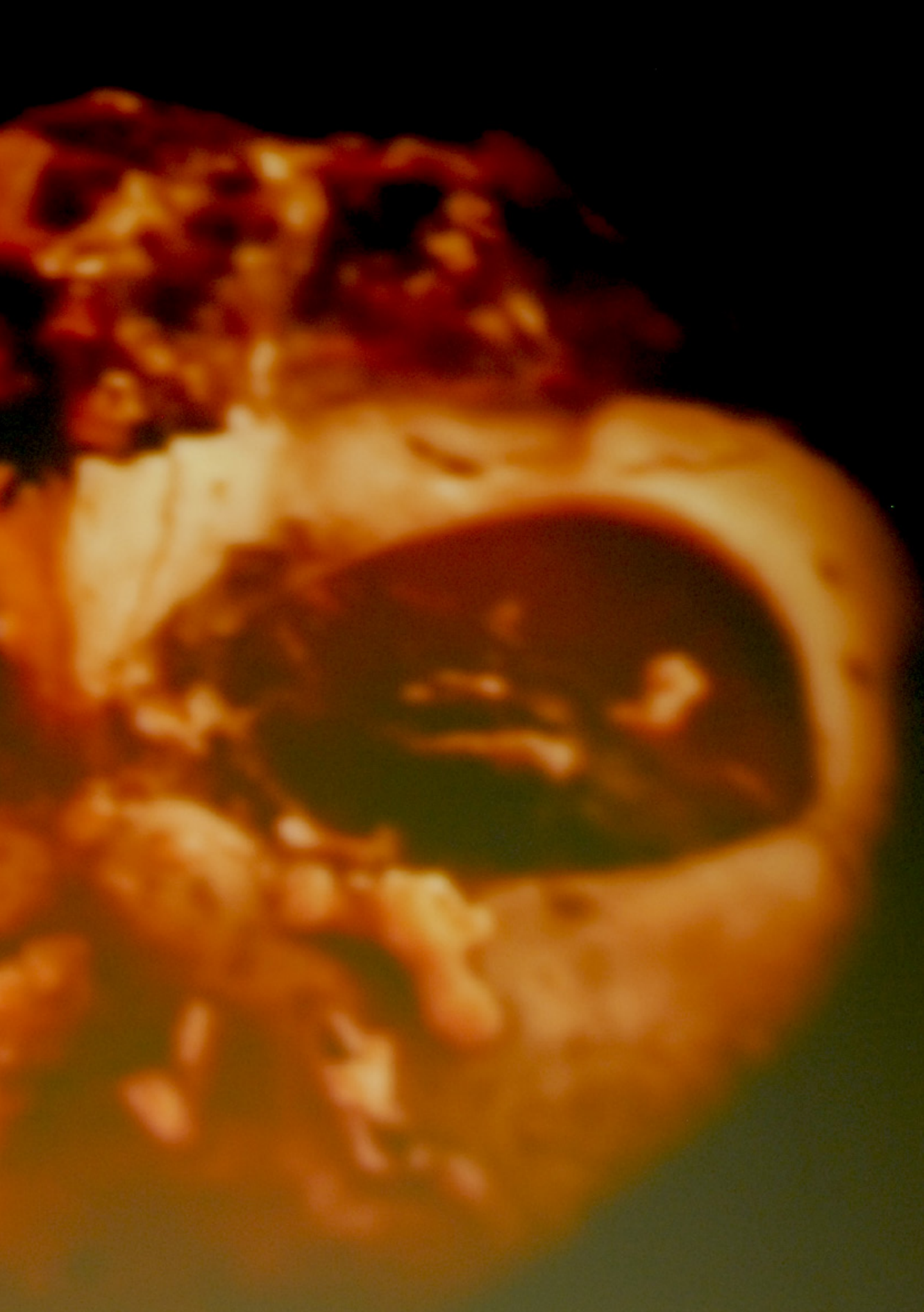
808 Davis (2010).

809 Foster (1996, 1997).

810 As a choreographer, I work primarily to meet the challenges imposed by theatrical time, but as a choreographer-researcher I do this with an awareness of the coexisting multiple temporalities that are set in motion with any choreographic project.

811 Caruth (1995: 10). Italics as in original.





Third Part – Process

Embodying the real

In the Third Part, the focus is on the artistic research process, and on how I constructed the performance trilogy *Life & Death* through exploring its tripartite context of grieving with the help of fieldwork. In Chapters 5 to 7, I will describe this approach to each of these sub-contexts of grieving and the artistic strategy that emerged as I constructed and embodied an understanding of their socio-political realities into a performance. As an introductory overview to this process, I will map out the project as such and situate my composite role in it, as an intermediary between the realms of aesthetics (that is, the artistic concerns of choreography), somatics, and the socio-political realities of loss and grieving. In this role lie also the challenges that interest me with this artistic research project: to approach these three realms interdependently. To start with, I will connect the research perspectives presented in the previous chapter on trauma and performance to my concerns in the Third Part through defining my understanding of grieving as a traumatic context.

Grieving as a traumatic context

In stating that I address three *traumatic* contexts of grieving related to death and dying in this project, with this term I allude to life-threatening events or incidents, circumstances or situations, that rupture the social fabric of an individual's or a community's existence.⁸¹² As discussed above, from this perspective grieving is regarded as a specific subcategory of trauma, caused by a traumatic experience.⁸¹³ It speaks of the pain and suffering experienced by individuals – or a community – in response to loss. This response is not confined only to the visible and social expression of mourning, but extends to the raw emotion that lives on as a traumatic experience abiding no time or social limits.

Grieving differs in this respect from mourning. As social historian Valerie Hope emphasises, mourning conceptually refers to the more formal conduct and rituals connected to loss.⁸¹⁴ For example, when an individual dies, there exist both public regulations and social norms for how to bury a corpse and achieve public closure. This means both written and unwritten guidelines for the conduct of mourning. In contrast, grieving relates to the pain and suffering,

812 See, for example, Schauer et al (2005: 5).

813 Grieving is from a clinical perspective also seen as an inherent part of the process of recovery from a traumatic experience. (Herman 1992: 175).

814 Hope (2007).

the raw emotions experienced when faced with such losses.⁸¹⁵ As an emotional state, grieving is therefore not so simple to pinpoint as mourning. This explains why more attention is often given to mourning, simply because as Hope states: “[m]ourning is the time when grief is made visible; mourning is the process of coping with loss and giving that loss a social expression.”⁸¹⁶ The rituals used in funerals exemplify such public expressions of mourning. However, despite the information discernible from studying mourning, the process of grieving itself is nevertheless a much more open-ended and ephemeral phenomenon. As Hope points out:

Death is a universal, but how the bereaved articulate their sense of loss is not. Mourning, its practices, rituals and processes, is often more accessible than grief. Yet mourning does not necessarily reveal how people feel; public behaviour may not illuminate private loss.⁸¹⁷

She highlights here the difficulties involved in knowing people’s emotional reactions to loss. As reported by James William Worden, this evasive nature makes it difficult for clinical researchers like him to find scientifically operational definitions and tools to get at grieving.⁸¹⁸ Hence, as Worden states:

The easiest solution has been to do research using well-defined pathological entities like depression, anxiety, and somatization, for which there are good standardized measures. Although these clinical entities may be part of the mourner’s experience, they clearly are not measures of grief.⁸¹⁹

In this project I am interested in these experiences that Worden points to that escape the operational definitions of clinical researchers: the unarticulated grieving processes and their impact on us. I am pursuing this not out of concern for scientific or clinical needs to develop better diagnostic tools, but out of an empathetic interest for grief and grieving as a socio-cultural phenomenon that I want to em-

815 Hope (2007: 172-3).

816 Hope (2007: 172).

817 Hope (2007: 172). Hope is here referring to J. Hockey (2001: 198), “Changing death rituals,” in J. Hockey, J. Katz and N. Small (eds.), *Grief, Mourning and Death Ritual*, Buckingham and Philadelphia, Open University Press (2001: 185-211).

818 Worden (2008: 3).

819 Worden (2008: 2).

body choreographically.⁸²⁰ As clinical researchers on grieving underline, such as Fyhr and Worden,⁸²¹ the grieving processes provoked by traumatic ruptures can be experienced very differently, depending on the circumstances causing it and the socio-cultural context of the bereaved and their personal history. Grieving is therefore also an individual experience as diverse as human beings themselves. It can result in an immediate and intense reaction that takes place within a shorter period, but, more often, the process can take years, sometimes even decades.⁸²² I am in this project interested in the latter; the complicated and delayed grieving processes. In particular, how such grieving can stir existential tremors of unease within an individual that hardly can be observed from outside.⁸²³

Overview of the artistic process

Out of the artistic process of constructing and embodying an understanding of the three sub-contexts of traumatic grieving in this project, the concept of griefscape emerged as an outcome. I will discuss this concept in more details in Chapter 8, but, in brief, a griefscape is a situated reality of grieving that is experienced as a composite in a specific socio-cultural or socio-political context.

I consider each of the three sub-contexts in this project as a griefscape. The first is centred on private grieving, that is, an individual but interpersonal grieving process caused by a sudden loss. The second focuses on the notion of facing our mortality, that is, our *memento mori*⁸²⁴ – the individual's intrapersonal grieving related to being mortal. The third encompasses communal grieving, that is, loss that is experienced both intra- and interpersonally and strikes a whole society or community's existence. Using the contextually based approach to choreography introduced in Chapter 1.2, I could illustrate the artistic research process of constructing the performance trilogy *Life & Death* as follows:

820 See Chapter 4.1 on trauma viewed from a socio-cultural perspective (Sturken 1997, Cvetkovich 2003, Taylor 1999, 2006, and Caruth 1995).

821 See Fyhr (1999) and Worden (2008).

822 See, for example, Fyhr (1999: 25, 32) and Tony Walter (1999: 164-165).

823 See Chapter 4.1 on the characteristic features of trauma.

824 The Latin phrase is normally translated as "Remember you will die" or "Remember you must die."

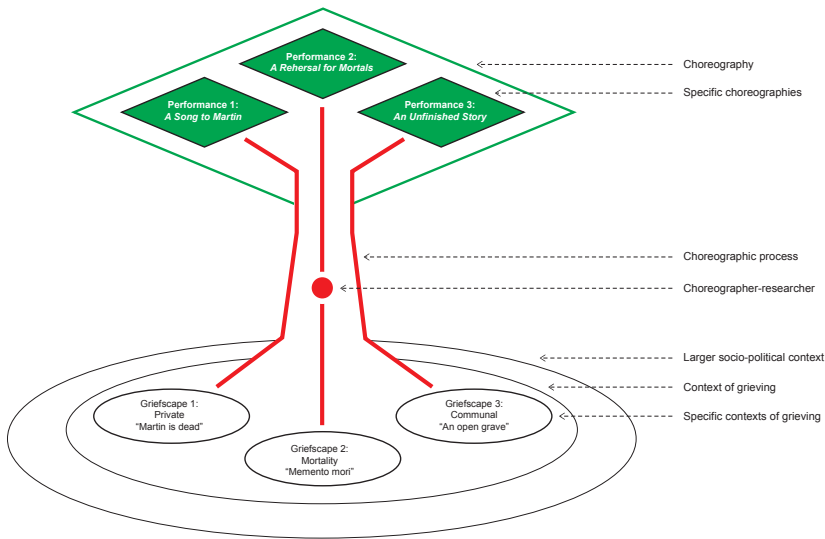


Figure 13. Conceptual model of the contextual approach to choreography with its three sub-contexts of grieving

The analogy of a tree, drawn from Paul Klee's discussion of the artist's role in the creative process, points to the interrelationship between context, process and artistic outcome.⁸²⁵ For me, the socio-political context of grieving is both a base and a source for the artistic process of constructing the performance trilogy. In this process the choreographer – in collaboration with the artistic team – becomes an intermediary between the realms of aesthetics, somatics and socio-political realities, which are here defined by traumatic experiences related to death, loss and grieving. In the figure the titles in quotation marks under each griefscape refer to the three photographs that became iconographic signs or containers for the three sub-contexts of grieving in this project, as introduced in the previous chapter.⁸²⁶ These images remind me of the factual circumstances and the core at stake in the realities I address here in docudancing grieving. As each griefscape originates from a specific, socio-political reality, this meant that I had to grapple with complex and rich documentary material. In the subsequent chapters, I will go into more details about this process and discuss the aesthetic,

825 Klee (1966 [1948]: 13).

826 Cf. Chapter 4.2. For the respective images "Martin is dead," see Figure 10; "Memento Mori, see Figure 12; and "An open grave," see Figure 25.

ethical and political challenges that surfaced, as well as situate my reasons for selecting each sub-context for this artistic research project.

Out of my personal experiences with grieving, I was especially struck by the suspended moment of stillness, or numbing inner silence, that I had encountered. Emotionally, it seemed like a void that contained everything and nothing at the same time. Prior to making the first part of the trilogy, I described this feeling like this:

*The moment of silence I am talking about is the speechlessness prevailing after a death has been announced or a tragedy appears discernible. The strange, paralyzing silence enveloping me as an individual seems to mute everything and to carry a sense of defeat, a knowing that nothing can change the situation, or what has happened. The void created holds too many emotions, too raw, to be channelled in any specific directions. No purpose seems to exist any longer, and as in a haze, I succumb to this silent suspension.*⁸²⁷

The ambience of this experience fed into my artistic process as I began working on the first part of the trilogy *A Song to Martin*.

827 Excerpt translated from notes dated 1 February 2002.

5. *A Song to Martin* – a strategy emerges

Arnold: Ma... I miss him.

Ma: Give yourself time, Arnold. It gets better... But, Arnold, it never goes away. You can work longer hours, adopt a son, fight with me, whatever... it'll still be there. But that's all right; it becomes a part of you, like learning to wear a ring or a pair of eyeglasses. You get used to it. And that's good. It's good, because it makes sure you don't forget. You don't want to forget him, do you?

From *Torch Song Trilogy*, Part III by Harvey Fierstein⁸²⁸

What does it matter whether ... [it is] today or not? All that's over and done with. There's no turning back, that avenue is closed. Don't worry, my dear. But don't try to fool yourself either.... You must face the truth.

From *The Cherry Orchard*, Act Three by Anton Chekov⁸²⁹

I developed the first performance in this project *A Song to Martin* through probing into my personal experience of grieving caused by the violent death and loss of my friend Martin Hoftun in 1992. In this chapter, I want to examine the contextually based strategy to choreography that emerged through this artistic enquiry. The chapter is divided into two parts. In the first subchapter (5.1), I will introduce the social backdrop of my private grieving: Martin and his life and my relationship to him; then, explain how the traumatic event of his death lives on in me; and next, how my attempt to convey this grieving process choreographically both led to an auto-ethnographic approach and highlighted embedded dilemmas in the project itself. In the second subchapter (5.2), I will describe the transition from

828 Fierstein (1979: 172)

829 Chekov (1980: 275)

ethnographic data to performance; and exemplify how I organized and made use of the collected material as I constructed the performance. The chapter ends with my reflection on this artistic process through which I acknowledged that loss has no end, only new beginnings. To situate this unfolding, I will start by giving an overview of the process.

Factual overview of the artistic production process: from traumatic debris to performance

A Song for Martin is a solo performance, which I made and performed. I developed the performance over a period of about eight months between August 2001 and September 2006. Production-wise, the performance grew into its compositional form through work-in-progress presentations, such as those given at the Nordic Theatre Days at Torshavn on the Faeroes and at the Dance & Theatre Festival in Gothenburg in Sweden in early autumn 2002. The work premiered at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts in Oslo in November 2003, and the major part of the work process, including the staging, took place between April 2002 and November 2003. The performance was restaged in September 2006 at Dansens Hus in Oslo, the national stage for dance in Norway, in connection with the presentation of the completed version of the trilogy *Life & Death*. The video documentation referred to in this study is from this presentation.

In developing the performance I drew on references from psychology on the trauma of loss, grieving and bereavement, such as Fyhr;⁸³⁰ philosophical/spiritual thinking related to the topic of death and dying;⁸³¹ and my insight from somatic practices, especially KA®;⁸³² in combination with extensive use of auto-ethnographic fieldwork that utilized my tacit knowledge of ethnographic tools.⁸³³ From exploring and processing the contextual information gathered, I developed the movement material as well as the video and sound material that I used compositionally to construct the choreographed performance. The video was edited in co-operation with the video artist Leif Gaute Staurland, who also had helped me to shoot the footage made on locations in Norway. The conceptual use of space and light in the staging came out of my collaboration with the audio-visual artist Harald Fetveit; this work was refined through my later collaboration with the

830 Fyhr (1999), but also Lawrence LeShan (1997), and Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (1998) among others

831 Such as Sogyal Rinpoche (1994).

832 As well as my training in Klein technique. See Chapters 3.2 and 1.3 on my background with somatic practices.

833 Cf. Chapter 1.3 on my tacit knowledge from my background in social sciences.

production design company BVLK in connection with the restaging of the performance in 2006.⁸³⁴ Although it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss the collective dimension of choreographic productions in general, the collaboration points to the fact that choreographed performances, especially cross-disciplinary projects like this one, can hardly be made without the assistance of others, whether artists, other professionals, or informants.⁸³⁵

Less obvious is the reason why I returned to the vaults of this private grieving process in 2002, ten years after the accident, in order to search for how to translate and share these experiences in a public realm. The simple answer is that I had never left it. The question for me was rather how to do this choreographically without turning it into social pornography but instead convey my experiences and Martin in a way that could make sense to others and offer perspectives on grieving – as well as our human condition and dignity as human beings.

5.1 The context of my private grieving: “Martin is dead”

It was an early Sunday morning in Vienna, and still quiet outside. I remember how the soft morning light washed through the studio flat where I stayed at Maria Hilfersstrasse in the late summer. I had my morning tea when the phone rang and I received the message: “Martin is dead.” Three days earlier, we had busily been sharing plans about the future and planning our next endeavours together. All brought to a halt by three simple words telling me that a whole life had abruptly ended. It felt as if a part of me did too.

In a fraction of a second, the plane he was on had crashed in the Himalayas. The news report lasted 40 seconds. In the papers, there were some obituaries, then, it was over.

He was gone. Ceased to exist. Martin Hoftun, the historian, was “history” himself. The year was 1992.⁸³⁶

This loss initiated the process of this project. In the account that follows, I will try to provide the contextual backdrop that situates my private grieving over the loss of Martin. In doing so I will emphasize three key features related to Martin’s life. They are related to the following: biographical data about him and

834 Staurland studied visual arts at KHiO and KUVA – the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki. Since Fetveit finished his studies in visual arts at KHiO, he has worked cross-disciplinarily. In addition to being an accomplished movement improviser and light designer, he now works as a sound artist and experimental musician. BVLK is an Oslo-based company, see <http://bvlk.com/> (accessed 21 September 2013).

835 For the list of all the people involved in the production, see Appendices.

836 Quote translated from field notes, August 2002.

his background, the social context of our shared experiences and life together in Oxford, and the important role friendship played in his life, not least in building up a household to support his everyday life. These factual components all played a crucial role in the development of the performance and my construction of this griefscape.

Martin Hoftun and my first encounter with him

Martin was born in Nepal to Norwegian parents on 16th January 1964. For most people is Nepal known as a very mountainous and beautiful tourist destination. According to the United Nations, it is also considered to be among the 35 poorest countries in the world.⁸³⁷ Martin's parents, Odd and Tullis Hoftun, went to Nepal in 1958 when it was still a rather isolated country governed as an absolute monarchy, the only Hindu kingdom in the world. His father Odd was engaged by The Himal-Asian Mission as a civil engineer and got involved in the effort of building hydropower plants and providing electricity for the country. This led to a lifelong commitment. His father stayed in Nepal for 38 years until his retirement in 1995,⁸³⁸ which meant that this complex and culturally rich country played a crucial part in Martin's family history and life, to the extent that it also played a part in his death, as one of Nepal's heavy but seasonal monsoon storms caused the extraordinary circumstances that led to the accident.

Martin grew up in Nepal as bilingual, and with a transnational identity. He moved to Norway as a teenager to attend secondary school and later studied anthropology, history and comparative religions at the University of Oslo, before he won a scholarship to study at Oxford University (OU) in 1986. There he began his doctoral studies in modern Nepalese history and politics with an emphasis on the post-war development of democracy in Nepal.⁸³⁹

However, Martin was not only a promising transnational intellectual with an exotic upbringing and past, but he was also Martin, "the disabled." He was born with a rare inherited condition called the Werdnig-Hoffmann disease, which causes spinal cord degeneration and is a form of spinal muscular atrophy.⁸⁴⁰ This meant that he had never been able to walk and was dependent on an ortho-

837 Source: United Nations Development Report 2009: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/> (Accessed 22.05.2010).

838 Svalheim (2009).

839 See William Reaper and Martin Hoftun (1992) on the Nepalese revolution in 1989.

840 On Werdnig-Hoffman disease, see, for example, Helen M Dodds (1976) and Carlo Poggiani et al. (2009).

paedic corset to sit upright and needed a wheelchair to move around. Because of the disease, his muscles had failed to develop strength in accordance to his physical growth as he grew up, which in turn resulted in his very limited range of movements. He depended on help for every task in his daily life, from lifting a teacup to fetching a book, brushing his teeth, going to the bathroom, or turning around in bed at night. He had, since leaving secondary school, chosen to rely on help from friends, rather than on professional assistance, in order to cope with his everyday life. I met him in the early autumn of 1983 as we both began our undergraduate courses in history at the University of Oslo.

I remember very well my first encounter with Martin. I was in the back of the largest auditorium in Sophus Bugge's building when I heard a strange noise. It made me turn around, and then I saw this strange little creature frail as a bird wing seated inside what looked like a monster of an electric wheelchair. Its dark blue fake leather upholstery and shiny chrome details seemed to cry out sad stories about institutionalized life and professional care. In this first impression, I missed seeing him as a person – I just saw his condition. Only later did I see his beautiful eyes and discover his lucid mind, quick wit and sense of humour.⁸⁴¹

He asked me if he could photocopy my notes from the lectures as he had a hard time writing quickly enough. Later on, he asked me to have lunch with him and gradually I become more and more involved in assisting him during his days at the university. From first simply helping him out at lunchtime with fetching food, I began to help him to relieve himself as well as to get out of his chair and lie down for a rest in the afternoon. Eventually, I started to stay overnight at his place once a week, as one of the many of his friends who did so over the years.

The turning point came in 1986, three years after we had first met. We had made a pact as undergraduates that if we were both accepted by Oxford University we would go together to continue our studies there. In the spring term that year, we got a letter of acceptance from Wadham College. At the time I was in Budapest on another scholarship scheme and had already started my orientation towards the arts, but felt committed by our previous agreement and plan. A few months later, we set out for a new life together overseas, as graduate students at Wadham College in the heart of Oxford.

841 Excerpt translated from my eulogy in connection with the Memorial Service in Oslo, August 1992.

*Oxford as social context for our new life together*⁸⁴²

Our college was in the midst of Oxford, and offered a stark contrast to the spacious and modernist styled campus we were used to at the University of Oslo. We had to find our way both as new students and newcomers to the city itself through narrow lanes and pathways with tightly packed buildings on each side, while being surrounded by tourists looking at the old cityscape with its domes and towers, gates and courtyards, gardens and walls. Oxford University was constructed over a period of 800 years. This makes it one of the oldest universities in Europe. The teaching is mainly done through tutorials, that is, through weekly meetings with a tutor, either alone or in smaller groups together with two or three other students. The university is considered one of the epicentres for learning, both in Britain and elsewhere,⁸⁴³ but it has also contributed to reproducing and maintaining the rigid British class society.⁸⁴⁴ Although the university visually might be seen as an integral part of the city of Oxford, it is socially a world on its own. The organizational structure of the university underlines this point.

The university consists of 38 self-governing halls and colleges,⁸⁴⁵ which all have their own premises and grounds, as well as an academic profile and social reputation to uphold. As stated by OU, this system gave us as students “the benefits of belonging to both a large, internationally renowned institution and to a smaller, interdisciplinary, academic college community.”⁸⁴⁶ The system radically differed from what Martin and I were accustomed to from Oslo, as it enabled students across subjects and year groups to meet and build a shared identity around the distinct nature of their college, its architecture and ambience. This collegiate system⁸⁴⁷ meant that each college functioned as a miniature society. This feature was strengthened by the fact that the colleges offered, to a large degree, room and board to the students on their premises. They also employed

842 To contextualize and describe Oxford, I draw on my recollection and diary entries from the time, fieldnotes from revisiting the place, information from the newsletters distributed to alumni and college members, and the university’s homepage as well as research done on the university, such as the study of Anna Zimdars (2007).

843 According to various surveys, such as QS World University Ranking: <http://www.topuniversities.com/worlduniversityrankings/> (Accessed 22.05.2009).

844 See the sociological study of Zimdars (2007). The overrepresentation of students coming from private schools reflects this fact. More than 40 percent of them come from the private schools, which in general account for only about eight per cent of the total number of school pupils in the UK. See the official webpage for Oxford University: http://www.ox.ac.uk/about_the_university/facts_and_figures/index.html (Accessed 22.08.2010).

845 See the official webpage: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/> (Accessed 22.08.2010).

846 Ibid.

847 A term used by OU to describe their college system. See: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/> (Accessed 22.08.2010).

their own staff, from porters to kitchen staff, gardeners and librarians, as each college had its own halls, including sleeping quarters, sports facilities, chapels, libraries, and designated common rooms and gardens for their students and academic fellows, respectively etc. Each college became, in this sense, rightfully a micro-universe and a community of its own within the larger framework of the university. The sum of these features sustains the ambient flair often connected to OU, and Wadham College, where Martin and I enrolled, shared all these features of an Oxford college. As one of the constituent colleges of the university, founded in 1610 by Nicholas and Dorothy Wadham, it was a small and proud society, known for its reputation as a progressive and liberal college. It had up to 600 students, out of which a quarter of them were graduates like us, and employed 60 fellows and a staff list of other employees of about 100.⁸⁴⁸ Into this world, Martin and I arrived. However, Martin was the first student at the college who was dependent on a wheelchair. The adjustments needed in the college were many, but after initial hesitation and unease, the college took up the challenge, and today takes pride in being able to accommodate disabled students. In 1986, this was still unploughed ground.



Figure 14. Oxford on wheels. To the left, Martin and I attempt to enter the Radcliffe Camera despite its steep staircase and the local protest, to the right; we relax in the Quad of Wadham College. Retrieved from a feature on Martin's life in Oxford by Tove Gravdal (1988). Photo: John Myhre / Aftenposten / NTB scanpix

848 See Wadham College's homepage: <http://www.wadham.ox.ac.uk/home.html> (Accessed 22.08.2010).

Martin pushed both the college and the university to change for the better. One of the fiercest battles he had to fight was with the latter, for access to the Indian Institute library, a reading room on the top floor of the Bodleian, the main library in Oxford.⁸⁴⁹ As a wheelchair user, Martin was at first denied access due to the fire regulations, as he was dependent on the elevator for getting out. The library had a unique collection of material that was of importance for his research, and a substantial part of this material was only available in the reading rooms, which made the struggle to get access more crucial. After considerable hardships, he was in the end allowed entry on the condition that he both scheduled his visit in advance, and was accompanied by an assistant who could carry him out in case of an emergency. Consequently as his companion, I spent hours with Martin in this reading room, which happened to have a splendid view over the city. I reclaim this experience in a part of the video made for the performance *A Song to Martin* in 2003. Seen through the camera lens in the video, I retrace our route up to the reading room with its view, but only to find a vacant desk where Martin once used to sit.

My household with Martin in Oxford lasted for two academic years until the autumn term of 1988, when I returned to Oslo and began my studies in choreography at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts.⁸⁵⁰ By then, we had built an extensive network of friends and helpers around our household that he could rely on in his everyday life at the college. Some would help him out for shorter periods and with smaller tasks, other for longer periods, such as Anita Schrader McMillan, a fellow graduate student. She moved in and joined our household from the beginning of the second year. We became a unit of three, and, from then on, my responsibility for overseeing that Martin's needs were taken care of became shared with someone else. This changed our social lives completely. Martin's wellbeing (as well as mine) built on the necessity of having a core family of friends that we could rely on and who enjoyed each other's company enough to cope with the hardships that inevitably come along when one takes part in assisting someone as severely disabled as Martin. Other central key members of this core family of friends were William Reaper, or Bill among friends, and Adam Steinhouse, to mention two.⁸⁵¹

849 See Bodleian Library & the Indian Institute Reading Room: <http://www.ouls.ox.ac.uk/bodley/library/rooms/iirr#facilities> (Accessed 22.08.2010).

850 Prior to 01.08.1996 called "Statens Balletthøgskole."

851 However, I would like to stress that it was a large group of people who took part, among them Brian Todd, Helen Lawrence, Emily and Michael Gould, Helen Rees, Louise Elwell, Simon McGrath, Surya

Martin's life in Oslo prior to coming to Wadham had built on a similar structure with a shared household with two close friends, supported by a larger pool of friends coming in and out of his home. In fact, when I arrived in Oslo from Oxford in 1988 I first moved into his household there and continued in this way to assist him whenever he stayed in the country.

However, Martin's life went through drastic changes in the last years before 1992. One of the major shifts came when he took over his grandparents' house in a village called Gjeving, near Tvedestrand in late 1990, and thereby relocated his Norwegian base from Oslo to the southern coast of Norway. Here he created a shared household in collaboration with two common friends of ours, Ellen and Peter Svalheim. In Kathmandu, he established a similar structure. This household had, as its anchorwoman, an old family friend called Mina Maharjan in the role of housekeeper, and drew further on the extensive network of local friends built over a lifetime there. This included assistants who could help him out both with his scholarly work as well as with the needs that were more practical.⁸⁵² He would normally stay in Kathmandu for months at a time, but combined his journeys between Nepal and Norway with short visits to Oxford because of his dissertation. There he used the facilities the college offered him for his periodic stays. From 1990 and onwards his time was divided between Gjeving, Oxford and Kathmandu, three places that were all dear to him, as his preface to *Spring Awakening* shows,⁸⁵³ the book he wrote in collaboration with our friend Bill Reaper, a Scottish writer and Oxford graduate, who was one of the first friends we made in Oxford. Bill had shared most of his time since the end of the 1980s as a companion for Martin, and was together with him on that fatal flight to Nepal in 1992. Bill was also one of my closest friends from Oxford, and at the time when I began the work with this project, ten years after their death, I could still not bear to take in the loss of them both at once. In this first part of the trilogy, I focus therefore only on my private grieving over Martin. Though this decision was primarily done out of the need for self-preservation, it also had practical reasons. In delimiting my objectives to the loss of one dear friend, the context of private grieving also became, in this way, more specific to address. However, the exclusion of Bill's story here does not diminish his importance in my life. Both their deaths ruptured my life, tore out a foundational wall of my social life, and left me with the shattered debris of

Soni, Beth Ebel, Bill Herbert, and Julia Crouch, to mention some of the others.

852 Krishna Raj Ghimire played a central role there.

853 Hoftun 1992.

an imagined future shared with both of them. For this reason, the second part of the trilogy on our mortality is dedicated to William Reaper. Moreover, Bill's death also marks what many of us in Martin's circle of friends were aware of at the time: it could have been any of us, as Martin could never have travelled alone on such a long journey. Somebody would always travel with him. For me this fact is also telling for the understanding of interdependency that emerged from a friendship with Martin.

Living in Martin's circle: the challenges of everyday life brought people together

It is crucial to understand how Martin's disability was a fundamental and integral part of who he was, as a scholar, activist and friend: how his extreme dependence on help and assistance both made claims on other people but also opened doors for close encounters and friendships. He himself did not have any choice, but had to involve himself in others. When he died we were therefore a large group of people who were strangely connected through experiences that are normally only shared within the close nucleus of a family: the intimate sensorial memories of another person. I will argue that nobody left an encounter with him without having been challenged and touched as human being. The numbers of public memorial services arranged after his death seem to confirm this. There were, in all, six of them, two in each of the countries in which he had lived: Norway, Nepal and England.⁸⁵⁴ I attended three, those held in Oslo, Gjeving, and Oxford (St. Matthews). In addition to these public services, there were numerous other informal gatherings of family and friends in Norway as well as in Oxford and Kathmandu. I believe that many of us were quite overwhelmed in hindsight by discovering the sheer size and presence of the invisible networks he left behind. They had quietly been formed around his existence over the years, the multiple household he had built, and only emerged clearly after his death as we met each other at the many memorial services. I have reason to believe that this impact was not apparent to any of us before the moment he was gone. As Erik Hoftun expressed it in his memorial speech:

⁸⁵⁴ His Norwegian friends organized a memorial service in Oslo, his family one in Gjeving, Wadham College one for college and university members in Wadham College chapel, while Oxford-based friends of both Martin and Bill organized one in St. Matthews Church in Oxford. In addition, there were two services held in Kathmandu, the first arranged by Martin's network and local community there, while the second was a part of the national commemoration of the accident.

I knew you first and foremost as a brother, but for them [friends in Nepal] you were a man with visions, a man with thought provoking questions, a man who loved Nepal. ...

Mishra Shanti said in his memorial speech [in Kathmandu]: “How can Martin have left us? If Martin is with God, and God is with us, then is Martin still with us.”

I knew that the grieving over you had to be shared with many, very many. So many that it almost hurt. For you were just my brother.⁸⁵⁵

Firstly, his comment pointed my attention to the different meanings someone might have for others. However, in speaking from his position as a brother, Erik also made me realize how I viewed my own relationship to Martin: as a brother life had given me, an outlook that, eventually, I would express in one of the video segments used in the performance. Moreover, for me his comment also struck a more painful chord in the grieving process that often remain unarticulated: the ambivalent feelings that may surface when encountering others’ precious memories about someone you loved dearly. Normally during a process of distressful grieving, such recollections will offer comfort and alleviate pain felt, but they might also be experienced simultaneously as surprisingly disturbing or painful, in part, as they reduce the uniqueness of your own experiences to become only one experience among many, as one of our common friends put it in a personal conversation after the memorial service in Oslo.⁸⁵⁶ It is unpleasant to face this ambivalence, and it might hurt too much to take in this fact in the midst of a grieving process. In Martin’s case, there were many who had stories to share,⁸⁵⁷ and mine is only one of them.

Nevertheless, everyday life together with Martin provided challenges that irrevocably changed my perspective on the little things that we often take for granted in everyday life, as having a cup of tea or going to the bathroom. As expressed in what our fellow friend and household member in Oxford, Anita Schrader McMillan, used to say: “I just had a Tea-and-Pee-Nap with Marty.” But my diary entry from Oxford, 14 October 1986, made a few weeks after our arrival there, also captures the stress experienced from this challenge at the time:

855 Translated excerpt from transcript of his eulogy in Oslo 17th August 1992.

856 Diary notes August 1992.

857 As the chaplain at Wadham College said in his eulogy at the memorial service at Wadham: “Martin didn’t just have friends, they were best friends.” (Source: Anita Schrader McMillan).

My everyday life is chopped up into pieces.

It feels almost pulverized into an endless row of small chores: “Could you please move my right leg on top of the other one? Could you please fetch that book for me? Could you connect the micro-writer to the computer? Could you please help me to pee? Could you lift the cup for me? Could you pull my trouser a little? Could you move me to the other side? Could you please wash my hands? Could you brush my teeth? Could you please help me to lie down? May I have something to drink? I need to take my pills now... Could you please go and ask him if he wants to come downstairs?

Per Roar, could you please...”

In this excerpt, I convey and recognise the intense feeling of being overwhelmed – both by despair, exhaustion, and a sense of entrapment – despite the fact that I primarily list some of the practical tasks that everyday life with Martin implied for me as his sole assistant and helper during our first three weeks in Oxford. However, in his total dependency on others’ help, I faced not only his but also my own vulnerability and limits, as his trusted helper. Through this experience, the binary of dependent and independent gradually gave way to a deeper sense of interdependency. From this perspective, my list of tasks contextualizes the intimacy embodied in a day-to-day life with him. His total dependency, combined with his choice of relying on friends rather than professional help, accentuated this intimacy. Most people who helped him over some time or shared a household with him would probably recognize from their own experiences what this diary fragment describes. Thus, living with Martin could also be challenging, because it put many of our preconceived notions about life on trial. This challenge is emphasized in the obituary written by his close friends, Tove Gravdal and Hans Olav Mugaas:

We, who in periods lived, stayed overnight, or travelled together with you, had to seriously question our understanding of what it means to be a human being. Our contemporary social ideal of independence was shaken. Your situation challenged and enlivened, provoked and enriched us. Carrying is a heavy burden. Being carried is a heavy load. A whole life. You lived your independence in the midst of you obvious need for help. You never learned to walk, but still got the whole world at your feet.⁸⁵⁸

858 Gravdal and Mugaas (1992). Translated excerpts from the obituary published 13 August 1992 in *Aftenposten* - the main daily newspaper in Norway. In the original: “Vi som bodde, overnattet eller reiste sammen med deg, fikk rusket opp i vårt menneskesyn og det moderne samfunns ideal om uavhengighet. Din situasjon utfordret og gledet, provoserte og beriket oss. Det kan være tungt å

In addition to drawing my choreographic attention in this process to movements which are often taken for granted in our everyday lives, like ‘walking’ and ‘carrying,’ Gravdal and Mugaas describe, in this passage, what I with Gordon would call a “transformative recognition.”⁸⁵⁹ how their encounter with Martin made them question their outlook and understanding of life. However, this direct confrontation with vulnerability and the question of in/dependency was not only challenging; it also connected us in a family-like bonding, as this excerpt conveys. I have good reason to believe that despite our individual differences this shared experience became the invisible glue between us, which not only created a special bonding between Martin and his individual helper and friend, but also in-between us, who were in the inner circle of his friends and helpers. As Gravdal and Mugaas also remarked in their obituary, it was an “incredible network of friends and contacts, both at home and abroad” that existed around him.⁸⁶⁰ In the opening part of the performance (on video) I therefore also included a longer excerpt of their obituary in order to contextualize for the audience who Martin was and what he meant to the many of us who had known him. In this way I also wanted to situate my private grieving in a larger context of grieving.

However, in my case, the impact of living with Martin also created and left sensorial imprints in my body: the intimate experience meant that even sensations of smell and the feeling of weight were evoked in the grieving process. But more importantly:

*He touched something in me. And I miss him in my life.*⁸⁶¹

In this personal encounter lies the pretext for my project on private grieving. As in the grieving process itself, I found myself returning repeatedly in the artistic research process to the same traumatic event and its critical rupture: the plane crash and Martin’s death. I realized early on how the photographs and descriptions related to the accident, obtained through official reports and eye-witnesses on the ground in Nepal, had impacted and still resonated within me. Therefore, I want to recount this specific information about Martin’s death that both shaped my traumatic revisits but also forced me to face what I otherwise could not fathom.

bære, men det er sannelig ikke lett å bli båret. Et helt liv. Du levde din selvstendighet midt i ditt åpenbare behov for hjelp. Du lærte aldri å gå, men la allikevel verden for dine føtter.”

859 Gordon (1997: 8). See also Chapter 4.2.

860 Gravdal and Mugaas (1992).

861 Excerpt translated from notes dated 17 August 2001, Oslo.

Returning to the past, his exit and my pain in a punctum: a pricking dark mark on a rock wall

According to David Gero in *Aviation Disasters*, it was at 12:30 pm on 31 July 1992 that Thai Airways Airbus 310-300 flight number 311 ran into a mountain at Ganesh Himal in the Himalayas, near Kistung Palung in Nepal. The airplane hit “a near-vertical rock wall in the Himalayan foothills, disintegrating on impact,” just a few minutes’ flying time from Kathmandu, only 40 km north-northeast of the city, but due to the topographical conditions in the area a three days’ journey overland. In all, 113 people lost their lives in the crash.⁸⁶² According to Erik Hoftun, who flew in with helicopter and saw the site shortly after the accident, it was located where

The valley narrows and ends at the foot of the 4,000 m high mountains south of the holy lake Gosaikund where pilgrims travel from afar to take a ritual bath in the ice cold water. Here in 3,500 m height – just above the tree limits – did the plane hit the mountain. Right next throws the creek itself down the mountainside in long white streams until it disappears between the trees in a monsoon green slope.⁸⁶³

As Erik expressed it, all that remained of what had been an airbus was little white dots sprinkled over the lush greenness. Viewed from above, it looked as if somebody had emptied a stapler over the steep, monsoon-green mountain slopes. Left behind was a distinct, dark and circular mark on the rock wall testifying to the tremendous impact caused by the colliding forces involved in the crash.⁸⁶⁴ His photograph of the site added sensorial input to his eyewitness report and made me envision it all. Since I first saw the photograph in 1992, the image of the unnatural dark mark on the rock wall has haunted and pierced me. This detail created for me what Barthes calls a punctum,⁸⁶⁵ which turned the photograph into a wound that would prick and radiate the pain that had already taken place, as if his death was captured in it. When I recall the white dots scattered underneath the dark mark, I still feel the hurt. I know that some of those dots contain the fragments of a thesis never completed and friends lost.⁸⁶⁶ This effect turned the photograph into an iconographic container and thereby a source for keeping in

⁸⁶² Gero (1996: 221).

⁸⁶³ Translated excerpt from transcript of his eulogy that he delivered 17th August 1992 in Oslo.

⁸⁶⁴ According to descriptions by E. Hoftun of 17th August 1992.

⁸⁶⁵ Cf. Barthes (1981: 26-27, 49-53) and my discussion on photography and trauma in chapter 4.1.

⁸⁶⁶ Eventually reworked by John Whelpton and published, see: Hoftun, Reaper and Whelpton (1999).

touch with the affective rupture that grounded my artistic process here while working. In unsettling and stirring up the unarticulated void of grieving that the accident caused in me, the image has an impact that evokes what Barthes expressed in his reflections on photography:

The effect is certain but unlocatable, it does not find its sign, its name; it is sharp and yet lands in a vague zone of myself; it is acute yet muffled, it cries out in silence. Odd contradiction: a floating flash.⁸⁶⁷

In describing this experience, Barthes illuminates how a photograph can trigger traumatic memories and thereby become a site for revisiting a traumatic incident as well as a source for re/encountering raw grief.⁸⁶⁸ This is also what I believe Sontag points to when writing about the photograph's ability to haunt us.⁸⁶⁹ As trauma, the photography can prick and reopen wounds, as if what happened a long time ago is happening all over again.⁸⁷⁰ As Barthes notes: "Nothing surprising, then, if sometimes, despite its clarity, the *punctum* should be revealed only after the fact, when the photograph is no longer in front of me and I think back on it."⁸⁷¹ Barthes touches here upon the complex ways in which our memory works. For me his study of the photography's potential for creating a superimposition of reality and past could also be used to describe a process of grieving. Through the superimposition of reality and past created by a photograph, I am confronted not only with what was once there – in front of a camera lens but no longer exists – but also simultaneously with the real loss that escapes the reality that is photographed.⁸⁷² Through its detail, a *punctum*, the photograph may hence complicate and destabilize the divide between what is past and present, reality and dreams, in our memory. In a grieving process this might typically produce a

867 Barthes (1981: 51-3).

868 Cf. Struk (2004: 200) and Zelizer (1998: 238).

869 "Narratives can make us understand. Photographs do something else: they haunt us." Sontag (2003: 80).

870 See, for example, Herman (1997: 37).

871 Barthes (1981: 53). Italics as in original. By applying the notion of "punctum" Barthes explicates how a detail captured by a photo can stir, and make the depicted not only "at once brief and active," but "with a power of expansion" (Barthes 1981: 49, 45).

872 However, as Barthes stresses, I keep in mind that what can be seen in a photograph is "not the optionally real thing to which an image or a sign refers but the necessarily real thing which has been placed before a lens, without it there would be no photograph. Painting can feign reality without having seen it." This option is not to the same extent possible in photography: "in photography I can never deny that the thing has been there. There is superimposition here: of reality and the past" (Barthes, 1981: 76).

disruptive situation in which our “dreams and aspirations for the future do not fit any longer, because they are built with the help of what is now lost.”⁸⁷³ This disruption was definitely part of my experience after the death of Martin (and Bill). Nearly two decades later the image of the crash site in the Himalayas can still hold me captive and evoke a sense of sensory compression and deep pain in my frontal rib cage. It is as if the plane again hit a ‘full stop’ in the mountain wall and left the dark spot marking the final exit point and end of Martin and Bill. Blasted out of our time. As Barthes argues, a photograph may prick us “to allow the detail to rise of its own accord into affective consciousness.”⁸⁷⁴ In combining his arguments on the detail as a pricking punctum and my personal experiences, I find Caruth’s claim succinctly accurate: “To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event.”⁸⁷⁵ This haunting characteristic of being traumatized gives the photographic image a potential power: it can affectively and effectively evoke memories and bring forward emotional wounds that may have been dormant for decades.⁸⁷⁶

For the traumatized bereaved, the detail of a photograph can, in this way, disrupt the notion of life as a linear flow, which unfolds from a past to a present towards a future, and instead bring on an experience of loss that blurs the boundaries between the past and the present in the grieving process. However, as the experience of loss ruptures the social context of the bereaved, it also impacts the life and the relationships of the bereaved to the surroundings in general. In this way, the loss and its grieving process also have social consequences, which destabilize the distinction between the private and public spheres.⁸⁷⁷

Early on in my artistic process of addressing the loss of Martin, this mix of private and public concerns involved in a grieving process became apparent. Through my auto-ethnographically inspired approach⁸⁷⁸ to this loss, I realized that the performance was not only about the history of Martin, his death or how

873 Fyhr (1999: 24). My translation from Swedish: “Drömmar och förhoppningar om framtiden stammer inte längre, eftersom drömmarna är uppbyggda med hjälp av det som nu är förlorat.”

874 Barthes (1991: 55).

875 Caruth (1995: 4-5). In the case of the photograph from the crash site, I am fully aware of that I am twice removed from the traumatic event itself, as I neither experienced the accident nor witnessed the place of the event directly myself. However, through photography, my loss is given a visual depiction, which haunts me.

876 Cf. Chapter 4 and Struk (2004: 200). See also Hirsch (1999) and Mendelsohn (2007).

877 My interest in such a socio-cultural perspective on grieving explains my transdisciplinary approach in this artistic research project, a focal point I outlined in Chapter 1, and further discussed in Chapter 2 and 4.

878 On autoethnography as a method, for example, see Bochner and Ellis (2006: 111) and Ellis (2004).

to grapple with grieving, but would also result from a dialectical negotiation between my personal and private concerns in a public realm.⁸⁷⁹ This negotiated result would destabilize the clear distinctions between fiction and documentary facts in my artistic project.⁸⁸⁰ In tracing and embodying the implications that radiated out of the dark mark in the rock wall – with its white dots of debris scattered below in the lush greenery of a monsoon green foothill of the Himalayas, Martin's death became manifest for me. Through rupturing the boundaries between past, present and future events, the photograph unleashed the griefscape of Martin within me.

Searching for translation of auto-ethnographic observations

The artistic research process is in this way anchored in a real event that at the same time is deeply personal, as it brought me into a context of loss and grieving as a participant – not only as a distant observer.⁸⁸¹ In this case, I had a time span of ten years between the accident and the first pre-screening of the performance for an audience. This time span provided an important buffer zone of life experiences to soften the brutal rupture inflicted by the crash and my research process. Nevertheless, the auto-ethnographically inspired approach added an artistic challenge to the project and made me question: How is one to translate the experiences with an absent body and the intimacy of private grieving into a public performance for a general audience without transgressing to social pornography, or self-centred narcissism, fuelled by sentimental indiscretions?

In an early project description, I find myself expanding on this concern through raising some fundamental questions that both motivate the project and delimit its scope:

What happens when a death announced becomes an instant that makes nothing remain the same? – Stops time, breaks the everyday routine, and creates a divide between a 'before' and 'after' that last? What happens in this gap between a 'before' and 'after'? The gap that suddenly turns obituaries into a necessary opium. In the days that follow, in the echo of the delivered message, memories transform to become property. These are guarded,

879 I am aware that my perspectives in this respect border upon discourses in social theory on the nature of the public and the private, as voiced by Hannah Arendt (1998 [1958]: 22-78) and Jürgen Habermas (1989 [1962]) et al., but I will refrain from discussing my project within these theoretical frameworks here.

880 Not only for me as the choreographer and performer, but also for the viewer witnessing the result.

881 This is not something unique. None of us can escape this fate in life. Sooner or later, we will find ourselves thrown into ruptures of loss and grieving.

treasured, and measured against others. But around the black hole death pulled out of time exists only a wordless song and an unresolved problem: What space to give for a grieving no words can express? What happens when this private space is made public? Can it be shared? By lifting the gaze from the loss created, one will see others, but how does one meet their gaze? This is the theme.⁸⁸²

Filled with these questioning concerns in the back of my mind, I began the artistic process by probing into my own history with Martin. I went through my personal correspondence, photo albums, and diaries from the years with him (1983 – 1992), while reading about grieving and grieving processes.⁸⁸³ In this way, I stumbled onto an auto-ethnographically based fieldwork, which was contextually grounded on his life and death and my experiences and relationship with him. By including Martin's social circle of friends and family, I expanded my enquiry and got access to more documentary material about him. This material included unpublished manuscripts, newspaper clippings, photographs, recordings and, not least, private letters as well as personal recollections and memories. The latter were shared through the informal interviews that I conducted. Both the quantity and the kind of material I found reflected the fact that Martin and most of his close friends were either engaged in research or had an academic background. For example, the impetus to record both some of the more informal gatherings as well as the receptions held after the many memorial services for his parents seemed self-evident to some of his friends with backgrounds in the social sciences.⁸⁸⁴ Ten years later, these recordings came to be invaluable for me in the explorative process of the grieving process, as they provided access to the tones and timbres of people's voices as they expressed themselves in a state of raw grief. I therefore included excerpts from these recordings in the soundscape of the performance itself. This also seemed appropriate because voice recording was a method much used by Martin himself in his academic work. The physical strain of writing led him to use Dictaphones and tape recorders, both for dictating his dissertational text as well as for being a tool for conducting fieldwork interviews. In the last years of his life, he relied, in fact, on a little team of assistants for transcribing this material.

882 Excerpt translated from notes dated 17 August 2001, Oslo.

883 In addition to Fyhr (1999), such as Kübler-Ross (1998 [1991]), LeShan (1997 [1989]), and Walter (1999).

884 For example, Adam Steinhouse (Oxford) and Hans Olav Mugaas (Oslo), who in August 1992 both made recordings from gatherings held in their respective cities.

However, in facing all these voices and traces of Martin during my research process, I became extra attentive to episodic and embodied bodily memories and flashbacks that surfaced in me – related to Martin's life and tragic death. In order to contextualize all these inputs and findings in a larger context of grieving, I drew on the research perspectives reviewed in the Second Part and consulted other documentary accounts and references on private grieving.⁸⁸⁵ Therefore, through this artistic research process, I was provided with a richer pool of information not only about Martin, but also on the process of grieving as such. This expanded my own personal perspective likewise, as it offered me a more self-reflexive position for dealing with my private grieving process.

I understood early on that the strands of the material I had gathered were too vast for the scope of this project, particularly as I gained insight into the others' experiences of Martin, for example, through reading his father Odd Hoftun's description of their family life and the social circumstances they lived in in Tansen, Nepal, where Martin was born in the early 1960s,⁸⁸⁶ or in learning more about Martin's gap year in southern Germany. I felt rather overwhelmed by the complexity the fieldwork material unearthed and the demands it implied for the further development of the performance project. Seen from a compositional point of view, the richness of the material made me aware of the many possible directions the artistic work could take, ranging from a strictly documentary account of his life, via a lecture performance on the research project, to a more episodic and ambience-driven performance crafted around the characteristic features of a grieving process in general. Aesthetic concerns aside, I was particularly struck by the ethical challenges that the outcome of my fieldwork confronted me with as I approached the studio-based process of conceptually moulding this material into a performance work.⁸⁸⁷

Respecting memories: ethical challenges and dilemmas

The encounter with the reminiscences of others who also knew Martin combined with a more scrutinized look at my own memories modified and matured my perspective. As an old friend and housemate, I realized that I not only had to respect his post-mortem right to confidentiality, but I also had to acknowledge that my memories offered just one perspective among many on Martin; his rath-

885 Such as Birgitte Brock-Utne (1998) and Martin Eikeland (1999).

886 Source: unpublished manuscript by Odd Hoftun on Martin's childhood and life in Nepal.

887 Lene Auestad (2013) proposes in her PhD what she calls a psychoanalytically informed position on responsibility, which I find an interesting position to explore in my future projects of docudancing.

er large circle of close friends and family all had their memories of who he had been for them. Any essentialist claims about Martin's life story would therefore be out of place. This had consequences for the development of the performance. Firstly, I limited the usage of texts fragments and stories in the performance to situations close to my own experience with him. I therefore decided to base the performance on references alluding to our shared time in Oxford. Together we had started afresh in Oxford and shared the cultural shock of this shift. For those who have grown up with the immediacy offered by digital technology, with mobile phones and internet etc., it might be hard to grasp to which extent we were somehow stranded in this new challenge on our own, the two of us. We had to make new friends and adapt quickly, especially, with his dire needs and being only one helper, simply to cope with our daily lives in Oxford, both as individual students and as a household. In this effort, we made life experiences that no other Norwegian shared with us. Therefore, I perceived this period as a unique framework and backdrop for this performance project, just as it had been for our friendship.⁸⁸⁸ We had been each other's link between the two worlds of ours, the Norwegian social-democratic setting and the hierarchical, class-ridden Oxbridge structure. When he died, this link disappeared and it felt as if a part of me had died and ceased to exist as well. This angle provided my project with an intersection in space and time in which my memories did not interfere too closely with the memory lanes belonging to others. I therefore delineated the contextual framework of the performance project on the loss of Martin to this particular period when we lived in Oxford together. Through focusing on the references linked to this period I wanted to excavate and share with an audience a sense of my grieving process and loss of Martin, while tracing his absent body both in Oxford and in my present life in Oslo; on the other hand, this delineation also meant that I had to give up elements that I thought were potentially rich for a performance, such as the descriptions from his childhood in Nepal from his father's unpublished biography of Martin, which had added texture and context for me about the person Martin had been. Nevertheless, they were not my stories. I had never been to Nepal.⁸⁸⁹

888 Later, other Norwegian friends would assist him for shorter periods while he stayed in Oxford, but none of them took part in this early period or in the dual role of being both a helper and a fellow student at the college.

889 That said, the country still existed as an embodied experience within me through what I had absorbed over the years from the stories Martin and his family had told me.

However, as Nepal was still such a central and constituting part of who he had been, I therefore decided to make it synonymous with the parts of Martin that I did not know or comprehend. This was explicitly expressed through Nepali, a language I did not understand and which therefore represented the otherness different from me.⁸⁹⁰ Thus, in my choreographic plan and concept for the performance Nepal and Nepali come to represent these territories within Martin that would slip away from my comprehension and which I could only speculate about. In the actual performance, I also included a little choreographed dance sequence that stood in for this naïve speculation into his unknown background. It was based on the effort to pick up a white flower with my toes. It was performed to a video projection of a large cherry tree in pink blossoming in the background. The blossoming tree might be associated with Asia but, in fact, it filled the view from my window and the doorstep of our accommodation in college. This particular tree and the lawn around it meant a great deal to both of us. In the performance, the little dance was therefore linked to both these unarticulated sentiments: what this tree meant for us, as well as being my imaginary and naïve tribute to his “Nepalese” world. The everyday smells, sounds, views, and tactile sensation from a childhood I never will know, except through my memories of his renderings of it. In spite of drawing on my knowledge of Southeast Asian dance traditions⁸⁹¹ and my effort to compose and perform the little dance with a sincere curiosity, I think it reveals more about my yearnings as an outsider to grapple with this part of him than of him and Nepal. However, through this ‘failure’ the little dance may convey a sense of what I call the anatomy of grieving in the performance: the grieving process itself, which for me is about grappling with loss, the fear of erasure and forgetting, and the feeling of being abandoned, left behind alone. In this state of vulnerability, I find dimensions that also connect me to Martin and his fragility.

For Martin disturbed our categories of strength and weakness, dependence and independence, and he also challenged these issues himself in conference

890 Not because it was threatening, but simply unknown, despite the fact that I heard it from time to time over the years. For example, when helping him to turn in bed at night, he sometimes would give all the instruction in Nepali, as he often was half asleep under these operations.

891 Cf. Chapter 1.3. In addition to Balinese dancing, I have studied Bharatanatyam, one of the Indian classical dance genres, as well as Indian martial arts forms and mediation practices, such as Kalaripayattu, a martial arts tradition from Kerala, and Yoga, in particular the tradition of K. Pattabhi Jois, known as Ashtanga yoga, see, for example, John Scott (2000).

papers and interviews over the years.⁸⁹² For him the superficial pity – that was often shown to people like him with an apparent and extreme physical disability – not only missed out the inherent dignity and respect any human being embodies regardless of his or her conditions, but also the human qualities that might come with it. Through my own encounter with him, I had experienced how my own outlook had changed. I wanted to share this paradoxical shift of feelings – about strength and weakness, dependence and independence – that even a brief encounter with Martin might inspire.⁸⁹³ However, at the same time, I wanted to avoid placing him on a pedestal, as an exception or an exoticized other. Rather, I wanted the audience to get a sense of Martin – not only his disability and the loss I had experienced; through the performance, I sought therefore to create a potentiality that could possibly kindle re-encounters with personal stories of loss and grieving for the audience, in addition to conveying glimpses of this paradoxical shift of viewpoint that Martin could inspire.⁸⁹⁴

In my wants for the performance, I recognise a core concern that connects to what I discussed in Chapter 4.2 related to Hal Foster’s understanding of the “return of the real:” how the traumatic produced the driving force behind this project and its enquiry into the past, and stirred my artistic interest in the interrelationship between choreography and socio-political outlooks.

5.2 From Ethnography to Performance

Making sense of gathered debris

The artistic challenge was how to translate all the information I had on Martin, his death and the trauma of grieving into a choreographed performance. In order to grapple with this challenge and to organize my mental notes and thoughts, I made use of mind-mapping. As a tool, this offers an “external expression of associative thought processes that proceed from or connect to a

892 Such as his paper on “Dependence –Independence” presented at the World Council of Churches’ conference in Budapest 3- 9 September 1986 (Hoftun 1986).

893 Such as the journalist Marie Rein Bore in an interview with Martin in 1985 obviously sensed. The interview was given the title “The question is how you tackle suffering” (In the original: “Poenget er hvordan du takler lidelsen”), and published in Stavanger Aftenblad (Bore 1985).

894 In a talk with the audience after the first work-in-progress showings of the performance, I stated that the work would make sense mainly to those who dared or were willing to face their experiences of loss and grieving (Fieldnotes from Torshavn, August 2002).

central point,”⁸⁹⁵ which Martin and his death constituted for me here. Through this mind-mapping, I could visualize the different layers and strands embedded in the contextual setting and more quickly get an overview of the material I faced in this project. This outcome enhanced a reflexive, meta-perspective while I was working. This was most needed as I was deeply engaged as a participant, not only in the process of devising the performance and performing it, but also as a source. I was both an intrinsic part and provider of the contextual framework and the auto-ethnographic material on which this choreographic performance was based. However, thanks to this reflexive perspective, it became simpler for me select what to include or exclude of the different strands of material I had collected as I choreographically approached the devising period in the studio in July/August in 2002. Nevertheless, in order to enhance this selection, I organized all the material into four categories, according to my specific interest in this project. They were as follows:

- Physical or kinaesthetically memories (explored in my own body)
- Documentary material dating back to **before** the accident (31 July 1992)
- Documentary material and reflections made **after** the accident
- References related to loss, mourning, and processes of grieving

Content-wise, the two categories of documentary material were each divided into four subcategories: (a) visual materials; (b) audio recordings; (c) written sources; and (d) interviews.

In the case of the documentary material dating back to **before** the accident (31 July 1992), the visuals consisted mainly of photographs. Predominantly, they came from private sources,⁸⁹⁶ but also from Wadham College, as well as newspapers that had interviewed Martin over the years.⁸⁹⁷ As Martin died before the consumer market for cam recorders took off, I did not find any video recordings of him. However, in the archives of the National Broadcasting Corporations in Norway (NRK) I found by chance unique film footage made in connection with the opening of the Norwegian School in Kathmandu, Nepal, in 1975. In this reportage Martin, aged 11, is interviewed about his experiences and what it means to be a

895 Tony Buzan (2000: 54), the educationalist who developed the concept.

896 Mainly from Hans Olav Mugaas, Tove Gravdal, Adam Steinhouse, Anita Schrader McMillan, and Helen Lawrence. The last three were friends from Oxford.

897 See for example, Bore (1985) and Gravdal (1988).

school pupil in Kathmandu. Eventually, I included an excerpt of this documentary at the end of the performance.

However, to compensate for the scarcity of live film/video footage of Martin, I used instead the abundance of audio material that I had found. In particular, audiotapes related to his doctoral work, which consisted mainly of dictation for his doctoral thesis and recordings of his fieldwork interviews from Nepal in both Nepali and English.⁸⁹⁸ In the soundscape of the performance, I included samples of both.

The written material consisted of both private and public sources. The latter were either articles presented at conferences or interviews given to newspapers.⁸⁹⁹ The private material included my diaries (1983-1992) and Martin's letter to me, as well as some of his correspondence to our close friends. When I told them about my project and the need to gather material about him, many of them, unsolicited, would also allow me to read their letters from Martin.⁹⁰⁰ In the period from early winter 2002 to autumn 2003, I conducted a number of informal interviews with our close friends,⁹⁰¹ as well as members of his family. In addition to their recollections of Martin, the process also provided me with visual materials, audio recordings, and written sources, including a large body of photographs and some detailed recollections that assisted me in the work to recapture the characteristic gestures and expressions that Martin used.⁹⁰²

However, the pool of the documentary material and reflections made **after** the accident had a larger variety of sources. The visual material ranged from television news reports and press coverage in various newspapers on the accident

898 Martin's parents, Odd and Tullis Hoftun, generously lent me the audiocassettes. Odd Hoftun also provided rough translations and contextualization of the Nepali material. I used some of this material in the performance. This was selected based on the combination of his assessment of the interviewee's integrity, the quality or tone of the voice, and the ambience transmitted in the interview situation itself.

899 Such as M. Hoftun (1986), Bore (1985), and Gravdal (1988).

900 Foremost Adam Steinhouse, Anita Schrader McMillan (also known as Anita Schrader), Tove Gravdal and Peter Svalheim. Steinhouse and Schrader McMillan were both our contemporaries at Wadham College.

901 In addition to friends from Oxford, such as Steinhouse, Schrader McMillan, Helen Lawrence, Brian Todd and Tanya Garland, I met up with Norwegian friends, such as Mugaas, Gravdal, Ellen and Peter Svalheim, Astrid Hovengen, Ingvar Evjen Olsen, Tonje Claussen, Hilde Frafjord Johnson, Svein Fuglestad, and Anders Brodtkorb Wittusen, who all added their contributions to the process. For the conceptual development of the performance, my discussion with Garland on how to define the borders between the private and the personal proved to be of great importance.

902 Especially the photographs by Hans Olav Mugaas and Tove Gravdal, and the precise observations and recollections written down by Peter Svalheim and Odd Hoftun contributed significantly in this process.

to private photographs from the site of the crash.⁹⁰³ In addition, the video-footage that I recorded on locations in Oxford and Oslo to create the video in the performance through which I aimed to conjure for the audience the contextual frame of Oxford as well as to situate my grieving process in a post-accident perspective.⁹⁰⁴ In the footage from Oxford, I especially focused on recording my impressions of the places that Martin and I had shared, such as the premises of Wadham College, the New Bodleian Library with its Indian Institute Library, the view of the green pastures at Port Meadow, the interior of Blackwell's Bookstore, and when leaving town, the first stretch of the journey out of the city towards London (from High Street to Gipsy Lane in Headington). I wanted to capture the sense of vacancy that these familiar places evoked for me, as if they inhabited his absence. What these video recordings may lack in terms of technical quality I think was compensated for in my clarity of what I was after in them, as well as my sensorial and embodied sense of the places depicted in these images.⁹⁰⁵

In the video-footage shot in Oslo, I focused on making recordings in which I was the subject, and in locations and with camera perspectives, which for me shared a tactile intimacy that could convey a sense of the inner stillness and vulnerability that I had experienced as a part of my private grieving process. The main part of these recordings showed me in different states of immersion, either while showering in my bathroom, or floating underneath the surface of water. The latter appeared in two versions, shot on different locations, first in deep, dark water (at a lake near Oslo), then in a white bathtub. In contrast, the remaining footage featured a proactive attitude, such as the shoot at the barber that documented my change from having waist long hair to a crew cut, or the shoot made at the National Library of a search through historical material on microfilm. The contrast between the immersive and the action-driven footage points to the different roles that the video would have later in the performance.

903 Consisted of a news reel from Kathmandu distributed by an international news agency with Norwegian commentaries broadcasted in Norway by the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK), as well as news reports and obituaries from national newspapers like *Dagbladet*, *Aftenposten*, *Vårt Land*, *The Guardian*, and *The Independent*, to local papers like the *Oxford Mail*, the *Oxford Times*, *Tvedestrandsposten* and *Lågendalsposten* etc. The private photographs were shot by Erik Hoftun, who arrived to Kathmandu shortly after the accident, and as next of kin and fluent in Nepali, managed to be airlifted in by an army helicopter to the site of the crash.

904 I shot the footage from Oxford, while Staurland in collaboration with me shot the footage from Oslo, as stated in the overview of the artistic process.

905 Like Seamus Heaney (1980: 131-145) who as a poet writes about "The Sense of Place," I believe that the artist's knowledge or embodied sense of a place and his or her artwork are intrinsically linked.

The audio material after the accident consisted mainly of four recordings.⁹⁰⁶ Three of them were extensive documentary material recorded shortly after Martin's death. The first was a compilation made by friends of the family in Nepal dated 2 August 1992 and consisted of first-hand descriptions from the site of the crash and the situation in Kathmandu immediately after the accident. The second was from a gathering of friends in Oxford shortly after the crash on 9 August 1992.⁹⁰⁷ The third recording was of the reception held after the memorial service in Oslo on 17 August 1992.⁹⁰⁸ The last recording was especially made for this project in Gjeving on 4 June 2003, and was of Martin's mother Tullis Hoftun singing, "Joy is like the Rain."⁹⁰⁹ I had first heard her sing this song in connection with the memorial service in Gjeving in 1992. It had not been recorded at the time, but I had never forgotten the impression it made on me. I knew that Martin and she used to sing it in Kathmandu when he as a child felt distress with his condition and singing together was the only remedy that could help to lift the spirit. I knew from Martin about this practice and its importance to him as a child. I was therefore thankful that his mother agreed to do the recording for the performance.⁹¹⁰ In the recording his mother sang it while being accompanied on piano by her young granddaughter Malene Jæger Hoftun. I was struck by the combination of the tune and the lyrics, Martin's life story, and his mother's trained, but aging and frail voice accompanied by a very young and halting rendition on piano. It seemed complete and perfect in its imperfection by simultaneously conveying both the fragility and strength that captured what I tried to render and embody about Martin.

The written sources consisted of articles and reports on the accident and obituaries published in newspapers and magazines, as well as the text of eulogies given.⁹¹¹ Additionally, I was given access to two unpublished manuscripts. They became particularly important to me in the artistic research process. The first was the unpublished biography written in Nepal by Odd Hoftun, Martin's father, in the months that followed the accident. His text helped me to see Martin's life in a larger perspective, as it gave me more information about both his childhood

906 In addition to the audio recordings made through the video footage.

907 Held in the home of Steinhouse at the time on Banbury Road in Oxford.

908 The reception was held at the Church City Mission Centre at Tøyen.

909 Originally sang by the group called the Medical Mission Sisters (1966): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCIXVPYJuSg> (Accessed: 9 October 2013)

910 The recording was made with the help of Atle Pakur Gundersen as sound technician.

911 Such as the obituary in *Aftenposten*, Oslo, written by Gravdal and Mugaas (1992) and the eulogies given at Wadham College 17 October 1992 by O. Hoftun, Steinhouse and Schrader McMillan.

and the socio-political situation that had framed his upbringing. The second manuscript entitled “Øyeskrift” was a draft of an unpublished novel written by Peter Svalheim in 2001-2002. Svalheim had known Martin since the early 1980s, and had since 1990 shared a house with him in Gjeving. The novel was drawing on his experiences from living with Martin and his disabilities. In being trained and having worked as a nurse for years before turning to literature studies and writing, Svalheim’s ability to recall and describe precisely physical situations was remarkable. His observations in this novel became therefore important reminders for me in my process. For example, he made me recall how Martin used his gaze and eyebrows as means to direct and instruct the helper who was assisting him.

The informal interviews I conducted between winter 2002 and summer 2003 with mutual friends and with Martin’s family played a central role in the early stages of this process of collecting material and in contextualizing my own experiences and evoking forgotten memories. The work brought me from one sitting room to the next, while I looked through old photo albums, scrapbooks and personal correspondence, and asked questions, listened to recollections, and shared memories – in Oslo, Gjeving, Liverpool, Oxford, London, and Guatemala City.⁹¹²

In this artistic research process, I also looked into references that addressed loss and mourning, and the process of grieving in general. According to their perspective or genre, these sources can, roughly speaking, be divided into four sub-categories:

- Psychological and / or therapeutic perspectives
- Biographical recollections of personal bereavement and grieving
- Fiction addressing loss and mourning processes
- Traumatic loss and grieving seen in a social perspective.

Clinical psychology⁹¹³ helped me understand grieving therapeutically. This insight I contextualized through studying self-help books directed towards individuals faced with loss and grieving, such as those written by Lawrence LeShan, a psychologist specialized in treating people with cancer, and Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, a psychiatric specialized in palliative care,⁹¹⁴ as well as biographical accounts

912 The interviews with Schrader McMillan were conducted both in Liverpool (2002) and Guatemala City (2003).

913 Fyhr (1999) and Herman (1997).

914 LeShan (1989) and Kübler-Ross (1998).

of personal grieving processes.⁹¹⁵ I supplemented these perspectives with the transcendental view on loss offered by the Tibetan Buddhist teacher Sogyal Rinpoche⁹¹⁶ and contributions offered by fictional writers on grieving.⁹¹⁷ I framed this pool of insights and the information I had gathered on Martin through drawing on socio-cultural studies on the traumatic a/effect of loss and grieving.⁹¹⁸

The question now was how I should actually process all this contextual background information, including the composite ethnographic data I had gathered, into a choreographed performance.



Figure 15. Exploring the debris: the orthopaedic corset and I in *A Song to Martin* at Dansens Hus in Oslo, September 2006. Photo: Knut Bry.

915 Such as those by Eikeland (1999) and Brock-Utne's (1998).

916 Rinpoche (1994).

917 For example, by Morrison (1987), Grieg (2002), Jacobsen (1985), and Auden (1991).

918 Such as Caruth (1995), Phelan (1993, 1997), and Gordon (1997). Cf. Chapter 4.

Revisiting my bodily memory of his body

Due to this process of accumulating insights, which included sifting through and comparing what friends had shared about their memories of Martin, I triggered the physical and non-verbalized experiences of him in my kinaesthetic memory. This triggering both tuned my awareness and renewed my interest in these embodied imprints. As I commenced on the solitary work in the studio, I therefore decided to focus on recapturing all the physical tasks Martin had needed help with in his daily life as well as my embodied memories of his physicality, as, for example, the morning routine of getting him up from bed and getting him seated in his wheelchair. This included the tasks of helping him to pee, to be washed, and to put on underwear and the layer of padding needed to avoid skin irritation under the corset. Then, the corset and the rest of his clothes, before at last I could lift him into his wheelchair, fasten the seatbelts, and commence a minute ritual of adjustments to help him avoid any unpleasant wrinkles in his clothes that could cause discomfort or strains during the next hours. This routine alone contained numerous little physical tasks that all required their specific attention and handling. In my explorative studio work, I delimited my focal point to recalling these tasks, which enabled me to revive and examine more closely the physical movements I had used to assist Martin. After he died, these movements had been emptied for meaning, but ten years later when I started this exploration, I discovered that they still existed in my kinaesthetic memory, embodied as movement reflexes that held experiences of Martin stored in me. In tapping into these reflexes, I experienced that a flood of memories and sensations were stirred up within me. In spite of being so real and present, this experience came as a shock, as I had not been consciously aware of these bodily imprints earlier, and even less so of the sensation of weight and smell that they carried with them. In August 2002, I wrote in my work diary:

*When I hold my underarms at an angle of 45 degrees from the shoulders and the torso, I still feel the weight of 40 kg + in my arms and can recapture the distinct smell of a twisted, peculiar body with a remarkable well-functioning brain and a sharp tongue.*⁹¹⁹

It fascinates me how an exploration into the specific execution of physical movements can precisely evoke experiential memories that produce sensations of smell, weight, and texture and, likewise, to what extent these bodily sensations can subsequently trigger movements in the mind that surpass the rational of

919 Excerpt translated from notes dated 17 August 2001, Oslo.

everyday life. However, according to Walter, research shows that it is normal that many bereaved like me find different ways to commune with the presence of the dead,⁹²⁰ which in my case, led to speculations like this:

*Does death only separate the movement from the body? Is the movement continuing without the body?*⁹²¹

This deliberate effort connected to recalling the experience of Martin's particular physicality framed much of my studio exploration. Through this effort, I largely defined the specificity of the movement work that was used in the performance later. However, the decision about using this material was only made after I had tested the material on a trusted colleague, the dancer and choreographer Ellen Johannesen,⁹²² whom I had invited in to give me some first feedback and response to the choreographic material. I had asked her, because she herself had had extensive experience of making and performing highly personal solo works. Her feedback was interesting. Despite the fact that she had not known Martin or what I was working on in much detail, her fascination was foremost with the movement material derived from exploring my embodied memories of Martin. She resolutely advised me to drop the part of the material that I had produced, which specifically came out of or related to my contemporary dance background. I found her spontaneous response both intriguing and helpful. Her observations made me feel as if I was set free from a self-imposed obligation to "dance." Furthermore, her points supported the direction I had intuitively experienced as the work progressed. My urgency and interest in the work lay in pursuing the specificities embedded in the material deriving from investigating my kinetic memory.

Moving from data and recollections to performance

As I prepared for the process of making the performance and facing again the rupturing wound of Martin's death, another disastrous aviation accident took place in Milan on 8 October 2001. A small, private jet drove into a fully loaded SAS SK 686 plane taking off for Copenhagen and caused what became the most serious accident in SAS's history. There were no survivors. A close friend of my family was killed. *Aftenposten*, the main newspaper in Norway, stated in their introduction to the report from Linate Airport:

920 Walter (1999: 56-61).

921 Excerpt translated from notes dated 17 August 2001, Oslo.

922 See *References: R4*.

A black hole gapes at us after the aviation disaster in Milan. The roof in the hangar has collapsed. The wall towards the runway is like blown away. It is quiet. Nobody talks loudly. They are working. Grave and concerted.

SILENCE, SMELL AND DUST⁹²³

The three last words were the headline of the article covering the page. I instinctively connected to the silence that was described there, the muted quiet that follows a sudden and violent incident that ruptures the linear flow of time.⁹²⁴ In combination with the footage of the debris, the report brought back the fatal hit that my project spiralled out of and reopened a wound in me. It brought back memories of that early Sunday morning in Vienna, nearly a decade earlier, when the phone rang from Norway and I received the news about Martin. I remembered how I was enjoying the pleasure of my Sunday morning ritual with a strong cup of tea and a cinnamon and raisin roll when the phone rang. I remembered how the soft morning light came in through the big windows and caressed the old studio flat where I stayed, and the immense emptiness that filled me after hearing the three short words: “Martin is dead.” I remembered that I asked about practical details even though the short sentence had made further words redundant. More importantly, I remembered how I only sensed a numbing and suspended feeling of silence inside; it felt as if I had been cocooned into a vacuum that invisibly enclosed me and set me apart from the outside world. The intellect instantly got the message; my emotions did not. The fact was plain, but emotionally incomprehensible. In this mental split lies the duality of grieving, shifting, like a pendulum swing, between the real ‘real’ and the dream world, as if two different dimensions of time are colliding: the gruesome, horrendous fact and “it-cannot-be-true”, “what-if...”, “perhaps...”⁹²⁵ In the tension field between these two dimensions and a future – a *futurum* – that is cancelled, loss is experienced and grieving emerges. For me, the body’s kinaesthetic memory – the imprints of movements absorbed and made an integral part of one’s being – fuelled these sensations of loss and grieving. With the news coverage of the accident in Mi-

923 My translation from the Norwegian: “**Et sort hull** gaper mot oss etter flykatastrofen i Milano. Taket på hangaren er rast sammen. Veggene mot rullebanen er som blåst vekk. Det er stille. Ingen snakker høyt. De jobber. Alvorlig og intenst. **STILLHET, LUKT OG STØV**” (Aftenposten, 10. October 2010: 2 – the usage of bold and capital letters as in the original).

924 In 1982 I was involved in a fatal car accident that nearly killed two of my fellow passengers. I was extremely lucky and was only severely bruised, but I can still recall the unbounded and numbing silence that I experienced right after the accident.

925 Fyhn (1999).

lan, the memory of these conflicting experiences was re-evoked in me and my sympathy went out to those who had lost their beloved. I knew how quickly the shock effect of the accident would fade in the media, and be replaced by other tragedies; while for some of the bereaved, they might find themselves, as I did, living on in a traumatic return to an event that would hit them again and again in the years to come.

With this jarring reminder of the nature of traumatic grieving, I was able to condense and identify the core challenge of my artistic enquiry: to search for a choreographed expression of what I call the anatomy of grieving. This refers to the experiential experience of loss, which gives 'body' to the complex process of grieving with its co-existing temporalities. Its different tenses include the Present tense ("Yes, he is dead"); the Past tense ("Do you remember..."); and the Future Unreal Conditional tense, or what I call the 'Dream world's' *Futurum Conditonalis* ("Imagine if..., then..."),⁹²⁶ as well as the sudden and involuntarily flashbacks evoking the trauma experienced.⁹²⁷ In the state of flux these temporalities create, sweet memories from the past intermix with the bleak and coarse reality of the present, the wishful hopes for miracles that could rescue a future that will never be, and the stirring flashbacks that bring on a haunting "rememory" of past events in the present.⁹²⁸ In the unpredictable swirl between all these temporal tenses, the sense of loss and grieving erupts beyond our conscious control.

I realized early on in the process that the traditional linear dramaturgy of a narrative did not make sense here, and decided "instead to approach the narrative from a non-linear and associative perspective," as I stated in August 2002.⁹²⁹ The insight I had gained through my artistic research approach to Martin's life and death supported this decision. In letting the dark mark in the Himalayan rock wall constitute the centre point on a mind-map, I had traced the associations as they spread out, like a rhizome⁹³⁰ from this black circle. The strategy had enabled me to get an overview, and hence to identify what strands of the story I would pursue in the development of the artistic work and in devising its staging. This also made it possible to construct a narration that followed a non-linear and associative logic, which seemed more in accordance with the way grieving

926 The latter a term used, for example, in Hungarian Grammar, see Anselm M. Riedl (1858: 198).

927 As discussed in Chapter 4.1.

928 The concept of Tony Morrison (1987, 1990) introduced in Chapter 4.2.

929 Excerpt translated from my presentation at the Nordic Theatre Days at Torshavn in August 2002.

930 I find this concept of Deleuze and Guattari evocative and useful, but my study is not built on their theoretical framework (Deleuze and Guattari 1987).

processes unfold, movements flow, and the kinaesthetic memory itself works. Dramaturgically, the narrative developed hence in spirals and layers, depths and texture rather than in a linear and Aristotelian sense, as I tried to convey the anatomy of grieving and the sense of Martin's absent body present in mine in the performance.

Constructing the performance: making my song to Martin

As a choreographic composition, the solo performance *A Song to Martin* lasted 60 minutes. It was made for a black box theatre with the audience seated on a conventionally raised platform and with a light design that had mainly a more supportive and subdued function in the staging. The performance was performed with the support of a video projection on two different screens with a designed soundscape, a remote controlled electric wheelchair, and with the help of a few other central objects, such as an orthopaedic corset and a white refrigerator.

The objects were not randomly chosen. They related to memories from my first painful visit to Martin's home at Gjeving after the accident. There, I saw left behind in his bedroom his old, spare corset and the electric wheelchair, which he had not taken along to Kathmandu. As Martin could not sit upright without his corset or move around on his own accord without his wheelchair, this sight materialized his absence for me. The feeling was underlined by the buzz of an old refrigerator. Left alone and vacant, the objects spoke of an absent user not present. The lonely image of a refrigerator resurfaced when I began to work on the staging of this project. As an object, its shape reminded me of a tomb. In combination with its function to keep things cool and to store what otherwise would not remain fresh, the refrigerator gave me associations to the way in which my own loss over Martin was kept 'freshly' contained in a trauma, years after he was killed. In the intertextual and mutual exchange between these objects, the supporting audio-visuals, and me as a solo dancer the performance came into being and my griefscape of Martin was embodied.

Choreographically as a composition, the performance had three main interwoven layers:

- The physical material developed;
- The video locating the performance contextually; and
- The soundscape integrating documentary sound recordings.

Each of the three parts consisted of material drawn from the earlier fieldwork and background research. I have already considered the physical approach in this chapter. I therefore want to look at the development of the compositional structure and primarily focus on how I viewed first, the work with video, and then the sound design, as extended and integral parts of the choreographic composition. Both video and sound played crucial roles not only in contextualizing the movements used but also as compositional elements in the staging of the project.

On the development of compositional structure and the use of video in the staging

The compositional structure resulted partly from a process of “dancing-the-unknown,” which meant that I already began dancing the performance from the first week of rehearsals. In the beginning, I would set aside 40 minutes at the end of each day for an improvised exploration of the elements I had covered during the rehearsals. I approached the task as if it was a performance, helped by the presence of the video camera, which I used to record the outcome.⁹³¹ Through this approach, I could advance into the physical material I had worked with earlier, as well as both develop my capacity to deal with this length of time and to identify my intuitive route in the space. From viewing the video, I got information that directed me further in my choreographic work. The video camera therefore became a central tool for me choreographically in this artistic process. Gradually through the process of dancing-the-unknown, I moved from open improvisation to dancing via scores that were more elaborate to eventually settling for a set route with a defined movement structure and timeframe for the physical material I explored. This material derived mainly from five different approaches to my embodied experiences of Martin, which were, respectively, recollecting the movements that I once used to assist Martin, recalling and adapting his movements’ vocabulary to my body, exploring his physical limitations on my able body, experimenting with various combinations and alterations of these different movement strategies, and probing into the uncertainty existing between these different modes of moving.

⁹³¹ The concept of performing my unknown dance derived from advice I got from Runa Rebne, an Oslo-based contemporary dancer. I consulted her prior to the start of the process because she had extensive experience with making her own solos. Though I had previously danced several shorter solos made both by other choreographers and myself, I had never spent a whole rehearsal process on developing a solo, nor performed a programme based only on a solo.

In parallel with this choreographic process, I developed the videos, which for me were crucial to contextualize the topic and the movements used in the performance. Inspired by the ideas of the early Russian filmmaker Dziga Vertov,⁹³² I wanted the video to play with our notion of time and space and rupture the notion of linearity, and let it function both as a microscope and telescope in the emotions that are often inaccessible. In doing so, it would alternate between resting in states of stasis and projecting flows or rushes of movements. Through these alternating modes, the video could fulfil both its role as a protagonist and that of the supporting partner in the performance for me. Content-wise, I therefore viewed it choreographically as an important dancing partner in the performance. Consequently, the artistic processes of developing the video work took place side by side with my movement exploration. I drew on my earlier experiences from television,⁹³³ and began the work by drafting storyboards and searching for useful footage. Some of this footage was mainly gathered from external sources and stemmed from newsreels, while I made the rest in collaboration with Staurland on camera, although his main contribution was to help me technically in the actual editing process. All the footage served as raw material to construct videos that were used in the performance either to create a contextual backdrop, or to convey a sense of how my personal memories of the past and/or feelings of remembrance resurfaced in the present. I will explain what I mean by these categories.

For example, at the beginning of the performance I used the newsreel of the crash to place Martin, his life and death, as a factual reality in the past. This scenario is set through a documentary collage consisting of televised news reports from Kathmandu on the accident, followed by images of the newspaper coverage of his death in the plane crash, the obituary notice, the photography of the crash site itself, and a scrolling text with excerpts from the obituary that appeared in *Aftenposten*.⁹³⁴ I ended the performance with another documentary sample, namely the news coverage of Martin in Kathmandu at the age of 11. This documentation of a past that has long ceased to exist also bespeaks a future that awaits, which in Martin's case, had already abruptly ended when I first watched the flickering images. However, for me this future includes both what would happen to him in life before the accident as well as the accident itself and what I would experience

932 See, for example, Annette Michelson (1992: 80).

933 From 1992 to 1993 I had a 12 months internship (divided in two parts) in the NRK. I was given opportunities to participate in the conceptual development and to produce short videos that were incorporated in the programmes I took part in developing.

934 Gravdal and Mugaas (1992).

afterwards, in the wake of his death. This simultaneous juxtaposition of memories that the film clip sets off produces a surging movement within me, because the excerpt brings forward sweet memories of a distant past into the present, which swiftly crash and break into the “return of the traumatic real,”⁹³⁵ the loss suffered. In the staging, I accentuate this temporal juxtaposition by projecting the recording of the most distant past in the performance at the very front of the stage – between the audience and myself – just as the performance is about to fade into its own erasure. In placing this only live image of Martin here, it created a contrast to what I had already presented about him that also paradoxically left a space for both of us in the performance. I felt that the image of him as a child in Nepal separated him from my private grieving, as it was furthest removed from the ground we had shared together. Nevertheless, the documentary video material contributed altogether to situating the performance within the realm of the real, a reality that once existed.

The video recordings of personal memories resurfacing in the present have a different role, mainly that of situating my private grieving. I decided early on to use the bathroom and/or the state of being undressed, as the main contexts for directly voicing my personal memories in the video. I chose the bathroom, because it is a place for personal hygiene, to cleanse and discharge the body, and therefore, is mainly associated with private intimacy. In this way, the context of bathing also visually pointed to the exposed and naked state, which I connected with Martin’s disability, the intimate relationship that would evolve between him and his helpers/assistants, and grieving itself.

The privacy and intimacy I associated with the bathroom and the act of bathing not only offered the state of private grieving a location or situation, but also contributed to creating an auto/documentary-poetic feeling in the videos. However, in the search for this quality, I went through a laborious process of testing out various site-specific locations and situations, prior to arriving at those seen in the videos used in the performance.⁹³⁶ In the videos, I carefully tried to convey aspects or glimpses of my grieving process, especially those linked to the sensation of feeling numb,⁹³⁷ captured in situations where I was exposed in

935 Cf. H. Foster (1996) and Chapter 4.

936 That is, the performance (2006) referred to in this study. One example from the strenuous process of exploring suitable locations for filming is the video loop showed at the beginning of this performance. This loop shows me floating naked underneath the surface of the water, sickly pale against a dark background. The footage resulted from numerous retakes and a freezing, cold experience on location in a lake in late autumn.

937 On numbness, see for example, Walter (1999: 144-145, 161-162).

naked or intimate privacy. I used these bodily states to portray delayed emotional responses, known from complex grieving processes,⁹³⁸ that related to my loss of Martin; how memories could still affectively surface in a flash and rupture my everyday life, more than a decade after his death. In the process of shooting this footage, I found a way to include excerpts from the text material I had gathered, although, in comparison to the vast amount that I had collected little of it was actually recorded and even less finally used in the edited videos. As noted, I had early on discarded my original intention to situate the “real” through performing text material live in the performance. With this self-imposed limitation, I acknowledged the often stated claim that it is impossible to convey private traumatic loss to others while I used the video-mediated text both to highlight and also to overcome this gap in the performance, partly through creating a temporal delay or juxtaposition that obstructed a linear reading of the grieving process. In addition to physically dislocating the speaking voice from the live situation on stage, I would also combine sound and video recordings that were incompatible in real time, for example, seeing me floating underwater, while my voice is heard speaking calmly and intimately. The two situations could obviously not take place simultaneously. Any live attempts to speak, see, hear or be heard by an audience from a position underwater would have been difficult, if not impossible, in real life. Combined with my live performance on stage, I inhabited in that instance three different locations and temporal modalities simultaneously.

This concern for multimodality was reflected in the way I approached my video work as such. Through connecting different temporal tenses to the footage shot at dissimilar locations, I tried to establish an internal temporal logic for myself in the video work. For example, I applied the footage from the bathroom, as it alluded to my private space, to indicate the present tense. In contrast, I used news excerpts about the accident to evoke the past, and I employed the documentary footage from Oxford to enhance a feeling of the cancelled future, as well as to create a haunting “rememory.”⁹³⁹ As a non-pathological concept, rememory speaks of the social effect of being hit by traumatic memories. Rememory might strike you while you are “walking down the road... you hear something or see something going on. So clear.”⁹⁴⁰ In that instant, one is ‘bumping’ into experiences of the past and is thrown into a temporal flux, a fragile and pliable state that

938 See, for example, Fyhr (1999: 51-55) on complicated grieving, and Wilson (2004: 7-44) on complex PTSD in general.

939 The concept of Tony Morrison (1990, 1987) introduced in Chapter 4.2.

940 Morrison (1987: 35).

fluctuates between past, present and future tenses, as a way of remembering and experiencing the present.⁹⁴¹ I wanted to contextualize this feeling of being suddenly and involuntarily overwhelmed, as if haunted, in the video used shortly after I had introduced Martin and the accident and done my entrance on stage. In this video, I situated the context of Wadham College and Oxford based on footage that I had shot while doing fieldwork and revisiting the places that Martin and I once had shared there. With the aid of personal photographs from the past, I sought to create a documentary ambience that re-contextualized this footage and conveyed the present state of my delayed grieving process with its experiences of the void: how details that I once had passed in Oxford without noticing suddenly catch my attention like an eyesore – details like the beautiful faded blue colour of the visitors' map on the wall of the New Bodleian Library, which tells me: "You are here." This phrase now seems to carry a hidden message yet to be deciphered. Likewise, the sign in the backyard announcing: "Disabled – please call for attention" now instantly appears to me as cynical, cruel, and humiliating, because I vividly recall how much trouble Martin had to go through in order to get access to this library. In the part focusing on Wadham College, I directly juxtapose old photographs of Martin and me together in college with new shots taken of exactly the same places without anybody present. For me these juxtapositions both illustrate the sensation of having involuntarily flashbacks⁹⁴² and visually evoke the impact of rememory that I wanted to address with the help of the videos in the performance. I sought to advance this sensation of rememory by adding a soundscore that connected the loss of Martin both to Wadham itself and to others' experiences of loss, as well as to a larger timeframe and historical context of loss and grieving.

In this soundscore I combined a recorded excerpt of Anita Schrader McMillan's speech at the memorial service in Oslo in 1992 with a recital of the poem *The Chapel at Wadham College, Oxford, 1921*, written by another Norwegian Wadham alumnus, the writer and poet Nordahl Grieg,⁹⁴³ who studied at Wadham

941 From a cognitive science perspective, rememory can be seen as a state produced by traumatic flashbacks of episodic memories. More information on episodic memories, see for example, Endel Tulving (2002).

942 Cf. Chapter 4.1 on the characteristics of post-traumatic stress.

943 Grieg (2002: 55-56). My translation from Norwegian: *Kapellet ved Wadham College, Oxford, 1921*. Ray Ockenden translated the first half of the poem for a hymn to the 400th Anniversary of Wadham College in 2010. However, this translation understates the ambiguous tone in the poem and Grieg's troubled relationship to the church and authorities and leaves out the second half of the poem, which has a completely different form with simpler and shorter sentences that expresses a pantheistic and

in the early 1920s. Seen through the camera's eye, I take the viewer on a visual tour of the college premises. First from the main gate to the rooms where Martin and I once stayed, then backtracking and moving across the two courtyards to the door of the college chapel, while, in a voiceover, we hear Anita describing the characteristic features of an Oxford college. Her account ends with the following note: "An Oxford College is not a place where people just pass through. It is the accumulation of people who have been there over time. Martin has become part of this continuum. Over 400 years and the centuries to come."⁹⁴⁴ In this way, she places Martin alongside Grieg and the many other young people "whose faces vanished in the sea of oblivion" but are still intrinsically parts of the college's history.⁹⁴⁵ On this note, the camera moves into the old chapel and the recital begins of Grieg's *The Chapel at Wadham College, Oxford, 1921*. It is done in Norwegian, as in the original, but with subtitles in English.⁹⁴⁶ In the poem, Grieg depicts his experience of attending a memorial service in the chapel in the early 1920s. This service was held for the many young men and former students of the college who had died a few years earlier in the First World War. Grieg was struck and deeply moved by the contrast between what he describes as "the white distant words"⁹⁴⁷ of the chanting priest, and "the grief of names"⁹⁴⁸ belonging to the young men who had died violently in their prime. Grieg had not known any of them but, as a young student himself, he imagined the loss that their friends must have felt. His empathy extends to include the dead, as he senses their presence and the impact of their destiny. This makes him wonder: "Are they still alive beyond death in after-lands we do not know?"⁹⁴⁹ In questioning the division between the living and the dead, Grieg expresses here what many of those bereaved experience, cf. Tony Walter's research on death and bereavement.⁹⁵⁰ The paradox is that Grieg would share a similar destiny with these young men: he died in an air crash while reporting an air raid over Berlin in 1943. Little did he know at the time of writing

spiritual vision for a peaceful re-encounter with the young fellows lost, set in the light white nights of the Nordic summer.

944 Schrader McMillan (1992). Transcribed by me from the reception after the memorial service in Oslo, 17 August 1992.

945 Grieg (2002: 55-56). My translation. In the original: "hvis unge forpinte sjele sank ned i den store ro."

946 In the distinct intonation that characterizes the dialect of Bergen that Grieg himself used. Recited by the actor Bjarte Hjelmeland, who grew up in the Bergen area. Recorded by Leif Gaute Staurland at NOTAM in Oslo spring 2002. The English subtitles used in the video documentation are based on a crude and hasty translation made in 2006.

947 My translation. In original: "ord som er hvite og fjerne."

948 Ray Ockenden's translation. In the original: "En endeløs sorg av navne."

949 My translation. In the original: "Er de i live bak døden, i land som vi ikke kjenner?"

950 Walter (1999: 57).

the poem that he himself would become one of “the fallen of this house, who once were gathered here;”⁹⁵¹ that his name would also end up among the many engraved on the War Memorial Wall at Wadham College in the rather narrow but central passageway where students hurry through on their way to meals and snacks in the refectory. As I juxtapose his poem with footage of this memorial in the video, I let the moving camera halt when reaching his name on the wall.

In Norway, both his name and works are well known and closely associated with the fight against the Nazi regime and their occupation and the defence of human values and rights, which makes his life and death seem inseparably interlinked.⁹⁵² Therefore, Grieg and his poem contributed not only to situating Wadham College as a place, as it exemplified the meta-text of Schrader McMillan’s description of an Oxford college, but also connected Martin and his story and my private griefscape as individual fragments to a larger context and continuum of grieving and loss.

In addition to providing contextual frameworks in the performance, the video also functioned dramaturgically as a co-player for me in the staging, as it alternated between being the protagonist and a supporting partner in the performance. The first role can be exemplified in the videos contextualizing the accident and Oxford at the beginning of the performance, the latter in the different, shifting constellations of duets, trios or quartets that the video would form with me as a dancer, the soundscape and/or the wheelchair, as co-players in the choreography. At times, in this supporting role, the video would simply function as a resonator that provided a steady background image, as a constant, to view the unfolding of the performance against. To accomplish this, I would mostly let the video projection linger on durational and atmospheric images, which would not add a stream of new information to the scene taking place but rather secure a contextual or emotive framework for it. The combined effect of these different roles of the video was also pivotal for me in order to convey and juxtapose a sense of past and present tense, and to point to a cancelled future and flashes of rememory in the choreographed performance. In the staging of the performance, the video therefore came to serve several compositional purposes, including contributing

951 Ray Ockenden’s translation. In the original: “alle de døde, de falne av dette hus.”

952 To underline this, one of his other poems became – together with the roses – emblematic for the spontaneous reactions against the terror that struck Norway on 22. July 2011 and killed our young people at Utøya. This poem entitled “To Our Young” (in the original: “Til Ungdommen”) was written in 1936, set to music by Otto Mortensen in 1952, and is today a well-known song in Norway (Grieg 2002: 133-134).

to conveying experiences of rememory. Through the combination of imagery and soundscore used in the video, I wanted to evoke this, how layered experiences and memories related to a traumatic event of the past can involuntarily be set in motion in a flash, as a rememory. With the help of the soundscore and the notion that Gordon calls “ghostly matters,”⁹⁵³ the composite that sets such experiences in motion, the video thus offered me a tool to stage choreographically how the different temporal modalities co-exist in grieving and how they may rupture the logic of linear time.

On the soundscape and the construction of cross-temporal juxtapositions in the performance

Central to the artistic process of constructing the performance was also the development of the soundscape. I began this work by trying out different kinds of music while exploring movement material in the studio. In the early phases of this process, I used mainly three kinds of sources, which reflected respectively: ‘roots’, contemporaneity, and culture, and hence based on traditional folk music, ‘Bhangra’ music from the Asian Underground scene, and classical music. With regard to the first, this consisted mainly of recordings of Norwegian “sæterd-alsslåtter” and medieval song traditions;⁹⁵⁴ the next of electronic and ambient music of British-Indian groups like *State of Bengal*;⁹⁵⁵ and the last, of classical music by J. S. Bach, Schubert, and Beethoven.⁹⁵⁶ However, I soon realized that the classical pieces mainly served a therapeutic purpose to sustain me as an individual in the solitary confinement of my studio work. After a few weeks of work, however, I discarded all this music, as the historical associations and references the music emitted seemed to override and over-determine my visions for the project. Instead, I turned to a composition entitled *Ghost Opera* of the contemporary Chinese composer Tan Dun,⁹⁵⁷ who since the 1980s has been based in New York. The composition is “a five-movement work for string quartet and pipa with water, metal, stones, and paper.”⁹⁵⁸ According to Dun, he wrote this

953 Gordon (1997). Cf. Chapter 4.

954 Especially recordings by Bjørgum (1990) and Garnås (1989), see *References: R3*.

955 Especially their song “Flight IC408,” see Singh (1997) under *References: R3*.

956 Recordings of Bach (1961), Schubert (1989), and van Beethoven (1997), see *References: R3*.

957 Dun (1997), see *References: R3*.

958 Programme notes (Dun 1997). Pipa is a traditional four-stringed Chinese instrument that resembles a lute.

composition as a musical journey or meeting point between East and West.⁹⁵⁹ In achieving this he decided to let elements from traditional Chinese tunes and a folk song encounter Western culture through strands of Bach and Shakespeare's work, while searching for an equilibrium between these two traditions of dissimilar world views and aesthetics. Martin's life and identity was, like Tan Dun's, transnational. Both felt equally at home in the East and the West. *Ghost Opera* may be read as an attempt to transgress this split. However, the title also refers to the inspiration Dun got from the ancient shamanistic rituals used in his family's home village in Hunan,⁹⁶⁰ where the bereaved would traditionally commune with their deceased in order to appease them, and thereby secure their wellbeing in the afterlife so the living could move on with their lives in this world – without being haunted. In this way, they also had a dialogue with their past and future life. Hence, in addition to dealing with the split between East and West, the *Ghost Opera* also addresses the struggle to mend the relation between the living and the dead, the past and the present, while dealing with loss and grief. These concerns closely corresponded to those I personally wanted to address in this project on Martin. I was also attracted to Dun's multilayered approach to composition in general, as well as his artistic reflection on the work leading to this particular piece.⁹⁶¹ I therefore wanted to work with his *Ghost Opera*, despite its specific Chinese references.⁹⁶²

However, as *Ghost Opera* is relatively short compared with *A Song to Martin*, that is, approx. 36 minutes,⁹⁶³ versus approx. 60 minutes, I decided in the staging to frame the recording of *Ghost Opera* with a careful selection of documentary sound recordings selected from the vast material of recordings I had gathered through my research process and fieldwork.⁹⁶⁴ This material also included the different atmospheric ambiences recorded at the many locations of my video shootings. I wanted to use these documentary sound excerpts to contextualize the relationship between the performance and the concerns of *Ghost Opera*, as well as to enhance a sense of the many layers that the griefscape involved for me

959 Dun, 9 October 1997 in a lecture on composition at The Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH) in conjunction with Ultima Oslo Contemporary Music Festival, see also the programme following the recording (Dun 1997).

960 According to Dun, 9 October 1997 in his lecture at NMH in Oslo.

961 Ibid.

962 I was granted permission via his publisher G. Schirmer Inc./Associated Music Publishers, Inc., New York, NY, which administer the copyrights to the piece.

963 In the recording I used, for more information on this specific recording, see Dun (1997).

964 Olav Torget remastered the authentic sound recordings in collaboration with me at his sound studio at Grünerløkka in Oslo autumn 2003.

as context and experienced reality. Both Dun's composition and my construction of the performance related to experiences with death and dying that transgress spatial or temporal borders normally restricted by time and space.⁹⁶⁵ In my case, I was concerned with capturing a sense of the temporal flux of tenses that tend to be a characteristic experience of grieving.⁹⁶⁶ Sound-wise, I tried to underline this focus through experimenting with how to choose and place the documentary sound material in the dramaturgical structure. For instance, I partly experimented with utilizing the sound of the spoken language as a contextual resonator and ingredient to place different temporalities and locations in the compositional bricolage of the performance.⁹⁶⁷ For example, in Martin's case, the audience first hears his characteristic and slight nasal sounding voice while he is speaking Nepali in a fieldwork interview with Naryan Man Biuche (Rahit) in Kathmandu in 1990. After this introduction, the audience hears Martin's voice twice more in the performance, the next time in English, while he is dictating the opening passage of his thesis in 1991, then at last in Norwegian, towards the very end of the performance in the interview he gave as a young school pupil in Kathmandu in 1975. However, in addition to familiarizing the audience with hearing his voice, I also wanted to convey a sense of his tri-lingual reality. Therefore, I deliberately juxtaposed recordings made in the three different languages already in the opening part of the performance in order to hint at these contextual intersections of languages in his life, starting with my recorded prologue to the performance in Norwegian, via Martin's interview in Nepali to the low buzz of English-speaking voices recorded right after the accident from the gathering of friends in Oxford that Adam Steinhouse convened. So within approx. five minutes the audience has been introduced to the three languages Martin lived and operated within: Norwegian, Nepali, and English, recorded in three different temporal and spatial locations: Oslo 2003, Kathmandu 1990, and Oxford 1992.

Likewise, I used different documentary sound recordings to attest to our shared time and connection to Oxford, such as the one of the eulogy that our close friend at Wadham Anita gave in Oslo in 1992 to a predominantly Norwegian audience who knew little about this part of Martin's life.⁹⁶⁸ In combining her

965 Likewise as the shamanistic rituals that had inspired Dun in his composition, Martin's death did have an impact on me that lead to the construction and embodiment of my private griefscape.

966 Fyhr (1999).

967 This interest has also permeated earlier works of mine, such as *White Lies/Black Myths*, see Gran (2000).

968 Recorded 17 August 1992 in Oslo.

meta-text about time and continuity with the recital of Grieg's poem, I could connect my private grieving over Martin to a larger context of grieving that simultaneously both evoked well-known Norwegian references and emphasized the premises of Wadham and Oxford.

Similarly, in order to enhance an ambience of multimodality in the performance, I expanded on this cross-temporal juxtaposition of time and place in the soundscape that followed the *Ghost Opera* and ended the performance. This medley of documentary sound starts with the recording done inside a bus that accelerates and sets off after picking up passengers. It was made during my fieldwork in 2002 and was an integral part of the video showing the view from a passenger seat as the Oxford-London coach leaves the city centre of Oxford. I added to this recording the one of Martin dictating his thesis in English from 1991. This excerpt ends with him saying: "Omit this whole paragraph. We start over again." On that note I faded in the recording of his mother Tullis Hoftun (Gjeving in 2003) singing what they had once sung together in the past: "I saw raindrops on my window, Joy is like the rain. / Laughter runs across my pane, Slips away and comes again. / Joy is like the rain" etc. In the middle here, I mixed in the short excerpt from the film interview with Martin as a child in 1975. And when the song ends, I let the low buzzing recording return, of his English-speaking friends reminiscing about their loss in the documentation from Oxford in 1992. This excerpt also constitutes the last sound segment heard in the performance. Despite the presence of the audience, I remember I felt as a performer strangely alone and in the company with my past and my future in this last medley of sound, as if I co-existed with a flux of tenses and locations: Kathmandu 1991 juxtaposed with Oxford 2002, Kathmandu 1975 with Gjeving 2003, while recalling memories from Oxford in the late 1980s. The performance came to a close as the sound of friends in Oxford ends with Surya Soni saying: "I will kind of miss being woken up at four in the morning, hearing a stream of Norwegian: 'Per-Roar, Per-Roar.'"⁹⁶⁹ In ending on this particular note, the core of my griefscape related to Martin and our shared life in Oxford was no longer just a product of my personal phantasm, but as expressed through his voice, connected to close-knit friendships and networks that had evolved there in Oxford.

As I have tried to demonstrate, the soundscape was not solely a question about selecting the individual segments of it, but the way these various parts were juxtaposed and set in interrelationship to each other compositionally, and coex-

969 Recorded 9 August 1992 Oxford.

isted with the video and the movements. For me these compositional concerns are about choreography, as they are choreographically motivated. I wanted to recreate an audible resonance of the worlds Martin travelled between in which the sounds of Nepali, Norwegian, and Oxbridge English were heard. Moreover, like me, most of the audience will not understand the content nor the nuances enveloped in all of these, but they can still be left with an ambience, or, more importantly, be left with a sense that none of us can grasp the entity of our next. Something always gets lost in translation.

I had a strange experience of this gap as I re-viewed the video documentation of *A Song to Martin* (2006) while working on this chapter. I was particularly drawn to the entrances in the beginning when the electric wheelchair started to move, and my state as I entered stage with a white arum lily and a scissor in my hands after having spent the first fifteen minutes of the performance cramped inside the refrigerator. In spite of knowing why the wheelchair was there and how the function of the refrigerator complemented my story about the nature of a prolonged and delayed grieving process, I was surprised by what this beginning evoked for me:

The performance is set physically in motion by a solo for an electric wheelchair. It is moving seemingly on its own accord, without anybody inside. The driver is missing. It is as if the absence itself has set the wheelchair in motion. It moves slowly. It has no hurry. It lingers as it reaches the front stage before it turns and carries on, and muffled voices can be heard, as if its squeaking wheels have re-awaken a past, and its shadows start to move the space. The wheelchair moves as a spider that meticulously makes an invisible web. As I am trying to convey what is going on, I am falling out of my stasis and into its fine net. I cannot get loose – without cutting something off and into pieces. This hurts. It makes no sense. Nothing does. I make the cut and everything falls into place: I can feel the weight in my arms of an absent body. It feels real but without really being here. Where am I?

This experience radically differed from the practical and craft-related challenges that I knew I had focused on here as a performer while doing this entrance in the performance. For example, they had related to the relation between balance and counter-balance, and the pull of gravity in the body. However, the input arising from re-viewing the scene offered another layer and intensity that had passed unnoticed in the heat of the production. This experience showed me the complexity involved both in conducting and writing about artistic research as I did in this chapter.

Closing thoughts: the loss has no end – only new beginnings

To sum up, early on in this artistic process when I faced the complexity embedded in the fieldwork material I had gathered about Martin, I experienced my own personal little crisis of representation.⁹⁷⁰ I resolved this challenge through focusing on the experiences I personally had shared with Martin. This decision meant that the major parts of the material I had collected were never used in the performance itself. The discarded material proved nevertheless to be very important in shaping the performance, because it provided another ground and a self-reflexive perspective on my artistic process and decision-making that forced me to look beyond my personal experiences to the larger social context involved. Evoking what social anthropologist Clifford Geertz has referred to as a “thick description,”⁹⁷¹ this outlook endowed me with a more a layered and dense understanding of Martin’s life, especially, thanks to the numerous accounts and information I had gathered on the impact that Martin had had on other people’s lives. This larger contextual outlook gave me a much-needed distance from which to observe my own loss. Hence, while keeping in mind the experiences of others, I choreographically constructed the performance as a “messy text”⁹⁷² of my own private griefscape. Through this research process, I identified an artistic strategy for working choreographically based on contextual background research and fieldwork.⁹⁷³ Likewise, I also faced some of the methodological and ethical challenges that such a strategy can raise. This experience enhanced my self-reflexive awareness, because it also pointed to the issue of politics involved in constructing and embodying a choreographic work. Despite the fact that my understanding of the strategy for docudancing grieving would emerge and develop gradually throughout the work with the performance trilogy, I knew from early on that this project challenged the distinctions between aesthetics and ethics, as well as those drawn between private and personal concerns in a public setting: firstly, as the project choreographically highlighted existential issues related to how to cope with loss and dying, rather than primarily focusing on aesthetic form, and secondly, as my autoethnographic role in it, which included embodying the documentary material that it was based on, made me critically aware of both the

970 Cf. Chapter 2.

971 Geertz (1973: 5-6, 9-10).

972 Heaton (2002).

973 In retrospect, this strategy resembles what Hal Foster observes and pinpoints with his concept of “the artist as an ethnographer,” mentioned earlier in Chapters 1, 2 and 4.2, and which I discuss in further detail in the remaining chapters. See Foster (1996: 171-204).

issues of ethics as well as the questions of politics at stake in the performance project,⁹⁷⁴ topics I discuss in the last chapter of this study. In the process of constructing *A Song to Martin*, I saw the outline of these challenges surface.

Although it felt meaningful to engage with realities, such as Martin's life and death, that had relevance and mattered to others outside my closed studio space and discipline, this contextual engagement would also highlight pertinent issues and add perspectives that I had to take into account, like those related to ethical and political concerns. The emerging artistic research strategy I had intuitively stumbled upon when exploring Martin's case would therefore eventually call upon the full range of my acquired skills and background.⁹⁷⁵ It created a pressure-cooker that made me question my motivation and purpose with the artistic work as well as the direction of the project. This also spurred me on to a critical introspection of my artistic discipline and my relation to its historical practice.⁹⁷⁶ The kaleidoscopic perspectives and multifaceted experiences this approach had brought on made me want to explore further what this strategy could offer when I included other performers in such a contextualized and fieldwork-based artistic process and approach to choreography. This exploration resulted next in the performance *A Rehearsal for Mortals*.

974 Cf. the end of the previous chapter, and the claims of Lepecki (2006) and Franko (2007). This challenge was particularly striking as I approached the trauma of the Bosnian War. See Chapters 7 and 8.

975 See Chapters 1 and 2.

976 By making me question and look into my own artistic heritage and lineage, see Chapter 3.1.

6. *A Rehearsal for Mortals* – a strategy evolves

For the Heart, Life is simple: it beats for as long as it can. Then it stops. Sooner or later, one day, this pounding action will cease of its own accord, and the blood will begin to run towards the body's lowest point, where it will collect in a small pool, visible from the outside as a dark, soft patch on ever whiter skin, as the temperature sinks, the limbs stiffen and the intestines drain. These changes in the first hours occur so slowly and take place with such inexorability that there is something almost ritualistic about them, as though life capitulates according to specific rules, a kind of gentlemen's agreement (...) None of these are alien to us. We are constantly surrounded by objects and phenomena from the realm of death. Nonetheless, there are few things that arouse in us greater distaste than to see a human being caught up in it, at least if we are to judge by the efforts we make to keep corpses out of sight.

From *Death in the family* by Knut Ove Knausgård.⁹⁷⁷

In this chapter I focus on the second part of my performance trilogy, which was entitled *A Rehearsal for Mortals* and addressed our mortality. Here, I examine how this project came into being and contributed to developing the fieldwork-based strategy to choreography that had emerged in *A Song to Martin*. Firstly, I locate the artistic starting-point for looking at our finitude and finality. Next, I describe my specific approach to this socio-political context of death and dying. This includes sharing how I involved other performers in this fieldwork-based strategy. In reviewing our experiences and how information was gathered, handled, and finally processed into choreography and the performance, I try to show how this strategy evolved as well as discussing some of the artistic dilemmas it raised. In order to situate my choreographic outlook, the chapter ends with a personal

977 Knausgård (2012 [2009]: 3)

rendering of the performance's final scene as a lead-in to the concluding comments. I begin this enquiry by first drawing up an overview of the factual project and its framework.

Factual overview of the artistic production process: the container and the content

A Rehearsal for Mortals is a performance project trying to embody the process of dying. It was built on an explorative study of the physiology and pathology of death and dying, and the industry surrounding death. My impetus for this project was the gap I observed between social discomfort and natural necessity that marked our relationship to death and dying. This contrast motivated me to look at our mortality as the social context for this second part of the performance trilogy. I wanted to probe into the practical aspect of death and dying through looking at both the bodily processes of dying and the professional work related to the disposal of corpses. The performance developed out of a devised choreographic process based on fieldwork and participatory observation as well as informal interviews with professionals who face death, dying, and bereavement in their daily work, such as medical experts, priests, funeral directors and the staff at the municipal crematoria in Oslo.

The core process involved three dancers and a choreographer for a total of six months from November 2004 to April 2007. The major work took place between November 2004 and October 2005. In addition to the art theoretical concept of “the artist as an ethnographer,”⁹⁷⁸ the fieldwork-based approach to choreography drew in particular on insights in physiology related to death and dying gained from medical experts, BMC™ practice,⁹⁷⁹ social anthropologist Julia Lawton's ethnological study of *The Dying Process*,⁹⁸⁰ and specific information related to burial and funeral rituals.⁹⁸¹

As a performance, *A Rehearsal for Mortals* resulted from my collaboration with the cast, who included the contemporary dancers Peder Horgen, Kristianne Mo and Terje Tjøme Mossige,⁹⁸² the professional undertakers Stein W. Westad

978 Foster (1996: 171-204).

979 For more on BMC™ and my somatic practices, see Chapter 3.2.

980 Lawton (2000).

981 See, for example, Iserson (2001), Mims (1999), Harris (2002), Walter (1999), Dickinson (2003) and Parkes et al. (1997) among others.

982 Horgen, Mo and Mossige are experienced performers with extensive professional backgrounds, which include, for Horgen: Carte Blanche, Heine Avdal/Deep Blue, Ingri Fiksdal, and Hooman Shariffi / Impure company; for Mo: Zero Visibility/Ina Christel Johannessen, Jo Strømgren company, and

and Jan Erik Larsen,⁹⁸³ and the sound-artist Jørgen Larsson on ‘live-electronics,’ who developed the sound design based on recordings of various natural sounds. The performance was staged with an extensive application of video projections, shot and edited in co-operation with the video-artist Leif Gaute Staurland.⁹⁸⁴

The performance premiered at Dansens Hus in Oslo October 2005. It was restaged in Belgrade and Oslo in 2006 and further reworked in connection with the conference *Close Encounters – Artists on artistic research* organized and hosted by the University of Dance and Circus in Stockholm in 2007.

Through this performance project, I tried to come to grips with one of our few remaining taboos in the western world, death.

*The context of mortality: “our memento mori” – embodied
The irreversible end – the artistic starting point*

The only certainty we know about the future is the fact that we are going to die one day. There is no way we can avoid death. Sooner or later, we will all have to face it. Alone. It is only a question about when. Despite the fact that in affluent societies such as Norway most people can expect to reach a fairly high age,⁹⁸⁵ people of all ages die every day. Death does not only strike the old. At the same time, we all share this existential premise. Nevertheless, I often come across people stating in newspapers or on talk shows in television that they were not prepared for suddenly facing death and dying in their midst.⁹⁸⁶ It is this public

Kreutzerkompaniet/EvaCecilieRichardsen;andforMossige:CarteBlanche,Zero Visibility/InaChristel Johannessen,IngunnBjørnsgaardProject,andToyboys,the companyherunstogetherwithUlfNilseng. The reason that I approached these specific dancers was threefold: first, that each had left an imprint on me that I could not forget after having seen them on stage. In these stage appearances, they had conveyed a combination of artistic integrity, personal commitment, and complexity that had triggered my curiosity and attention. Then, combined, they would constitute a “new” constellation of dancers that had not been seen performing together in a larger production earlier. This was important, as I wanted to create a new start for all of us, including the Norwegian audience. Finally, they as a group possessed a versatile background as performers, and differed in age, gender, and background, and in this way ensured different personal references in the process of working. However, most of all was their interest and willingness to commit to taking part in an extensive artistic research project, which both related to a topic that for many is too unpleasant to deal with and that would involve a trying fieldwork and documentation process.

983 Stein W Westad and Jan Erik Larsen had at the time altogether nearly 50 years of experience from Jølstad’s Funeral home, see www.jolstad.no

984 The light design was made in co-operation with Boya Bøckman (2005) and BVLK (2006/2007), the costumes by Ebba Johansson, while the project co-ordination was facilitated by Cathe Sjøblom (2004-2005) and Sandra Sandbye (2006-2007).

985 In Norway, the average age of death is approximately 78 years for men and 83 for women (Statistics Norway 2010: 104, table 77).

986 Though I have sympathy with the bereaved and their experience of loss, I find in particular the media’s handling and coverage of such situation harder to take on.

disconnection with death and dying that specifically triggered the artistic investigation I am unpacking here.⁹⁸⁷ This kind of media coverage makes it seem as if death did not frame our lives. But it does. Dying is, in fact, a prerequisite for living: without the myriads of “little deaths” occurring every day on the cellular level of our bodies, we would not live. This bodily paradox is reflected in our sensation of having to “die-a-little” each time we cross into unknown territories in our lives. In this way, dying is both deeply personal and a matter of common concern. This binary sparked my interest in our mortality as a context of grieving. We are all in the process of “living – dying” as long as we are alive, even though we will eventually have to face the final death on our own. In fact, every second there is a cell dying within our body. This “little” death is a precondition for our existence, interlocked with the regenerative processes in and around us. From this perspective, the finality of death is just a breakdown of the balance within the body as a whole, an outcome of material exhaustion.

On this background I approached the issue of death through focusing on the physiological turmoil that takes place within an immobile sick body. The ongoing movements and autonomous processes inside the body are normally invisible to the external eye, but their external absence does not mirror the intensity of the processes taking place within that immobile body. This contradiction captured my interest. The choreography was therefore developed through combining insight on these different states of the immobile dying body with the able dancer’s moving body. Movement-wise, I approached this inherent contradiction through exploring these internal movements’ of our viscera “inside-out,” that is, explored as impulses and patterns for moving.

However, because the process of dying is an irreversible process, the literal experience of dying is not available to the performer experientially, except through visualization and exploratory physical studio work based on the information offered through medical and pathological research on the dying processes in the body.

This limited access explains the title *A Rehearsal for Mortals*: since dying cannot be experienced directly, it can only be accessed through what Anne Britt Gran, a Norwegian theatre studies scholar, calls a speculative approach,⁹⁸⁸ in this

987 In which I draw on my own personal background and familiarity with death. Cf. Chapter 1.2.

988 Gran developed this term to describe a way of approaching a performance analysis as a theatre studies scholar. I find it also as a useful term to describe the approach we used in the movement explorations in this project. See Gran (2000: 276-285).

case, as a rehearsal or pretence – “as if”⁹⁸⁹ we were dying, based on extensive knowledge on what it implies physiologically to die. The title also evokes the fragility we as performers encounter in the performance situation while performing. When performing in a performance, this always takes place in an irreversible one-way journey towards its completion, the end. Likewise, as in our lives, there exist no options for rewinding.⁹⁹⁰ Viewed from this existential perspective, the performing arts touch upon issues that define the e/motionscape of death, bereavement and grief, or the territory of grieving.⁹⁹¹

Nevertheless, in this performance I wanted the dancers primarily to concentrate on the bodily process of dying, the body’s annihilation and disappearance, rather than the trauma of dying itself. I wanted to leave that task to the audience as witnesses to the unfolding taking place on stage. This task is not pleasant. The reason for this is obvious. As the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman points out, “death is not a matter of choice.” For him this fact obtrusively contrasts the prevalent emphasis on the individual’s right to freedom of choice in our secular and affluent society, and therefore, makes death into a particular grim fact to digest.⁹⁹² Not everybody wishes or can face this fact. Even for those of us who chose to face this fact, the encounter with death when manifested in rows of corpses can be overwhelming to experience, as described later here in excerpts from my fieldnotes.

The presence of death and dying and the funeral industry

In part the taboo of death is reinforced in the affluent part of the world that I live in, because we can afford the luxury of keeping our distance from death and dying with the help of professional mediators who soften the brutal confrontation involved. This situation has created a parallel world designated to death and dying in which death is an industry. As I did my fieldwork on death and dying in the city of Oslo, I will use facts from this research to contextualize the funeral

989 Cf. Richard Schechner (1985: 102-3, 295). As Schechner describes, the process of improvising and exploring material in an artistic production is based on the performers ability to imagine what other parameters for their life could mean, hence, “as if.”

990 Cf. Davis (2010) and the concept of theatrical time, see Chapter 4.2. This ontological perspective comes in addition to the more technical challenges that dance artists face when performing, such as performing pre-set movement patterns in a way that does not make these appear as a “dead” repetition of previous experiences, but as (re-)experienced and embodied at the actual moment in which they are performed.

991 Cf. Phelan and “the ontology of performance: representation without reproduction” (1993: 146-166). See Chapter 4.2.

992 Bauman (1992: 15).

business here. According to Statistics Norway, out of a population of 521,886 inhabitants, 4,854 people died in Oslo in 2004.⁹⁹³ This equals approx. 93 dead per week, or approx. thirteen a day on average. This meant that on an average weekday, Monday to Friday, a minimum of eighteen dead bodies were transported across the city. The actual number of dead on wheels in the cityscape of Oslo is probably much higher as each corpse must often be transported several times: first from the place of death to the morgue, then to the place of the funeral ceremony, and then to either a crematorium or one of the cemeteries. In 2004 the city had twenty cemeteries and two main crematoria. The main morgues are found at the larger hospitals in town, such as Ullevål University Hospital. In addition come smaller units located at nursing homes all over the city.



Figure 16. “Silent transport” – from fieldwork with Jølstad Funeral Agency in Oslo, December 2004.

The strange thing is that we rarely notice these transports as they, for the most part, are carried out with neutral vans, not the recognizable black funeral cars,

993 Statistics Norway (2010). See <http://www.ssb.no/emner/02/02/folkendrhst/tabeller/tab/03.html> (Retrieved 22.05.2010)

but if you know what vehicles to look out for you will soon start to register their discrete presence in the cityscape.

When you start to look into the business of dying you discover a whole chain of suppliers and professions who make their living either partly or completely from the industry of dying. Each of the numerous funerals taking place every day in a city requires multiple services, such as those provided by florists, coffin makers, printers for the production of funeral programmes, priests or others who can conduct funerals, musicians and singers for the ceremonies, food catering personnel for receptions, stonemasons for making tombs, workers at morgues to attend to the corpses, caretakers of the chapels or funeral homes that are hosting the funerals, cremators at the crematoria for an ethically and technically safe destruction of the organic material, and gravediggers and gardeners at the cemeteries for providing for the final resting place, in addition to the funeral directors who normally co-ordinate and arrange all practical tasks that need to be taken care of when somebody dies. All of these people are specialized in doing their part of the job. In Norway in 2009, this meant that a thousand people worked as funeral directors,⁹⁹⁴ while the funeral-related activities at large had a turnover of 1,108 billion Norwegian crowns.⁹⁹⁵

More than being the certain outcome of life, death is thereby also the livelihood of numerous professionals that with their practical measures provide logistic services for us to deal with our dead. Through my fieldwork, however, I am struck by the funeral industry's practical attitude and level-headed response to death and dying, which appear in stark contrast to the discomfort or taboo of relating to death and dying, or our finality, in general. Therefore, in constructing and staging the griefscape of *memento mori* that addressed this personal discomfort related to facing one's finitude,⁹⁹⁶ I wanted to draw on this practical soberness that I had encountered in the funeral industry, despite the fact that my first experience with their work had been anything but sobering and rather unsettling.

994 Statistics Norway (2009: 365). In addition comes the many employed by the local municipalities to run the crematoria and maintain the graveyards. The local municipality of Oslo has 145 full-time employed at their cemeteries, in addition to about 50 seasonal employees maintaining the graveyards in the summer. See Oslo Municipality (2010).

995 Statistics Norway (2009: 365).

996 In other parts of the world, the luxury of keeping a distance to death and dying with the help of professional mediators is not an option. The presence of death and dying is simply too overwhelming to handle or ignore. This was the case in the last context of this study on communal grieving in Chapter 7.

Observations from the dead end: *a personal excerpt from our exposure to death*

Fieldnotes from 14 December 2004 with Jølstad Funeral Agency in Oslo:⁹⁹⁷

A pungent and penetrating intensity hit us as we were shown the large and open cooling room at the main morgue in Oslo. Filled with corpses, covered in white linen on roller tables of stainless steel. The stench of fetor is sickening sweet, earthy and vinegarish, as the smell of fermented sour milk on the skin. The odour permeates me and leaves a lingering nausea. It would silently stay with me for hours after our exposure to it.

Later, my touching and holding the cold hand of the deceased old man in the basement of the nursing home downtown gave death a specific body with an organic texture, consistency, and substance. What struck me most was how self-evident death is when the circulatory systems in the body have stopped functioning. Life as we like to think of it gives way to something else. The furrows on the face, acquired through years of muscular tension, are now released and smoothed out. The blood has lost its purpose and direction and instead follows gravity. It accumulates in those areas of the body where the weight of the mass meets the surface underneath, and results in red and dark purple patches on the skin. In this case, even the top surface of the skin in the stomach area had obtained a greenish tint, which we were explained was a typical sign of advanced cancer. The once warm and agile body is now reduced to an emptied and cold slough, organic waste material. The cooling system used for storing the corpse helps to hold the decomposition back as low temperatures slow down the internal enzymic and microbiological putrefying processes. Supported by diapers and gauze plugs in the major orifices, the refrigeration delays the putrefaction and gives the mourners some extra time to organize a dignified farewell before the corpse starts to unbound and fall apart. Seeing the old man in diapers makes me recall the stains on the white linen wrapped around the bodies waiting in the morgue earlier this morning. These stains resulted from bodily leakages and testified to the first step in this process of decomposition.

997 As the undertakers at Jølstad work in teams, the dancers and I shared the day between two teams of undertakers: Pål Jølstad and Jon Sandvand (before lunch); and Rolf Willy Ekeberg and N.N. Nyborg (after lunch). The day began with a short morning brief at the agency with the daily manager Odd Borgar Jølstad, before we joined the first team on their first assignment to the main mortuary in Oslo, the University Hospital Ullevål. It was followed by a preparation for a private viewing and funeral at a chapel in one of the nursing homes downtown. The afternoon shift would be spent at "Østre Krematorium," which in 2004 was the largest crematorium in Oslo. That was my second visit there, but the first with the performers.

At lunch I feel an irrational repulsion or reluctance towards my own hands. I can hardly bring myself to lift them up towards my mouth as we ate our lunch at a café across the street from the nursing home between our two shifts. In spite of knowing that I had worn latex gloves due to safety regulations and even thoroughly washed my hands afterwards. But simply knowing that they shortly before had held the weight and touched the inside of the dead man's hand did something to them. They still bore the imprint of the dead. The small idiosyncrasies of the undertakers now made sense: how they cover the head of the old man with a thin piece of cloth while working; or how they refer to the deceased as the "corpse" or simply "it." These created a professional distance from the death of a specific person. The dancers and I had few of those skills; we were dazed and shaken out of our everyday comfort zone.

The familiar street outside the café was bustling with everyday activities and passers-by, who were unaware of what we had just experienced. Paradoxically, this made the whole experience more absurd and disturbing. It made it seem as if the parallel world of the dead we had visited did not exist. Nobody was publicly wailing outside the nursing home as part of a wake in progress, simply as there was none held. The dead old man was left alone after his corpse had been prepared and made ready for its last ceremony. The waiter who brings our coffee and tea does not know of the dead man lying cold and immobile in the basement across the street, nor is he aware of the six coffins transported discreetly outside in a white, covered van. Why should he? I remember as I looked across the street, I saw an old man with a walking stick standing outside the main entrance of the nursing home. He looked out to the street, but was not going anywhere. The only way a resident leaves the premises of a nursing home is either with an ambulance to the local hospital or in a coffin through the back door, which also happens to be the entrance to the chapel. It is placed next to the doors for deliveries of goods: coffins, washing, toilet papers, and food, all delivered side-by-side in the early morning hours.

In this juxtaposition the practical necessity of handling the dead is smoothly combined with the social need to keep death discretely apart from our daily life, as if death and dying existed only in a nearly invisible and parallel world to the living. Our visit to the large morgue earlier that morning had left me with a similar impression. This morgue is located next to the main chapel of the University hospital. Only a concrete wall with a number of discrete doors connecting these two juxtaposed worlds separated the area of the morgue from the nondescript chapel. The contrast is stark: in the antechamber of the chapel a Zen-like calm reigned,

centred around the quiet sound of running water from a fountain made of a flat slab of a stone with a carving of a logarithmic spiral on top. This orchestrated peace was remote from the constant activity on the other side of the wall – the deliveries of coffins and corpses – and the stark presence of organic material in decay each time the door to the cooling room was opened. This contrast captured me in an unsettling and intriguing manner. This impression is strengthened as we visit the main crematorium, “Østre krematorium” in the afternoon. The purpose of our visit was first to see how the undertakers prepare the chapel for the funeral, and then as participant observers, to study their role in the actual ceremony. However, before the funeral begins, the performers and I are given a tour of the place and the chance to meet the other professionals working at the crematorium. The crematorium is a one-story building that in the front has two public ceremonial rooms or chapels, one larger and one smaller, and at the back a more industrial workplace with cooling rooms, storage spaces and offices. The crematorium ovens are placed in the basement. We met the caretakers and cremators who showed us their systems for receiving and disposing of coffins and floral arrangements. The facilities include one cooling room for the newly arrived coffins and one for the flowers ordered for the funerals. Both flowers and coffins are stacked neatly on rows and shelves. They are organized after dates, the assigned time slots in the two ceremonial rooms: 10:00, 11:30, 13:00, 14:30, and the names of the funeral agency and of the deceased. After the funeral, the flowers are removed and the coffins are lowered downstairs and lined up in front of the cremation ovens. The identification of the corpses inside the coffins is now reduced to a serial number, imprinted on a piece of ceramic that can be burned with the coffin without being destroyed, and thus easily retrieved afterwards. This system is built to secure and vouch for the confidence of the bereaved. As this piece ensures the identity of the remains, from the time the funeral ends until the ashes are placed in the urn and labelled with a sticker containing all the vital information needed. The floral arrangements and wreaths are disposed of immediately after the funeral, left in the dustbin right behind the double doors at the back of the chapel. To observe a funeral ritual after just having been through these back-stage procedures and their organization does something to our perspective as we watch the next funeral from above, seated on the gallery at the back of the chapel. The gallery itself is long and narrow, and you can only enter it from the staffs’ areas downstairs. All three performers and I have been to funerals before, but never as outside observers. A professional singer and an organist share the space with us. The organist is blind. The singer arrives at

the last minute. He wears a dark blue blazer and a white turtleneck, which are casually combined with a pair of worn jeans. His trousers are not visible from downstairs as he sings, standing by the covered railing of the gallery. He sings only three times during the service, in-between, he sits indifferently at the back of the gallery reading a detective story. Downstairs, the chapel fills with mourners. The large number of wreaths and flower arrangements are symmetrically laid out and arranged around the coffin, which is placed centrally as the focal point at the front, between the chapel's altar and the congregation. We know now that in less than an hour all the elaborate wreaths with their silk ribbons carrying last greetings, such as "Dear Mother, thanks for all your love," will be casually thrown into the containers right outside the double doors at the front right in the chapel. In the cooling room at the back new coffins are already lined up in rows - as performers waiting in the green room for the cue to enter their show. Below, the ovens are working at full blast. As we say goodbye to a woman who had a name and was a good mother and a responsible and engaged citizen, another dead person is going up in smoke. Only a ceramic chip with a serial number that has followed the corpse since it was received at the crematorium can now ascertain the identity of the ashes. While we in the chapel sing hymns and honour the memory of who the woman had been, someone else's bones are ground into ashes and put in an urn downstairs. In the gallery, the singer returns to his detective story, as the mourners grab for their handkerchiefs. From my viewpoint, I can suddenly see how this juxtaposition between the well-prepared ceremonial room - with its ceremonial master performing the formal ritual while dressed up in a special costume - and the busy, rough workroom with the handy workers at the back, resembles the theatre with its difference between the back-stage areas and the stage. The singer reinforces and exemplifies this association to the theatre and its co-existing parallel worlds, as he is dressed in a partial formal and informal costume, switches between his professional and private worlds in the gallery during the funeral.

The performers and I are transformed after this long day with the funeral directors. The experience has changed our outlook and references to each other and the world. In a few hours, everything has changed.

I end my fieldnotes here, as I state: We were somewhere else. As if surfacing from deep water and forwarded on rolling waves, simple but fundamental questions about life and death and our existence rushed through our systems. When I reread my description from that day, I can still recall the intensity of grappling with death and dying that we experienced, as I write this text. For me

as a choreographer-researcher, the question was how to artistically challenge and embody these experiences and the social context we entered but with respect and integrity, both for the social context and the choreographic work.

Grappling with death and dying - the research approach

However, while preparing for this project and its fieldwork, I came across Hal Foster's *The Return of the Real*.⁹⁹⁸ With his term "the artist as ethnographer," Foster eloquently describes here an artistic strategy or approach for making art in which the artist is investigating the context of the art project, as well as probing into the materiality of the art discipline itself.⁹⁹⁹ In reading his analysis, I recognized questions and concerns that I had struggled with in my own artistic practice as a choreographer, related to a fieldwork-based approach to choreography.¹⁰⁰⁰

Foster asserts that when engaging in such contextually-based artistic investigations a double process is always in play, revealing a critical balancing act between layers that often leads, as I have experienced, to larger-scale artistic discourses, for example, related to the relationship between aesthetics and ethics.¹⁰⁰¹ According to Foster this double process not only demands of the artist to keep up "with the disciplinary forms of a given genre or medium,"¹⁰⁰² but also when selecting a context that the artist "enters its culture and learns its language, conceives and presents a project." The latter demands that the artist is "familiar not only with the structure of each culture well enough to map it, but also with its history well enough to narrate it."¹⁰⁰³ In contrast to the visual art scene that Foster refers to, this double process does not stop with me as an individual artist-researcher here. As a choreographer, I work collaboratively with and through other artists' contributions to create artistic work. On a practical level in *A Rehearsal for Mortals*, this meant that it was pivotal for me that the dancers participated in the fieldwork as well as in the studio explorations in order to map out and get a sense of the context I wanted us to address. Facilitating for their participation

998 Foster (1996).

999 Perspectives I introduced in Chapter 1.

1000 Cf. Chapter 1.

1001 Assisted by his theoretical framework I was hence able to identify and situate my artistic concerns in this project within a larger artistic discourse in a way that also sharpened my critical perspective and awareness to the challenges it involved, issues related to the politics of arts and the relationship between aesthetics and ethics in an artistic process. Cf. Chapters 4.2 and 5. I will return to these issues in Chapters 7 and 8.

1002 Foster (1996: 199).

1003 Foster (1996: 202). See also Chapter 1 and Foster (1996: 171-205).

added an extra layer to the contextual approach I had tested out in my previous solo-project *A Song to Martin*. In the fieldwork, I wanted us to delve both into the physiology and pathology of death and dying, and the practical tasks and rites linked to the funeral and burial of the dead body. In sum, these are the issues I am referring to when mentioning “the context of death and dying” in this study. In processing and embodying the experiences from this fieldwork in our studio work, I combined this effort with an exploration to deepen our understanding of the body as a three-dimensional organism. In this way, we also probed into the craft of moving while creating the performance.

It was very demanding to unpack all the information gained from this fieldwork, while searching for adequate choreographic responses. It required multiple skills of me as the responsible choreographer for the project, including the abilities to make use of embodied knowledge about choreography and performing, utilize analytical skills from critical theory, methodological skills and tools from qualitative research on conducting ethnographic fieldwork,¹⁰⁰⁴ and draw on social and organisational skills, the latter two in order to connect and build up trust with people and expertise coming from various fields and walks of life, and to organize and co-ordinate the timing and the content of the contextual input in the studio work while the process was running. Despite the brutal and sensorial confrontation with death and dying, which the dancers experienced through our fieldwork, and further explored in a demanding enquiry into the autonomous processes in their bodies, the dancers experienced the fieldwork encounters as crucial and very important for the work process.¹⁰⁰⁵ As one of the dancers expressed it: “How can I return to dancing for other choreographers after this?”¹⁰⁰⁶ The rhetorical question came as an exclamation in connection with a conversation in the group on the experiences of the work process, halfway into the project period for the dancers. The statement related to how the contextual focus and the fieldwork, combined with a systematic studio work, had engaged the dancer not solely as a body and a performer, but as a human being and an artist with an intellect and a creative ability. In this way, the work process had changed the dancer’s perceptions and understanding of what dancing and choreography could imply as an artistic endeavour. I remember that this positive feedback to my choreo-

1004 My background in social science and performance studies came in useful here. Cf. Chapter 1.

1005 According to my fieldnotes both from Oslo 14 December 2004 and 30 September 2005, and Belgrade 14 June 2006, that is, both in our immediate debriefing and processing after the exposures, as well as in talks taking place respectively seven and eighteen months later.

1006 Excerpts from fieldnotes 30 September 2005, Oslo.

graphic approach made me feel both flattered and happy, but also uneasy: in part because the feedback reminded me of the ethical responsibility that I carried as a choreographer for the performers wellbeing, and in part because it instantly created a self-imposed demand to live up to the expectations that this raised for the continuation of our collaboration. However, instead of jumping ahead to my reflections on this artistic research project,¹⁰⁰⁷ I want to situate the conditions that grounded our explorations and the experiences of the dancers in the first place: the material that was actually gathered through our fieldwork.

Gathering the remains – identifying the material

The background information I gathered with the dancers on death and dying can broadly be divided in three categories, addressing the following issues:

- Inside the dying body
- Around the corpse
- Framing the dying process

The material was based on information coming from different kinds of sources ranging from literature reviews and web sites, fieldwork with informal interviews and participatory observation, and gathering of visual and auditory material, in particular from imaging techniques like endoscope, angiogram, X-ray and ultrasound in addition to photo, video- and sound recordings. I gathered most of the visual material from medical researchers and specialist physicians at the university hospitals in Oslo and shared this with the dancers in the studio.¹⁰⁰⁸ Likewise, I shared the most relevant literature and web references with the dancers, and encouraged each of them to do the same. In sum, we had large pool of data and information. I will give a brief overview of the content that this material covered.

Inside the Dying Body

“Inside the Dying Body” contains information related to physiological and pathological processes and functions both in the living and the dead body, the corpse. This information has two strands: the first strand is about gathering material and probing into issues related to the living body, ranging from anatomical mapping

1007 Cf. Chapter 8.1

1008 For an overview of the core medical professionals interviewed and consulted, see *References: R8*.

of the skeleton and the location of the organs to physiological insights about the regenerative processes on a cellular level in the body and the pathology of bodily breakdowns due to illnesses, such as cancer and AIDS. Especially central here in order to grasp the systemic functioning of the body were facts about the cardiovascular, the lymphatic and immune, and the digestive systems, all of which are vital parts of the autonomous processes in our body. The second strand covers information about the corpse, including the criteria for pronouncing somebody dead and pathological and forensic knowledge on the disintegration and decomposition of the body.¹⁰⁰⁹

Besides informal interviews with doctors and medical expertise, for example, researchers and scientists in physiology and microbiology,¹⁰¹⁰ we also talked to individuals who had personal experiences to share from following a dying process to its end – including one of the dancers.

However, to embody this information I had to set up a parallel process in which the three dancers had to rethink their dancing body. I devised a class based on my knowledge of BMC™,¹⁰¹¹ which turned into our daily warm-up routine that lasted up to 90 minutes. It gave them a chance to re-pattern their bodily awareness and through movements experience that their dancing body was not only composed of its six limbs (legs, arms, head and tail) contained in its skin surface, and shaped and sustained by its skeleton, but also composed and supported by the location, functions and weight of its organs, the pulse of its circulatory systems, and the layers of tissue surfaces rubbing against each other inside the body itself.¹⁰¹²

They had to know what was going on inside them, and start to become aware of these processes while moving. But, because this kind of work takes time to sink in, we still hit moments of gridlocks while working. To give but one example: though meetings with medical experts gave us theoretical insight into the autonomous processes in the body, the dancers still struggled to get into embodying them, particularly in the case of the microbiological functions, that

1009 Mims (1999), Iserson (2001) and Sachs (2001).

1010 See *References: R8*.

1011 My insight is primarily based on my studies with Wendel Beavers and Erika Berland in New York combined with studio-based self-studies and reading. See also Chapters 1.2 and 3.2.

1012 This work was supported, for example, with video recordings made with the help of Ultrasound techniques (in colour and with sound) that showed the different pulses and intensities in our vital organs, provided to us by Knut Brabrand, MD, director of the Ultrasound and Interventional Department, Rikshospitalet University Hospital, see *References: R8*.

is, the autonomous processes going on at a cellular level in the body.¹⁰¹³ At that point, I recalled a video documentation of medical research done at Stanford University, which Professor Joel C Glover,¹⁰¹⁴ a microbiologist at the University of Oslo, had introduced to me earlier, as I prepared for the project start with the performers. He kindly agreed to lend me a copy of this documentation. The video showed isolated cellular movement patterns of singular migrating cells as well as the activity of macrophages¹⁰¹⁵ in the lymphatic system. Watching these radically changed the dancers' ability to visualize and connect to the autonomous processes going on within them and it recharged their work. The articulation of their movement exploration became more focused, detailed and specific. In this respect, the visual material played a crucial role in our movement exploration as it enhanced and complemented both the theoretical insight and the bodywork practices applied.

The internal processes in our body are, despite being such an integral part of us, most often experienced as something distant from us. Like the sound of a rumbling stomach, they seem both remote and, at the same time, an intimate part of us. In the case of the stomach, we may even feel embarrassed when the growling starts, despite the fact that its moans are beyond our control and are experienced likewise. Such noises disturb the divide between what is perceived as inside and outside, distant and near. In the rehearsal process, this insight also led to an exploration of sound and of our relationship to it as a partner while moving in the room. The outcome of this work was later reflected in the performance's soundscape, designed to enhance this destabilizing feeling between inside-outside through a surround-sound system enveloping both stage and audience.

The feeling of discrepancy in our bodily self-perception is a sensation that is often enhanced in the dying process due to the disintegration of the body, in particular in the case of cancer. According to Lawton, this is what really makes the dying process radically challenge our sense of a bodily identity: a struggle to maintain a sense of oneself as a bounded body.¹⁰¹⁶ This physiological passage

1013 Such movement work relies on physiological insight in combination with visualization techniques, but furthermore requires patience and attentive tuning of the performer while executing minute bodily tasks. Together this makes the work very demanding and challenging.

1014 Joel C Glover, see *References: R8*.

1015 According to Michael Farabee (2010) a macrophage can briefly be defined as "a type of white blood cell derived from monocytes that engulf invading antigenic molecules, viruses, and microorganisms and then display fragments of the antigen to activate helper T cells; ultimately stimulating the production of antibodies against the antigen."

1016 Lawton (2000: 2).

from a bounded to unbounded body was an issue we addressed physically in our speculative movement explorations.

However, the moment of death is not as obvious as one might first think. Dying is a process that takes place in a sequential close-down action through the various parts of the body. From the cellular level to the more systemic failures and the body's complete breakdown. And the body transforms into a corpse.

In terms of the dead body, we particularly studied how death disconnects the internal parts of the body from each other and frees the processes needed for the corpse's decomposition. The characteristic phases that the corpse passes through in this decomposition are stiffening (rigor mortis), putrefying, liquefying, bloating and drying, and then at last brittling, which completes the disintegration process.¹⁰¹⁷

The work took place around the time of the Tsunami catastrophe in Southeast Asia in 2004,¹⁰¹⁸ and the news coverage provided us with visual documentation rarely seen in public related to the various stages of bodily disintegration. This coincidence suddenly connected our studio work to references shared with society at large, and contributed to illuminating how these issues of death and dying are dealt with in our affluent western world.

Around the Corpse

The concept 'around the corpse' refers to the information gathered about procedures, rituals, and tasks connected to the corpse and the disposal of it. I am talking about customs and practices taking place 'before,' 'during,' and 'after' the funeral. These activities are restrained, both through written and unwritten laws. In a Norwegian context, these procedures have to comply with public health regulations¹⁰¹⁹ and statutes for the conduct of funerals and burials,¹⁰²⁰ and likewise, most often they will adhere to informal norms of behaviour and social conduct under such circumstances,¹⁰²¹ such as the austere simplicity characterizing most Norwegian funerals, reflected in the common usage of white painted simple

1017 Mims (1999: 119-124).

1018 Caused by an earthquake in the Indian Ocean on 26 December 2004. More than 230,000 people were killed in fourteen countries.

1019 Cf. Norwegian Laws (1998): The directive relating to transport, handling and wrapping of corpses, including funerals: FOR-1998-04-03 no. 327. This directive is implemented by the funeral industry in their own guidelines for safety and hygiene, exemplified here by one of the suppliers Bentzen Utstyr: <http://www.bentzenutstyr.no/Engelsk/hygiene.html> (Accessed 05.11.2004).

1020 Cf. Norwegian Laws (1996): The Burial Act: Act relating to cemeteries, cremation and funeral: LOV-1996-06-07-32.

1021 Cf. Parkes (1997).

coffins. In this respect, even the choice of a coffin will reveal something about cultural background, preferences and status.¹⁰²² However, the combination of the bereaved's need to say a final goodbye and society's necessity to safely get rid of the corpses provides the livelihood for a whole funeral industry. This includes a wide range of professionals, from coffin makers, car producers, via florists, priests or other masters of the funeral rite, musicians and singers, undertakers to specialized staff at crematoria and cemeteries. I wanted to understand how this industry practically operated and related to the issues of death and dying in their daily work. This motivated the fieldwork that I referred to earlier and conducted with the dancers in December 2004. For me as a choreographer-researcher, I perceived this fieldwork as a prerequisite for tackling the issues at stake for us in this project on *memento mori* and our mortality.

The fieldwork consisted foremost of informal interviews with funeral directors, combined with a participatory observation of their workday. This exposure included visits to morgues, participation in silent transfers, that is, when the corpse is transported and transferred to its coffin without any mourners present and prepared for an eventual public viewing and/or the funeral. In addition, we also attended public funeral ceremonies and conducted informal interviews with priests who had extensive experience from meeting the bereaved and conducting funerals,¹⁰²³ as well as staff and caretakers who worked at the crematoria and cemeteries.

Early on in the process I intuitively felt that the dancers had to see a dead body. Without any breath to sustain life processes, the body is reduced to organic waste, a corpse. I knew that its textual quality must be radically different from a living body and I wanted us to touch and feel this difference, if only through slightly lifting the arm of a corpse. I envisioned that such an experience would add important sensorial insight to our movement exploration on the dying body. I presumed that the dancers' accumulated kinetic experience and bodily awareness would provide them with skills to take in such tactile information on a preverbal level. Already early on in the process in December 2004, we got the chance to experience such an encounter with a dead body thanks to our collaborating informant, the funeral home Jølstad. I described it in the project blog afterwards as "a mind-blowing experience" and "a major turning point in our work." As the undertakers prepared the corpse for viewing, we were given permission to try

1022 Cf. Bordieu (1984).

1023 Among them, Grete Hauge, the parish priest in Paulus Church in Oslo.

to lift its arm. I provided myself with a reference point, as I applied the arm-lift well-known from release-related work or somatic practices when the person who rests on the back get his or her arm lifted towards the ceiling by another person. This task is often used, for example, to increase awareness of unnecessary tension in the arms. In this case, the receiving arm was completely free from the usual conflicting and tensional exchanges between resisting and letting go that I as a helper normally would perceive; instead, I felt this incredible sense of nonresponsive weight in the arm. In this encounter, death became tangible and its impact real. This minute, but staggering and precise experience humanised my impressions from our earlier visit to the main morgue in Oslo, which in contrast showed me death wrapped up and stored as pure waste. As I described it at the time, “the sensorial impact of the place was overwhelming. It is not only visual. It seemed as if the odour got into our pores and left an invisible layer of stench glued to and oozing through our skin.”¹⁰²⁴

However, this lingering experience of stench confirmed the contextual observations that Lawton made on the dying process.¹⁰²⁵ The implications of this process are, as she points out, “issues of dirt, decay, disintegration and smell” - of rotting flesh. These aspects of the dying process are as she underlines “rarely, if ever written about” - or talked about in our part of the world.¹⁰²⁶ Seeing the corpse cold and discoloured, plugged and in diapers, with the jaw held in place to the skull with the help of straps, and kept in cold storage to avoid disintegrating before the family’s last goodbye, make the uncanny present in the way death reveals an inability to hold back the unbounded nature of the body. Lawton’s descriptions were, in this respect, overwhelmingly present and real.¹⁰²⁷ What was certain here was that the effect of these exposures in our fieldwork changed us. They gave us shared references, turned us into a team, and foremost sharpened the focus of our work as the experiences induced an increased sensibility and insight to the exploration we were doing.

Framing the dying process

The third category of materials I gathered in this artistic process relates to the sources I looked into while searching for a suitable dramaturgical model or acting frame for the performance, that is, to provide me with a compositional arch for

1024 Fieldnotes 14 December 2004.

1025 Lawton (2000: vii, 135-7).

1026 Lawton (2000: 143).

1027 Lawton (2000: 143).

constructing the choreography and its unfolding of our embodiment of the dying process. Together with the dancers I explored, particularly, two scenarios of which the first was based on the funeral rite itself, and the other on Bingo. Both explorations developed as we went back and forth between fieldwork experiences and studio work in a dialogical collaboration between the performers and me.

We explored the funeral rite through attending funeral ceremonies at the crematoria in Oslo, and studying the official liturgy for funerals in the Church of Norway¹⁰²⁸ in order to use it as a script for re-enacting and experimenting with its dramaturgical form in the studio.

Likewise, we probed into bingo as a social construct, mainly through visiting and playing the game at local bingo halls in downtown Oslo, combined with physical experimentation in the studio, based on our fieldwork experiences and discussion of these.

Bingo interested me as a game model, because of its predictable but still random outcome of the game; each game ends when the first person has got all his numbers up and shouts “Bingo!” Each game is a set with five rows or parts. Each part ends when someone has filled up a row and shouts. When the last row is completed, the set ends. Then, a new game can begin. Even though every player knows approximately how long time each game will take, its actual end still seems abrupt and sudden when it occurs. Death seems to strike in a similar way: nobody knows when their numbers are up and the game ends. In addition to this meta-text, three other phenomena captured me about the game as I did the fieldwork: the soundscape, the role of the body in the game, and the interpersonal relationship created through playing. This relates to how the game was played in the local bingo halls in Oslo we visited as part of our fieldwork in 2004. We took part only in traditional bingo played on paper with marker pens, not electronically. The Bingo halls had no entertaining hosts who would crack jokes and cheer up the players, which can often be encountered in other countries.¹⁰²⁹ Amplified through loud-speakers the bingo callers would call the numbers in a particular way, as if intending to be impartial and articulated; their voices sounded impersonal and flat, mechanical and monotonous, while at the same time were neither, and created for me an almost hypnotic drone. With the help of the first names: ‘Birger,’ ‘Inga,’ ‘Nils,’ ‘Gustav,’ and ‘Olga,’ the callers would indicate the row in which the number was to be found on our papers, and call out:

1028 Church of Norway (2002): *Funerals – general provisions for funerals*.

1029 Such as in the USA.

“Gustav twenty-nine (short pause) – Gustav twenty-nine (a slightly longer pause); Inga eight (short pause) – Inga eight (a slightly longer pause); Birger nineteen (short pause) – Birger nineteen (a slightly longer pause); Olga twenty-one (short pause) – Olga twenty-one (a slightly longer pause).” The drone was intercepted only when someone shouted “Bingo!” then the caller would make a short stop, stating: “It was Bingo here (longer pause) – we continue now on row two.” The voice had a calming effect; it conveyed a sense of endlessness, while at the same time, came across as extremely mundane and trivial. This jarring and juxtaposed sensation created a friction that interested me.

I experienced a similar itch or contrast when I observed the role of the body in the game, in particular when playing on several bingo papers in one game. Viewed from the outside, the bodily posture or state then resembles one of a seriously ill person. As a player, one is hunched forward in a physically contracted and introvert state, while gazing down and hardly moving. This seems like a passive, inactive state, but on the inside, I felt as a player most intensely awake and present, hardly able to talk, because of the need to stay alert and observant. Despite knowing that the game could end at any time, only a sense of “now” prevails, and the body becomes a single-minded intensity. The last element that struck me was the interpersonal relationship we experienced through playing. As a player, you do not have much time, if any, to directly interact with others while playing, only in the short breaks between the games, or if taking a pause from playing. Nevertheless, without talking, in sharing the experience of playing in parallel with the other players, this still left a feeling of being together in a social context with an awareness of each other. It created a fleeting kind of bonding among players that were both fragile but touching.

Both the funeral ritual and the bingo model strategies were explored and tried out in the rehearsal situation in the studio, but in the end very little of the material was used explicitly. The bingo game as a conceptual game model was even tried out as the starting point in the first public performances (2005): we simply began the performance as if we were in a bingo hall. Each member of the audience would receive a pen and a bingo paper as they entered the theatre. The first “Bingo” that occurred would then trigger off and start the performance physically. This idea was cut in later presentations (2006) as it dispersed the artistic coherence instead of sharpening it. However, the experiences from physically exploring how to convey internal states in the body were carried on into our movement work. Likewise, the social experience of a space that is interpersonally shared, while each individual maintains his or her activity in parallel with others, stayed

with us in the compositional structure of the choreographic work in which three interwoven solos are operating in parallel. Similarly, our explorations of the funeral rite would also inform and mark the choreographic work and the staging of it. In particular, the participation and role of the undertakers combined with the use of the coffin in the performance are evidence of this.

What I eventually chose as the framing solution for the performance was a direct result of the fieldwork conducted at Østre Crematorium in Oslo, especially drawing on our meeting with the cremators, who generously introduced us to the different steps of the cremation process, and included the practical variables that could influence this process, such as the corpse's constitution and state.¹⁰³⁰ Most importantly, they offered us the chance to observe and follow the cremation process closely. From this experience came the idea to use a video projection of the cremation process as the compositional arch of the performance. The video documentation was made in consent with the local staff and the director of the crematoria in Oslo.¹⁰³¹ The filming and editing were done in collaboration with Staurland, and in the choreographed performance the main video was projected onto a large rectangle screen hanging approx. three meters above the floor in the forefront of the stage. It documented the whole cremation process from the moment the coffin went into the oven, including the burning (which was shot from the loophole of the oven and in terms of duration constituted the major part of the video), the later removal process of the remains from the oven to an urn and the final burial in the ground.

As it was of the utmost importance for me not to transgress the confidence and trust I had built with the people working at the crematorium that had served as my informants, I refrained from using the video to create a sensational and lurid marketing of the performance.¹⁰³² From a compositional point of view,

1030 For example, whether the corpse contained a pacemaker (which meant a potential risk of explosions), or had died of advanced cancer after prolonged treatment of chemotherapy (which meant it required more time in the incinerator), or factors such as age and weight. For example, a very old woman would normally contain less water than a middle-aged man who had died suddenly of a heart attack. The time needed for completing a cremation could, due to these circumstances, vary from approx. 60 minutes to up to more than 200 minutes. Therefore, information about the corpse became an important insight in order to structure their workday.

1031 The recording took place in spring 2005 on the condition that the director of the crematoria in Oslo and her superior would have to approve the final version of the edited video before any public screening. This assessment was done in October 2005 and the video was approved.

1032 Despite knowing that if I had, this certainly would have given the project enormous and widespread publicity. Instead, and because of this decision, I ran into another dilemma related to my responsibility to the audience. I had to ensure that the theatres took responsibility for providing advisory guidelines to the audience on the performance, which underlined the topic and stated that the performance was

however, in terms of duration and content the cremation provided a precise and condensed contextual frame for the work that the dancers explored and executed on the stage. Like life itself, the process of dying and the cremation are both temporally limited, and are as such irreversible processes with a beginning and an end.

In this respect, for the staging of our *memento mori* the superimposed video of the cremation provided what Schechner calls an “acting frame around a nonacting circumstance,”¹⁰³³ that is, our mortality. As an acting frame, the video provides a context for perceiving the dancers on stage, as well as a compositional arch for the construction of the choreographed performance. Involving the two funeral home professionals ‘live’ on stage augmented this effect. Their presence on stage together with the application of video projection of the burning corpse extended the choreography beyond the notion of aesthetics and into the realm of aesth|ethics,¹⁰³⁴ and pointed to the existential challenge of our awaiting erasure, while at the same time, the dancers unfolded the choreography, our choreographic speculation, of the ongoing activity and exhaustion involved in the dying body’s return to dust.

The burning corpse on the video is not recognisable as a particular person; it is first and foremost a corpse: one body that could have been anybody’s body – yours or mine, or a person we have known and who sat beside us yesterday. And that was precisely what I wanted to convey. The corpse represents every one of ‘us,’ but is still marked by its singularity. The corpse is not performing, and the video only documents a reality, but as it is situated in this performative context it both effects and affects us, both the performers and the viewers. Not only until I had seen the performance together with an ordinary audience did I realize the full impact and meaning of the video for me as the choreographer-researcher: If the viewer emphatically identifies with the corpse, our shared life trajectory becomes real at the present moment, and embodied in the dancers’ exploration of that reality. Respect for this fundamental human condition is intrinsically ingrained in the project itself. The choreographed performance addresses our mortality. It is not abstract; it strikes us as singular beings, but it also relates to each and every one of us. In this acting frame our roles as audience, performers,

not suited for minors. In retrospect, I question if this was the right decision, and if this testified more to a situation in which the role of the researcher took the upper hand over the artist in running the project.

1033 Schechner (1985: 97).

1034 Drawing on Welsch (1997).

technician, or choreographer, do not help. Here we are alone,¹⁰³⁵ but also together as we all share this condition as human beings. The whole performance is built around this premise. It brings forward our future erasure. Thus I argue that this situates the audience not only in the role of being a spectator in a theatre, but as individual human beings, each of whom has to find in the midst of their own lives ways to cope with this reality, their forthcoming death.

The performance offers little consolation or delusions to escape this confrontation. Thanks to the video, the performance moves visually to a context not commonly seen and relates this to the choreographed sequences of the dancers' own 'decomposition.' While the dancers execute their movement explorations related to the autonomous processes inside a dying body and the organic decomposition of the corpse, the "realness" of the video from the crematorium situates and extends the choreography for the audience. This challenges the realm of aesthetics as the "realness" points to the existential premise shared by all of us. In this respect, the performance became less a spectacle than a persistent meditation offering the audience a space for contemplating their mortality. In this way, the performance tried to situate the audience more as witnesses and fellow human beings, than spectators. The audience were trusted to fill the void depicted on the video and in the staging, while the dancers solved their tasks on stage.

After having described above the kind of contextual material and information we gathered, related to the dying process and the corpse, I will next in more details outline the process of working with this information to make the actual performance itself.

"Getting real" – the process of capturing death and dying in a performance

Structurally, the performance emerged out of a work process that took place in four stages. It evolved from a seven weeks' introductory period in which we did fieldwork and immersed ourselves with the contextual material described above,¹⁰³⁶ a four weeks' in-depth study in which we explored ways of embodying

1035 Cf. Sartre (1984).

1036 According to the production plan handed out to the dancers in November 2004 we focused in particular on the following: the micro-cosmos of the body, rituals and procedures related to funerals and burials, bingo as a game model and as a state of being, and exploring sound as a partner / subject in space with its own weight, texture and spatial direction through a workshop conducted in co-operation with the sound-artist Trond Lossius. See *References: R4*.

this information further; a four weeks' defining phase in which the structure of the choreography was constructed; and then a three weeks' staging period, with the final arrangements, before publicly presenting the performance itself.¹⁰³⁷

In addition to the material I have already accounted for, I engaged the dancers from the start in an exploration of blogging, logging and dialoguing as reflexive practices while working with movement explorations in the studio. The blogging practice was developed while participating in a separate research project on multimodal composition run by the media researcher Andrew Morrison at the InterMedia research group at the University of Oslo. The practice contributed to enhancing self-reflexive thinking and gave the process a shared memory as well as a public body of its own, which I am not going into here.¹⁰³⁸ In addition to the blogging, we also logged in three other formats: video- and audio recordings and writing in personal notebooks. In writing this study, I have accessed all these sources, except for the dancers' logbooks, which I consider as their private documents, though, segments of our personal log writing would often be shared while working, because in our dialogical way of working, the sharing of thoughts and reflections was an integral part of the process. Several of these exchanges were also recorded. In collaboration with the dancers, I tried out different ways for facilitating this dialogical approach, including experimenting with when, how often, and in what way to present feedback to each other, whether dancers to dancers, dancers to choreographer, choreographer to dancers, production team to artists etc. This work on our dialogical practice continued throughout this process and into the work with the third part of the trilogy.

Altogether, this meant that the self-reflexive practices of blogging, logging and dialoguing came to play a central part of our process to digest the contextual fieldwork material and develop the performance. The practices also generated a rich documentary material about the process itself, which later helped me while I was writing this study, because I could more easily trace the emergent development of my choreographic thinking and practice in the project.

In this way, the self-reflexive approach would come to underpin our whole work process, and prove crucial, both from an artistic research perspective and for us as a creative team, primarily for the dancers and me as we spent most time together, but the exchanges would also involve all our collaborators who took

1037 In addition come approx. six weeks of rehearsal in connection with the performances we did in 2006 and 2007.

1038 See Morrison and Thorsnes (2011). I will not discuss the media specific concerns related to this project here. For more information on that, see this article.

part or visited us in our explorative studio work. The approach fed back into the explorative movement work as the experiences from this were nurtured in the dialectic exchange between the input provided from our fieldwork and ongoing discussions and reflexive practices shared among us, as this log excerpt from 16 January 2005 indicates.



Figure 17. Mind-map from the process of constructing *A Rehearsal Mortals*, logbook entry 16 January 2005.

My mind-maps bear witness to the body of experience we had accumulated at this stage; that is, at the end of the first week of the in-depth study period. Here, we strived to embody some of the information and materials retrieved in the introductory phase. The movement exploration itself was based on physical tasks explored through improvisational structures. I tried to ground and enhance this exploration with the daily warm-up routine I had developed for the dancers as a preparation for the work. It drew on movement patterns from BMC™ and related bodywork practices.¹⁰³⁹ By the time we had reached the end of the introductory period in mid January 2005, our shared explorative practice had matured. Then, I

¹⁰³⁹ Cf. Chapter 2.2. See Cohen (1994, 2003), Hartley (1995, 2004), and Olsen (2004). Further supported by Calais-Germaine (1993) and Kapit (1977, 1987).

had developed symbols, which we used as codes or signs to indicate the different bodily systems or functions we were focusing on in our bodily exploration. The first drafts of these signs are seen to the left above.¹⁰⁴⁰ This sign language allowed us to play around with improvisational scores more simply: the signs were easy to read from afar, and as iconographic containers, they held memories of shared experiences that could sustain hour-long improvisational explorations.

I paid close attention both to the choreographic potential and to my artistic research interests in this exploration. In my dual role as the chorographic-I and artist-researcher I coached and facilitated, as well as directed attention to dilemmas or potentials that I observed. Out of this exploration – and the whole process of probing into the inside of the dying body – evolved a compositional structure of the dancers' movement paths. This structure was an explorative journey through our bodily autonomy. The journey stretched from the cellular life and cell migrations in the body to the heart and the cardio-vascular system and subsequently to the lymphatic immune system, its defeat and collapse; the body's digestive system and processing and the process of dying and onwards: the phases of disintegration of the body before its return to dust.¹⁰⁴¹

I initially wanted to apply the evolved structure as an improvisational score for the public presentation of the work, while I concentrated on coaching the dancers in their process to deepen their bodily and spatial awareness and sense for attuned listening and timing. However, the majority of them felt too uncomfortable about the prospect of facing the audience without having set and rehearsed the actual movements material used. Therefore, I complied with their needs and choreographically set the material according to the compositional structure I had already developed together with them.

This defining phase of selecting material was very work-intensive, both for the dancers and for me. As the choreographer, I compositionally spent my time on selecting material for each of the dancers based on the logged videos from our previous periods of exploration. I edited this movement material in the video program iMovie,¹⁰⁴² before I gave the edited material back to them in segments at a time. With the help of three laptops as tools, each dancer started to study and learn the edited compilation of their own material, which I had both re-organized and re-contextualized into choreographic sketches. This created a

1040 As used in studio, see *Appendices: A3.1*.

1041 The characteristic phases of bodily disintegration are stiffening (rigor mortis), putrefying, liquefying, bloating, drying, and brittling (Mims, 1999: 119-124).

1042 iMovie is a simple software program for editing video on Mac.

work situation that empowered the dancers. Besides offering them individually tailored sketches that they could access through the laptops, the edited video segments provided them with a visual memory of their previous movements' explorations. The method offered the dancers a transparency with regard to the origin of the material, while at the same time making my compositional choices and re-contextualization of the material as a choreographer visible to them. This transparency was closely related to how I had edited the selected movement material from the dancers' improvisational explorations in iMovie. The editing was not rendered, but kept on the timeline in iMovie.¹⁰⁴³ This meant that each dancer could instantly see the overall sketch of his or her part as well as separate and trace each movement segment of the choreographic video sketch or sequence back to the original context in which the explorations were done.¹⁰⁴⁴

The extensive use of digital media with video cameras and laptops for editing and screening played a central role in the process of developing the movement material. Without these tools, the choreography could not have been made. They had become integral to the process of constructing the performance, together with the use of documentary material.

Through this artistic process and my use of digital media, I explored an indexical use of documentary material in the composition, juxtaposing, and situating the performance. I applied three different strategies for using the documentary material:

- Building visual/scenographic elements,
- Providing the context for understanding and insight, and
- Creating working conditions

The process showed me that these three strategies are highly interrelated and connected; the media application is used not only for building the visual and scenographic elements in the staging of the performance. It also provides a context: both for the audience coming to the performance, and for the performers in their process of gaining insight about the physiological and pathological basis for their movement explorations, while developing the choreographic material. This latter

1043 This technical option existed in iMovie before the Mac OS X version 10.06.

1044 The explorations were done in the period between 8 November 2004 to 21 January 2005 and my re-editing was made in the period 18 January to 21 February. We had our first work-in-progress presentation on 7 and 8 March 2004. The period overlaps as I worked double shifts in this rehearsal period.

function I have already demonstrated in the example with the video documentation of the moving macrophages in the immune apparatus, which proved to be pivotal for the dancers' embodiment of the lymphatic system. In this actual case, the media were used only as a tool for creating understanding of the specific system addressed in the movement exploration in the studio, whereas the video material in question here was never used in the staging itself. Similarly, outside the parameters of the stage, I used the recordings of the movement explorations to edit video sketches for the dancers, and in this way, I created new working conditions for the performers with the help of the documentary material.

This points to a complex correspondence relation between the usage of media and the construction of the staging, which supersedes a naive integration of a moving image as disconnected scenography through turning the media usage into an integral tool for constructing the choreographic composition.

To illustrate this, in the part of the choreography that the youngest male dancer Peder Horgen dances, the last fourteen minutes are composed of twenty-eight different video segments from his various improvisations, based on tasks he studied after assignments from me. In selecting and editing this movement material, I constructed a choreographic sketch of his choreography, which Peder then studied and (re-)learnt, while he, in a close process with me, adjusted the choreographic material compositionally. Through this process, the movement material was further developed, as it was moulded and shaped, and set in time and space. Though I had already given considerations to choreographic concerns related to 'effort'¹⁰⁴⁵ and dynamics in my earlier selection of the movement material, the moulding process allowed me to further enhance these concerns.

In this manner, the video is not a mimetic representational tool employed in the performance space itself, but rather a tool used to enhance and develop the choreographic work – which in itself is a delicate transition in understanding human frailty and the instability of states of being, becoming and departures.

Exhausting dance – on artistic dilemmas and conflicting interests

From working with the process of dying, I was reminded of the fact that the end rarely comes when we want it. In the case of terminal illness, this situation often causes a sense of suspension and exhaustion, which sometimes seems

1045 Cf. Laban's concept of effort. See, for example, Laban (1966, 1974), Davies (2001: 49-98), and Hackney (1998: 217-29).

unbearable.¹⁰⁴⁶ There is no question of “proportion” or “scale” in the process of dying, only an unstoppable process of descending to a final rest. I wanted the choreography to reflect a sense of this course of our future erasure. I realized that staging this in a performance would place the audience in a different and difficult viewing position, as the suspensions and exhausting course of the dying process defy conventional notions of choreographic craftsmanship in terms of “proportion” or “scale” in the compositional structure and development.¹⁰⁴⁷ With its multiple endings, the choreography departs from the expectations of a well-crafted composition, as it is conventionally conceived and taught.¹⁰⁴⁸ Instead, for example, as the dancers explore the different phases of the bodily decomposition towards the end of the performance, the choreography descends in a series of sudden energy drops, followed with momentarily suspensions and fading lines, before swift accelerations and ascents rupture, only to be cut short as new abrupt plunges thrust the dancers towards the ground, again, and they start with a new series of attempts to resist the descending journey to the end, the performance’s waiting abyss.

Nevertheless, I wanted to make the choreography without compromising or diverting from the overall issue at stake, namely addressing the process of dying and our mortality. In upholding this contextual framework for realizing my choreographic project, I understood that this decision would have consequences for the staging, and even potentially create a sense of exhaustion for some viewers, simply, as it could be experienced as being too much to endure for some, but which is also at the core of the matters addressed here. As Bauman states, “there is hardly a thought more offensive than that of death; or, rather, of the inevitability of dying; the transience of our being in the world.”¹⁰⁴⁹ To address this inevitability of dying constituted the inherent dilemma and paradox making

1046 Lawton (2000), Fyhr (1999), and Kübler-Ross (1991).

1047 For example, in my experience choreographers will often instinctively insert a moment of relief after forty to forty-five minutes into an evening-length performance in order to accommodate the audience’s need for a break. In *A Rehearsal for Mortals*, this moment corresponds on the contrary to the actual point in the performance when the dancers moved into their speculative explorations on the effects of bodily deterioration in which the body takes over and begins its long descent of decomposition, expanding on what Lawton describes as the state of the “unbounded body.” See Lawton (2000: 128-9, 136, 141, 142-3).

1048 For example, cf. the Louis Horst tradition I was trained in that deeply influenced my early years as choreographer.

1049 Bauman (1992: 12). This is perhaps particularly offensive in a secular and affluent society experiencing economic boom and prosperity, as the case was when the performance was made.

this choreography. Embodying dying is performing a paradox, a rehearsal for mortals, as we are not dying, yet. Duration and endurance are played off another.

Through this process, I understood better why Hal Foster in his critical framework insistently distinguishes between the socio-political engagements he considers as “*flâneries* of the new nomadic artists,”¹⁰⁵⁰ and those that make a difference by altering outlooks, artistic practices and outcome. In this respect, his perspective also helped me to situate my choreographic project and its concern within a larger contemporary arts’ discourse. Though I already knew that my contextually based approach required the co-ordination of several discourses, as outlined in Chapter 1.3, it was only while working on *A Rehearsal for Mortals* that I fully grasped both the potential as well as the burden involved in conducting such a multilayered process.¹⁰⁵¹ Here, in probing into death and dying, this project intrinsically both stirred and produced aesthetic concerns as well as ethical challenges, and thereby reinforced my want to explore and challenge the divide between the actual real and the arts, or a socio-political reality and an artistic endeavour.¹⁰⁵² This might have provoked those who wanted those realms to be kept neatly apart. But, as Bauman reminds us, it is unpleasant to be confronted with our finality,¹⁰⁵³ and it is at this crux that the performance begins with the video of the coffin going into the oven. Here, the audience could witness processes that normally are invisible and unavailable, either because they take place backstage in the crematorium, or underneath the surface of our skin. Metaphorically speaking, it is also on this note that the performance ends by making the funeral directors and their work visible.

I will share my personal rendering of this endpoint and its ambience, and in this way share a glimpse of how I perceived this performance project as a choreographer.

1050 Foster (1996: 180). He is here referring to a prevalent attitude in the fine arts in which artists approach the reality of others as a commodity that they appropriate and simply use to enhance their artistic career and goals.

1051 Foster (1996: 202). I will exemplify and discuss the implications of this strategy further in Chapters 7 and 8.

1052 Cf. Klockljug (2007: 10). The review describes how the viewing of the performance (Stockholm 2007) had such an impact.

1053 Bauman (1992).

Approaching the end – personal impressions from the performance

The performance draws to a close when the performers gravitate towards each other on the edge of the white square, at the front left of the stage, and end in a final and complete stillness. By then, the burning image on the video has also come to a freeze, a still image, just like the performers underneath it. Their individual journeys based on a speculative exploration and embodiment of the body's decomposition and return to dust is over. It is in this stillness that the last video segment starts: showing the door of the crematorium oven that opens. Meanwhile, the performers exit the stage, find their seats among the audience and, together with them, watch the last remains being raked out of the oven. The funeral directors have re-entered the stage, and we see them in action placing candle stands as if they were preparing for a funeral ceremony. Their close teamwork and embodied practice in making swift and precise arrangements in meticulously symmetry is displayed. The flowers are replaced here by a video loop, shown on the small screen on stage right. The loop consists of close-ups of flower arrangements superimposed onto each other to make a continuous flow of altering images.

The funeral directors' endeavour discloses a void created by the absent coffin. Its absence subversively disturbs, but also enhances the awareness of the undertakers' discreet presence and bodily appearance. Their performance is the result of years of practice focused on not drawing attention to their presence, but instead to defuse and direct one's attention back to the situation they are facilitating. Here this effort becomes exposed and given centre focus. The audience is looking at the work normally taking place prior to a ceremony, the back stage activity of the funeral ritual. When the work is done, they stop, look up and watch the remaining part of the video with the audience: seeing how the urn is lowered into the ground and covered with earth and sprouting grass turns the burial site and the whole large screen grassy green. At this moment they turn to the audience and the oldest of them says: "Our time here has come to an end. Outside there will be a small gathering. Tea and coffee will be served. You are all invited. Would you please stand up and kindly follow us." As the audience exits the theatre, they meet the two funeral directors standing on each side of a white coffin resting on a trolley. When the last member of the audience exits, the two roll the coffin back in to the theatre. Through the doorway we can see them place it in the vacant space between the candleholders, do a respectful bow, before they return to the entrance. With a respectful nod, they acknowledge the audience as they close the double door in front of them and disappear out of our sight. Gone are the performers and the performance and our access to the space inside. The end is real, but not for us, yet. We are offered a break. With tea and coffee.



Figure 18. The final scene of *A Rehearsal for Mortals* at Dansens Hus in Oslo, September 2006. Photo: Knut Bry

Closing thoughts: transitional observations

As I draw this chapter to a close, I realize that a major shift occurred between the two processes accounted for in Chapters 5 and 6. In the process leading up to *A Rehearsal for Mortals* I am no longer involved as a performer, but primarily in the role of the choreographer-researcher in charge of the group of performers and artists involved. As I focused on my composite roles as a responsible artistic director, rehearsal leader, and facilitator, this offered me a different perspective and overview of the process. Combined with an increased awareness and understanding of what my role as choreographer-researcher required and the research project embedded, this shifting position also made me more alert to the structural and conceptual ramifications of my artistic strategy. This change may come across in the way I have recounted this last artistic process, particularly if compared to the personal account and immersion that I described in the previous chapter on *A Song to Martin*. However, I want to emphasise that this difference relates in part to the fact that *A Song to Martin* was centred on my private life and experiences of Martin: because he was not known to a general audience, but had left a deep imprint on me, I needed to convey on what personal grounds this project was situated and motivated. In this project on *memento mori* and our mortality, the need to situate a personal motivation was less pertinent.

Nevertheless, these factors contributed to changes in perspective, which may also explain eventual differences and shift of tone in the style of writing and the way I have accounted for the artistic processes in these two chapters.

In *A Rehearsal for Mortals* I probed into death and dying, while focusing on the liminal states of the dying body. The concept of the project evolved in a collaborative process with the performers and the wider team of creative partners supporting us. This process was supported and grounded on information gained from our background research and fieldwork on death and dying, and combined with my knowledge of somatics. We processed this input in our explorative studio work with the help of practical visualization techniques and defined improvisational tasks. We looked into these bodily matters both from a cellular level and a more systemic understanding. As we gradually embodied the insights gained from our background research, the choreographic composition and its performance came into being.

This encounter with the process of dying made the material and textural consequences of dying apparent, and death a definitive real, rather than something abstract. This work confronted us with our own mortality and the griefscape of our shared “memento mori:” the ordinariness of dying, in contrast to the extraordinary with the plane crash in the Himalayas and Martin as a person and close friend. This contrast reflects the way my artistic research project thinks through different kinds of death and their dissimilar grieving processes. In this respect, the process of constructing *A Rehearsal for Mortals* not only honed an artistic approach and methodology to make contextually-based choreography, that is, choreography drawing on ethnographic tools and documentary material, but also provided the performers and me both with physiological and bodily insight as well as an existential ground for undertaking the next challenge: facing the griefscape of the Bosnian War.

7. *An Unfinished Story* – a strategy is challenged

In death, or rather at the moment we cease to exist, there is no difference – gas chamber, mass execution or the treacherous flash of a metal blade in the dark, a painful sigh or rattle and the final strike of the knife. Ten thousand people, then ten thousand coffins, ten thousand gravestones – yeaah, ten thousand! Everything is known about that death, or at least we now pretend that we want to know everything. We violate their death in newspaper columns, never asking ourselves questions about their life. We do not know anything about all those people who were not any less or more wonderful, good or bad than anyone else. Wonderful in so far as they were human. An in so far as I knew them.

From *Postcards from the Grave* by Emir Suljagić

– a survivor of Srebrenica.¹⁰⁵⁴

In this chapter, I will look at the processes leading to the last part of the performance trilogy *An Unfinished Story*. Here, I approached a highly volatile socio-political reality: the traumatic legacy of the Bosnian War (1992-1995) with its multi-layered and complicated grieving processes, which I choreographically tried to come to grips with as a context of communal grieving. In this process, I faced less familiar ground while collaborating with a larger, intercultural group of performers. Altogether, this challenged and augmented the contextually based approach to choreography that had emerged through my project. My emphasis here is on the conceptual considerations and the fieldwork experiences that

1054 Suljagić (2005: 12).

shaped my choreographic thinking and process as I constructed the performance *An Unfinished Story*. The chapter is therefore divided into three major sections: (7.1) *Socio-political context and conceptual considerations*; (7.2) *Fieldwork experiences*; and (7.3) *Explorative processes*, that is, the studio-based work of processing the contextual information gathered to construct and stage the performance. However, I will begin this study by drawing up an overview of the project, as a production.

Factual overview of the artistic production process: crossing contexts

As a performance, *An Unfinished Story* was devised in collaboration with performers from Oslo, Belgrade and Sarajevo; it was produced on location partly in Belgrade, but mainly in Sarajevo, where it also premiered in Vijećnica, the former national library in Sarajevo. The performance lasted approximately 50 minutes and was designed to fit any larger assembly or congregation hall where the audience could share the floor with the performers. The performers were Slaven Vidak (Sarajevo), Peder Horgen, Kristianne Mo, Terje Tjømø Mossige (Oslo), and Marija Opsenica (Belgrade). The work also included other pivotal participants such as the sound artist Jørgen Larsson (Bergen), the local project co-ordinator in Sarajevo Ivan Vrhunc and the costume designer Samina Zajko (Sarajevo), to mention some of our numerous collaborators and partners.¹⁰⁵⁵

Though I had already begun my journey towards this artistic research project in June 2000,¹⁰⁵⁶ the actual work process *with* the performers took place from June 2005 to September 2006. This interval of fifteen months was divided into four separate and intensive work periods, which amounted to almost five months of full-time work for the performers. As in the previous performance project, the process developed from an introductory fieldwork period (June – July 2005) via a phase of explorative processing (November – December 2005) followed by a defining stage (April – May 2006) before entering the final performance period

¹⁰⁵⁵ Other central collaborators in the project included the local project co-ordinators Dušica Parezanović (Belgrade) and Sandra Sandbye (Oslo), Hamo Muhommod (Sarajevo) for his compilation of traditional folk dances from Sarajevo – taught us by Mersiha Zembo and Kolo Bosansko at Bosnian Cultural Centre (Sarajevo), the set designer Silje Kiise (Bergen), the movement advisor Ingunn Rimestad and the Gindler practitioner Gro Torgersbråten (Oslo). The project was co-produced with Dansens Hus in Oslo, KHiO, Rex cultural centre in Belgrade, and MESS in Sarajevo, and funded by Arts Council Norway, Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Norway, Fond for lyd og bilde, Programme for artistic research Norway, and Intermedia at UiO. For extensive list of partners involved in the project, see *Appendices: A1*.

¹⁰⁵⁶ See Chapter 1.2.

(June and September 2006). This last period included the final preparations and adjustments for presenting the work publicly at the different venues.

The considerable time gaps that divided the different phases of work were important for the development of the project. Besides providing valuable room for manoeuvring and sorting out logistical problems and needs before approaching the next stage, these openings also offered time for all of us to process our experiences and digest the work done. For example, there were nearly three months between the second and third stage of the work. This space granted me as a choreographer important time for refining and sharpening the direction and focus for further developing the performance project. As support in this process, I used the video documentation of our movement explorations and compositional sketches, and consulted my expanding network in the region.¹⁰⁵⁷ In the period between July 2005 and July 2006, I visited the region eight times, and spent more than five months on location. For my background in the area prior to July 2005, see Chapter 1.2.

Here, I continued to draw on ethnographic tools and methods¹⁰⁵⁸ in my artistic strategy, as in the previous parts of this project, but in addressing a more complex and foreign socio-political context while working with an intercultural artistic team, I radically challenged this strategy. In this process, I was confronted with the socio-political circumstances of death, dying, and grieving that profoundly differed from my daily life at home and the previous contexts I had explored. Although I had faced unfamiliar and challenging situations while developing *A Rehearsal for Mortals*, I had until now engaged in fieldwork situated close to my everyday life. In the emotionally charged and politicized territory of the Bosnian War, I was both literally and metaphorically confronted with another ground and a grammar unknown and demanding, which necessitated that I went beyond my own comfort zone and cultural borders. Facing this destabilized ground raised other and more complex demands to my choreographic strategy. On a practical level, this also reinforced the importance of the fieldwork in the artistic process. The fieldwork included a range of different informal interviews and meetings with local residents and survivors,¹⁰⁵⁹ medical experts, psychological clinicians

1057 By region, I imply the area of the former Yugoslavia overall, though my attention centred mainly on the situation within Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia.

1058 See, for example, Denzin (1999, 2003), Emerson et al. (1995), and Heaton (2002) to mention a few. Cf. Chapter 1.3 and 2.

1059 From an ethical stance, I did not seek out pathologically diagnosed trauma survivors, but concentrated instead on exchanges with ordinary people that we met, in addition to colleagues from the area. My interest was in how people dealt with their everyday lives living under the predicament of such a

and researchers, political analysts, representatives of Human Rights organisations, and other activists in NGOs working with peace and reconciliation in the area.¹⁰⁶⁰ I engaged the performers to take part in the work of collecting data and impressions and processing this information. The processing happened through continuous conversations and exchanges in the field as well as while working in the studio. With the performers, I searched for a choreographic response to the socio-political context we encountered. Through this composite process, I identified the physical focus of our movement explorations: to probe into the functions of the vestibular system, or our physical sense of balance, and the psychobiological or somatic strategies for coping with post-traumatic stress.¹⁰⁶¹ The outcome of this exploration provided a base for the choreographic material used in the construction of the performance, and explains the performance subtitle: a study in the neurology of grieving.

Therefore, rather than primarily emphasising details in the choreographic crafting and staging of movements, I will instead probe into the processes that lead up to my choreographic decisions here. This focus explains the balance between the three sections (7.1 – 7.3) in this chapter. The concerns addressed in these sections are all integral parts of my choreographic thinking in this project. I do not consider the choreographic process and its outcome limited to the last section of this chapter.¹⁰⁶² On the contrary, in my contextually based approach to choreography, the two first sections (7.1 and 7.2) – on contextual background research, conceptual considerations and fieldwork experiences – constitute what

traumatic past. In other words, how the legacy of the war with its complicated grieving processes influenced their present lives in various ways.

1060 See *References*, under *R8* and *R12*.

1061 Exposure to traumatic events can cause post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD). See Chapter 4.1. In such situations the traumatic incident will remain un-integrated in the person's life narrative. According to Bessel A van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart, "this failure to arrange the memory in words and symbols leaves it to be organized on a somatosensory or iconic level" (van der Kolk and van der Hart, 1995: 172). As van der Kolk points out, this makes the individuals "prone to revert to rigid 'fixed action patterns:' the automatic behavioral flight, fight, or freeze responses that are our evolutionary heritage" (In the foreword to Ogden 2006: xx). These responses cause a state of hyperarousal in the traumatized individual, which fragments his or her perceptual experience into emotional and /or sensory elements, for example, in the form of flashbacks and nightmares. This makes the traumatized individuals "unable to trust their bodily sensations to...alert them to take appropriate action." Source: Van der Kolk, Van der Hart, & McFarlane (1996: 421), as quoted by Ogden (2006: 34). Ogden points out that one third of the traumatized individuals might instead of hyperarousal-related symptoms suffer from hypoarousal. This is, a re-experiencing causing "similar losses in memory, motor or affective functions, and somatosensory awareness as those that occurred during the trauma" (Ogden, 2006: 35).

1062 Cf. Hal Foster's (1996: 171-172) reading of Benjamin that I referred to in previous chapter on the interrelationship between contextual engagement and material praxis.

framed and motivated the decisions later made in the studio work.¹⁰⁶³ They therefore define what set apart this last choreographic process from the earlier two in my artistic research project, as they situate my approach to construct and embody communal grieving in *An Unfinished Story*. Here, I will first outline my understanding of communal grieving in relation to the socio-political context in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia, and then proceed to expand on how this contextual understanding framed my conceptual definition and choreographic approach in this project.

7.1 The context of communal grieving: “An open grave” – *the aftermath of the Bosnian War*

Communal grieving and organized violence: a socio-political wound and challenge

With the concept of communal grieving I refer to a context in which a large majority within a community or a group of individuals has to face similar and or interrelated losses in the aftermath of a traumatic event. Here private and personal grieving processes will coexist and live on within this larger amalgamated context of grieving that I call “communal.” The concept of “communal” does not necessarily refer to the number of dead involved, but rather to the social impact of the traumatic event on a community. My claim is that nobody within such a context of communal grieving can escape its social impact.¹⁰⁶⁴ In this study, I relate the concept to the spectral nature of these collective experiences, that is, the raw feelings of aggregated grief. These experiences are not to be confused with the publicly shared rituals we may apply for mourning traumatic events, often administered by the funeral industry.¹⁰⁶⁵ Nevertheless, I assume that there is a certain correlation between the scale of the traumatic event – in terms of lives lost and or damage suffered – and the socio-political importance that shared mourning rituals may play in a situation of communal grieving. However, I believe that there is a substantial difference when the traumatic event is a result of a

1063 In parallel to my ongoing physical training and bodywork practice, which primarily are centred on Asthanga yoga, Qi gong, improvisational composition and Gindler-Jacoby work, cf. Chapter 2.3.

1064 Cf. Chapter 4.1 and the discussion of a socio-political perspective on trauma. As Cvetkovich has pointed out, the experience of traumatic events can create “trauma culture” – public cultures that form in and around trauma,” or what I would call “a culture of grieving.” See Cvetkovich (2003: 9). Though interesting, I will not discuss further the implications of these claims in this study.

1065 Cf. Hope’s distinction between grief and mourning (2007: 172).

premeditated action, as here, where I was probing into a context of communal grieving that resulted from organized violence¹⁰⁶⁶ on the level of states (or groups of equivalent coherence and level of organization). These circumstances forced the bereaved, in addition to confronting their losses, also to face the horror that they were mostly deliberately intended and committed. According to psycho-traumatologist Maggie Schauer this kind of violence is

targeted for continuous use against individuals and groups who have different political attitudes, nationalities, or who come from specific racial, cultural, an ethnic backgrounds. It is characterized by the violation of human rights and disregard of women's and children rights.¹⁰⁶⁷

This deliberate intention to inflict pain on civil society, which Schauer describes, has severe traumatic consequences. The impact of such organized violence will not end with its operations but, as Schauer points out, have consequences that “reach far into the future of a society.”¹⁰⁶⁸ These consequences directly relate to the societal impact of trauma that I discussed as a backdrop for my artistic research project in Chapter 4. However, the traumatic experience of loss and grieving might even be exacerbated in the aftermath of such operations by a constant fear of having to face the perpetrators and the informers – or of living on with the uncertainty of who they were – in situations of impunity.¹⁰⁶⁹ In cases where lawsuits are filed to hold the perpetrators responsible, the traumatic impact might be further amplified. As court proceedings, these processes easily draw out in time, and need to go into minute details about the atrocities committed, in addition to bringing up and getting intertwined with the mesh of political agendas involved in any liability claims. At the same time these efforts are needed to re-establish social order and justice. As poignantly observed by Piotr Kuhiwczak, a specialist in intercultural communication, while referring to developments in Poland after communist rule and South Africa after apartheid: “the ghosts of the past will not be properly buried until those responsible

1066 On the concept of organized violence, see, for example, Schauer (2005: 7) and Nora Sveaass (1994: 54-61).

1067 Schauer (2005: 7).

1068 Schauer (2005: 7). Cf. Anita Schrader McMillan (2005) on maltreatment of children in post-war Guatemala.

1069 As the case was in large areas of the former Yugoslavia after the Bosnian War, see, for example, Martina Fischer (2007) and Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia (2005).

for breaking the law are brought to justice.”¹⁰⁷⁰ In this way communal grieving becomes not only a matter of a grief-stricken traumatised culture, but it also enters the complex economy of body politics. A turn, which complicates what, can be considered as a “normal” grieving process by throwing it into a volatile and painful territory fused with political overtones and mistrust, from which there is no easy way out. This often results in prolonged and complex grieving processes.¹⁰⁷¹ It is the consequences of living under such conditions that I wanted to investigate through looking into the context of communal grieving in the aftermath of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Bosnian War (1992-1995) and its aftermath

The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which I will simply refer to as the Bosnian War, took place in the heart of the former Yugoslavia. Briefly, the war started after Bosnia-Herzegovina declared independence in March 1992, based on the result of a national referendum.¹⁰⁷² The war lasted for nearly four years from March/April 1992 to December 1995.¹⁰⁷³ It was the most violent war Europe had experienced since the end of the Second World War. Bosnia-Herzegovina was known for its unique historical heritage with a cultural diversity and a geo-politically interwoven texture of religious and ethnic cohabitation.¹⁰⁷⁴ This heritage proved fatal when faced with a warfare conducted and reinforced by nationalist rhetoric and the idea of ethnic cleansing. Early on in the war, the brutality of the warfare became evident. As early as May 1993, it led to the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY),¹⁰⁷⁵ whose main headquarters were located in The Hague in the Netherlands. The United Nations (UN) established ICTY in order to bring war criminals to justice. However, the international community’s involvement in the conflict was problematic and at times only worsened the situation locally on the ground. The result of the war was a human tragedy, on a scale that neither the citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina at the time, nor we as Europeans overall were prepared for. This was perhaps

1070 Kuhiwczak (1999: 176).

1071 Herman (1997: 119).

1072 CSCE (1992: 19).

1073 My synopsis of the war is written on the basis of what insight I have accumulated since my first personal encounter with it in 1994, including my fieldwork experiences and what I have learnt from primary and secondary sources in this project, but without claiming to offer a strict historiographical reading of the war here.

1074 See, for example, Tim Judah (2000: 159), Noel Malcolm (1994), or Ivo Andrić (1995).

1075 ICTY, see <http://www.icty.org/> (Accessed 7.09.2010).

most callously demonstrated in the case of Srebrenica and what followed its fall on 6 July 1995. Despite the fact that the UN had declared it a “safe area,” twenty to thirty thousand people had to flee as the Bosnian Serb Army (VRS) took over the area.¹⁰⁷⁶ The refugees gathered at the Dutch UN base in Potočari nearby, and trusted that the UN would still protect them.¹⁰⁷⁷ When General Ratko Mladić arrived, the commander of VRS, he demanded the Dutch UN commander to hand over the Bosniaks, that is, the Bosnian Muslims, into his custody, while he assuredly announced to them: “No one will harm you.”¹⁰⁷⁸ More than an estimated 12,000 Bosniak men did not trust his promises and instead decided to flee to the Bosniak-controlled “safe” enclave around Tuzla.¹⁰⁷⁹ Their mistrust soon proved to be well founded. Many of the men who fled never made it through the forest but were ambushed *en route* by the overwhelming power of Mladić’s forces and killed. Yet the thousands who stayed behind and who trusted the UN-led troops in Potočari to protect them were worse off: they were all handed over to Mladić and his men. All men above early puberty who were considered fit for fighting were separated from the women and the children and then executed.¹⁰⁸⁰ In 2005, ICTY cautiously estimated that 7,000 – 8,000 Bosniak men and boys were killed between 11 and 19 July 1995.¹⁰⁸¹ However, mass graves were still being discovered and unearthed in the area in 2010, by which time 8,372 missing people had been identified.¹⁰⁸²

Since the massacre, the passive inaction and the defensive role of the international community in protecting Srebrenica and its refugees have been much questioned.¹⁰⁸³ In particular, as the UN with the support of NATO had international forces available in the region at the time, but did not comply with the request for re-enforcement which the commander of the Dutch contingent of Peacekeepers

1076 ICTY, Case No. IT-98-33-T. Dated 2 August 2001. On being declared a “safe area,” see: § 18 on page 6, and on the numbers of civilians fleeing, see § 34 on page 12.

1077 Judah (2000: 239).

1078 Quoted in Judah (2000: 240).

1079 Judah (2000: 239-240).

1080 The women, children and elderly were transported in buses to Tuzla. The women were exposed to rape and harassment prior to this deportation. Sources: Judah (2000: 240) and ICTY Case No. IT-98-33-T, § 46 and § 48 on page 12, dated 2. August 2001.

1081 Source: ICTY Case No. IT-04-81-T dated 30 September 2009 and Case No. IT-98-33-T, § 84 on page 27, dated 2 August 2001.

1082 Out of which 6414 have been identified by DNA analysis. According to Edina Becirevic, University of Sarajevo, and Gunnar M. Ekeløve-Slydal, Deputy Secretary General, Norwegian Helsinki Committee, speakers at the seminar “The Genocide in Srebrenica 15 years on” organized by The Norwegian Helsinki Committee 3 June 2010.

1083 See, for example, Judah (2000: 300-301), Woodhead (1999), and Vulliamy (2005: 186).

at the UN base in Potočari had made.¹⁰⁸⁴ The fact remains that the UN and the international community did not succeed in preventing the genocide through other means, either.¹⁰⁸⁵ In that respect, the responsibility for the consequences of this tragedy also rests in part on the international community. The former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, acknowledged this fact in his message to the tenth anniversary ceremony in memory of the Srebrenica massacre in Potočari 2005: “We cannot evade our own share of responsibility ... the tragedy of Srebrenica will haunt our [UN] history forever.”¹⁰⁸⁶

However, only in 2011 were the last two main perpetrators indicted, Ratko Mladić and Goran Hadžić, captured and brought to ICTY in The Hague.¹⁰⁸⁷ As the pivotal force behind the Srebrenica genocide, Mladić had already been indicted in 1995. Despite a reward of five million US dollars for information leading to his capture,¹⁰⁸⁸ Mladić had spent sixteen years as a fugitive in the region. For a well-known person like him, this was only possible thanks to active help from loyal and influential supporters, and unwilling support from others to turn a blind eye. For me these unidentifiable and unknown supporters constitute a chilling part of the scenario that complicate and make the grieving processes in the aftermath of the Bosnian War particular difficult and unpleasant.

Numbers that speak of a larger griefscape

In trying to comprehend the legacy of the Bosnian War, I turned to statistics for support to get an overview of what the war had meant in terms of death and dying. The numbers provided a measure to indicate the traumatic impact that the war had caused. They helped me to navigate the emotional territory of loss and grieving that I had entered, because with an overview of the factual consequences, I also secured some reference points when discussing the implication of the war with others. This became of the utmost importance when I did fieldwork and background research, particularly in the Serb-controlled areas.

1084 See for example, Woodhead (1999) and ICTY, Case No. IT-98-33, § 34 on page 11, Dated 2 August 2001.

1085 Confirmed by ICTY: “Undeniably the enclave was not defended in the manner it would have been anticipated.” See Case No. IT-98-33, § 35 on page 12, Dated 2 August 2001. Similarly, this fact makes Gry Larsen, State Secretary of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, state: “As we, and I say we, failed to prevent what happened, we all have the commitment to bring those responsible for to justice.” Quoted from a speech delivered at the seminar *The Genocide of Srebrenica 15 years on*, organized by the Norwegian Helsinki Committee at Litteraturhuset in Oslo, 3. June 2010.

1086 Annan (2005). Press Release UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan: SG/SM/9993 – 11 July 2005.

1087 For more information about the cases, see ICTY – under “The cases “ at” <http://www.icty.org/>

1088 See, for example, Reward for Justice: <http://www.rewardsforjustice.net/index.cfm?page=Mladic> (accessed 13 March 2013).

From my artistic research perspective, the statistics outlined the topography of the griefscape that I had set out to construct and embody in this performance project on communal grieving in the aftermath of the Bosnian War. Here follows a brief overview of the key data that I obtained and which framed my approach.

According to statistics published in June 2007 by the Research and Documentation Centre (RDC) in Sarajevo, 97,207 citizens of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina died directly as a result of the war. People who died of secondary reasons, like starvation, exhaustion, or of illness due to lack of medicine etc., because of the war are not accounted for here. Neither are those who are reported dead or missing, but where the family cannot prove their existence due to missing official identity papers, lost in the cause of the war.¹⁰⁸⁹ Nearly half of the people killed were civilians. Of them 83.3 per cent were of Bosnian Muslim origin or – as they are normally referred to – “Bosniaks”, while 10.2 per cent were Serbs, and 5.5 per cent Croats.¹⁰⁹⁰ Serbs are culturally reckoned to be Serbian-Orthodox Christians, whereas the Croats to be Roman Catholics. If we compare these numbers with the 1991 census for Bosnia-Herzegovina we will find that out of a population of about 4.35 million, there were only 43.7 per cent Bosniaks, but 31.3 per cent Serbs, and 17.3 per cent Croats.¹⁰⁹¹ The lack of correlation between the ethnic breakdown in the census and in the distribution of civilians killed in the war reflects a disturbing reality. The number of civilian Bosnian Muslims killed is nearly double what, demographically speaking, could be anticipated, while the numbers of Bosnian Serbs and Croats killed are strikingly fewer than their populace would otherwise have indicated. The statistics point to the dark and grim horrors of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992 – 1995): a war fuelled on xenophobia and ideas of religious and cultural superiority, which resulted in pogrom-like situations of ethnic cleansing. The war gave – as all wars do – misfits and the simple-minded a cause to believe in,¹⁰⁹² profiteers and speculators an opportunity to make quick profits in the lawless vacuum the war caused,¹⁰⁹³ the

1089 RDC (2007). *Human Losses in Bosnia & Herzegovina 91-95*. The project was sponsored among others by the MFA in Norway. See http://www.norveska.ba/News_and_events/Society-and-Policy/rdcpresentation/ (Accessed 08.10.2008).

1090 According to the census of 1991, the population were 4,354,911. Cf. RDC (2007): Out of 39,684 civilians killed 33,070 were Bosniaks, 4,075 Serbians, and 2,163 Croatians.

1091 Judah (2000: 344). According Judah, in the census of 1991 7 percent of the population were a composite of people who were either categorized as “others” (like Rom people or Albanians), or consisted of people who did not subscribe to ethnicity, but simply considered themselves as Yugoslavs (Judah 2000: 344).

1092 Slavenka Drakulic (2004: 50, 73).

1093 Judah (2000: 255-8).

little crooks an opportunity to enrich themselves by looting fleeing neighbours' homes,¹⁰⁹⁴ lesser intellectuals the power to redefine the past and their academic standing,¹⁰⁹⁵ religious leaders the possibility to regain ground lost after years under communism,¹⁰⁹⁶ and the frustrated both a new/renewed vision to live for as well as a scapegoat to blame for their personal as well as their country's misery,¹⁰⁹⁷ while, on the whole, the war imparted tremendous suffering on the main population, and in particular on the Bosnian Muslims as demonstrated in the statistics mentioned above. The general standard of living plummeted and was set back for decades compared with the rest of Europe.¹⁰⁹⁸

With these fragments, I will leave the historical backdrop that contributed to the country's misfortunes aside. It is for others to give detailed accounts of the warfare leading up to the atrocities I mentioned above, and to offer a plausible reading of why this young country ended in such a precarious state as it did. My main concern here was primarily to establish the contextual background for my artistic research project on communal grieving. Through the account, however, I also wanted to set out my partial and specific perspective on this socio-political context of post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia. My aim is to tune in and listen empathetically to the roaring silences of grieving. Though I had already encountered the tragic outcome of the Bosnian War first-hand during the war in 1994,¹⁰⁹⁹ it was not until 2004, in connection with my preparation for this project, that I witnessed the communal dimension of grieving as a reality. Seeing and being part of tens of thousands of people in grief on a meadow in Eastern Bosnia flocking around endless rows of graves made a difference – as it is captured for me in the photograph I call “an open grave” from Potočari in July 2004, which I introduced in Chapter 4.1 and will expand on in Chapter 7.2.¹¹⁰⁰ However, faced with the brutal facts of this socio-political context, my role as an artist and

1094 Elizabeth Neuffer (2003: 33) and Drakulic (2004: 25).

1095 Judah (2000: 158-9).

1096 Åsne Seierstad (2000: 65).

1097 Sources: Seierstad (2000), Drakulic (2004), informal interviews conducted with local people in particular the Serbian dominated area in combination with interviews with local informants such as Borka Pavicevic at Centre for Cultural decontamination (CZDk) and Nebojsa Tadic at the Helsinki Committee (HC) in Serbia, both Belgrade.

1098 Shelburne (2010: 4-5). According to Shelburne's report to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, (UNECE), *Discussion Paper Series*, No. 2010.1, April 2010, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina are still by 2009 30-25 percent below their 1989 levels.

1099 Cf. Chapter 1.2 and my visit to Mostar.

1100 Cf. Chapter 4.1 – photographs as iconographic signs. For me this photograph testifies and stands in for this larger and ephemeral griefscape and ongoing grieving processes that still impact individuals, their communities and society in the aftermath of the war in the region.

researcher was anything but evident, I had to self-critically examine it and the conceptual framework for my artistic research project: what was my role as an artist-researcher in this context? How could I ensure that my artistic approach became conceptually and aesth|ethically viable?

Conceptual framework for the artistic process

The challenge of carving out of the conceptual framework for *An Unfinished Story* highlights the crux of Hal Foster's argument in "the artist as an ethnographer"¹¹⁰¹ related to the politics of identification and ethics in fieldwork-based artistic endeavours. His claim is not only concerned with the double process of the contextual probing versus the media-specific artistic investigation as described in *A Rehearsal for Mortals*, but he also questions the terms and means for how an artist approaches a socio-political context for making art. According to Foster, the challenge here is to strike a critical balance between the tendencies of "over-identifying" or "under-identifying" with the context one is addressing. This demands a self-reflexive stance from the artist.¹¹⁰²

As I approached the Bosnian situation from an outsider's position in this project, the challenge Foster describes was very urgent. The project could too easily be read as an example of the tendency Foster discusses in the contemporary arts scene, where globetrotting artists travel around the world and appropriate local contexts in order to create their art works. Then, socio-political contexts are turned into playgrounds for the sake of the artists' own self-interest in promoting their international careers and/or dysfunctional emotional needs, whilst little concern is given to the needs of the locals and the context the artists are passing through. This kind of "under-identification" and its ethical abuse and appropriation of others' reality has political implications that go beyond what is actually made in this encounter.¹¹⁰³ However, as Foster points out, the result here may also be that an artist can "over-identify" with his or her chosen context. Such a phenomenon was already observed in the Western Balkans in the late 1930s when the English author Rebecca West in her famous book *Black*

1101 Foster (1996: 171-204).

1102 Foster (1996: 203).

1103 Issues related to a post-colonial discourse, voiced by scholars such as Homi Bhaba (1981, 1994), David Williams (1991), Anne Britt Gran (2000), Stuart Hall (1991, 1997) and highlighted by the works of artists such as Alfredo Jaar. See *References, R4*.

Lamb Grey Falcon, wrote about her journeys in the area.¹¹⁰⁴ According to West, the repressive history under various empires had caused a deadlock in which

each people was perpetually making charges of inhumanity against all its neighbours.... English persons, therefore, of humanitarian and reformist disposition constantly went out to the Balkan Peninsula to see who was ill-treating whom, and being the very nature of their perfectionist faith unable to accept the horrid hypothesis that everybody was ill-treating everybody else, all came back with a pet Balkan people established in their hearts as suffering and innocent, eternally the massacrée and never the massacrer.¹¹⁰⁵

Although West exemplifies the tendency that Foster points to, I believe that the situation is a little more complex than what she poignantly describes in the 1930s. However, what West addresses precisely here is how we take recourse to reductive reasoning when encountering atrocities. I have come across similar attitudes to those she refers to, both on a political and a personal level in my work in the Western Balkans.¹¹⁰⁶

We tend to externalize the cause of the problems we face when blaming them on others. In attributing the act of horrendous atrocities and inhuman violations to “evil” and “monstrous” individuals - or as resulting from the characteristic vices of an ethnic or religious group - we deflect the challenges these situations confront us with. As the psychoanalytically based scholar Julia Kristeva and the Croatian writer Slavenka Drakulić, have both pointed out, we seem to have a need for monsters or scapegoats to blame for deeds too inhuman to face within ourselves.¹¹⁰⁷ This can, for example, obviously be seen in the historical role most commonly assigned to Hitler in the case of the Holocaust: in making him the evil monster, personally responsible for the destruction of the European Jews in the Second World War, we exempted ourselves as Europeans – and our societies - from taking the responsibility for anti-Semitism or, more generally, xenopho-

1104 West (1993 [1942]).

1105 West (1993 [1942]: 20).

1106 A high ranking Norwegian Civil Servant exclaimed while we discussed in a private setting the situations on the Balkan in 2000: “What more can you expect from the Balkans!? You know, they will always fight down there.” By this statement he turned a diverse group of people into a different “other” and by that he dis-identified with and dismissed the whole situation. A more infamous “othering” of this kind is the former U.S. president G. W. Bush’s proclamation of “the axis of evil” in response to the terrorist attack on 9/11 in 2001 that divided the world into two: either you are with us or against us. This got serious political consequences.

1107 Drakulić (2004) and Kristeva (1991).

bia.¹¹⁰⁸ But just as one man cannot kill six million people alone, neither could Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadžić fifty years later in Srebrenica kill more than 8000 men themselves in the few days between 11 to 22 July 1995. This perspective, that is, the reality of their many willing executioners,¹¹⁰⁹ came to haunt me as I began to dig into the legacy of the Bosnian War. As Drakulić points out:

turning your head away or remaining silent in the face of injustice and crime means collaborating with politics whose programme is death and destruction. And whether it is willing or unwilling collaboration doesn't really matter, because the result is the same.¹¹¹⁰

In this way, Drakulić questions the distinction between passive or active collaboration. This thought gave my choreographic project a chilling and uncanny backdrop, which simmered in the back of my mind as I met people as part of my background research. However, in combining Foster's observations with my self-reflexive stance and background that I outlined in Chapters 1 and 2 and 4.2, I was provided with tools, to critically examine both my actions and the issues at stake as I approached the post-war situation in Bosnia and Serbia.

In sum, this backdrop reinforced an outlook charged with what I would coin a pragmatic idealism, which the theatre scholar Anne Britt Gran, in her reading of my artistic approach and usage of intercultural practices, described as one of a self-reflexive bricoleur.¹¹¹¹ I call this outlook an *aesth|ethical* thinking,¹¹¹² which amalgamates a self-reflexive ethical and aesthetical praxis into an integral part of an artistic approach. These parameters are foundational for me in this artistic research project, but became particularly important here, as I approached this third part of the trilogy *An Unfinished Story* - and began to look into the facts and consequences of the Bosnian War.

1108 Arendt (1994) in the report from the trial against Eichmann in 1961 points to this with her famous claim about "the banality of evil." In the case of the Bosnian War, see Drakulić (2004: 164 -172).

1109 Goldhagen (1997). I am borrowing the term "willing executioners" from Goldhagen, though without vouching for all his claims or methodological base for his thesis. However, I could feel a haunting discomfort when I walked down the streets, for example, in Belgrade or Banja Luka, and thought about the large number of men who once had fought in the war and who now certainly walked among us.

1110 Drakulić (2004: 171).

1111 Gran (2000: 324-7).

1112 For a definition of this concept, see Chapter 1.3.

Facing a socio-political context: identifying a communal griefscape

When the war ended in late 1995 and close to 100,000 people had been killed, nearly half of the population had also been on the run, fleeing from their homes in what historically has been known as the most ethnically diverse of the former Yugoslavian republics.¹¹¹³ The survivors found themselves uprooted, divided, and surrounded by ruins. Ten years later, when I began the work with the performers in the area in 2005, the political situation was still volatile, in spite of the presence of international peacekeeping forces and initiatives that had played a significant role there since the early 1990s. Representatives of NGOs working in the area claimed that the country in many ways was ethnically more divided than when the war began.¹¹¹⁴

According to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), there were still 17,000 people unaccounted for and considered “missing” in 2008, 13 years after the war had ended.¹¹¹⁵ This situation alone produces what can be called “the conditions for an unfinished work of mourning” in a society.¹¹¹⁶ The accumulated effect of these numerous absences retains both a painful void and the dead weight of the loss suffered. The ephemeral nature and impact of these absences represent for me what Gordon would call *ghostly matters*, which may haunt both society at large as well as the individual on a personal level for decades.¹¹¹⁷

For me the haunting impact that ghostly matters can have on a personal level, I find succinctly expressed in the eyewitness accounts of Emir Suljagić, a survivor from Srebrenica. When writing about the thousands killed he simply states: “There is no difference between their death and my survival, for I remained to live in a world that has been permanently and irreversibly marked by their death.”¹¹¹⁸

For many in Bosnia-Herzegovina, like Suljagić, they are still caught up in a painful and affective process to face the sum of the multiple losses and blows

1113 Judah (2000: 293, 344). See also RDC (2007: 91-95).

1114 Source: Nebojša Šavija Valha at Nansen Dialog Centre (NDC) in Sarajevo.

1115 ICRC (2008).

1116 Azoulay (2001: 4).

1117 Gordon (1997). She refers among other issues to the haunting quality of the legacy of slavery in the contemporary United States. So, when Lepecki discusses the relationship between colonialism and choreography, which he understands as “predicated on a politics of the ground [that] reveals those movements initiated by ‘improperly buried bodies of history;’” he refers to Gordon and how she views those bodies “as haunting epistemology, as powerful ethical and critical forces” (Lepecki, 2006: 18). My reasoning in this project builds on a similar understanding of Gordon’s “improperly buried bodies of history.”

1118 Suljagić (2005: 11).

which this brutal and ethnically driven war caused.¹¹¹⁹ Their experiences rupture the temporal divides of past, present and future, and leave them in a state of trauma.¹¹²⁰ As Suljagić alludes, the war disrupted all aspects of life. People suffered the loss of beloved family members and disintegration of a country¹¹²¹, homes were destroyed, livelihoods collapsed, networks of family and friends torn apart, and confidence and trust in others were often shattered. Many reports tell about people betrayed by their neighbours. These betrayals ranged from neighbours who simply stopped greeting their old next-door neighbours when meeting them in public to cases where they got more heavily involved in harassment or denunciations, or straightforwardly participated in violations and lootings, in extreme cases even killings.¹¹²² When the war ended, the survivors had to face the accumulated experiences and consequences of all this in a post-war situation that came with economic hardship, material deprivation, segregated schooling, etc., all this whilst having to deal with their own post-traumatic reactions resulting from exposure to horrors that most of us have little knowledge of or can comprehend. Moreover, because the war tore up the very fabric of civil society and divided people according to cultural and ethnic affiliations,¹¹²³ this also contributed to blurring the borders between private and public spheres and making the grieving process far more complex and indecipherable. The high figure of missing people further exacerbated this situation by depriving large numbers of individuals and families of a closure. Altogether, this creates a messy composite of intersected grieving processes that is hard to contain, emotionally as well as politically. The grieving seemingly seeps out and affects society as such – as a traumatized culture – not only within the national borders of Bosnia-Herzegovina, but also in the diaspora of Bosnians at large.¹¹²⁴ This contextual complexity of grieving is what I address as a communal griefscape here. I call it “communal,”

1119 See, for example, accounts by Drakulić (2004), Ugrešić (1998, 1999), Suljagić (2005), Warsinski (1998), Woodhead (1999), and Zbanic (1997, 2006).

1120 Cf. Chapter 4.1 and effect of the traumatic repeat.

1121 Including both Yugoslavia on the whole and *Bosnia-Herzegovina* as such. The part of the population – often from interethnic marriages – that considered themselves as Yugoslavs before the war (Judah 2000: 344), would often after the war consider themselves as citizens without a country, as the Yugoslav author Dubravka Ugrešić did (1998: 9, 233).

1122 Neuffer (2003).

1123 As exemplified by the situation in Mostar. See, for example, reports by Daria Sito-Sucic (2012) or Ian Traynor (2004).

1124 The many Bosnians living in exile that I met during my fieldwork – either while they visited Bosnia or in their new countries – told me more or less the same story. The situation seemed, however, to be hardest for those who had reached adulthood prior to 1992 and remembered everyday life before the war began, as adults.

simply because I believe that the impact of this embodied non-verbal grieving on society at large is more than the sum of the individual pain experienced. As Zelizer stresses in her photo-journalistic study of the trauma of the Holocaust: “No single memory reflects all that is known about a given event, personality, or issue. Instead, memories resemble a mosaic, where they generate an authoritative vision in repertoire with other views of the past.”¹¹²⁵ By using the notion of a mosaic, Zelizer here points to the way shared memories are formed and built in a society. I find this viewpoint especially relevant with respect to my project on communal grieving, even though its mosaic is not of a fixed or static character, but constituted in a state of flux, like the ever-shifting formations of migrating birds in the sky, or the somatic state of a living organism. In order to illuminate this viewpoint contextually here, I will discuss and situate some of the challenges I encountered in my attempt as an “outsider” to approach this Bosnian flux of grieving.

My involvement as a stranger

When approaching grieving in the socio-political context of the former Yugoslavia, I was not only crossing national borders, but also entering a mire of ethical and political challenges. Some of those challenges were reinforced due to my role as an outsider, including the concerns to avoid appropriation and exploitation of others’ situations, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, and to grapple with the claim that considers trauma as a “mission impossible” which cannot be fully addressed, because it imposes limits on representation itself, as discussed in Chapter 4.¹¹²⁶

The latter is also an argument used in discussing artistic responses to trauma, which Adorno famously voiced when he argued after the Second World War that no poetry was possible after Auschwitz.¹¹²⁷ Perhaps less well known is the fact that he retracted this famous and disputed argument almost twenty years later, stating: “A perennial suffering has as much right to find expression as the victim of torture has to scream. For this reason it may have been wrong to write that after Auschwitz poetry could no longer be written.”¹¹²⁸ According to the philoso-

1125 Zelizer (1998: 3-4).

1126 Common claim often made in trauma studies. See, for example, von der Kolik (1987), Herman (1992), Langer (1991), Caruth (1995), Silverman (1996), Zelizer (1998), Fyhr (1999), Hirsch (1999), Taylor (2006), Ogden (2006) et al.

1127 Adorno (1955: 31). I will refrain from discussing his view on arts in general here.

1128 As quoted by Rolf Tiedemann (ed.) in the introduction to Adorno (2003: xvi).

pher Rolf Tiedemann, Adorno's main concern was "merely that writing poetry before Auschwitz and writing poetry after were separated by an unbridgeable gulf."¹¹²⁹ From my perspective, in acknowledging and including the rights of the "perennial suffering," Adorno also expresses an altered understanding of the impact of trauma and its traumatic repeat –what Auschwitz represented as a trauma. Moreover, with this altered view, Adorno exemplifies for me how we as human beings have to struggle to find adequate responses to man-made horrors such as genocide, because as traumatic events they shatter our comprehension. In this respect, I recognize in Adorno's subtle change of opinion the oscillating considerations that I struggled with continuously throughout the process of developing this project: on the one hand, I acknowledged the deep-felt empathy that motivated me to do this performance project on the legacy of the Bosnian War, while on the other, I was painfully aware of the dilemmas that I could encounter when addressing a trauma like this, also ethically and politically. In negotiating these concerns, I chose to focus on the grieving processes in the aftermath of the war itself, as it allowed me to draw on my own personal experiences from a complicated grieving process.¹¹³⁰

As I noted in my reading of Hal Foster, I had already sharpened my awareness of the inherent danger of exploiting and appropriating other people's miseries when working on projects like this one. In the case of Bosnia, this alertness was reinforced partly thanks to the war observations made by the Yugoslavian author Dubravka Ugrešić.¹¹³¹ She describes here the scenario in which "numerous observers, participants and intermediaries, drawn by the spectacle of death, have accused one another of moral indifference and incompetence and scored for themselves intellectual, professional and moral points, fighting over other people's land."¹¹³² I did not want to add yet another expression to this approach.

1129 Ibid.

1130 See Chapter 5 on *A Song to Martin* and the account of my personal background in Chapter 1.2.

1131 Ugrešić is an author from the former Yugoslavia, who is herself living in exile in Northern Europe. She used to live in Zagreb in Croatia before the war, but refused to be assigned to ethnic categorization prescribed by the Croatian government in the early 1990s. She made her point clear by claiming citizenship of a country that does not exist anymore, see Ugrešić (1998: 269-8; 1999: 105).

1132 Ugrešić (1998: 226). See also political commentators Cedric Housez (2005) and Håkon Harket (1994). Housez refers to the quarrels between French intellectuals over the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, fronted by prominent figures such as the French philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy and the essayist Alain Finkielkraut, whereas Harket (1994) interviewed Ugrešić on the situation of the war in June 1994 as she was attending the cultural conference of ARTE in Paris. She states in this interview: "The market transforms a real evil to pornography, soap-opera, fairytale, call it what you want. In this transformation process, the facts of the real events are not only erased, but also conversed to entertaining fiction. This is real postmodernism! These are not essays by Jean Baudrillard or Paul

Nonetheless, even though I paid the utmost attention not to act on behalf of other people, or to play the role of an expert on other people's misfortune, my project was still an intervention in a socio-political context. As Ogden and the psychiatrist Laurence J. Kirmayer remark while discussing therapeutic strategies that ask survivors about their experiences, intervention involves a risk that the questions might rip open old wounds and hence inflict a re-traumatization, or a kind of re-wounding.¹¹³³ Thus, in my opinion, when probing for information on a traumatic past from people who experienced it, one also takes on a responsibility for possibly stirring up a turmoil of emotions: sometimes pain and helplessness, at other times fierce anger that creates a precarious situation for both the informant and the one receiving the testimony.¹¹³⁴ However, clinical research on the autonomous physiological reactions of such sessions interestingly concludes that the health of war victims seems to generally improve when they recount their traumatic experiences, but for the listener, the contrary is the case.¹¹³⁵ Their findings correspond to observations and experiences I made during my fieldwork in Bosnia and Serbia. For example, I vividly recall how at a certain stage I reached a point of exhaustion and emotional overload from taking in any more accounts and stories. This experience occurred while I was in a critical stage of the choreographic process, just before the local producer joined us for the last leg of the production. Dramaturgically, I was struggling to resolve transitional issues in the performance. I was hence in dire need of having the production side of the project run as smoothly as possible in order to focus fully on these artistic challenges. At the same time, I found myself caught between the performers' expectations and a Bosnian reality where I did not possess the local knowledge to resolve the many practical challenges that also needed to be sorted out during the last weeks prior to our premiere.¹¹³⁶ Under these circumstances, it seemed as if the mesh of the communal griefscape surrounding us permeated the whole process and

Virilio. These are our life experiences, and it is dangerous." Cited in Harket (1994) and translated by me.

1133 Ogden (2006: 241, 243) and Kirmayer (2002).

1134 I experienced both extremes.

1135 I am referring to studies conducted by the psychologists Kent D. Harber and James W. Pennebaker (1992), which are also quoted in Christianson (2002: 314).

1136 In addition to issues related to our studio work and the crafting of the choreographic structure, I refer here to the multiple tasks in a final production stage, such as agreements and contracts related to marketing, hiring of technical equipment, budget control, but also including the performers problems with their landlords and the lack of basic facilities at the venue. None of the tasks are in themselves difficult, but when added up they can become quite overwhelming in an independently run and understaffed production heading towards a premiere.

made it equally volatile. Judging from the urgency charging our discussions, it became obvious that at this stage we all felt vulnerable and challenged. I heard the performers out and understood their frustration, particular those who were also in a foreign environment, and tried to accommodate their needs as well as solving my own related to the production and the artistic process. It was in this vulnerable position that I suddenly registered while in a meeting with a potential new collaborator that I was unable to take in more stories. I simply had reached the limit to what I could take in at that stage. I felt as if I was drowning when another story about the war surfaced at my café table during our conversation. After this incident I observed how I stopped pursuing or steering the conversation towards the issue of the war – or the recent past – when I met new people, contrary to what I had done the previous six years. It seemed to me that the performers went through a similar phase of fatigue: though they were still highly committed to our work process, they were less inclined to show interest in meeting up with new people at that stage. It seemed as if we all needed some breathing space and time to take in the horrors remembered. Though this phase of fatigue is often normal in any choreographic project at a certain period in the production, it perhaps became more pronounced and visible here, as many of us were also working away from home. This meant less familiar grounds to provide comfort and release from the tension experienced. However, in this context, the experience of fatigue taught me that if I did not have the capacity or time to take on and deal with the strain of listening, I had better leave the questions relating to a traumatic past aside, not only out of respect for the survivor and his or her need, but also to respect my own limits. Whereas violations always seemed to feed new violations,¹¹³⁷ I wanted to break this chain, not contribute to its perpetuation in this project. In this way, my concerns about macro and micro levels coincided in the choreographic process, and I realized how difficult it could be to co-ordinate both those levels and concerns, even inside a small performance project.¹¹³⁸

1137 See, for example Schrader McMillan (2005) on the continuation of violence and abuse in domestic life after a civil war. In this study on the situation in Guatemala, Schrader McMillan refers to the Chilean psychologist Jorge Barudy and his claims that political and personal violence emerge from the same cognitive process (Schrader McMillan 2005: 2).

1138 With regard to micro and macro concerns, see Chapter 1.3.

Accumulating contextual insights, altering artistic perspectives

I initially got involved in this socio-political context primarily because, like many others, I was shocked and provoked by the crude violations of human rights that erupted when Yugoslavia fell apart in the 1990s. My visits and friendships with individuals from the region in combination with having lived under communism in neighbouring Hungary earlier altogether created for me a special affinity with the region. Nonetheless, my first idea to construct a performance project relating to the disintegration of Yugoslavia was conceived in 2000, when I participated in the post-graduate pilot project “Art as an Arena for Investigating Conflicts” that focused on the recent war in Kosovo (1998-1999) and the human rights situation in the former Yugoslavia.¹¹³⁹ My participation here developed my involvement politically as well as artistically, as it made me aware of the indirect complicity that my own country and the international community had through the role of the UN, NATO, and the EU in the disintegration process of the former Yugoslavia.¹¹⁴⁰ In this respect, I had a “long” history in the region before I began work with the performers in July 2005.¹¹⁴¹ Nevertheless, in my position as an outsider who did not permanently live there nor had mastered the local language, this situation required of me an immense attentiveness to subtle messages and social codes. In combination with the complex socio-political situation, this critical awareness of my role as an outsider meant that I kept questioning my own motives and ethics throughout the artistic process, and hence, lived in a never-ending fieldwork mode while working on the performance project. This resulted in an intense contextual research process, which drew on all my professional and personal skills, including insights from post-colonial discourse,¹¹⁴² performance studies and trauma theory.¹¹⁴³

With this backdrop of perspectives, combined with years of exposure and concern for the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia (1994 – 2006), I built my choreographic exploration on extensive background research with a special

1139 Cf. Chapter 1.2. The project extended over six months, and included two intensive workshops of a total of seven weeks, plus an independently organized study trip, which took me to Belgrade, Pristina and Prizren, as well as Skopje in F.Y.R.O.M.

1140 See Ibid.

1141 From my first visit in 1985, then during the war in 1994, and the subsequent six visits between 2000 and 2004. Cf. Chapter 1.2.

1142 See, for example, Homi Bhaba (1994), Boal (1995); Fanon (1967), Gran (2000), and Hall (1991, 1997).

1143 In Performance Studies, I drew especially on Phelan (1993, 1997), Lepecki (2004, 2006), and Taylor (1999, 2006). With regard to Trauma studies: APA (2000), Brett (1985), Caruth (1995), Christianson (2002), Cvetkovich (2003), Foa (2009), Gordon (1999), Herman (1997), Hirsch (1999), Leys (2000), Ogden (2006), van der Kolk (1987, 1995), and Wilson (2004).

concern for the human rights situation and the everyday life of people living in the region. It included a wide range of complementary sources in order to critically address this recent past and its legacy. I will here give an overview of this approach through briefly categorizing the kind of sources I drew on in my artistic research process. The sources can roughly be divided into two groups: those that could be accessed from Oslo, and those that only could be accessed through participatory fieldwork in the region or elsewhere, such as my visits to ICTY in The Hague.¹¹⁴⁴

The first group of sources included literary reviews,¹¹⁴⁵ web searches,¹¹⁴⁶ and other text-based sources such as public reports and news coverage.¹¹⁴⁷ These were supported by informal interviews with both Bosnian expatriates and experts with relevant experiences living in the vicinity of Oslo,¹¹⁴⁸ as well as audio-visual material such as films, documentaries, and music recordings that could be obtained about the region.¹¹⁴⁹ The second group of sources was accessed through participatory fieldwork. This meant personal encounters and sensorial experiences on the ground in the region that perceptually gave first-hand insights about a culture and its past and the individuals that create its future. However, the two groups of sources are closely intertwined: through the fieldwork I also got important new recommendations about literature, web sites, and audio-visual material that I otherwise would not have accessed. Likewise, through the background research in Oslo, I got suggestions for people to meet in the Western Balkans, contacts that the performers and I otherwise would have missed out on, such as meeting Dusko Kondor and his youth group in the Helsinki Committee in Bijeljina.¹¹⁵⁰

1144 For more information on ICTY, see <http://www.icty.org/sections/AbouttheICTY> (Accessed 8 June 2010). I also visited museums addressing crimes against humanity, such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC, the Holocaust Exhibition in the Imperial War Museum in London, the Jewish Museum in Berlin, and the Holocaust Memorial Berlin. See under *References: R12*.

1145 Including Sonja Biserko (2005), Gerdien Jonker (1997), Andric (1995), Drakulić (1996, 2004), Judah (2000), Malcolm (1994), Neuffer (2003), Seierstad (2000, 2004), Suljagić (2005), Ugrešić (1998, 1999), and West (2006).

1146 See under *References: R.10 - R.12*.

1147 Such as Research and Documentation Center Sarajevo (2007) and Fischer (2007).

1148 Such as Professor Tim Brennan at the UiO, but also people working in NGOs such as Maria Dahle from the Human Rights House Foundation (HRRF) Oslo; Enver Djuliman from NHC in Oslo; and social anthropologist Anders Huuse Kartzow with his research on dialogue courses run by NDC Norway on peaceful conflict resolutions for young people in the former Yugoslavia.

1149 For example, films by Begovic (1999), Kenovic (1997), Kusturica (1995, 1998), Warsinski (1998), Woodhead (1999), Zabanic (1997, 2006), and Zalice (2004) and music recordings, such as Levin (1993) and Dordevic (2002).

1150 Dusko Kondor (1947-2007) was brutally murdered less than a year after we performed our performance in Bijeljina. See <http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/taxonomy/term/240> (Accessed 6 July 2010).

In this process, I also continued my exploration of different formats and means for making fieldnotes, which I had started on while developing the previous two parts of the project,¹¹⁵¹ by including the use of video blogging. Despite the fact that I had been logging my experiences and observations related to the region in different log formats since 2000,¹¹⁵² I became more conscious about the importance of these fieldnotes, as the artistic research project on docudancing grieving evolved. The fieldnotes changed, particularly from 2004, when I also began working on *A Rehearsal for Mortals*, and they became more detailed and refined as I prepared for the first introductory period with the performers, based on fieldwork in Bosnia and Serbia. When the Norwegian performers joined me in June 2005, they were quickly drawn into this work. They were asked to read reports and political commentaries, watch documentaries and films, and participate in meetings with local NGOs engaged in the Western Balkan region, such as the local Helsinki Committees, and other experts and resource persons related to the field and the area.¹¹⁵³ I also assigned them to make small impressionistic expeditions on their own – equipped with notebooks and cameras. We would later share and discuss the experiences gained from this micro-fieldwork. These exchanges were extremely important, also as debriefing, simply because all these personal encounters with the region – its recent past, culture and people – would stir up and mix with the private histories that each of us carried with us of previous experiences and references – moulding our perceptive abilities and sensibilities. In sharing experiences, this intricate interweave could be highlighted and the different perspectives complement and enrich each other. While drawing on my transdisciplinary backdrop, my view of the communal griefscape emerged out of this intertextual way of working.¹¹⁵⁴

The composite knowledge gained from this process also changed my initial artistic intention with the work. An earlier yearning to blame the perpetrators and speak back on behalf of the Bosnian victims of nationalist aggression changed into an urge to go beyond the primal rage and instead dig deeper into the fabric of grieving itself in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina. I shifted from an emphasis on

1151 Such as through logs, diaries, and blog as well as audiovisual formats like photo, video and sound recording.

1152 See Chapter 1.2.

1153 For more details, see Appendices, under A1.3.

1154 With regard to the transdisciplinary, see my Introduction to the Second Part and Chapter 2. With regard to the construction of griefscapes, I expand on this in Chapter 8.2.

what happened during the war to a focus that concentrated on what haunted people in the aftermath of such traumatic events.¹¹⁵⁵

The shift of my focus also altered the expressive mode of the planned choreographic work. Rather than being driven by a need to express my indignation and rage towards the perpetrators, I began instead to search for a way to meet the survivors with their wounds through *kinaesthetic empathy*. As Susan L. Foster states, this refers to “a process through which one experienced muscularly as well as physically the dynamics of what was being witnessed.”¹¹⁵⁶ This is a physiological and sensorial way of perceiving; I intuitively drew on it in the process of constructing the choreographed performance here. Hence, my delimited aim was now about addressing the situation of communal grieving caused by the Bosnian War. The multiple losses and hurts endured by people in the region had, from my perspective, created a void, a griefscape with its ghostly shadow play that I wanted to embody a sense of, choreographically. My intention was not to offer a simplified resolution about how to deal with the loss, rather the opposite. I wanted primarily to acknowledge the pain and the embodied grieving prevailing in the area, but without being condescending, or making the future seem more difficult and bleaker than it already appeared to be for people. Therefore, the artistic aim for the performance became to create a ‘rehearsal’ situation or imaginative space allowing for reconciliation with the irretrievable, but without surrendering memories to its oblivion, that is, remembering without forgetting.¹¹⁵⁷ I arrived at this position well aware of the issues

that what we are trying to understand is not really a relation between body and group via culture. What we are faced with – what we are living – is the constitution of both group “membership” and individual “identity” out of a dynamically chosen selection of memo-

1155 See Chapter 4.2 on the performance of trauma. The issue of haunting relates to Jacques Derrida’s neologism *hauntology*. In his notion it is not a question about the return of the past, but rather that we live in a present saturated by the past as our notion of time already is spectral. For more, see his *Specters of Marx, the state of the debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International*, translated by Peggy Kamuf, London, Routledge, 1994.

1156 S. Foster (2010: 177). S. Foster draws here (i.e. Ibid. 165-9) on the findings of neuroscientists, like Vittorio Gallese and Ivar Hagendoorn, that suggest that “empathy is the most fundamental capacity of our minds, foundational to the very way that knowledge is acquired.” Their findings imply “we are, prior to establishing an individuated sense of identity, constantly inhabiting the worlds of others, and through mirroring their actions, learning to give shape and significance to our own identity” (Ibid. 178-9). Nevertheless, as a choreographer like Foster, I believe it is still important to pay attention to the impact of established, “dominant and dominating sets of assumptions about identity,” which “still bear down upon the present,” such as gender, class, or skin colour (Ibid. 179).

1157 See Zelizer’s reflections on remembering to forget (1998: 239).

ries, and the constant reshaping, reinvention, and reinforcement of those memories as members contest and create the boundaries and links among themselves.¹¹⁵⁸

In his remark on the politics of memory as a collective dimension, the anthropologist Jonathan Boyarin manages for me to capture the dynamic interweaving of perspectives and layers that constitute shared memories, as something we live. In his remark, I also recognize the dense and multi-layered mesh of interwoven and interrelated private and public concerns that I faced in this project. Through my extensive background research on the socio-political context of post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia I became aware of this complexity, and how the unfinished stories of the Bosnian War lived on as reality and how they politically had an impact on the present volatile situation in the region. This insight exemplified to me why Hal Foster claimed that the contextual background research was foundational for undertaking the kind of ethnographically based artistic work I was doing here.¹¹⁵⁹ More importantly, this composite insight made me question how to choreographically respond to this situation. In practice, this insight led to my somatic interest in the basic neurological system and its functions in our bodies, particularly in relation to our system of balance and our psychobiological reaction patterns in the case of traumatic events, discussed later in this chapter. Besides adding an extra dimension to Foster's conceptual model for contextually based artistic work, cf. Figure 8 in Chapter 1, this bodily or corporeal perspective also augmented my approach to choreography, in providing a tool that simultaneously answered to my artistic quests both for a deeper understanding of the bodily materiality of choreography itself and for better grasping the core issues of a socio-political context, like those in this project, related to the human costs and legacy of the Bosnian War. Balancing these two strands of concerns, however, also turned out to have consequences for other aspects of the production, such as the casting.

In *An Unfinished Story*, I had originally planned to work mainly with local performers from the area. But while developing *A Rehearsal for Mortals* I noticed how labour-intensive and time-consuming an ordeal it is to conduct sensorial-based movement explorations and research. This fact also prompted me to invite the three Norwegian performers involved in *A Rehearsal for Mortals*, Peder Horgen, Kristianne Mo and Terje Tjøme Mossige, to join me in the next project, rather

1158 Boyarin (1994: 26).

1159 Foster (1996: 177-204). As briefly outlined in Chapter 1 in this study.

than starting completely anew with only new performers.¹¹⁶⁰ Fortunately, they were thrilled to accept the offer and to continue our collaboration. In this way, their embodied competence and our shared bodily knowledge – gained from making *A Rehearsal for Mortals* – were carried onwards into this project. This made them an important part of this artistic research project's augmented and embodied memory. Though I do not aim to tell their story here nor make them accountable for this study and its perspective,¹¹⁶¹ their contribution, nevertheless, became very important for my reflections.

In this respect, the Norwegian performers that participated offered continuity, whereas the performers from the region, Marija Opsenica from Belgrade and Slaven Vidak from Sarajevo, brought fresh perspectives into the project and its inner life. Besides their strong qualities and experiences as plastic performers, they further contributed to the production not only by being native speakers of Serbian-Croatian/Bosnian,¹¹⁶² but also as they radically expanded our professional network in the region, which was particularly important, as the whole process of making the performance took place on location in Belgrade and Sarajevo, the respective home cities of Marija and Slaven, and most of the other artists, producers, and organisations that locally supported and participated in the project.¹¹⁶³ Perhaps even more importantly, Marija and Slaven carried with them an embodied understanding and contextual anchorage to what I call the Bosnian griefscape, in stark contrast to their three Norwegian colleagues, who were unfamiliar with the local socio-political and historical context. This juxtaposition of viewpoints within the group produced creative friction and dynamism in the

1160 The decision was also prompted partly by the weak position contemporary dance had as an art form in the region at the time. In 2005, none of the performing arts colleges or – universities had programmes for contemporary dance, neither in Bosnia and Herzegovina nor in Serbia. The continuity in casting also included the involvement of the sound artist Jørgen Larsson.

1161 Certainly, a study written from the performers' point of view would have offered important insights and knowledge about the process, but likewise required other research perspectives and frameworks than those defined here.

1162 Before the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the language in the area was referred to as Serbo-Croatian. Now, nearly twenty years after the war, the four main dialects, Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, and Montenegrin, are considered independent national languages.

1163 In Sarajevo this included Ivan Vrhunc (producer/composer), Samina Zajko (costume designer), the dancers of Kolo Bosansko led by Hamo Muhommod and Mersiha Zembo at the Bosnian Cultural Centre, MESS (International theater festival Sarajevo), Tanzelarija (organization for promotion of contemporary dance in BiH) by Stefania Kregel, and the Mosaic congregation in Sarajevo by Eli Tauber. In Belgrade: Nela Antonovic (artistic director/choreographer of Mimart), Stevan Bodroza (director), and CZDk (Centre for Cultural Decontamination) by Borka Pavićević (leader). In Novi Sad: Saša Asentić (artistic leader of PerArt). The funding was provided by Norwegian institutions and funding boards.

process. It also added another level of complexity to the project. The differences embedded in the cast with regard to their background and experiences meant that as a choreographer-researcher I had to negotiate between four different positions within the core group of our production team:

- The Norwegian outsiders who knew very little about the war and who were accustomed to the living conditions that an affluent economy provides
- The Serbian bystander who had experienced the war as a dissenter under the regime of the perpetrators
- The Bosnian insiders who came from one of the epicentres of the war zone, and
- The informed outsider, which was my own position.

In sum, these production conditions kept me unremittingly aware of the complexity at stake in this project. Next, I therefore want to contextualize this complexity through highlighting some of the considerations and consequences that it implied for my artistic approach here.

Moving in an emotional minefield: approaching an uncharted terrain

Following Foster, while preparing for the production period of this project, I relentlessly questioned my own motives and what this work might offer the people whose lives were marked by the war. This produced a mode of hyper self-reflexive interrogation in the research process. This mode led to a state of alertness to experiences similar to the one I described above from the café, but also generally for what in a psychoanalytic tradition would be called transference relationships, that is, the redirection of emotions to substitutes.¹¹⁶⁴ As I related and directed my work to people both within the Bosniak and Serb-dominated areas, the tension existing in and between these two environments enveloped the project, and constituted an important feature of the socio-political context I was addressing. In trying to address this complex situation while working on location, my position was precarious. There were no even grounds to dance on in this situation.¹¹⁶⁵ Nevertheless, I made it part of my obligation that when I met people

¹¹⁶⁴ See, for example, Ogden (2006: 176-182).

¹¹⁶⁵ Cf. Lepecki's discussion of the ground (Lepecki 2006: 99-104).

in the area, I had to be ready to answer what I was doing there, how I viewed the situation, or approached my artistic work, as I drew on “their” experiences. This readiness kept me alert to and critical about my own motives and agendas.

However, through conversations with all kinds of people, this policy also provided important insights itself, about the socio-political context we were living in while working. From early on in the process I therefore became aware of the importance of paying close attention to my informants’ reading or attitudes towards what I said, non-verbally as well as verbally. I drew here on an ethnographic sensibility from my tacit knowledge of qualitative methods as well as my insight from somatics.¹¹⁶⁶ The combination made me attentive to the richness in these expressions, especially, those expressed in the gaps and pauses of a conversation – with only minute shifts in weight or focus in the body. I believe that the sensibility to these expressions left an imprint on the choreography later. For the practical reason of safety, I certainly needed this sensibility in the early parts of my background research and fieldwork. Fortunately, I also had colleagues and friends in the area that I had known for a long time. They provided me with “safer” environments in which I could test out my hypotheses and ask questions about the socio-political situation as well as the war.¹¹⁶⁷ In particular, I used to ask them for second opinions or comments on impressions from my numerous meetings with people that I had accidentally met on public buses and trains - I deliberately used public transport in order to get a feeling of people’s everyday life and sentiments. Through these exchanges, I acquired a more multifaceted view of the issues raised. In this way, I obtained a better understanding of the socio-political context that I addressed and worked within, and ensured a needed corrective to help me prevent and avoid unnecessary problems and misunderstandings in the artistic research process. First, to safeguard my own personal safety when talking to strangers, then, to lower the risk of creating future problems for the project when meeting potential collaborators, as misunderstandings in initial meetings could easily cause unspoken but deliberate obstructions for the work process later. For example, in a negotiation with a supporting partner in Sarajevo before our work period started, there was a misunderstanding of this kind. Rather than declining any collaboration, which would have been the case in Oslo, this partner offered to provide a major service only in order to do nothing and hence hurt the production. Thanks to our clever and cunning local producer,

1166 Cf. Chapter 2.

1167 The safety rested on a bond of friendship and shared professional and or political interest or outlooks.

this passive obstruction was detected before our premiere. I was told that this was a quite common experience for those working in international projects and businesses in the region. However, as this experience showed me, the chances of success with any endeavour in this region largely depend on personal networks of contacts and these individuals' standing and credibility in the local community. Your contacts will either serve as bridgeheads and open doors to other networks, or abort any attempts to gain access to such sources. Over time, I developed a sensitivity to listen for eventual invisible movements of mental shutters that might be operating. At times, it felt like walking blindfolded on a tightrope – listening with my whole body – until I got more of a grip of the situation and knew more about what to expect, and what I could and could not control in the process. As I got more familiar with this context, it enhanced abilities in me to go with the flow and seize opportunities as they occurred. This situation might be particularly challenging for someone who comes from the Nordic countries who is used to long-term planning and predictability in running projects. Paradoxically, after a while, unpredictability also became one of the predictable conditions surrounding the work process: I never knew for sure if plans would be realized until they actually were. Working under such conditions, as if floating, constantly in flux, was stressful, but the assets it offered far outweighed this; among the people I met I discovered an incredible adaptive ability to change plans quickly and to improvise, which I consider a tremendous strength in artistic processes. For example, in Belgrade less than a month before the guest performance with *A Rehearsal for Mortals*, I ran into unexpected problems with our venue in spite of our long-standing agreement and joint interests. The tickets and the hotel for the performers had already been booked. Fortunately, I had arranged a meeting with a local colleague right after seeing the management of the venue. The colleague heard me out and made a phone call and in less than two hours I was in a meeting with an artistic director of another venue and had worked out a better deal. Such swiftness would be unthinkable in a Norwegian setting.

Another complicating factor I was faced with in the process relates to language. I had to communicate with our local partners and informants in a language foreign to both parties, normally either in English or German – or a mixture of both. I would also draw on some basic knowledge of Serbian/Bosnian that I acquired through the work process. It would suffice as an icebreaker in a first encounter, but not for taking part in conversations or conducting interviews. In spite of my extensive network of friends and colleagues in the region that helped me to translate, the language situation added further possibilities for

misunderstandings and nuances lost in translation. That said, there are also codes implied in the culture itself that go beyond formal language skills, such as the word “yes” in a Bosnian context. I realized after I had been working in Sarajevo for some time that the utterance “Yes” could mean, for example, “YES, we can!”, or “if I have to”, or “I would like to, but”, or “let’s see”, or “not likely”, or “no way.” All nuances depended on the accompanying body language and the way the word was said. As I became more familiar with these codes, I began to understand the complexity of this social reality more fully. This made eventual mishaps, such as the experience I described earlier with the partner in Sarajevo, seem more comprehensible.

However, my sympathy was clearly with those who were “in favour of a sovereign and independent Bosnia-Herzegovina, a state of equal citizens and nations of Muslims, Serbs, Croats and others who live in it,” as it was stated on the ballot-paper used in the referendum on independence in 1992 in Bosnia-Herzegovina.¹¹⁶⁸ My empathy extends to all the people who suffered under the regimes of the nationalists in the region, or whose lives were uprooted in Bosnia-Herzegovina due to the actions of their respective politicians, army officers, and the paramilitary groups operating. As an outsider, people on all sides of the national and cultural divides would place me in one of the roles that often foreigners take when faced with the recent history of the area.¹¹⁶⁹ What role I was assigned to depended on the context around our meeting, where and how it took place, or who was introducing us. The roles, to mention a few, span from being read as the naïve Western philanthropist, the cynical profiteer of the general European political goodwill for efforts geared towards rebuilding the civil society, to the partisan artist fighting against impunity and for restoring justice through confronting the perpetrators with their acts – or alternatively – the partisan artist aiming to undermine and discredit the reputation of a victimized culture. The latter was a concern most commonly expressed by people with a political leaning towards the Serbian Nationalists. I had to present my position carefully in order to avoid being type-casted in any of those roles. Hence, I had to prove that I was informed (that is, not naïve), committed (that is, not cynical), and concerned

1168 Malcolm (1996: 231). The referendum was held 29 February and 1 March 1992. On 6 April, the European Community recognized the new independent state (Ibid. 234).

1169 Cf. the observations cited earlier by West (1993: 20). Concerning the political system of Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Dayton Peace Agreement of 14 December 1995 laid the premises for the present federal division of the country into two main entities, that is, the Republic Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2000 the Brčko District was added as a separate entity in addition to the two former entities. Source: the Office of the High Representative (OHR). See *References*, R12

with justice without sounding overly biased (that is, not partisan). I found myself repeatedly in a trial-like position where I had to navigate between these different readings in order to be taken seriously. The working periods in Sarajevo were in particular experienced as a continuous test of my personal qualities. I do not blame anyone for this cautious attitude. This partly relates to the fact that my network was more recently established there than in Serbia, and to build trust and credibility takes time.¹¹⁷⁰ More importantly, the war experiences gave the people of Sarajevo and Bosnia no reason to trust strangers; their trust had been brutally violated in the war.

On a personal level in conversations and meetings with people from the area, I would always stress that I was an outsider, *but* that I felt implicated as a Norwegian, a European, and as a fellow human being.¹¹⁷¹ As part of an international community and a human fellowship, we were all implicated. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the core responsibilities for the actual atrocities committed rest on the perpetrators alone. Likewise, the ultimate victims of those crimes cannot speak as they are all silenced. They were dead and buried and in many cases several times reburied in various mass graves hidden in the Bosnian forests – as the perpetrators got cold feet and wanted to cover their traces.¹¹⁷²

I wanted to make my contribution in part to ensure that the victims' destiny was not forgotten, through drawing attention to the legacy such atrocities may have for the social fabric of society. Most of all, I wanted to pay my respect to the many anonymous survivors who still have to deal with traumatic impacts of the Bosnian War. Faced with this legacy, I find, like the historian Annette Wieviorka when discussing the Holocaust, that the challenge is not to "bear witness to inadequately known events but rather [how] to keep them before our eyes."¹¹⁷³ The question is how to contribute to remembering.

That said, it is important here to keep in mind that the documentaries on the atrocities committed in Srebrenica were not broadcasted on the main national

1170 With it comes an ethical responsibility that I again want to stress, because of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the war.

1171 With the latter, I refer to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. As a Norwegian, the fact is that Norway's former Minister of Foreign Affairs, an experienced diplomat and trusted politician, Thorvald Stoltenberg, held the office as UN Peace Negotiator in the former Yugoslavia from 1993 to 1996. Through him the Norwegian Government was partly responsible for the UN's strategy of impartial involvement, as well as the Owen-Stoltenberg plan for peace. This plan had for many critics "conceded the basic principle of rewarding aggression" through giving too large concessions to the Serb nationalists. See, for example, Malcolm (1996: 253).

1172 ICMP (2010).

1173 Wieviorka (1994: 24).

Serbian television channel before 2001, when the BBC documentary *A Cry from the Grave*¹¹⁷⁴ was aired and ordinary people in Serbia could witness the harrowing facts from Srebrenica on the Radio and Television of Serbia (RTS) for the first time. This airing caused uproar in Parliament led by Aleksandar Vučić, at the time Secretary-General and Parliamentary Group Deputy Chairman of the Serbian Radical Party,¹¹⁷⁵ who stated that the whole claim about a massacre resulted from a “systematic campaign against the Serbian people.”¹¹⁷⁶

The overall narratives that Serbian or Croatian nationalists used when retelling the Bosnian War seem to offer a contemporary case study of what sociologist Stanley Cohen¹¹⁷⁷ calls “States of Denial.” This means that they are produced from “assertions that something did not happen, does not exist, is not true or is not known about.”¹¹⁷⁸ According to the clinical psychologist and researcher on the consequences of human rights violations Nora Sveaas, these strategies are normally applied by those responsible for organized human rights violations,¹¹⁷⁹ although, as Cohen reminds us, denials can appear in many shapes and on many levels, whether “individual, personal, psychological and private – or shared, social, collective and organized.”¹¹⁸⁰ This means that denials, like human rights’ violations, can be enacted by both individuals and societies at large,¹¹⁸¹ and result in acts of silencing and shaming as well as articulated denials. For the survivors, the denials and silencing of traumatic events are particularly straining, because these responses discredit the survivors’ own experiences. For example, the responses can cause doubt about whether the survivors’ trauma really existed, or simply shame them to silence.¹¹⁸² In this manner, the denial may cause a triple wounding: it adds a third layer to the initial hurt inflicted and the haunting affect caused by post-traumatic flashbacks and stress symptoms.¹¹⁸³ This effect

1174 The director of this documentary is Leslie Woodhead (1999).

1175 Vučić later became a leading politician in Serbia when he joined the Serbian Progressive Party in 2008. As the head of this party, in 2012 he became both First Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia responsible for defence, security and the fight against corruption and crime and Minister of Defence. See the Serbian Government’s homepage: <http://www.srbija.gov.rs/> (Accessed 10 August 2012).

1176 See news reports, for example, *Glas Javnosti* from 13 July 2001: <http://www.mediaonline.ba/en/vijesti.asp?ID=271> and Kazimir (2001) in *Vreme* from 19 July 2001: <http://www.ex-yupress.com/vreme/vreme99.html> (Accessed 2 September 2009).

1177 Cohen (2001).

1178 Cohen (2001: 3).

1179 Sveaas (1994: 213).

1180 Cohen (2001: 9).

1181 See Sveaass (1994: 211-220), Herman (1992: 9, 28), Caruth (1995: 258-9), and Cohen (2001: 76-167).

1182 Middleton-Moz (1990) or Herman (1997: 105).

1183 Cf. Chapter 4. See, for example, Taylor (2006: 1675) and Wilson (2004: 17).

made me very preoccupied with the impact of denials on survivors in my artistic research process, which resulted in a long monologue of denials that I wrote and used towards the end of the performance, because, as Elma Kovacevic, the ambassador of Bosnia-Herzegovina to Norway in 2010 poignantly expressed it: “each time a crime is ignored, a new crime is committed.”¹¹⁸⁴ For me Kovacevic here pinpoints the ultimate consequence of denial, which Sveaas and Cohen describe,¹¹⁸⁵ and thus, challenges all of us to pay critical attention to how the past is reiterated for the future by us present in the now.

Figuratively speaking, I have therefore likened the challenges of approaching this traumatized socio-political context and legacy of the Bosnian War to that of crossing an emotional minefield. Because I relied extensively on fieldwork to overview and navigate this, for me, uncharted terrain of communal grieving, I will in the next subchapter share some of my core experiences from this work in order to situate what this strategy meant for me in practice. I will start with a description of my first personal encounter with communal grieving in Bosnia, because this experience turned out to be paramount for the development of the project and the process of constructing a sense of this griefscape.

7.2 Fieldwork experiences

Facing the socio-political context of communal grieving: from a personal encounter to a shared fieldwork experience

Since the first time I met survivors of the Bosnian War and witnessed close-up the legacy of the conflict in Mostar in May 1994, I was struck by the stark contrast between their hospitality and the generosity that I was received with and their grim, traumatic experiences in the past. One of these encounters took place in July 2004 with people from Zene Srebrenice (Women of Srebrenica).¹¹⁸⁶ The organization brings together women who lost members of their families in the genocide: fathers, husbands, brothers and/or sons. On 11 July 2004 I travelled on one of their chartered buses going from Sarajevo to the memorial cemetery in

1184 In a speech delivered at the seminar *The Genocide of Srebrenica 15 years on*, organized by the Norwegian Helsinki Committee at “Litteraturhuset” in Oslo, 3 June 2010.

1185 Sveaas (1994) and Cohen (2001).

1186 On Zene Srebrenice, see <http://www.srebrenica.ba/index.en.php?link=articles&p=2> (Accessed 2 September 2009)

Potočari for the commemoration of the genocide.¹¹⁸⁷ They received me as a lonely traveller into their company with a warmth and friendliness that moved me. Their reception harboured a message to me as a visitor that in essence expressed this: thanks for not having forgotten us and for coming here to witness our losses, and please tell the people in your country about our fate so they will not forget what happened here, nor the prevailing impunity.¹¹⁸⁸ Upon arrival in Potočari after a five-hour journey but before the official ceremony started at midday, some of my new friends from Zene Srebrenice wanted to show me the town of Srebrenica itself, which lies only two to three kilometres up the road from Potočari. Despite the emotional strain it meant for some of them, they wanted me to see the town and experience its ambience. Some of them had not been back since they left it as children in 1995. Srebrenica used to have approximately 37,000 inhabitants before the war, out of which about three-quarters were Bosnians Muslims. Nearly two decades later only 6,000 people live there, 5,000 of them Serbs, that is, Orthodox Christians.¹¹⁸⁹ The town is squeezed in at the end of a narrow valley surrounded by steep hills. In 2004, the majority of the houses were still partly in ruins, burned out shells deserted and empty, their ghostly shadows looming over us as we entered the town. Most of the few people who now lived there were said to be refugees from other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. An awkward quiet seemed to reign over the place as we walked through its nearly empty streets on that sunny morning in July. The presence of absence felt thick in the air, evoking what Gordon calls “ghostly matters”¹¹⁹⁰ of the past.

This visit to Srebrenica and the ceremony in Potočari that followed – with its mass burial of identified victims recovered from mass graves – became pivotal experiences that shaped the development of my project. This exposure had a strong bodily impact on me, as my notes from this encounter attest:

Seeing the time and energy involved in moving the 380 caskets from the site of the sermon to their burial in separate graves made an immense impact.

1187 The annual commemorations in Potočari had begun the year before in 2003. Source: The Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial and Cemetery for the Victims of the 1995 Genocide. See www.potocarimc.ba/ (Accessed 10 June 2010). The memorial service in Potočari is broadcasted nationally in addition to the tens of thousands of people who travel to this desolate place in Eastern Bosnia for this occasion. In 2010 approx. 60 000 people participated in the commemoration. Source: CNN (2010).

1188 Sources: logbooks and fieldnotes 11 - 12 July 2004.

1189 Source: Amir Kulgić, a survivor and resident, born and raised in Srebrenica, speaking at the seminar *The Genocide of Srebrenica 15 years on*, organized by the Norwegian Helsinki Committee at Litteraturhuset in Oslo, 3 June 2010.

1190 Gordon (1999).

Carried to their final resting place by countless numbers of hands, the caskets were floating over our heads like tiny boats on a moving sea. The consequences in time and space became real: transporting 380 caskets to their final resting places and filling these graves with earth¹¹⁹¹ takes both time and effort. The spatial organization of all the prepared graves with their piles of dirt and stacks of shovels speaks of careful planning. All these practical and undeniable aspects of the burials made the number 380 something become startlingly real. These factual consequences went beyond the defence mechanisms in my body. They struck like vertigo. There was no cynical or ironic distance to hide behind; this was not the closed circuit of art making, which offers me the option to engage in a formalistic game of reshuffling elements and playing with form as in the preparation of this text; it offered none of that coolness to chill out in. It hit me like a fist in my stomach, shattered my comprehension and brought me to the edge of mental collapse. A black hole in the reality that was unfolded in front of my eyes. I began to sense the implication of the number 8,000. My video recordings of the burials make this feeling visible. As I am approaching the burial site the camera seems to avoid the centre of action – the burial of the caskets. It searches for a rescue from the overwhelming sound of earth hitting the wood of the caskets, the shuffling of the spades and the cries of grief-stricken relatives reaching the culmination of a painful and delayed mourning process.

A soundscape interspersed with the whispering sounds of recited prayers, bodies rubbing against each other, and smell of earth and sweat as the slow flow of caskets and people move on among the dug up graves and the piles of mud. Together with the scorching sun it made the air seem solid.

I am on the edge of emotional suffocation or overload. Treading an uneven ground. My grief seems without any address. My feelings are ambivalent, in flux between moral disgust at the barbarity of the war and its perpetrators, and self-contempt for being an intruder into others' misery, a sensation seeker. Despite the cordial reception of the people around me, who seem to perceive me both as an outside witness who can testify about the horrors that once took place here and hence contribute to keeping the memory alive abroad, and as living proof that the outside world hasn't forgotten them. The complexity of emotions in and around me, and the recapturing of a past

1191 Shovelling dirt to fill the grave is an integral part of the burial and all male relatives of the deceased are expected to take part in it. See Jonker (1997).

*played out “live” cracks the linear sense of time. Together with the crowd of people and the heat – the sum of all this – force upon me a brutal reality without any shade wherein to rest. The dancing other – the dead bodies set in motion towards their final resting place – moves me, despite the fact that they have been long dead.*¹¹⁹²

The experience had a shattering effect on me. It both ruptured my accumulated understanding about trauma, politics, bodies and culture, and reconnected me to the fragmented but troubling imprints that I introduced in Chapter 1.2 from my visit to Mostar in May 1994, during the war.

First of all, my exposure to Srebrenica and the mass burials in Potočari gave communal grieving a body. It had a strong bodily impact on me, both affectively and cognitively speaking. At the time, I had not yet premiered *A Rehearsal for Mortals*, but I knew, intuitively, that if the Norwegian performers were to participate in this next part of my artistic research process on communal grieving, I had to share this overwhelming experience with them. This impetus echoed the intuitive necessity I had while making *A Rehearsal for Mortals* to ensure that the performers encountered a dead body, a corpse.¹¹⁹³ Just as I knew then that to touch and feel the textual difference between a living body and a corpse would provide a crucial reference for our work on death and dying, I presumed here that the psychobiological and sensory experience of encountering the grieving in Potočari would make a tremendous difference; it would give them an immediate sense of what communal grieving might imply as a living sensorial reality, witnessed and perceived directly through their own bodily senses – not as a second-hand account given from me. By making this encounter an integral part of our artistic process, I wanted to give the performers a chance to make their own individual experience of this sensorial and affective reality, which had engulfed me in this larger body of grieving.

In 2005, I therefore returned to Potočari with the three Norwegian performers. They were already familiar with the concept of fieldwork from the process of *A Rehearsal for Mortals* and knew my motivation for this one. As the Bosnian

¹¹⁹² Recaptured from my field notes of 11 July 2004 from written, photographic and video recorded documentation. The excerpt was included in my presentation “dancing the other/ the other dancing” at the seminar “Dance Moves – into the social and political context” at OktoberDans 2004, Bergen. Reworked into an article (Roar 2006: 133-134) discussing ethical conduct of artistic interventions in choreography by drawing on Foster (1996), Guattari (1995), and Lepecki (2006).

¹¹⁹³ See Chapter 6 or Roar (2010: 77).

context and its grieving processes were alien and unfamiliar to them, I considered this fieldwork as a necessary and an essential prerequisite that would help the Norwegian performers both to grasp an essence of the context they encountered and to participate in the process of constructing a sense of this communal griefscape. I wanted them to get an experience of this context under their skin and into their bodies by seeing, walking, touching, smelling the landscape, tasting its food, and talking to the survivors they encountered. Experienced and professionally trained dancers work “with” and “through” their body. I therefore assumed that they would perceive their surroundings through their sensory awareness and bodies, more directly and acutely than others. This hypothesis reinforced my motivation for involving them in the ethnographic, fieldwork-based choreographic approach in this project.¹¹⁹⁴

Joint fieldwork and “the March to Freedom”: embodying insight by walking

The artistic process with the Norwegian performers began in late June 2004 with a short introductory programme in Oslo prior to embarking on our fieldwork in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia. Here, I shared my knowledge of and involved the performers in my background research into the socio-political context and legacy of the war. This included a combination of watching documentaries and meetings with both experts and activists with experiences from the area. They were either involved in human rights’ issues, peace and reconciliation efforts, research, or were working specifically with trauma survivors. I had planned this background research carefully and searched for input that could prepare and situate the issues in the socio-political context the performers would soon encounter through our forthcoming fieldwork. Besides the participation in the commemoration of the Srebrenica genocide in Potočari on 11 July, the fieldtrip also came to include visits to Sarajevo, Mostar (in Herzegovina), Pale and Bijeljina (in Republika Srpska), and Belgrade (in Serbia). As independent and unknown artists in a low-budget production, we represented little threat to anyone’s position or situation in life. Combined with the fact that we travelled mainly by public transport, this offered us a more direct access to the everyday life of ordinary

1194 In retrospect, I can trace back this interest in fieldwork exposure to my very first projects as a professional, such as *Norsk Land Bruk* (1993), also known as *Erna’s last fortress*, a site specific performance developed and performed on a run-down farm in southeastern Norway in collaborations with local associations and farmers. This project later evolved into the performance *Fra dalstrøka innafør* (tr.: “from the valleys beyond”) (1998). See Gran (1998).

people in the region than what would be the case for most foreign visitors, mostly representatives of international organisations or national governments. I wanted the performers to get this grassroots, bottom-up perspective, a harsher flavour of what the life in the region was like: seeing its topography, experiencing its ambience, and directly encountering the people who lived there.

In addition to meetings with local representatives from the many NGOs working in the region,¹¹⁹⁵ and experienced staff members from the Norwegian Embassies in Sarajevo and Belgrade, we also met individual artists as well as ordinary people living in the area. Besides offering good company and their personal friendship, many of these individual contacts contributed substantially to the project as they provided us with invaluable information and suggestions. For example, the Norwegian documentary filmmaker Maria Fuglevaag Warsinski offered assistance that would prove to be crucial for our fieldwork in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia in 2004 and 2005. She had spent a substantial amount of time in the country from the period of the war and up to 2005. In addition to mastering the Bosnian language, she had a large network and was a person of merit in Sarajevo – not at least thanks to her documentary film *Crime and Punishment: witnessing the massacre in Srebrenica* that she released soon after the war ended.¹¹⁹⁶ Her experiences, network, and introductions proved to be invaluable in a country where personal introductions are the gateway to success. Thanks to her, our visit to the memorial service in Potočari in 2005 would include the preceding *Mars mira put slobade – Peace march to Freedom* – from Nežuk to Potočari near Srebrenica (110 km).¹¹⁹⁷ In this connection, Maria also had us stay with a friend of hers, an old widow who was one of the local survivors. Despite the recent atrocities that had cost her the lives of her sons and husband, and the prevailing hostility in the area towards the Muslim returnees after the war, the woman had decided to return to her little farm. We were fortunate to be received as her guests. In contrast to her traumatic and brutal experiences, she received us with profound hospitality and compassion, and her determined but

1195 NGOs such as HC in Bosnia-Herzegovina, HC in Republika Srpska, HC in Serbia, HRHF Sarajevo, NDC in Mostar and Sarajevo; *Žene u crnom Beograd / Women in Black Belgrade*, *Žene Ženama Sarajevo / Women to Women Sarajevo*, *Žene Srebrenice / Women of Srebrenica*, Bosnian Cultural Centre Sarajevo, and CZKd - Centre for Cultural Decontamination and Rex Cultural Centre, both in Belgrade. See *References R5* and *R12*.

1196 Warsinski (1998).

1197 Nežuk was on the frontline to the Tuzla dominated area, which was an UN-protected “safe” enclave controlled by the Bosniaks, that is, the Bosnian Muslims (Judah, 2000: 239-40). For more information about the march, see <http://www.marsmira.org/> (Accessed 13 September 2009)

peaceful resilience made a great impact on all of us. For me personally, she became the epitome of *Grandmother Bosnia* by radiating endurance, perseverance and hospitality.

The march lasted three full days and was organized for the first time that year. It ended at the memorial cemetery in Potočari on the eve of 11th July, the national Remembrance Day for the victims of Srebrenica and the war.¹¹⁹⁸ As we, the 400-500 participants of the march,¹¹⁹⁹ approached the gates of the cemetery we were met by hundreds of survivors, mostly women, who welcomed us with cheering applause as a tribute. We found that we few foreigners among the marchers,¹²⁰⁰ in particular, were warmly welcomed: as if we carried with us a larger message of empathy and remembrance on behalf of the outside world, the international community, a message that they were not forgotten. When the performers and I discussed this experience later on that evening, we realized that this warm reception had taken all of us by surprise and made us feel quite embarrassed as we felt that we had so little to offer in return. We felt burdened by the knowledge of how back in our home country most people had partly forgotten about the Bosnian genocide.

The march was held in remembrance of, and as a protest against, the crimes committed against the Bosniak population that had sought shelter in Srebrenica. The march itself backtracked the route taken by the estimated 12,000 men who decided to flee to the Bosniak-controlled area around Tuzla after the fall of Srebrenica in July 1995.¹²⁰¹ A large proportion of the marchers were either survivors or young adult sons of those who fled, but never made it to safety. For us, the march gave an important source and reference point to the war, and in particular to the genocide of Srebrenica. It felt like walking into a living past of experiences surfacing and being told in the present.

Even though the march was very strenuous due to the steep, mountainous and hilly landscape of eastern Bosnia, the physical strain came to nothing when compared to the exhaustion caused by the chilling stories our fellow hikers carried with them. The stories started to seep out after some hours of walking together in the wilderness. All along the march, we stopped at turns and bends

1198 11 July corresponds to the beginning of the genocide in Srebrenica in 1995.

1199 The relative low number of participants the first year was connected with the alleged bomb threats and general tension level in the days prior to the march. In comparison, according to unconfirmed sources approx. 5000 people participated in the March in 2010.

1200 In the latter marches, it seems as if the number of international participants has increased drastically, judged by their multi-lingual web site and large number of participants in general.

1201 Judah (2000: 239-240).

in the stunningly beautiful landscape as small plaques or stone monuments appeared, indicating the mass graves found there. It seemed like an endless row of two or three digit numbers, telling about corpses unearthed, lives cut short.¹²⁰² The stories we heard appeared in stark contrast to the green serenity and beauty surrounding us. In combination with the quiet but harrowing testimonies that the survivors shared with us personally while walking, and the physical exhaustion and material discomfort we experienced, the ground we walked on became uneven and precariously unsettling. The numerous policemen posted along the route of the march in order to secure the participants' safety through the hostile environment of Republika Srpska heightened this feeling. We registered this hostility as we passed through some of the villages on our way, and we were not alone in making these observations. Our impressions coincided with those made by other international observers, such as the German researcher on conflict transformation Martina Fischer, who made her observations during the same period as we began our fieldwork. In her report on the development of civil society in Bosnia ten years after the war, she states:

How Bosnian society can constructively deal with the violent past in a situation where many persons are still missing and where returnees are fearful of meeting the former neighbours who became perpetrators or claimed the "key to their neighbour's house" remains an open question. The situation is further exacerbated by the fact that war criminals are still at large in some of these areas and justice still has not been done.¹²⁰³

Fischer's findings support and underline the impression we had of the situation. The unease we felt became even more disturbing when we realized that several of the policemen who were posted along the route to safeguard the march had been recognized by our fellow marchers from their involvement years earlier – during the war – in the aggression against the Bosniak population. The ambience of stress we experienced left us wondering, as Fischer, how people could deal with their losses and traumatic past when faced with war criminals and a political situation of impunity in their everyday lives. This underlying question

1202 See, for example, ICTY, Case No. IT-04-81_T dated 19. August 2009. The data in this document confirms my impression.

1203 Fischer (2007: 38). Here, with the expression "key to their neighbour's house," Fischer refers to the book of Neuffer (2003), entitled *The Key to My Neighbour's House: Seeking Justice in Bosnia and Rwanda*. Fischer is a senior researcher at the Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies.

would frame and inform our understanding of the griefscape and the eventual making of the performance.¹²⁰⁴

Crossing the forested and sparsely populated countryside of Eastern Bosnia, the march offered few mental escape routes. It confronted the performers and me with first-hand accounts from our marching companions and new friends, which marked out individual nodes and inscribed them into the larger web of the griefscape we all participated in constructing. This embodied and existential experience offered us another ground to move on, and provided an understanding that would seep into the choreographic process that followed. In the programme notes for our premiere in Sarajevo in June 2006, I therefore asked the following:

How do people find equilibrium in a precarious state of unbalance? How do we deal with what we can't deal with? An Unfinished Story is listening to the echo of atrocities, the sound of falling bodies, and the emotional pain left behind human tragedies such as the Bosnian War.

In the course of this section (7.2), I hope to illuminate how I ended up with these questions and reflections on our project.

Exhausting choreography through facing finitude

The march did indeed confront us with *unfinished stories* from the Bosnian War and its ghostly matters. Towards the very end, as we were approaching Potočari on the eve of the ceremony, we had come near our breaking point from sheer exhaustion. Therefore, I was very relieved when I recognized the memorial park below us in the valley. But to my surprise, just as we were about to turn right and descend down towards the memorial site, we were directed to take a sharp left curve instead, up another steep hill. Being completely exhausted, hungry, filthy, and emotionally overloaded, this extra detour so close to our destination seemed hard to mount.

Around the bend in the grass-covered dirt road we arrived at a newly uncovered mass grave, approximately 4 by 8 meters, laid out in a small field. Like a black hole, the grave pulled us by its gravitational collapse towards its core. There, we faced the unearthed remains of people who, ten years earlier, had

1204 In 2005 two of the main people responsible for the killings in Srebrenica were still fugitives: Radovan Karadžić (the former President of Republika Srpska, head of the Bosnian-Serb Democratic Party / SDS, and Supreme Commander of the VRS), and Ratko Mladić (the former Commander of the Main Staff of the VRS).

been gasping for air like us, only to be brutally killed. Their skulls bore the marks of bullet holes. The reactions among our fellow marchers were diverse. Some seemed emotionally paralyzed; others ran forward as they thought they were spotting fragments of clothing or personal items that reminded them of their missing husbands, fathers, sons, or brothers. I felt drained, as if emotionally numbed. I reached a complete standstill with an exhausted mind, feelings, and body. I believe the majority of my fellow marchers shared this sentiment. Together, we had hit a dead end. The sight of the grave offered no sanctuary or consolation except through dissociation or denial. Here, the “choreography” in which we took part exhausted the concept as it is used in the theatre. Instead, as I am writing this section, I realize how the mass grave evoked in me the concept of the “still-act” that anthropologist Nadia Seremetakis launched and which Lepecki understands as describing “moments when a subject interrupts the historical flow and *practises* historical interrogation.” According to Lepecki, this requires “a performance of suspension, a corporeally based interruption of modes of imposing flow.”¹²⁰⁵ In this case, the still-act of the mass grave interrupted and forced me into a suspended standstill of clarity. It was as if we were cast into something larger, a social choreography, witnessing the dark heart of genocide with its murderous intent and desire for final erasure. No words can be heard in its proximity, only a static but jarring white noise, as if I was locked into an anechoic chamber, confronted with the internal sound of the body. The experience highlighted what Seremetakis poignantly states: “Stillness is the moment when the buried, the discarded, and the forgotten escape to the social surface of awareness like life-supporting oxygen. It is the moment of exit from historical dust.”¹²⁰⁶ In this sense, the stillness I encountered at the mass grave became for me the moment of exit from historical dust that Seremetakis describes. The destiny of the dead, who I did not know while they were still alive, have since that day lived within me. The stillness I experienced transgressed their finality, and resurrected them in my awareness, not with names and faces, but as fellow human beings that individually gave me a body to the 8000.

1205 Lepecki (2006: 15). Italics as in the original. See Seremetakis (1994). *The Senses Still: Perception and Memory as Material Culture in Modernity*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press.

1206 Seremetakis (1994: 12) as quoted by Lepecki (2006: 15). Lepecki stresses in his reading of her claim that “Historical dust is not a simple metaphor. When taken literally, it reveals how historical forces penetrate deep into the inner layers of the body: dust sedimenting the body, (...) fixating movement within a certain politics of time and of place” (Ibid.).

Out of 8000: 610 green coffins touching the abyss within

The following day, 11 July 2005, tens of thousands of people turned up for the memorial service at the cemetery in Potočari. Together with the other participants from the March, we were seated right in the front, on the seats of honour. As the ceremony started, 610 identical green coffins with 610 different identified bodies inside were laid out on the ground in front of us, waiting for their burial.¹²⁰⁷

The magnitude of the situation and the numbers of dignitaries attending the ceremony made the politics involved in such manifestations of “remembering and forgetting” quite apparent. For me, this brought home the eloquent observation of James Young, who, as a scholar of memorials to tragedies, has pointed out the importance of recognizing that “the shape of memory cannot be divorced from the actions taken in its behalf.”¹²⁰⁸ The experience helped me to understand that the politics of memory is not for the soft-hearted: it is entangled in a complicated mesh of raw emotions and political agendas and interests,¹²⁰⁹ which set the dead in motion and conjure sentiments and opinions in us about the past. This politics of memory shapes our present experience and prospects for the future. The 610 green coffins enter this politics of memory by touching the abyss – and the unmarked¹²¹⁰ – within us, whether they call upon our empathy or provoke “states of denial.”¹²¹¹ In other words, the coffins make demands by engaging us e/motionally.

1207 The number confirmed by Fischer (2005: 36). Identification has been done by DNA tests since 2001. In order to count as an identified person more than 50 per cent of the body must have been identified. Source: senior forensic anthropologist Eva Elvira Klonowski, who has been working for the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) in Bosnia since 1996. We met her in Sarajevo in July 2005. For more information about her work see Reynolds (2005), Smiley (1999) and the interview conducted by Saša Petejan (2003). Ssee also under *References: R7*.

1208 Young (1993: 15). I will not go further into these issues here, even though I am critically aware and acknowledge the importance of questioning the underlying political issues in such public commemoration, as many scholars have done by offering critical perspectives on the politics of remembering and claims of victimhood. In addition to Young, see, for example, Norman G. Finkelstein (2003, 2008), Edward T. Linenthal (2001), Sturken (1997), Struk (2004), and Hayden White (1990). They represent some of the insights and concerns that have informed my thinking about the concept and commemoration of communal grieving.

1209 As emphasized by Sturken (1997).

1210 Phelan (1993) introduces the concept of the unmarked in an attempt to get at “that which is not ‘really’ there, that which cannot be surveyed within the boundaries of the putative real” (Ibid. 1) but still works within and among us as a subject. I will refrain in this context from unpacking the Lacanian theory undermining her arguments, but simply use the term in a simplistic way in order to point to subjective experiences that are often lost sight of in the visibly representable, while still tearing open subtle, but affective terrains within us.

1211 Cf. Cohen (2001).

A few weeks later, just across the border in Serbia, while participating in a folk dance course¹²¹² in the little village of Tripkova near Zlatibor, I was indeed confronted with the blatant negation or denial of the reality embedded in the testimony of the 610 green coffins in Potočari. The landscape of Tripkova was so similar to that of Srebrenica. Yet its beauty startled me, as if something was wrong – until I realized that the landscape was without any burnt-out houses and scattered ruins. The visual imprints of the recent war that I had become accustomed to seeing everywhere on the Bosnian side of the border – just a few miles away – were missing. Both the feeling of something “missing” as well as the absence of ruins seemed unpleasantly uncanny.¹²¹³ The sense of the uncanny was further reinforced when the course made an excursion to the famous folk music festival in Guca, a nearby city, known for its large assembly of trumpet players and brass bands.¹²¹⁴ There, I came across people who wore denials printed on their T-shirts: the print combined the slogan *Srpski Heroj* (meaning Serbian Heroes) with the portraits of Mladić and Karadžić, the leading two wanted war criminals charged with being responsible for the Srebrenica genocide, who were both still fugitives at the time. Here, festival participants celebrated them in public as Serbian Heroes. Witnessing the crowd of Mladic supporters just across the border from where I had been exposed to the mass grave in Potočari a few weeks earlier made me shiver in discomfort – it felt like having a nightmare with no escape. It brought back chilling memories from my visit to Split and Mostar during the war in 1994,¹²¹⁵ which in turn evoked Hannah Arendt’s poignant observation from the trial of Eichmann on “the banality of evil.”¹²¹⁶ My experience

1212 The reason for taking part in the folk dance course was to get a better understanding and embody a sense of the rhythm enveloping the culture in the area. Hence, before going to Tripkova I consulted Stian Carstensen, Norway’s foremost expert and performer of Balkan music, in order to get a better overview and understanding of the rhythmic patterns and the structuring of the music. The folk dances and its music interest me, as their layered complexity resembles what I am attempting to conceptually embody choreographically in the performance. The folk music and dances have a very strong position in the region and almost any party will inevitably transform itself into a kolo – a chain dance, which is known by everybody in the former Yugoslavia. I wanted to refresh my knowledge of this heritage, while looking for ways to disentangle its intriguing rhythmic complexity from the highly politicized role it had got in the late 1980s when the folk music was appropriated by the Serb Nationalists to serve their propaganda. Though continuing a practice known from Tito’s regime, the emphasis shifted from a pan-Yugoslavian ethos of unity to one highlighting denominational and ethnic identity.

1213 Applied here in the Freudian understanding of the word uncanny. See Sigmund Freud (2003).

1214 The folk music festival in Guca is well known for its popular contest for brass bands playing folk music, which also happens to attract large numbers of Serbian Nationalists. See <http://www.guca.rs/> (accessed 22 May 2010)

1215 Cf. my descriptions in Chapter 1.2.

1216 Arendt (1994 [1965]). See also Drakulić (2004: 164-172) and Chapter 1.2 on my memories from 1994.

in Guca felt like “encountering hyenas in daylight,” as I wrote after returning to Tripkova that night:

Vlada, the folk dance teacher, had, on the night before our outing to Guca, issued the following warning: “Tomorrow you will meet tigers, lions, rhinos and all kinds of wild animals.” The foreigners in the group laughed merrily, while he seized the moment to add: “I do not mean literally. What I am saying is simply: Watch out. You don’t have to be afraid, but be cautious.” On our way back to Tripkova, I complemented him on his well-chosen and understated introductory words the previous night, while adding: “I didn’t see any tigers or rhinos, but packs of hyenas.”¹²¹⁷

I saw beefed-up men with bodies like bodyguards, expensive sunglasses, and several golden chains around their necks holding court at the restaurant tables, with their entourage of well-formed and bleached blonde girls dressed in tight and skimpy outfits that left little to the imagination. Despite their pouting lips and bursting busts, the silicon bimbos looked barely out of their teens. Around the restaurant tables, a swarm of observant waiters took their turns, while the men kept sticking large dinar notes onto the instruments or the sweaty foreheads of the musicians in the wandering Roma brass band that were playing. It seemed like scenes taken from a film by the controversial Bosnian-Serbian director Emir Kustorica.¹²¹⁸ For me it all came together: the men flexing their fiscal and physical muscles and power in public at the restaurant, while the rough, young skinheads patrolling the streets with their beer bottles at hand, and their bearded elders holding forth at market stalls. Wearing traditional caps, the elders sold orthodox icons and religious material mixed with nationalistic pamphlets and items such as the T-shirts of their ‘Srpski Heroj.’ Seeing the total fabric of this stratified and cross-generational presence of nationalists in the cityscape was simply too much to take in. I felt as if catapulted into a larger context than I could handle or defend myself against, where the borders between the past and the present and the future seemed porous and frail. I felt startled, as if I was walking into a hyper-reality that burst the separation between fiction and faction, and created a flux in which all shades of real and unreal co-existed. It felt as if my sternum had been ripped open and had left my chest painfully receptive to what I encoun-

1217 “In African fauna, hyenas are mammals known as scavengers and fierce hunters operating in flocks, and culturally associated with cruelty, treachery and greed.” Extract from fieldnotes 8 August 2005.

1218 For example, Kustorica (1995; 1998).

tered. It seemed as if the rib cage could not hold on to the impressions filling it, and forced its two halves apart. I was simultaneously scared, angry, upset, and frustrated. I felt as if I was caught in a large stream and had to figure out how to swim in order not to drown. In retrospect, I can see that I tried to recapture the composite layering of the elements I felt here in the choreographed performance, in particular in the scene built around the long denial monologue towards the end of *An Unfinished Story*.

Fortunately, I was not left completely alone with this feeling. I stumbled upon one of my fellow course participants – an accomplished folk dancer originally from the Northeastern part of Bosnia¹²¹⁹ who now lived in exile in southern Europe. Through our conversations, I discovered that she – like me – felt as if she was walking, fully awake in a surreal nightmare. The sight of these different groups of nationalists filling the festival streets evoked memories from her past, of her coming of age in an area severely struck by warfare and ethnic cleansing. It brought back feelings she had put aside for a long time, memories that once were simply a part of daily life. She remembered how she would pass mutilated bodies on the roads of her home village without flinching. Now, as these memories resurfaced, she was struck by what they contained and spoke of, how extraordinary these horrendous and unbearable experiences had been, and how the circumstances had nonetheless made her accept them as part of “normality,” which they are not. “No wonder people get sick these days,” she exclaimed, and explained how many of her contemporaries and their parents, who had managed to establish new lives elsewhere, had only now, a decade after the war ended, experienced serious signs of mental problems and/or physical illness. This delayed response is typical in cases of severe and prolonged traumatic experiences with complex grieving processes.¹²²⁰

Combined with the experiences from Potočari just a few weeks earlier, my course-mate’s memories and the encounter with Tripkova and Guca formed and charged my kaleidoscopic perspective on the grieving processes I was researching. Experientially, these experiences made me feel as if I was entangled in a living and transformable organism that comprised a rhizome-like web of

1219 The region belongs now to Republika Srpska, the Bosnian Serb dominated entity of Bosnia Herzegovina. I will not disclose her name here in respect for her confidentiality.

1220 Cf. Herman (1997: 120), Schauer (2005: 13-14), Ogden (2006: 238), and Fyhr (1999: 54). See Chapter 4.1.

interconnected elements.¹²²¹ This sensation shaped my notion of what I now call a *communal griefscape*.

Despite the scorching sun above, the experience in Guca caused an inner shiver, as if I was hallucinating and seeing insurmountable forces, where the other foreigners in my company seemed to observe nothing but a high-spirited festival with the potential threat of pickpockets. The blatant and coarse presence of the nationalists stood seemingly in stark contrast to the rich complexity and subtle syncopation in the regional folk dances we were practising on our course. At the same time, their presence only extended and added to this complexity by giving the dances a precarious resonance. But thanks to my Bosnian dancing partner and our teacher Vlada's subtle warning from the previous evening, I knew that the surreal situation I perceived was painfully real, even though it passed unnoticed by the other foreign participants in our group.¹²²² In retrospect, I realize how this situation reflects how ghostly matters are present among us, rarely overt, but insidiously working, through contaminating their surroundings and those who live within them.¹²²³

According to polls made that year, more than half of the Serbian population denied that there had been any genocide in Srebrenica.¹²²⁴ For me, together with the silent roars emanating from the imprint of the 610 green coffins in Potočari, these denials uncannily constitute the critical, larger wounds of the Bosnian griefscape that I wanted to address through the performance.

The impact of being exposed to the Bosnian trauma as an outsider

My assumption was that by seeing, touching, smelling and walking through the landscape of Eastern Bosnia in company with survivors the Norwegian performers would literally get a sense of the griefscape we faced in their bodies. In this

1221 The term "rhizome" is used in botany to describe the mesh of roots and stems underground. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) have used the term to bring forward a dynamic and shifting perspective on how to understand complex interrelationships in our societies. I find their application evocative and useful, but my study is not built on their theoretical framework.

1222 I base this on the informal conversations that I deliberately had made with my fellow participants about their individual experiences of Guca and the festival, as we returned to Tripkova.

1223 The experience also made me understand better why the independent cultural centre in Belgrade, founded in 1995 as a sanctuary for civil society to promote the freedom of expression, is called a Centre for Cultural Decontamination (CZKD).

1224 See, for example, Adam LeBor (2005). This was also confirmed for us by our sources at CZKD and The Serbian Helsinki Committee, both in Belgrade. Only on 31 March 2010 did the Serbian Parliament finally pass a declaration on Srebrenica, but only with a very narrow margin and without calling it genocide, but a massacre. For more updates, see Schneider (2010) and Diana F. Orentlicher (2010: 91-99).

way, I wanted to provide them with embodied preverbal knowledge about the acute complexity at stake, and thereby give them a pool of insights and references to access as we approached our studio exploration to construct the performance later. From this perspective, I invested in the performers and trusted that our fieldwork would induce in them not only a deeper engagement and motivation, but also an increased sensibility, respect and critical insight to the situation we addressed, analytically as well as sensorially and empathetically. The strategy definitely succeeded, in particular with regard to increasing their sensibility, empathy and respect, as I will expand on throughout this chapter.

For Marija and Slaven, the Serbian and Bosnian performers in the project, their situation differed from that of the Norwegian performers. They were completely immersed in and nearly suffocating from the overpowering force of the recent history on their societies. They already knew too well the sources for these haunting shadows, and the ghostly matters they could stir into political commotion. However, from my dialogues with the Norwegian performers, it soon became evident that the experiences in Potočari and their introductory fieldwork had created a strong commitment to the project's objective as well as respect for the situation in the region and the people living there. The full impact of their first exposure soon became evident for them as they returned to Norway for their summer vacations with friends and family; they experienced the fact that few, if anyone, could really take in the experiences the performers were conveying. As one of the performers reported later: "They would only politely listen for a little while before they returned with much greater interest to everyday trivialities." The performer felt very disturbed by their loved ones' lack of interest. The other two confirmed this experience with similar stories and the shock of returning back home to Norway. Seeing one's own culture from another perspective can be surprisingly disturbing. The contrast between the two co-existing and parallel worlds within Europe had obviously appeared brutal and startled the performers. Their accounts made me realize that while I had worked hard to prepare them for entering the Bosnian griefscape, I had neglected their possible needs for debriefing as they returned home to their everyday lives and unexpectedly encountered a cultural shock produced by the stark contrast.¹²²⁵ I thanked the performers for sharing their experiences and

¹²²⁵ Based on my own experiences from returning to Norway after taking part in an exposure programme in Bangladesh in 1990, I should have known better. This visit radically challenged my outlook on life and caused a shift in my artistic perspectives and understanding of choreography and dance as art disciplines.

apologized for my negligence to keep in mind their possible need for debriefing. However, in retrospect, this glitch made me understand the foundational aim of my contextual approach and this laborious way of making performances: for the participants involved, including myself, I strive to create choreographic situations based on contextual exposure that allows one to have existential experiences in which aesthetic concerns intertwine with politics and ethics. This means that I am not only concerned with probing the socio-political content in search for artistic solutions for a performance, but that I also aim to involve the performers and the audience on an existential and/or personal level. I hope that this combination of exposure to contextual concerns and existential challenges affects the creative process and the performers' way of performing, offering them anchorage for engaging beyond purely aesthetical considerations. Likewise, I do hope that the audience can seize the performance as a proposition for engaging personal memories and societal references while witnessing the situations being played out. However, it is more likely that the audience is engaged in radically different ways, according to their individual artistic and political preferences, as my choreographic approach deliberately conflates three different strands of interests or viewing positions: the choreo-aesthetical, personal-existential, and contextual-political. Not everyone likes attempts to mix these concerns.¹²²⁶

I therefore also ensured in the marketing of each part of the trilogy that both my overall artistic approach and the issues I addressed in each here were clearly communicated.

From the “mission impossible” of “dancing the Other” to a psychobiological approach¹²²⁷

Through the fieldwork, the Norwegian performers were exposed to the challenging and complex topography of grieving caused by the Bosnian War, its interlaced socio-political concerns and individual stories of loss that founded the notion of a communal griefscape. My aim was to choreographically construct and embody a performative experience of this griefscape. However, as I wanted to achieve this without reductively “dancing the other,” that is, without mimicking or appropriating the other's experiences, the task seemed like a “mission impossible.” The fieldwork played an important role for finding a way to solve this challenge,

1226 This might explain why my work often seems to engage people but in a conflicting way. Not everybody likes the existential and / or political backdrop blurring the aesthetical concerns. I understand this position even though I do not share it.

1227 For more background for the notion of “dancing the other,” see Roar (2006: 129-143).

as this process crystallized questions pertinent to the choreographic project, such as: how can we – as human beings – deal with irretrievable loss and, at the same time, seek a closure without surrendering memories to amnesia? Can a performance situation offer a rehearsal space for such attempts? More specifically: How can one create a space for both remembrance and reconciliation in the circumstances still apparent in Bosnia? I did not have the answers to those questions but became aware of the important concerns embedded in them – concerns that challenged and framed the development of the choreographed performance with the performers.

The issue of proximity and critical distance became a particularly precarious challenge. Although a strong emphatic identification with the suffering of victims is both understandable and perhaps even needed in order to engage with such tragedies, an “over-identification” would only prove counterproductive when searching for a potent aesth|ethical response. As Hal Foster emphasizes, “the self-reflexivity of contemporary art” is “needed to protect against an over-identification with the other that may compromise this otherness.”¹²²⁸ Therefore, insight gained from my extended fieldwork made me insist on approaching our highly politicized material from a strictly physical and sensorial angle. This choice became apparent as I observed the affective outcome that our fieldtrip in 2005 had on the Norwegian performers. Their responses evoked memories of my own immediate reactions and the strong feelings that had erupted in me when I faced for the first time the consequences of the war crimes and the prevailing attitude of impunity towards them, particularly amongst the nationalistically inclined Serbs in the area.¹²²⁹ This retrospective perspective was an unexpected side effect of the fieldwork. It offered me a reflexive look on how my own outlook had

1228 Foster (1996: 203). An issue I expand on and discuss in Chapter 8.1.

1229 First of all, I felt heartbroken out of empathy for the victims and the survivors, and then an initial impetus of rage against the political leaders and those responsible for the wars and the war crimes committed in the wake of the disintegration of Yugoslavia, which had inflicted so much suffering. My lasting reaction surfaced as the footage from the intensified conflict in Kosovo started appearing in 1998. After weeks of upsetting news images documenting what was happening, I vividly remember the moment when I saw in the New York Times the photograph of young children in Kosovo on a train, looking out from the doorway of a freight car. They were about to be deported out of the country. Instantly I knew that an international military response would follow, as I knew that this photo brought up communal memories, which Europe and the US had promised themselves never to let happen again, and hence, could not allow to take place. When my prediction proved right and the war started, I felt even more disgusted: as there is no quick fix for such situations when hell is already let loose. My reactions evoked my memories of the wartime in Split and Mostar in 1994 as well as ignited an engagement that took me to Belgrade, Skopje, and Pristina in 2000; Belgrade and Novi Pazar in 2001; the Balkan Dance Platform in Sofia in 2001, and Bucharest in 2003; and a major fieldtrip including Zagreb, Banja Luka, Sarajevo, Mostar, Srebrenica, Bijeljina, Novi Sad and Belgrade in

developed since my early preparations for the project. The insight that I gained here became decisive for my decisions on the choreographic direction of our explorative processing and the making of the performance. It made me realize that the main contribution we could offer through the project was related to our embodied knowledge about the body, or, as I expressed it in a video interview with one of the performers in June 2006:

*Faced with this overwhelming situation, I questioned myself as an unimportant stranger, what could I contribute? The only thing I knew for sure was that I knew something about moving and how to break down or deconstruct a movement. This skill gave me tools to probe into the physicality of such precarious situations, and seeing what these might entail movement-wise. This was all I can offer. But I do believe that such work is recognizable to others, and that it can reach people on a preverbal level.*¹²³⁰

In this self-critical scrutiny of my position as an artist-researcher in a Bosnian context, I acknowledged my limitations but also identified my strengths, my choreosomatic skills and understanding of movement and moving. Therefore, in trying to capture a sense of the moving and three-dimensional mosaic that constituted the communal griefscape, I chose to approach the process from a corporeal and psychobiological angle. This meant that I primarily inquired into the psychobiological impact of trauma on the body and our movement patterns, rather than focusing on the performers emotional and personal impressions or associations from encountering this traumatized reality of grieving, in part because I wanted to avoid what in psychoanalytic terms could be called a narcissistic leaning in the exploration.¹²³¹ I also knew, both from my own process of making *A Song to Martin* and from reviews of clinical research,¹²³² that emotionally and socially traumatic experiences will always influence the psychobiological processes in the body. I therefore trusted that their experiences would fuel their movements. However, in my strategy for developing choreographic material

2004. All these fieldtrips were made before I began working with the performers in 2005. Through these exposures my initial perspectives and outlooks were challenged and evolved.

1230 Transcript from video-notes recorded in Belgrade June 2006.

1231 Narcissism relates in this meaning to a self-centred attitude arising from the failure to distinguish the self from external objects or objectives.

1232 See, for example, Ogden (2006: 11), Wilson (2004: 9 - 17, 40), and Van de Kolk in the foreword to Ogden (2006: xxi, xxiv). A psychosomatic understanding of the body certainly also includes affective and emotional material in addition to physiological and biomechanic functioning. In this respect the affective aspect is always implicitly present in whatever physical actions we are undertaking.

with them, I relied mainly on physical explorations of psychosomatic states and psychobiological reaction patterns to such traumatic events. I was especially interested in the sensory-motor patterns or reaction patterns in the body.¹²³³ We began this exploration while still searching for information and personally engaging with new encounters and discussing the socio-political situation in the region. Paradoxically, by pursuing this strictly physical-sensorial approach rather than one based on emotional and personal identification, we touched the existential ground on which the experience of the war continues to live on, in the body.¹²³⁴ In order to enhance and support this approach, the performer and I needed to know more about the basic functions of the nervous system in the body. The subtitle of the performance, *a study in the neurology of loss*, therefore reflects the concerns that framed the studio-based exploration and processing of our fieldwork experiences. To do so, we explored the functioning of the nervous system and psychobiological reactions.¹²³⁵ We did this through drawing on references to trauma and basic neurology,¹²³⁶ and informal interviews with experts on neurology and physiology as well as on psychology and trauma treatment and PTSD.¹²³⁷

In addition to my enquiry into the physical states embedded in the psychobiological reaction patterns to PTSD,¹²³⁸ I became particularly interested in the functioning of the vestibular system: how the body maintains its equilibrium and keeps in balance. In both cases, my attention was directed towards the bodily

1233 See, for example, Hartley (2004: 40, 96).

1234 For example, Cf. Langer (1991), who describes how survivors of the Holocaust, more than 40 years after, are still carrying their psychosomatic imprints from this terror.

1235 As outlined in Chapter 4.1.

1236 For example, APA (2000), Matti Bergström (1990), Fredrik Goplen (2000), Wynn Kapit (1987), Vibeke von der Lieth (2000), Christianson (2002), Herman (1997), Hartley (2004) and van der Kolk (1987, 1995).

1237 On neurology and physiology, experts such as Joel Glover. Glover is professor at the Department of Physiology, Institute of Basic Medical Sciences, University of Oslo, and works on research on neural stem cells. On psychology, trauma treatment and PTSD, experts such as Tim Brennen, Nora Sveaass, Gry Stålsett and Evelin G. Lindner. Brennen is professor at the Centre for the study of Human Cognition, University of Oslo, and his research fields are in Trauma, PTSD and cognition, with a particular interest in memory. Sveaass is a Dr. Psychol., and was, at the time, head of the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies, and does research on migration and psychological effects of impunity. (Since 2008, associate professor at the Department of Psychology, University of Oslo). Stålsett is a Dr. psychol. and specialist in psychology at the Modum Bad Research Institute. Her research field is religion and psychology with a focus on existential issues. Lindner is a Dr. Psychol. and a Dr. Med., and works on research related to humiliation and international conflicts. See also under *References: R8*.

1238 Cf. the first part of Chapter 4.1 on trauma. I will return to what and how in the last sub-section of this chapter.

impact on spatial orientation and locomotion as well as breathing patterns and use of muscular tension. This bodily understanding not only complemented what I had obtained earlier from the self-experiential exploration into the body's circulatory and cellular physiology as well as its memory while working respectively on *A Rehearsal for Mortals* and *A Song to Martin*. Here, this comprehension of our basic neurology and psychobiological reaction patterns became central in the explorative and studio-based choreographic process of embodying our understanding of this communal griefscape into a choreographed performance.

7.3 Explorative processing

Social and structural framework for the explorative process

The first studio exploration of the material and our fieldwork experiences took place in Belgrade from late November to late December 2005. We worked in the congregation hall of the Jewish community centre (JCC),¹²³⁹ which is located in the city centre, at the heart of what used to be the old ghetto in Belgrade. According to Vojislava Radovanović, the ethnologist and director of the Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade, 85 per cent of the Jewish population were exterminated during the Second World War.¹²⁴⁰ Just a few days after the Third Reich had occupied Belgrade on 6 April 1941, about 500 people with a Jewish background were brought down to the river banks of the Danube, not far from the old ghetto, and shot.¹²⁴¹ The situation was not unlike how the victims of Srebrenica were killed, in large groups, more than 50 years later near Potočari. The history and the ambience of the neighbourhood, the building, and the space we worked in resonated with our project on communal grieving. These elements reminded me of how the Bosnian War is a part of a larger historical continuum of xenophobia and violence, ethnic cleansing and ruthless killing. It was during our working period in Belgrade that my attempt to embody communal grieving as a performance also found its basic shape and form.

1239 On the Jewish community centre, see <http://www.jobegrad.org/> (Retrieved 19 May 2010). They are housed in the same building as the Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade.

1240 Radovanović (2010: 21).

1241 See, for example, the historian Martin Gilbert (1987: 148). According to the historian Jasa Romano, all the Jewish men in Belgrade were executed by December 1941 (Romano 1980: 577).

Embodying experiences topographically into a choreographic structure

After having literally walked the landscape into their bodies, met survivors, and seen traces of the wounds the war had inflicted, I wanted the performers to begin our studio process with identifying their main experiences from this exposure, regardless as to whether these experiences were based on our fieldwork as outsiders, or whether they came from living as insiders within this overwhelming cultural and political reality we were approaching. My concern was both to stimulate an intrapersonal reflection for each performer and to establish an interpersonal ground on which to construct and embody the griefscape into a performance. In practical terms, this meant that I began our studio-based artistic process by letting the performers work on identifying and sharing with each other visual and physical expressions of the impact this socio-political situation had had on them. This could have been done in many different ways, but I simply gave the performers a sheet of paper and crayons and asked them to express what most strongly came to mind when thinking back on the experiences they had had. I wanted them to turn their introspection into a drawing they could observe from the outside and possibly return to, but which would utilize another logic than written reflection. However, I emphasised that the task was not about making a nice drawing, but rather about allowing impressions and memories from our experiences to surface freely.

Upon completion we shared the results of our work and took time to study the drawings carefully. I invited each of the performers to add comments or share reflections and/or ask questions about what we saw. I consider the drawings as messy “text” results that came out of our ethnographically based artistic process. As I outlined in Chapter 2,¹²⁴² the concept of a messy text is not only about giving outlets to subjective accounts of experiences, but as Denzin has pointed out, “these texts attempt to reflexively map multiple discourses that occur in a given social space.” However, as he stresses, the outcome is always “multivoiced” and “open ended” and does not privilege one interpretation.¹²⁴³ The following photograph is of one of these messy “text” results that came out of this process.

1242 The concept draws on Marcus (1994: 567; 2007: 1128). See, for example, Heaton (2002) and Denzin (1997: xii, xvii, 225).

1243 Denzin (1997: xvii).



Figure 19. Example of the first drawing task in Belgrade, December 2005.

Here, one of the main features the performer seemed to emphasise was the contrast between the greenery of the landscape and the horrors of the crime committed there. This theme appeared in several of the drawings; otherwise, the drawings greatly varied in terms of content and style. For example, they would be more or less conceptually or expressively made, blurry or graphically defined, abstractly or figuratively conveyed. In their differences, the drawings manifested individual and subjective experiences. Therefore, after we had shared our drawings with each other, I wanted the performers to take a closer look at their own drawings again, firstly, to identify for themselves the most important impressions embedded in their drawings and then to name them with keywords. With the help of these keywords, the task was to place their selected impressions on a new A3-sized sheet of paper. As the organizing principle, I asked them to imagine themselves at the centre of their paper, and in accordance to the impact that these different experiences had had on them place the keywords on the paper in proximity to the centre. In distinguishing between the degrees of impact expressed through proximity in space, they created a personal map of their experiences and impressions of the socio-political context of grieving we

were addressing. The next photograph is an example of one of these drawings, based on identified keywords:



Figure 20. Example of the second drawing task in Belgrade, December 2005.

After the performers had completed the second task and shared the results with each other and me, I asked each of them to carefully study their drawing and next select what for them appeared as the most crucial keywords or nodes in this, their personal map. Then, with the help of chairs placed in relevant proximity to themselves in the rehearsal space, each performer was to create a three-dimensional landscape based on these keywords. In this way, they would spatially embody a simplified version of their personal map. Further, I asked the performers to put signs on each seat with the actual keywords, so to indicate the concerns each chair or stack of chairs represented. Below, the photograph on the left shows Peder's floor plan for this arrangement, while the photograph to the right depicts the physical rendition of the plan as he presented it to the rest of the group:

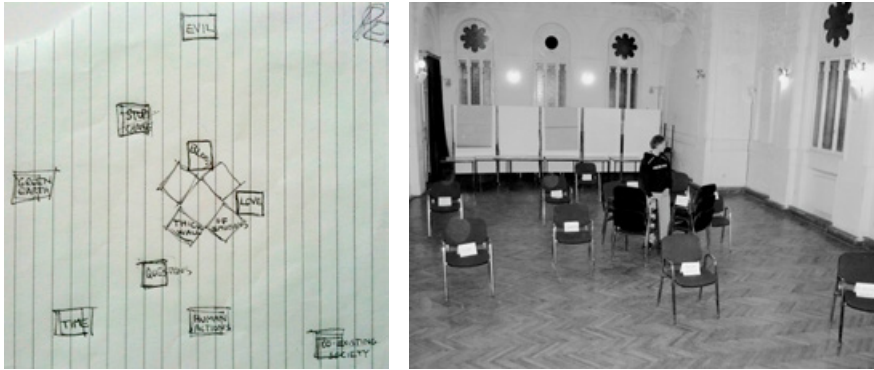


Figure 21. Left, Peder's floor plan, and right, his physical rendition of it in Belgrade, December 2005.

Each performer constructed their three-dimensional model of his or her experiences and presented it to the others. Despite the rather cryptic nature of the signs — with keywords such as “upside down,” “grass,” and “the smell of Bulgaria” — the compilation of words combined with the spatial constellation of the chairs created an ambience in the room. Down to the different details, such as the angles of the chairs that defined and demarcated the space, like fine lines in an old face, these details spoke of lived experiences. The combined usage of words, chairs and space was evocative. As I walked through the installations, they brought up a feeling of treading into highly personal and complex landscapes of experiences. This sensation was shared with the performers when we discussed the outcome afterwards, after having experienced all the installations.

In the next rehearsal, I asked the performers to combine their individual configurations into one composite landscape of chairs. The task caused a complicated spatial negotiation, not only because all the performers had used the centre stage as the focal point for their models, but because the task offered a wide range of alternative combinations to try out, as each model could be placed in at least four different directions in space. We searched for the constellation that looked the most spatially and topographically interesting as a compositional structure when viewed from all angles.

The performers enjoyed creating this embodiment; probably because it was satisfactory to see experiences that seemed incomprehensible manifest themselves concretely in a choreographic structure and installation in the space. The structure created a composite and externalized expression of the sum of experiences and impressions that they were carrying within them. As one of the performers expressed it in a video log made later that week:

I thought this worked and created an interesting map of all the ingredients that surrounds us now in this project; the highly personal became suddenly a mass of physical presence in the room, which is – when only existing mentally – not so simple to keep in mind at all times – now it is in a way present. This is an interesting entry point for the work.¹²⁴⁴

The description pinpoints how the installation affectively manifested an expression of the group's ephemeral and personal impressions of the context that enveloped us. This partly explains why the composite installation also eventually became the opening scene that the audience encountered as they entered the venue for the performance. At our premiere in Vijećnica, the former national library in Sarajevo, in June 2006, this is what it looked like:



Figure 22. Opening scene of *An Unfinished Story* at Vijećnica in Sarajevo, June 2006. Photo: Foco Fuoxos

As this photograph shows, the physical landscape and topography created by the chairs came to frame the whole compositional structure of the performance itself. But before going into details about what this meant, choreographically, I will outline how I approached the exploration of trauma as a corporeal experience movement-wise.

¹²⁴⁴ Transcribed translation from a video log recorded by the performers on 14 December 2005 in The Jewish Community Centre in Belgrade.

Approaching our ability to maintain physical balance

The photograph above also shows how the building of our venue in Sarajevo and, in particular, the stage floor was still marked by the merciless siege and shelling that struck the city of Sarajevo during the war. When the physical destruction and scars of the war remained so visibly present, this reinforced our attention and made us wonder about the invisible wounds that the survivors of this horror carried within them. We could only speculate upon what it is like to live on such an uneven psychological ground of traumatic memories and still maintain a sense of balance. The floor in Vijećnica thus directly points to the core questions in our artistic enquiry: How can one maintain a sense of equilibrium or balance under such circumstances? In preparing for *An Unfinished Story* and our corporeal exploration of traumatization, I approached this question through a purely physical probing into our kinaesthetic ability to maintain balance. This meant that we had to face fundamental issues related to the vertical and upright position that we often take for granted.

This exploration was informed and based on theoretical input we had previously gathered concerning the neurobiological systems that regulate our balance.¹²⁴⁵ Our main informant here was Joel Glover, professor and expert on neurobiology and neural development at the University of Oslo. According to Glover, balance relies on the co-operation of three major sensory and motor mechanisms:

- The visual information from the eyes
- The general proprioceptive receptors of the body
- The vestibular system in the inner ear

The eyes (the optic nerves) assist us in orienting ourselves spatially by giving us visual information about our surroundings. The proprioceptive sense is located in receptors in various organs - in our skin, muscles, tendons and joints. These are sensitive to alterations in pressure and tension and register the minute changes in the body's relation to its surroundings. As we move or shift positions the force of gravity that is working through the body is altered. The vestibular system in the inner ear is even more specialized: it detects changes in the position of the head in space in relation to gravity. This also enables us to perceive changes in the acceleration and rotation of our body.¹²⁴⁶

1245 From basic sources, such as Hartley (1995), Kapit (1977, 1987), Lieth (2000) and Goplen (2000).

1246 As illustrated by Kapit (1987: 94-95, 97-98).

Together, this complex proprioceptive system provides us with the ability to sense three different planes: transverse, sagittal, and coronal planes, as well as pendulum swings or tilting. Briefly, the three planes help us to distinguish between the horizontal, the vertical or cross-lateral plane, and the back versus the front of the body. In this way, our brain and the body receive the proprioceptive information needed to maintain posture and balance.¹²⁴⁷

In our studio exploration, I began by proposing tasks based on my practice of sensory awareness that focused on identifying the three major sources for keeping our balance.¹²⁴⁸ This work started from a “warm-up” session in which the performers were asked to pay attention to their proprioceptive sensing and ocular focus. According to my field notes, this warm-up began with exploring the sensory receptors in the feet.¹²⁴⁹ What this task meant varied. It could, for example, start with a simple balancing act of slightly shifting the distribution of weight felt under the soles of the feet, followed by an exercise in altering the weight of the body from one foot to the other, before this task changed into moving forward- as if on an imaginary tightrope - putting one foot in front of the other, while paying close attention to the realignments that these steps required throughout the body. The tasks were done largely with the eyes shut in order to sharpen our bodily focus and sensory awareness to what was going on within.¹²⁵⁰ The action of shifting the weight from one leg to the other was subsequently expanded through exploring different ways of losing and regaining balance in sideways lateral shifts, falling from one foot to the other. This would eventually develop into exploring how to remain moving around in an upright position as if in a continuous state of unbalance but without giving completely in to gravity and collapsing on the floor.

As I wanted to induce awareness of how much we rely on our eye vision in order to relate to our surroundings, I began the exploration of the ocular focus by asking the performers to move in the space with their eyes closed. In this way, their balance while moving primarily relied upon their proprioceptive sensations, supported by their ability to listen. In order to increase the challenge, I also asked them to alternately close off the external sound by physically pressing the fingers over the ears. As part of the ocular exploration, I specifically tried

1247 As also pointed out by Goplen (2000: 8).

1248 Cf. Chapter 3.2 on Gindler-Jacoby work and BMC™.

1249 Fieldnotes from a rehearsal in Belgrade dated 6 December 2005.

1250 A strategy often used by H'Doubler in her teaching. Cf. Chapter 3.1. See also H'Doubler (1940: 78, 91-97) and Ross (2000: 157).

out several sequences with different modes of seeing. One of these was to keep moving around with the eyes mostly closed but occasionally opening them to take in random snapshots to glimpse the room. With the support of these visual fragments, the performers would navigate in the space. Another focal mode that I asked them to explore relied only the peripheral vision, or what I call a “fly-gaze,” that is, an attempt to keep focusing on a 180-degree angle of visual attention while moving. In yet another mode, the performers explored quick shifts between different focus points, for example, in shifting between a distant focal point and a close-up focus. I let this evolve into explorations of the eyes’ ability to zoom, alternating between movements based on a “zoom-in-to-a-close-up” focus and a “zoom-out-to-a-distant” focus. Lastly, I asked the performers to pay attention to the in-between spaces, the space that exists between oneself and the physical limits of a room, or between oneself and an object or another person in the space. These in-between spaces can be in front, behind, or on either side of a person. The task progressed from paying attention to one of these spatial-relational dimensions at a time, to keeping two of them in mind simultaneously, before I asked them to pay attention to all the in-between spaces around them. This meant that they had to take into account the other performers’ movement paths in the space.

Through these task-based exercises, I wanted to enhance the performers’ sensory awareness of our vast perceptual abilities. In developing the exercises, I drew on the somatic insights of Gindler-Jacoby as well as Summers and Bainbridge Cohen’s bodywork practices.¹²⁵¹ However, exploring our proprioceptive senses, hearing, and sight¹²⁵² was sensorially exhausting for the performers. The last exercises, particularly, with the quick shifts of focal points, easily unsettle and stir up automated operations and habits in the body that are related to how we perceive our surroundings and maintain balance.¹²⁵³ This unsettling effect was also expressed by one of the dancers in the subsequent video-log, stating: “This is very tiring for the head. . . . I become very tired when working so much with

1251 See Chapter 3.2 on somatic and somatic practices. For sources with regard to Gindler and Jacoby, see, for example, Brooks and Selver (2007), Loukes (2006) and Weaver (2006); on Summers, see Green (1992) and Wooster (1980); on Bainbridge Cohen, see, for example, Hartley (1995, 2004) and Cohen (2003).

1252 The explorations relating to the eyes’ focal points derive partly from my studies with Lisa Nelson at Mad Brook Farm in Vermont, autumn 1992 and 1993. This work with her (and Steve Paxton) was an integral part of my programme at New York Dance Intensive. Cf. Chapter 1 and 3.1.

1253 Cf. Hartley (1995: 126).

balance. It almost makes me just want to lie down to sleep.”¹²⁵⁴ From my research, I knew this to be a typical reaction when one was exposed to tasks challenging our sensorial patterns.¹²⁵⁵ In this context, it also offered a first point of contact with the physical discomfort and sense of vertigo, or the sense of feeling “spaced out,” that can be induced by rupturing flashbacks of traumatic experiences, such as those constituting the griefscape that we were seeking to embody here.¹²⁵⁶

This investigation led to an exploration of what falling is as a movement. Since falling is the ultimate consequence of losing one’s balance, our work on balance expanded to include a more detailed physical study of the mechanics of falling from an upright position to lying on the ground. When I then introduced into our explorations the element of will or willpower, the ability to control one’s impulses and actions, this augmented our probing. Because it is conditional on the dynamic range of the willpower in play within us, the pull of gravity will meet various degrees of resistance or compliance affecting the falling.¹²⁵⁷ At this point in our enquiry, we were exposed to an upsetting video shot during the war. The video had circulated in closed circles as part of heroic memorabilia among the hard-core nationalists, but surfaced as evidence in the trial of Slobodan Milošević in The Hague in 2005.¹²⁵⁸ Its release had aroused international attention, and caused a public outrage in Serbia after it was broadcast on national television.¹²⁵⁹ The video depicts how a group of young Bosniak men, bruised and beaten with their hands tied behind their backs, are ordered off a truck and summarily shot from behind. To view the unedited video was horrifying, but the close-up footage also revealed bodily states of falling not normally seen. Just as the photographs of the Tsunami victims in South-East Asia in 2004 had not only affected, but also contributed to, our process of studying bodily decomposition while making *A Rehearsal for Mortals*,¹²⁶⁰ these images of falling, dying bodies added crucial

1254 Video field notes recorded 14 December 2005. Transcribed August 2009.

1255 See, for example, Hartley (1995: 126).

1256 See, for example, Ogden (2006: 37-8).

1257 Claims supported by the observations of Rimestad, a Gindler-Jacoby work practitioner and lecturer in contemporary dance at KHiO, and Marcia Plevin (2007: 107), psychologist and Authentic Movement teacher/therapist.

1258 Recorded by members of the infamous Scorpions, a feared paramilitary unit that operated during the war. The group was composed of Serb nationalists with close links to the interior ministry of Milošević’s regime (Judah and Sunter 2005). For excerpts of the video, see United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s interview with Nataša Kandić: http://www.ushmm.org/genocide/take_action/gallery/portrait/kandic (Accessed 6 June 2010)

1259 The video was shown on Serbian television on 1st June 2005 and caused an outrage. (Judah 2005).

1260 Cf. Chapter 6. See, for example, the photographs by Darren Whiteside / Reuters for the New York Times of 30 December 2004: <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/30/international/worldspecial4/30disease>.

insights into what we were physically exploring. They brutally demonstrated for us the mechanics of mass surrendering to the pull of gravity, that is, how the body without willpower to keep it upright succumbs to the laws of physics.

For me, the video footage evoked personal childhood memories of seeing my grandfather die of a heart attack. Aged 11, I saw his fall from up close in a side-wise angle, as the only witness. Watching the video, I suddenly recalled how my grandfather's body fell as if in slow motion, with the head slightly dropping back as the knees bent forward, resulting in what seemed like a prolonged state of being vertically seated. The body appeared as if suspended for an instant before a smooth folding took over as gravity pulled the body to the ground.

This personal recollection of witnessing a final surrender to gravity, in combination with my expertise on sensory awareness and kinetics, contributed to the strategy I chose when faced with the horrors depicted in the video of the murder. Whereas the intentional violence causing the final surrenders captured in the video speaks of a brutality that is difficult to comprehend, the bodily mechanics of its consequences are conceivable in part and can be conveyed bodily. Concretely, in deconstructing the physical mechanics involved in falling movement-wise, I found a tool for approaching the wounds that the war had inflicted. This was not a mimetic but a physical task for the performers: to kinaesthetically explore and re-explore falling and surrendering to the pull of gravity by probing into its inherent logic. With this approach and in collaboration with the performers, I hoped to embody some core aspects of this communal griefscape that we together strived to grasp and convey in our performance work.

Probing into the bodily consequences of trauma

By this time, we had already been looking into the bodily consequences of trauma. I had used the diagnostic criteria of PTSD¹²⁶¹ in this process as a raw material

html?_r=1 (Accessed 20 August 2010). Despite the merciless depictions and the tragedies they contained, these photos also paradoxically became valuable visual documents for grasping the processes we were studying.

1261 Cf. Chapter 4.1. In short, the characteristic for an individual with PTSD is that "the traumatic event remains... a dominating psychological experience," which over years or even decades has the power of evoking strong emotional reactions (Friedman 2010: 1). The intrusive recollection criterion can manifest itself in many ways, including flashbacks and traumatic nightmares and so on. The avoidant/numbing symptoms consist of strategies that people with PTSD use in order to avoid triggering traumatic recollections or minimizing the affect of these. The numbing provides here a kind of anaesthesia to procure self-protection. The hyper-arousal criterion is the most typical characteristic of PTSD, which is brought on when traumatic memories are triggered. Producing a raw and hyper-vigilant response, which appears out of proportion or context to its surroundings (Ibid.). For more information on PTSD and diagnostics, see, for example, Christianson (2002), Friedman (2010), APA

for our movement explorations. Despite the important and interesting criticism that can be invoked against the details and functions of these diagnostic criteria, this discussion had less relevance to my concern in this project.¹²⁶² Here, in my movement explorations, I focused on the most common categories – or clusters – of the symptoms of PTSD: intrusive recollections, avoidant/numbing symptoms, and hyper-arousal symptoms.¹²⁶³ I was particularly interested in looking at their bodily consequences, the physicality produced by these traumatic reactions.

Together with the performers, I especially studied the bodily and intrusive impact of traumatic reminders: the sensations related to hyper-arousal and hypo-arousal symptoms. The bodily manifestations of hyper-arousal are expressed in extreme distress and excessive startled and defensive responses when one is exposed to situations that trigger traumatic memories. In contrast, hypo-arousal can respond to traumatic reminders with “behavioural shutdown,” according to Ogden, and instead lead to emotional detachment and the deadening of bodily awareness.¹²⁶⁴ The consequences can be dissociation and memory loss, freeze responses and numbing of feelings, and states of denial and depression.¹²⁶⁵ By investigating these as physical states, rather than their emotional affects, I focused on patterns of breathing or holding back breath, weight distribution, spatial orientation, the placement of the gaze, the intensity of listening or alertness to external sounds, and muscular tension levels. For example, in exploring depression, I asked the performers to probe into its etymologically meaning, pressing down. In the case of intrusion, we searched for the bodily sensations of resisting and surrendering, even submitting, to an invasive flashback or recollection. This included the sense of release experienced as a reward at the moment one wavering ceases to fight or be in flight and instead abandons hope of any escape. As Ogden and Herman point out, these states have psychobiological implications for the tension levels and the degree of effort spent in the body.¹²⁶⁶ I pursued the physicality of these states through using analytical tools and practical approaches

(2000), and Foa et al. (2009). Or web-based resources on PTSD, such as the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (www.istss.org) or Psychiatry Online (www.psychiatryonline.com) (Accessed 10 May 2011). See also *References: R11*.

1262 See, for example, Herman (1997: 31-32), Summerfield (1999), and Spitzer et al (2007).

1263 Friedman (2010: 1) summarizing APA's (2000) nosologic classification scheme, which in short is referred to as DSM. According to Friedman (2010: 1), PTSD was first included in the third edition of DSM in 1980. I refer mainly to revision of APA's DSM made in 2000 (DSM-IV).

1264 Ogden (2006: 34-35, 97-98).

1265 See, for example, Ogden (2006: 33-38) and Herman (1997: 238-239).

1266 Ogden (2006: 18-21) and Herman (1997: 239). See also Levine (1997: 99-107).

to moving that appealed to the performers' kinetic and sensory awareness.¹²⁶⁷ For example, I would ask them to pay attention to the distribution of pressure or weight under the soles of their feet as they explored one of these states. I tried in this way to devise a physical approach to deconstruct highly emotional states that also enabled the performers to keep a critical distance to the material, without confusing it with the intoxicated seduction that a narcissistic mirroring or "reductive over-identification" could produce.¹²⁶⁸ Through the deconstruction process, I wanted to provide the performers with tools that strengthened their artistic insight into their medium of movement and moving, while at the same time also challenged their approach to how they moved.

The challenge of a sensory and analytical approach to moving

In discussing this strategy and approach with Ingunn Rimestad,¹²⁶⁹ an experienced Gindler-Jacoby practitioner,¹²⁷⁰ she pointed out that through investigating our sense of balance and physical equilibrium in the body, "we will as individuals get to know what life has accumulated for us." In particular, these kinds of studies will give us insight into our own individual patterns of holding on to tension. Thereby, in the probing into the mechanics involved in the pull of gravity, this can offer an endless source for exploration in itself. When adding the component of will or willpower to the workings of gravity, the complexity becomes staggering. For Rimestad willpower is a subtle component with a large dynamic range, from being a strong constructive force to being a decisive negative force with an equally destructive impact. As Rimestad stresses, it is "in the tension field between willpower and gravity that meet a ground, life is unfolded."¹²⁷¹ For me, Rimestad precisely describes here what is at stake when I move. In my body's meeting with the ground, the tension field between the law of physics and my desire to move is highlighted and creates buoyancy that moves me on; if not, I will simply collapse to the ground. Movements are expressed and articulated within this boundary. This turns, for example, the study of falling into a never-ending

1267 These were informed by my composite knowledge of somatic bodywork practices, such as BMC™, KA®, Yoga, Feldenkrais, Klein technique, and most of all, my experiences from Gindler-Jacoby-derived bodywork. Cf. Chapter 3.2.

1268 Foster (1996: 203).

1269 Fieldnotes 23. December 2005 from a meeting with Rimestad at Grünerløkka in Oslo. Rimestad closely followed the process of making the trilogy as one of two artistic supervisors together with Efva Lilja in Stockholm.

1270 For more information about Gindler-Jacoby, see Chapter 3.2.

1271 Fieldnotes 23 December 2005.

enquiry for the mover. In the tension field that Rimestad describes, there will for each step or shift of weight pressure in the body occur new states that can be sensed in the body. I share this bodily perspective with Rimestad and believe it can provide an awareness that can be useful for the individual performer in his or her work. This bodily perspective allows the performer to approach simple tasks and pedestrian movements like walking, running, and falling without being mimetic; instead, thanks to this movement-analytical tool, I can as a mover focus on actually doing these actions, and thereby experience their physical specificity. However, this approach requires a basic, initial adjustment of the performer: to take the risk to do less. For me this means simply to go into the cause and core of the physical action in question, each time one is performing the tasks, while remaining attentive to the sensory information experienced while doing them. Performing such task-oriented and score-based choreography offers infinite opportunities for the performer to have new experiences with the choreography.

Early on while working in Belgrade, I realized that I was searching for an approach to moving based on sensory-awareness, both in the process of developing and performing the movement material. For me this sensory-based approach to moving added a dimension to performing that I had missed in the conventional way I had been taught to perform in my undergraduate programme in dance and choreography. This training had emphasized the importance of being good at displaying skills and making an expressive impact on an audience. The highly accomplished performers I had selected to work with in this project shared a similar background. Through working together, however, I became aware of what my nearly fifteen years of a conscious and deliberate retraining away from this background had accumulated in insights. From this experience, I also became clear about what I sought with this project. In contrast to the virtuosic approach of our shared background, the focus on “sensory awareness is not about ... being good at it or not, but ... becoming conscious of our approach to the world and learning from that,” as Selver points out.¹²⁷² This focus on becoming conscious of our approach to the world interested me. Choreographically, this meant that I wanted to create a performance situation in which the audience’s role was less about spectatorship than about witnessing the unfolding of the performers’ work. Moreover, I wanted to offer the performers the possibility to enact and experience an approach to performing that trusted the performers’ kinetic intelligence and sensory awareness. However, I realized that such an understanding of “perform-

1272 Brooks and Selver (2007: 23).

ing” is also conditioned, as most other approaches to performing, and is in this respect likewise dependent on interests and training – or an established praxis – for knowing how to apply it while moving. As a choreographer, I can only provide the structural framework for such an approach, not make the performers’ trust the power embedded in it. What I can do is to ensure a dialogical relationship built on trust in which I listen to the performers’ experiences as collaborators. For me this is a fundamental work mode for undertaking and leading explorative processes of the kind that I was in charge of here.¹²⁷³

A search for conjoining personal and interpersonal interests

According to Hartley, foundational bodywork of the kind I conducted with the performers in our exploratory period can disturb self-concepts or self-images of the participants, and set in motion or rupture unconscious survival patterns and scars from the past.¹²⁷⁴ Exposures to extreme traumatic and socio-political wounds such as the Bosnian griefscape are in themselves known to cause similar unsettling effects.¹²⁷⁵ This is evident in research and observation done on aid workers, therapists, and ethnographers.¹²⁷⁶ The combination of exploring sensory bodywork and the exposure to the Bosnian griefscape only amplified these rupturing effects. As one of the performers in this project quite accurately described:

Both what we are experiencing and seeing is horrendous and hard to grasp, but also one’s own story and memories that pop up while working can be painful to relate to in midst of all this. Making it at the same time also a very personal journey.¹²⁷⁷

The performer situates here this amplified effect through describing how the fieldwork and the following explorative process made the performers involuntarily “remember or reflect on [their] own history.”¹²⁷⁸ The totality experienced

1273 In Rimstad’s opinion as an informed observer to the process, our prehistory with the first field trip to Bosnia and Herzegovina in July 2005 in combination with the process of making *A Rehearsal for Mortals*, had built trusting bonds between the Norwegian performers and me as a choreographer that enabled this work.

1274 Hartley (2004: 177-8, 183).

1275 Sven-Åke Christianson, an expert in the field and professor at Stockholm University, accounts for “how a strong sense of identification and communion with the victims (a sort of emotional over-involvement) can be triggered. Identification is a process through which we perceive others as confusingly similar to ourselves” (2002: 343, my translation from the Swedish).

1276 See, for example, on aid workers: Christianson (2002: 342-43); on therapists: Herman (1997: 140-47); and on ethnographers: Ghassem-Fachandi (2009).

1277 From transcript of video log with the performers, 14 December 2005.

1278 Ibid.

from meeting people, visiting places, being exposed to mass graves, watching documentary films, attending seminars and talks, and so on, was simply too much to contain and comprehend. However, this distress was simultaneously what made the process of rehearsal profound. It created a strong need amongst the performers to connect their “personal journeys” to the process of making the performance itself; they literally wanted to utilize their personal stories and their own associations in the development of the movement material. In contrast, I was convinced that these emotions were better channelled into the sensorial and neurological psychobiological investigation of bodily balance and reaction-patterns related to PTSD symptoms and traumatic experiences.¹²⁷⁹ The choreographic work therefore came to be based on a succession of small tasks questioning the basic conditions for our being in the world, like ‘falling’ as I already have discussed. In this way, the choreography was pushing forward a whole series of highly existential issues to be explored. They appeared nearly as Zen-like *koans*,¹²⁸⁰ that is, as paradoxical tasks: the action of transferring weight and falling into walking, running, floating in a vertigo of off-balance, or struggling between surrendering or fighting against the pull of gravity, all while exploring the combinations of willpower and the “fight”, “flight” or “freeze” impulses in the body. These concrete tasks might at first seem removed from the complexity embedded in the communal griefscape we constructed. However, in developing a higher degree of precision concerning the psychobiological and physical premises for executing these movement tasks, I will argue that such an approach offered a tool for conjoining the personal and the interpersonal interests of the performers.¹²⁸¹

In this way, the performers’ initial concerns – originating from a discussion on “authenticity” or what it means to be “true” to oneself as a performer¹²⁸² – opened up an exchange on fundamental questions related to moving. This enabled the

1279 The performers’ approach would have created a completely different performance that I would have loved to see, but which was not what I had set out to do in this artistic research project.

1280 Koans are paradoxical statements or tasks given by a Zen master to his student that transcends rational thought. Hence, they are used for opening up to new insights. See, for example, Kadichi Kadowaki (1989: xi). In this case, I refer to the paradoxical in focusing on simple physical tasks as a way to address complex socio-political issues.

1281 Trained dancers and plastic performers may through their bodily insights and tools consciously access and work with the unconscious layers (the deposits of movements accumulated through living) within us, and at times even make art out of this complicated mesh with skilful precision.

1282 A concern much stressed among Norwegian contemporary dancers and performers in the first decade of the 21st century but most often without being based on a reflexive thinking around the concept of “authenticity.”

group to distinguish between the performer's personal needs and desires for capturing something "true" and their professional role of identifying the task that I had defined for the artistic project, as choreographer-researcher. From my perspective, the distinction offered a more multilayered understanding of the agendas involved while performing and allowed for multiple perspectives, whereas in a situation where this distinction is not made conscious, blurring of interests and focus may obstruct the efficacy of the performers' performance and the impact of the choreographic work.

Consequently, a large part of the remaining choreographic work process was spent on clarifying the bodily specificity and the foundational physical premises underlining the movement tasks used in the choreography. From my point of view, it became important to stress that we did not work with the traumatic event itself but with its post-traumatic manifestations – the tension levels in these traumatic reaction patterns and their deposits – through addressing how such traumatic experiences are embodied physically and kept alive long after the traumatic incident itself.

The framework for the defining phase of the project

The last and defining phase of the artistic process began in late April in 2006 and took place in Sarajevo. This studio-based period led up to our premiere in Vijećnica on 7 June. The time was spent on the compositional construction and the choreographic clarification and definition of the movement tasks that would shape the choreographed performance, and was done in collaboration with the performers. Our studio was at the Bosnian Cultural Center (BKC) in Sarajevo.¹²⁸³ Originally, the premises of BKC had been built and used as a synagogue, the largest in Sarajevo. However, after the Second World War, the building was rebuilt and converted into a cultural centre in accordance with the socialist aesthetics of the time. Architecturally, the building looks at first sight like a monument for the lost communist heritage, the 'golden days' of Yugoslavia under Tito.¹²⁸⁴ In

1283 For more on BKC, see <http://www.bkc.ba/index.html> (Retrieved 19.05.2010).

1284 The synagogue is the last of three built in the town centre of Sarajevo. It was built in 1927-31 by the Sephardic community and was said to have been the largest and most lavishly decorated in the region. After being looted and wrecked during the Second World War by the Nazis and their local collaborators, it was supposedly donated to the city by the Jewish survivors in Sarajevo in gratitude for the support they had had received from the local inhabitants during the war. Sources: BKC and a commemoration plaque at its entrance. For more information about Jewish history in Sarajevo, see the Jewish Virtual Library: http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0018_0_17524.html (Retrieved 24.08.2010).

this respect, the project continued the dialogue with the past that we had begun in the old Jewish ghetto in Belgrade and entangled us in the larger continuum of erasure and disappearance in the former Yugoslavia. In my attempt to get at the griefscape that the Bosnian War had caused, I had become acutely aware of the historical interweaving of past and present in the complex socio-political context of grieving in the region. This awareness had made me sensitive to the silent testimonies that our surroundings narrated, such as in the layered traumatic histories imprinted in the cityscape of Sarajevo. In addition to the ruined buildings, these imprints included the numerous plaques on the walls at street corners all over the city, placed in memory of individuals who had been killed by either snipers or shelling during the siege in 1992-1995.¹²⁸⁵ It was in the ambience of this cityscape that the performance *An Unfinished Story* found its final form. The (recent) history of the city and its people left invisible marks both on the performance and on all of us who participated in its making.

***From traumatic reaction patterns to choreographic structure
- in search for a common ground***

The physical installation of chairs, which we had constructed in Belgrade four months earlier, had become the core component that I built on in creating the dramaturgy of the choreographed performance. Both spatially and conceptually, its physical landscape now helped me to compositionally structure the scenes in the choreographic work, just as it had helped the performers in the December to identify and locate themselves in the project. With its many written signs, the installation had materialized and mapped out the performers' personal impressions of the socio-political context of grieving that we together tried to address and embody. However, in being made up of different but coexisting perspectives, the installation created an inter-subjectively shared ground and a point of departure for our work.¹²⁸⁶

One of the challenges in our clarification period became how to refine the implications of this structure for the choreographic development in the performance. As an example of this process, I will look at the development of the scene called *avoidance*¹²⁸⁷ midway into the performance. The scene explored both the

1285 Including the one indicating the place, in which Archduke Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated, the act that sparked off the First World War in 1914.

1286 Cf. Zelizer (1998: 3-4) on how memories resemble composite mosaics.

1287 As a choreographic composition always consists of many parts, one will give name to the different parts. Rarely will the audience know these names, because they simply and primarily are practical

fight-or-flight response, our physical states when faced with stress factors triggering hyper-vigilant reactions, and avoidance, or the need to search for escape from such situations. At the time when the scene took place in the performance, the audience had moved out to the edges of the stage and the centre stage had been cleared of chairs, with two exceptions (see photograph below): a single chair was left to stage left, partly hidden behind the performer, and a stack of chairs stood to his right. These two remaining units of chairs each had a drawing (respectively of a tree and a big eye) instead of the signs with keywords as the other chairs had had.



Figure 23. “Avoidance.” From left to right: Kristianne Mo, Marija Opsenica, Peder Horgen and Terje Tjøme Mossige in Vijećnica, Sarajevo, June 2006. Photo: Foco Fuoxos.

Despite the nearly empty stage, the performers approached from the edges cautiously, as if faced with spatial obstacles and challenges. This cautious manner was partly a result of the way their pathways in space were designed. Each performer’s pathway was devised and framed according to the spatial restrictions that the (now removed) installation of chairs had imposed. Each performer moved as if the installation was still there. This created a contrast between their actions and the actual stage. For me, this contrast between what I can see as

tools for navigating within the composition during the rehearsal process. The naming helps the people involved in the work to talk about what specific the First Part is addressing.

an audience and what the performers are attending to while moving produces a potent choreographic tension. This brought about the elements that I as an audience cannot see but can only sense through seeing the performers' movements. For me, this produces a subtle but visible echo, a memory of what used to be there, the imprint of the by-now-invisible landscape and bygone reality of a past. This is similar to the way flashbacks of traumatic events and memories are played out and are manifested in the traumatized body, often registered as deviant behaviour by onlookers, but rarely comprehended for what they are.¹²⁸⁸

The effect was created from letting the performers rehearse their movements' paths with the installation of chairs present until the memory of this spatial topography was embodied in them. Once the actual chairs were removed, the performers' movements produced a sense of invisible hindrances and ghostly matter haunting their spatial navigation on the stage. The actual movement tasks the performers attended to enhanced this effect. These tasks related to avoiding certain spatial planes and dimensions,¹²⁸⁹ while the performers increasingly accelerated as they moved through their spatial route on stage. My aim was that the performers' execution of these action-oriented tasks conveyed a state of hyper-agitated tension that completely absorbed and controlled their attention, in this way, to bring about an affect of urgency that could be perceived and witnessed without fully being able to grasp the reasons for it. For me, the scene produced a sensation of how trauma interrupts and leaves a gap, created in the contrast between the actual room I could see as a viewer and what it appeared to be for the performers. In essence, this juxtaposition of realities – seen and unseen – captures for me some of the core features of post-traumatic stress: the traumatized individual is acting or reacting in the present to events or situations in the past. When they take place in our everyday life such actions are most often perceived from the outside as irrational or illogical behaviour.¹²⁹⁰

1288 Cf. Christianson (2002: 311) by quoting the psychologist and psychotherapist Atle Dyregrov (1992) *Katastrofpsykologi*. Lund: Studentlitteratur. Dyregrov confirms how the traumatic event lives on in the survivor long after the event itself has ceased to exist through post-traumatic reactions. See also Herman (1997: 117, 123) on the tendency and consequences of misdiagnose trauma victims in psychiatric care.

1289 Referring to Laban's concepts of spatial planes and dimensions, see Hackney (224-5).

1290 Cf. Herman (1997: 116-7) on diagnostic mislabelling. Laura S Brown (1995) supports this claim by documenting how in the case of more insidious trauma, such as domestic violence, the survivor might even be "assumed to have contributed to her problem" (Ibid.102), similar to the shame and disgrace many Bosniak women faced after having been raped in the war. Sources: Fieldnotes June 2005 from a meeting with Tim Brennen, professor in psychology, University of Oslo. Based on his research experiences on PTSD in Tuzla, Bosnia.

In the gap produced between the audience and the performers' perspectives I wanted to leave space for an echo of this social alienation.

The scene ends as the "flight" options are being exhausted. In combination with the actual physical strain and exhaustion the performers experience, they turn to explore mental dissociation as a means of resisting the pending intrusion of unwanted memories. In swift shifts of focus and direction in the room, they try to move out of the situation. This task is quickly succeeded by another and more basic struggle: the need to negotiate the tension field between willpower and gravity as they try to avoid giving in to the exhaustion and its pull to surrender. This task becomes manifest in the performers' bodies in abrupt and sudden drops of weight, followed by deliberate hoisting moves, before the performers one after the other surrender to the pull of gravity and their bodies yield to the ground.

Chasing a double aim requires choreographic precision to release the mind

In the description above of this particular scene, I want to point to the interrelationship existing between our bodily exploration of the psychobiological states of post-traumatic stress reactions and the task-oriented movement-explorative structure used in the choreographic composition. Rather than offering an interpretation of the actual scene, I want to unpack the thinking behind the making of it and its choreographic structure. My choreographic aim was to provide the performers with movement tasks, which both addressed the core content of the griefscape as well as offering them professional challenges that required a finely tuned kinetic awareness. This dual aim draws on what I in Chapter 1.3 defined as *aesth|ethical thinking* that harbours what Guattari calls a "double finality."¹²⁹¹ As an artistic research strategy, this meant that in my choreographic practice I engage in larger socio-political and ethical issues while I simultaneously also probe further into the specificity of my art practice and its traditions. In our work process in Sarajevo, this strategy meant that in pertaining to the larger socio-political context of grieving, my responsibility as a choreographer was to ensure that we identified and defined the initial premises of the tasks constituting the choreographic structure. For the performers the main objective was to explore the consequences of our choreographic clarifications and detect the need for new ones. From these explorations and our discussions of them, the premises of the tasks were further clarified, redefined, and refined. In this process, the term

1291 Cf. Chapter 1.3. Guattari (1995: 130).

‘premise’ came up as a useful concept and offered us a more neutral springboard for our investigation: it helped us to focus on the psychobiological conditions defining a task. This meant clarifying what was the base for the movement exploration in a given task. In identifying its initial impetus on a micro level in the body, we explored how this focus could guide our exploration of its possible routes. The probing was framed and composed of the critical tension field that the pull of gravity and the various degrees of willpower and constraints imposed or involved. In insisting on identifying and refining our understanding of the premises or conditions for the tasks, I provided a framework for the ways in which to approach them. This logic led me to develop set structures of simple movement paths for the performers to explore. The performers’ ability to improvise and come up with eclectic material played a lesser role in this process than did their ability to sensorially experience or *sense* through doing, as Bainbridge-Cohen would say.¹²⁹² In BMC™ terminology, *sensing* is an experiential bodily process.¹²⁹³ According to Hartley, it “has a quality of careful, self-conscious attention that can be both active and receptive, inner- or outer-directed; it is a way of aligning thought and sensation.”¹²⁹⁴ I was especially interested in how this attention can be both active and receptive, inner- or outer-directed, something I had experienced myself as performer. Here, I strived to enhance this quality of sensing through emphasising a simultaneous inner- and outer-directed attention while performing. In order to facilitate such an experiential and somatic approach to moving, I decided early on that the choreographic structure needed to be *set*. With this, I mean that the movement patterns were fixed and rehearsed rather than relying on open scores for improvisation during the performance. The set structure included even the route and the system for removing the chairs off the centre stage in the first part of the performance. With setting the structure, I relieved the performers from the pressure of being ‘innovative’ and creative in solving their tasks: that is, spending energy on deciding where to go next and worrying about the brilliance of their choices. Instead, they could focus on experiencing what they were actually doing when they moved and on their own “being” in the doing – through finely and consciously tuning their awareness towards the sensorial quality of what they experientially experienced in the execution of the tasks. In identifying the core physical and psychobiological premises for doing the

1292 Bainbridge-Cohen in an interview with Stark Smith (Stark Smith 1993: 64); also quoted by Hartley (1995:122).

1293 See introduction to BMC™ in Chapter 3.2.

1294 Hartley (1995: 122).

tasks, my aim was to sharpen this sensorial attention for the performers, most of whom were unfamiliar with such an approach to moving. The effort brought about a heightened sensorial awareness for both the performers and me, and altered their physical execution of the movement score.

The outcome of this analytical and task-oriented approach to moving resulted from a dialogical process supported with relentless questioning throughout the choreographic clarification and definition process. It was like an epiphany in one of our discussions, one of the performers spontaneously stated: “You don’t need dancers to do this – anybody could do this choreography.”¹²⁹⁵ At the time, from the performer’s way of thinking about dance, this task-oriented approach seemed to suggest that the choreography could have been written out as a score and performed by anyone – not necessarily requiring trained dancers or plastic performers, although I understood the reasoning behind this reading, and I can imagine transferring the final choreography to a group of non-professional performers, as an interesting future option.¹²⁹⁶ Nevertheless, from my point of view, I definitely needed the performers for the process of constructing the choreographed performance in the first place: the performers’ insight into sensing and articulating their bodies, as well as critical questioning, added crucial and valuable depth to the choreography. Due to their capacity of being able to delve into the minute details, for example, as related to the balance system in order to dissect an impetus to falling, their performance became more subtle and nuanced than what could have been expected of non-professionals. Whereas most of us are caught up in the deposits of movements accumulated through our own lives, through their bodily insights and tools plastic performers and trained dancers may access and work with these unconscious layers and at times even make art out of this complicated mesh with skilful and subtle clarity.

Encountering unknown fields – and “the unbearable lightness of being”

The contrast between the simple and formal movement tasks and the complexity experienced in the contextual encounter with the trauma of the Bosnian War disturbed some of the performers. It seemed to me that this impression was aggravated because the sensory approach to choreography, in part, stirred up personal stories from the past and re-introduced old tension patterns and

1295 Fieldnotes, Sarajevo, May 2006.

1296 Cf. Pina Bausch’s reworkings of *Kontakthof* (2000) and (2008).

affects,¹²⁹⁷ and in part, pushed towards an encounter with an uncharted terrain. Moreover, the approach's aesthetic objectives diverged from what Fabius would call a traditional "ocular-centric approach to choreography."¹²⁹⁸ These objectives made its choreographic outcome less easily recognizable as "something" for the performers, which, for some, created a sense of uncertainty about whether what one was doing would have any artistic value for an audience. I will discuss the schism caused from this uncertainty in Chapter 8 when I reflect and discuss challenges that came about in my artistic research project. For now, it suffices to say that despite the fact that this reaction puzzled me, it became of the utmost importance for me as the choreographer-researcher to respect these emotions without letting them control the work. Instead, I tried to provide a sense of safety for the performers in this situation.¹²⁹⁹ This included ensuring that we in the process set aside time and space for voicing experiences and raise questions regarding the work and the process. I also stressed that our focus was not on the trauma itself or our personal relationship to it, but mainly on the post-traumatic reaction patterns and their communal manifestations. For this reason we probed into the tension levels and the reaction patterns in the body that can haunt people long after the traumatic incident, and bring about these complex states of grieving. In this respect, the use of latex gloves in the performance became important to highlight this temporal perspective here. The fortuitous accident that led to this usage stemmed from the old varnished floor at our first rehearsal space in Belgrade, which was difficult to clean and therefore felt sticky and dirty. This made one of the performers touch the floor rather unwillingly and gingerly. This particular cautiousness fascinated me, and I decided to try solving both the performer's issues with the dirt, as well as to enhance the quality of cautiousness added through accentuating this touch with the help of a visual marker, and therefore introduced the gloves as an auxiliary tool. However, as I noted after our first public work-in-progress showing for an audience in Belgrade in December 2005: "The clinical touch of the surgical gloves provided the little detail, which allowed us a visual reading that drew attention to the past in the present through establishing a "now" that clinically deals with the emotional scars and the consequences of the past on our present flux." Hence the gloves visually reminded me, and also the performers, as well as our test audience in

1297 As sensory awareness-based work often, tends to do. Cf. Hartley (2004: 176-8).

1298 Fabius (2009: 343). Cf. Chapter 3.1.

1299 This included stressing that the responsibility for how the choreographic structure and concept was received rested on the choreographer, not on them as performers.

Belgrade, of the temporal factor involved in our performance.¹³⁰⁰ In triggering images known from forensic investigators in television crime series, the gloves signalled and hence indicated that we entered the story from a post-traumatic position, as someone dealing with the debris left behind. They provided a clinical touch, and a distance to the trauma we were dealing with that made it clear that we were recalling something that had already taken place. The tragedy had already happened; the performers were just tracing the ghostly remains – the griefscape. The gloves were redirecting the focus towards the present-day challenges, reminding the performers of their entrance point.¹³⁰¹

Another example that pointed to this retrospective perspective in the staging was the actions of Slaven when he finally entered centre stage in the second half of the performance, after having spent the first half in the role as a member of the audience in a wheelchair. His first actions after rolling in were to put on latex gloves, step out of the wheelchair and to push it over to the other side of the stage, where he resumed his role as a paraplegic sitting in the wheelchair but now as a performer starting a duet with one of the other performers on stage. For me, his entrance marked not only a shift in the performance, but his actions also pointed to the difference between the “real-real” and the “stand-in” in our staging, as his actions created a Brechtian *alienation effect*.¹³⁰² His actions literally freed me as a viewer – and hopefully the general audience as well – from a more sentimental bonding of pity or identification of the paraplegic character as a “victim.” Instead, his actions as a performer allowed us as viewers to stay focused on grieving while critically questioning the definition of victimhood: both as a role as well as how we can all feel paralyzed at times, regardless of our physical condition. In this state, we might feel left without a clue about how to move on, enmeshed between roles assumed and ascribed – whether as a survivor or as a bystander¹³⁰³ – overwhelmed with a feeling of shame or guilt for what one did or did not do.

1300 Source: fieldnotes 21 December 2005 in Belgrade. Here, our first test audience picked up on and commented on this use of gloves in the Q & A session after our first work-in-progress showing.

1301 That is, they were not representing the totality of the traumatic event personally, but just retrospectively exploring aspects of its psychobiological consequences in being receptive and paying attention to the bodily reverberations they might experience as they executed the physical tasks in the choreographic construction. While leaving me as the first viewer feeling as if “bumping into a rememory that belongs to somebody else.” Cf. Toni Morrison notion of “rememory” (1987: 35-36); and the way it is explicated by Gordon (1997: 164-5).

1302 See Brecht (1964: 91). The concept is often referred to by its original German word: *Verfremdungseffekt*.

1303 Based on my fieldwork observations in combination with support from trauma studies and clinical research, I decided that I did not want to spend time on “fetishizing” the perpetrator. Leaning on

An unfinished story has always a beginning

I will end this chapter with a task-oriented choreographic account of the beginning of the performance. Though the account is sprinkled with other eyewitness accounts, it is not in any sense meant as the ultimate reading of the work. Primarily, it offers my personal perspective on what this opening sequence was about for me, that is, how I perceived it choreographically.

The performance starts as an installation-like situation. The audience enter a room with no conventional seats; the space is only filled with a large installation composed of identical chairs. None of them are available, as small signs occupy all the seats. The situation invites the audience to walk among the chairs and take in the different messages stated on the signs. Four performers smartly dressed in black and wearing surgical gloves set the performance in motion. They alter the space through collecting all the signs, except for the two which are both covered with a drawing. The performers end up next to the drawing placed on top of a stack of chairs. On the 'shelves' created from the stacked chairs they deposit their collected signs. The action makes the signs disappear out of sight, while remaining physically present in the room. As a member of the audience responded after our first work-in-progress showing in Oslo:

The signs were powerful – first to read and then to see them being picked up and gathered – they created a landscape, which, when stored away out of sight, I could not stop thinking about: what they evoked – the landscape we could not see.¹³⁰⁴

As the last performer has disposed of his signs, all four of them close their eyes and with tentative steps begin to walk into the room, crowded with chairs and members of the audience. Without seeing, the performers have to rely on their ears, hands and feet; with the help and guidance of their listening skills and tactile sensorial proprioception, they try to maintain their balance. Gradually, this condition leads them into a state of vertigo – floating in a state of off-balance – as if remaining in a suspended fall.¹³⁰⁵ As the performers eventually let go and fall

Arendt (1965) and her telling description of “the banality of evil” and supported by the accounts of Drakulić (2004) and Seierstad (2004), I decided to leave the perpetrator as a closed category that I would not spend time speculating on here.

1304 Field notes 4 January 2006, from an “after-talk” session following a work-in-progress showing at KHiO.

1305 After viewing our work-in-progress presentation in December 2005, one of the main choreographic elements the Belgrade-based choreographer Nela Antonovic stressed, was the contextual relevance

to the ground, they open their eyes and face another laborious task: the removal of the chairs. Carefully, they crawl underneath the chairs and lift them up with their backs. They slowly carry them out of the centre of the stage and towards the outer edges of the room, one by one. Whilst transported, the chairs seem as if floating on top of a smooth sea. Another member of the audience expressed his experience of seeing the chairs in this way: “I became very occupied with what they were as they were taken away – it was as if each chair suddenly became a human being.”¹³⁰⁶ Or rather as if each chair was a trace or ghostly remain of a human being.

The last removals of chairs happen hectically, in a frenzy. This opened up an unobstructed clearing in the room that soon gave way to a flood of physically manifested reaction patterns, such as the *avoidance* scene described earlier in which the performers were chased from one task-oriented operation to the next, as if governed by invisible necessities. This created and communicated a sense of urgency, experienced disturbingly as a reality, an embodied *e/motionscape*. Simultaneously, the performers’ actions pointed to the jarring gap between the surroundings in which the actions are performed and the experiential states obviously experienced by the performers in the space. In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Sontag describes this dilemma:

We don’t get it. We truly can’t imagine what it was like. We can’t imagine how dreadful, how terrifying war is; and how normal it becomes. Can’t understand, can’t imagine. That’s what every soldier, and every journalist and aid worker and independent observer who has put in time under fire, and had the luck to elude the death that struck down others nearby, stubbornly feels. And they are right.¹³⁰⁷

Though acknowledging this gap that Sontag describes, I fear that in stressing it we may also risk fetishizing traumatic experiences. I therefore believe in the importance of trying to empathetically connect to the suffering of others but with an awareness of the inherent failure of ever getting it right. In the realization of this breakage becomes the other’s suffering real. It is from this perspective I have

of our explorative work with balance and off-balance, and states of being in off-balance. For her this element captured the situation as she experienced it in Serbia at the time. Source: fieldnotes 21 December 2005, from an “after-talk” session following a work-in-progress showing at the Jewish Community Centre, Belgrade.

1306 Fieldnotes 4 January 2006, from an “after-talk” session following a work-in-progress showing at KHiO.

1307 Sontag (2003: 113).

tried to construct this choreographed performance and conjure the griefscape of *An Unfinished Story*. I trust that an intersubjective realm can emerge out of the kind of physical translations and embodiments that we explored. In our case, through the practical tasks relating to gravity and physical mechanics, and movement explorations on psychobiological symptoms of traumatic reactions, as these tasks address our shared kinaesthetic intelligence and bodily reflexes.¹³⁰⁸ Despite unbridgeable divides, such work may distort or disrupt time-bound constraints because it enters a preverbal discourse that our corporeal being can recognize, thanks to our sensorial, proprioceptive and empathetic abilities. Though it cannot mend the gap discerned by Sontag, this effort summons Duchamp's statement on the purpose of artistic endeavours: "What Art is in reality is this missing link, not the links which exist. It's not what you see that is Art; Art is the gap."¹³⁰⁹ Like trauma itself, the experience of art is in the gap between realities. As the photograph from the end of *An Unfinished Story* in Vijećnica points to:



Figure 24. Approaching the end of *An Unfinished Story* in Vijećnica, Sarajevo 2006. Photo: Foco Fuoxos.

1308 The performance was also well received by our audience in the region. As one of the members of the audience expressed it after our premiere in Sarajevo: "I lived in this city during the nearly four years of siege. Nobody who wasn't here can understand what it was like. So this performance must have been made with help from above." This feedback made all the effort behind the performance seem worthwhile.

1309 Duchamp in an interview with the art historian Arturo Schwarz, as quoted by Dalia Judovitz (1995: 135).

In the gap between the realities that left the wounds in the floor, created by the missiles in 1992, and the dark shadow play brought on by the audience participating in the final scene of the performance in June 2006, both life and death were present. I like this idea and even if it is not true, I accept it as a truth.

Moreover, what I do know from having artistically approached this communal context of grieving is that in constructing our perception of this griefscape, the socio-political context has challenged me, both as an artist, a colleague, a researcher, and as a human being. This is not solely because of my laborious incorporation of all the information and insight gathered during the process, but more so as a result of my unconscious adoption and sensory process of absorbing this composite as a reality.¹³¹⁰ In this respect, I have been moved by ghostly matters into action as much as *docudancing* these matters into a choreographic response; floating in the suspense between off-balance tilts in a mission impossible – while being marked from moving on the uneven and unsettling ground of this griefscape.

Closing thoughts: revisiting docudancing griefscapes

In this Third Part of the study, while looking at the artistic research process of making the trilogy *Life & Death*, I have indirectly demonstrated how the core element of a choreographic process is about creating conditions that can produce a framework for an artistic enquiry.

In the case of *An Unfinished Story*, I clearly both challenged and developed my artistic research project through addressing the context of communal grieving that surfaced in the wake of the Bosnian War. The conflict ruptured the very fabric of society in Bosnia-Herzegovina and made the private and public field coalesce. In facing the societal impact of this war, I was confronted with contextual circumstances and grieving processes that were far more complex and foreign than the previous two contexts in the performance trilogy,¹³¹¹ while at the same time collaborating with a cross-cultural team of performers and participants. In this process, I therefore came to rely extensively on the support I could draw from my kaleidoscopic optic, which in addition to knowledge of choreography and somatics, trauma and performance, included the use of ethnographic tools for conducting fieldwork and insights deriving from qualitative background research and informed by post-colonial thinking. Through this process, I both challenged

1310 In psychoanalytic terms: not so much due to my incorporation of it as to my introjection, that is, my unconscious adoption of it, or sensory process of absorbing its reality. Cf. Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok (1994: 125-138).

1311 Cf. Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

but also clarified my understanding of the artistic research strategy, which I had coined *docudancing*. This term refers to the choreographic approach for constructing and embodying a socio-political context with the help of ethnographic tools and contextual background research in this project. With the notion of *docudancing grieving*, I therefore describe the application of this choreographic approach to construct and embody 'a living reality' of grieving, or what I call a *griefscape*. The griefscape is an ephemeral and floating composite, which I perceive as a three-dimensional mosaic and rhizome. In this artistic research project, I have with the trilogy *Life & Death* constructed and embodied three griefscapes choreographically.

More specifically, this meant in the first part of the trilogy, *A Song to Martin*, I explored a personal griefscape with the help of an autoethnographic approach and through that developed a strategy for making contextually based choreography. This process introduced me to the ways in which one could retrieve information and documentary materials, make choices on their basis, and construct choreographed performances. This exposure explains why Chapter 5 is largely spent on describing how I ordered and then applied the materials retrieved to construct the solo performance. Partly, through integrating in the staging some of the documentary materials with the movement materials I had developed from embodying memories and private experiences of grieving and loss related to Martin. From this effort emerged my understanding of a contextually based approach to making choreography, which in the second part of the trilogy, *A Rehearsal for Mortals*, I explored further by including a team of dancers as participants in my strategy of docudancing. Enabled by my choice of not being a performer here, I could focus more on the conduct and structure of the choreographic process, which also explains the shift of focus from Chapter 5 to Chapter 6. Instead of predominantly describing the material gathered, I now began to pay more attention to the overall implications and the meta-levels in such an artistic research process. Here, I explored more systematically how to integrate the reflexive need to make fieldnotes and observations while looking at death both as a physiological / bodily process and as an industry. In addition to logging, I therefore introduced the dancers to new tools or methods for participating in the choreographic process, such as blogging and the use of photography and video, as well as dialoguing together, while engaging in fieldwork, developing the movement material, and staging the performance.¹³¹² Besides a proliferation in

1312 In 2004 blogging was still a fairly recent phenomenon with few standardised programs and was here done without tools like smart phones.

the use of documentary materials, the more significant outcome of this probing into the bodily process of dying was the distinct and central role that the somatic focus got in the choreographic process. Including how the materials retrieved on dying became inscribed in the bodies of the dancers constituted a major part of the investigation, to the extent that if my aim here had been primarily to address the issue of choreosomatics, rather than to specifically look at the relationship between choreography and socio-political contexts related to death and grieving,¹³¹³ I would have accumulated enough research material from this process to concentrate mainly on *A Rehearsal for Mortals* in my study. Instead, Chapter 6 *A Rehearsal for Mortals* became the shortest chapter here, while Chapter 7 *An Unfinished Story* the longest, because the latter more directly addressed and highlighted my research objectives in this project. It achieved this through bringing together the core features of the first and the second part of the performance trilogy and including a core group of the performers as participants directly in the artistic process. In this way, the performance project utilized ethnographic tools and documentary material extensively to gather information about the socio-political context, as I had done in *A Song to Martin*, while also probing more deeply into a choreosomatic approach to movements and dancing, as I had begun to explore more fully in *A Rehearsal for Mortals*. Altogether, this meant that in *An Unfinished Story* the performers both participated in the ethnographic fieldwork and somatically embodied neurological states related to post-traumatic stress as we approached the context of communal grieving. The specific focus here on the aftermath of the Bosnian War accentuated not only the ethical but also the political challenges in docudancing griefscapes.

If I should attempt to briefly summarise the political and ethical concerns of the performance trilogy, I could simply state this: In *A Song to Martin* the main ethical concern relates to how to portray a deceased friend, while the political relates to the issue of providing a public space for a differently bodied reality. In *A Rehearsal for Mortals*, the ethical relates to the relationship to performers but especially the partners and collaborators in the funeral industry and the handling of the material and information received from them, while the political touches upon the hidden discomfort of relating to death. In *An Unfinished Story*, the ethical concern seems at least threefold. In addition to negotiating the relationship to

1313 Though, in retrospect, with the help of Kristeva's arguments on the need for an intimate revolt (2002), I clearly see how choreosomatics can be matters of a larger socio-political and contextual concern, issues I already have begun probing into in my post-project *If this is my body* (2010-2013), but which I will leave this aside here. For more on this project, see Roar (2015) and the FB page <https://www.facebook.com/hvis.dette.er> (Accessed 10 January 2015).

partners and collaborators in Bosnia and Serbia and handling what we received from them, I also had as a choreographer-researcher both to pay respect to the memories of the victims and the survivors of the war, and to ensure the wellbeing of the performers while they struggled to embody this painful griefscape on stage. Politically, this performance gave both public attention and expression to the invisible griefscape of the Bosnian War, and in this way, it indirectly also addressed the volatile future of the region as well as the cost of war.

In outlining the different emphasises in the three processes with this brief summary, I can highlight the main evolvement of my artistic research strategy for making contextually based choreography in this project. However, when I look closer at my accumulated experiences from constructing the trilogy *Life & Death*, this brief summary seems at the same time too simplistic and reductive, especially as the effort of making *An Unfinished Story* showed me how the aesth|ethical, that is, my term to address aesthetical and ethical concerns as an inextricably intertwined composite, also exists in an interdependent symbiosis with the political. I will therefore address this interdependency with the political in more details in the final part of this study, as I discuss some of the challenges and insights that surfaced through my contextually based approach to choreography and elaborate on my understanding of docudancing and griefscapes as concepts.





Fourth Part – Reflections

8. Tracing *Life & Death* – recounting insights, choreographing a future

There is a mountain in the interior of Newfoundland, known as Halfway Mountain. It rises from a rather flat forestland and might therefore seem higher than it is. I've travelled round it on a hunting trip, and noticed then, how entirely different it could be each time I had walked on a little way and turned to look at it again. A thousand different descriptions of Halfway Mountain may be presented to you, and all will be equally accurate. I feel a strong urge to say this to you now: the mountain is vast and many-sided, but the one who lay in chains on the ground saw Halfway Mountain only from the spot where he lay.

From *A fugitive crosses his tracks* by Aksel Sandmose¹³¹⁴

This last part of my study has two sub-chapters, where I reflect upon the process of docudancing grieving. In the first part (8.1) *Challenged by the Return of the Real*, I focus on the difficulty of ensuring a critical balance in the artistic process. Here, I especially draw on my experiences from making *An Unfinished Story*, because through this process my understanding and practice of a contextually based approach to choreography first came to maturity. The encounter with the traumatic context of communal grieving impacted both the social interaction within the group and the choreographic work, as well as my way of thinking about dancing and choreography in general.

In the second part (8.2) *Docudancing griefscape and the political*, I will first examine the two key concepts that evolved as an outcome of this artistic research project: docudancing and griefscapes. Then, I will elaborate on how the process

¹³¹⁴ Sandmose (1936: 413-414). English translation by Eugene Gay-Tiffet. In the Norwegian original, see (1962: 431).

of writing this study created a context and space for sharing observations and reflections that otherwise would have remained unarticulated and lost. Finally, I will augment this social dimension through interlinking it with the insight I gained on the relationship between choreography and context and hence end this study with a discussion on choreographic practice and the political.

8.1. Challenged by the return of the real

“Attitudes are not enough” – the critical challenge of engaging in a social reality

In my effort to situate and probe into this project, I have been in part drawing on *The Return of the Real* and Hal Foster’s discussion of “the artist as ethnographer.” Through revisiting some of his main arguments here, I will reflect upon some of the challenges that my contextually based approach to choreography confronted me with in this project.

From his art- historical perspective, Foster considers the ethnographically based artistic strategy as an expression and continuation of the avant-garde project to overcome the traditional dichotomy between form and content in the arts.¹³¹⁵ More operational as a starting point for my reflections here, however, is his claim that the potential efficacy of such a strategy depends on how artists actually approach their chosen contexts, as well as how these encounters impact their material praxis. Due to this claim, he distinguishes between the artistic approaches that superficially or cynically make use of others’ reality to benefit their own “ethnographic self-fashioning” in an international art market,¹³¹⁶ and those that lead to encounters which change artists and their way of working with their media. With this distinction, Foster refers to Benjamin, who in the 1930s famously called upon artists to be aware of “the decisive difference between merely transmitting the apparatus of production and transforming it.”¹³¹⁷ For

1315 Foster (1996: 172), see also the background for his argument in the fn. 376.

1316 Foster (1996: 180). With these descriptions, he is drawing on James Clifford (1988).

1317 Benjamin (1970: 4) or (1978: 228), though I prefer the first translation here, also quoted in Foster (1996: 171-172). Benjamin presented this argument in his lecture “The Author as Producer” at the Institute for the Study of Fascism in Paris, 1934, while in exile in France (Benjamin 1978: xxxviii). I will not venture into a more thorough discussion on the political ideology that underpinned Benjamin’s appeal here.

Benjamin solidarity in an artistic theme or a political attitude was not enough.¹³¹⁸ In “The artist as ethnographer,” Foster elaborates on this stance and how it can bring about an artistic strategy that can “render contemporary art dangerously political;”¹³¹⁹ through allowing the encounters with a socio-political reality to have consequences for the process and the outcome of an artistic project. This is a strategy I strongly affiliate with in this project, as outlined in Chapters 1.2 and 2, and, I hope, proven through my composite, aesth|ethical thinking and self-reflexive approach to the socio-political contexts addressed in this process. In viewing these socio-political concerns as inseparable from the aesthetic and the ethical consequences of my artistic strategy, I was, however, confronted with several dilemmas, especially, as I approached the aftermath of the Bosnian War. They relate to what Foster observes as the main challenge with this strategy: our ability as artists to strike a critical balance between “too little” or “too much” distance in our identification, that is, a critical distance to the social reality we approach.¹³²⁰ If this is not achieved, then our artistic interventions risk succumbing to either “a reductive over-identification with the other (...) as victim, which locks it into a hierarchy of suffering whereby the wretched can do little wrong.” Or alternatively, the intervention might lead to “a murderous disidentification from the other (...) which it blames as victim, and exploits this disidentification to build political solidarity through fantasmatic fear and loathing.”¹³²¹

In both cases, the other as a victim is reduced to an otherness, as an object and accessory for the artists’ agenda. Such interventions can be highly political, because they contribute to reinforcing socio-political stereotypes and attitudes that circulate in society. In a situation of violent conflicts and war, such interventions can become lethal when used to enrage the masses to disidentification. In the case of the warfare in the former Yugoslavia, the consequences of these kinds of stances were thoroughly demonstrated. The international community’s

1318 See Foster (1996: 171-172). In claiming “[a]n author who teaches a writer nothing, teaches nobody anything,” Benjamin argues that the determinant factor lies in the artist’s ability of being “capable of making co-workers out of readers or spectators.” As an example of such an achievement, he refers to the epic theatre of Bertholt Brecht (Benjamin 1970: 6, italics as in original). In his argumentation here, he highlights the role of the audience as a co-author implicated in the outcome of the work. From my perspective, this idea was further re-explored decades later, for example, through the choreographic strategies that emerged with the Judson Dance Theatre and their contemporaries in the 1960s, then, especially those associated with the Fluxus movement (Banes 2003: 3-19, Burt 2006: 13-15), and through Barthes’ reflections upon the role of the author in writing (Barthes 1977: 142-149).

1319 Foster (1996: 202).

1320 Foster (1996: 203).

1321 Ibid.

failures to counteract these positions early and efficiently only enhanced their impact. The combination of extreme over- and disidentification eventually resulted in a state of political emergency that threw a whole country and region into an inferno of brutal insanity and violations.¹³²² Even though such situations can be considered as exceptional, they illustrate the reason why it is hard to imagine the artist as ethnographer as a viable strategy without being aided by reflexivity, critical distance, and a disciplinary memory.

The urgency of reaching a critical distance

The urgency to find a sensible critical distance is, moreover, embedded in the role of making art generally, not only contextually, when confronted with highly volatile and politicized situations such as those in the Balkans. From my point of view, artistic work results from making discriminating choices. As an artist, this means that I am confronted with the need to make decisive decisions in the artistic process, and, in this way, faced with the normative dilemmas that exist within our fields. The question of “too much” or “too little” distance challenges, hence, the heart of the decision-making process involved: selecting, reading, and evaluating the choices made to create a work of art or an artistic intervention. As an artist, I have to negotiate and find the appropriate distance and balance, between the private and the professional concerns at stakes.

The only difference is that this challenge becomes critical when working contextually as in this artistic research project, in particular when faced with the politicized grieving process after the Bosnian War, but also in relation to the two first contexts of grieving. For example, in *A Song to Martin* the challenge was to safeguard and pay respect to the memory of my informants, who also had suffered a loss when Martin died, as I created my own personal rendering of it,¹³²³ likewise, as I searched for the most potent outcome in *A Rehearsal for Mortals*, I also had to handle respectfully the trust that was bestowed on us from our informants in the funeral industry.¹³²⁴ Such social contracts are far more complex than a simple reading of them might suggest. In a project based on fieldwork, as here, however, I am not only in danger of appropriating experiences of others but also running the risk of being changed by these experiences myself, in part, as

¹³²² Cf. Chapters 7.1 and 7.2.

¹³²³ Cf. Chapter 5.

¹³²⁴ Cf. Chapter 6.

my own personal history is set in motion and stirred up in these encounters.¹³²⁵ Erasing such imprints are not so simple; even erasures leave marks, at times blatant scars, at others, painful voids and invisible wounds, or they may - as Foster points out - seep out into partisan fear and phantasmic loathing.¹³²⁶ This explains why encounters with a social reality can bring about experiences and profound shifts, which can transform outlooks, and, thus, ultimately impact the reality itself.¹³²⁷ One of the main challenges for me in this process was to find the critical balance to deal with overwhelming and traumatic impressions without suffocating from despair, blind rage, or self-righteousness.¹³²⁸ This effort seemed essential, especially while constructing *An Unfinished Story*, in order to avoid replicating or reinforcing the reductive binaries that had caused the traumatic context of grieving in the first place.

On the pain of getting involved

In fact, it is incredibly demanding to face a traumatized socio-political context such as we did in Bosnia. Bearing witness to trauma is an emotionally exhausting experience.¹³²⁹ Facing the testimonies of so much human cruelty, while working with embodying its consequences adds to the burden and takes its toll. At times, this would make our process in this project painfully real, especially when evoking insights that had the power to confront and touch the core of one's self-image or concept of the world. Boal, who developed the *Theatre of the Oppressed* as an interventional practice,¹³³⁰ was familiar with this inherent danger involved

1325 See, for example, Okely (2007) and Browning (1995) on fieldwork embodied; Taussig (1992) and Ghassem-Fachandi (2009) on violence in ethnographic encounters.

1326 Foster (1996: 203).

1327 The transformational impact explains why Benjamin urged artists to reconsider their practices in the 1930s, cf. Benjamin (1978: 220-238).

1328 This claim comes out of my experience over the years: from Eastern Europe under the communist regimes in the 1980s with the social backlashes that followed after 1989; the hardships in the slum quarters in the overpopulated Dhaka in Bangladesh (1990) and in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil (1993); the horrors of war in Mostar (1994); the post-apartheid situation in Zimbabwe (1995, 1997); and to postwar violence in Pristina (2000) and Guatemala City (2003) to mention some of these imprints tattooed into my cortex. A normative reading of these situations may reduce the pertinent issues embedded in them to a question about being right, rather than a questioning of who has, or takes, the power to define who have got the balance right? What defines 'just right'? Who are 'outside' or 'inside' the ruling paradigm of 'just right'? What I am pointing towards here is that we need to negotiate the norms at play. If not, such discourses will give birth to attitudes that easily translate into well-known simplifications and political binaries: patriotic/unpatriotic, moral/immoral, Christian/Muslim, civilized/savage, good/bad, "Übermensch/Untermensch" etc. Our recent history offers us a large supply and fresh samples of such binaries. I am looking for a way out of these binary codes.

1329 Cf. Chapter 4.1 and Christianson (2002: 314-15).

1330 Boal (1995). Cf. Chapter 1.2.

when performing artists are getting engaged in burning social-political issues. He therefore points out:

To be an actor is dangerous... Because the catharsis that one seeks is not inevitable. For all the security his profession gives him, for all the protection offered by the rituals of theatre, for all the established theories about what is fiction and what is reality, none of this can prevent the possibility that one day these aroused personalities [or states of being, my addition] may refuse to go quietly back to sleep, these lions may refuse to return to their cages in the zoo of our souls.¹³³¹

This intra-personal precariousness was definitely also present in our work: The probing into the contextual background of the griefscapes – with their traumatic losses and or atrocities of death and dying – inevitably aroused personal memories and phantoms that could be difficult or painful to face. The performers had been informed about this potential side effect prior to signing the work contracts. I had made it clear that I could not guarantee a smooth and simple process, as the work most certainly would include bumpy and unpleasant stretches, and possibly take them into uncharted terrains.

Despite the importance of such preparatory introductions and conversations, they would still not prevent the eventual pain that unexpected encounters caused: those moments when one's own perceptions about oneself and or the world break and new insight will have to be made. In those breaking points, one would have to go through and endure a period of chaos and flux, where nothing seems familiar or to fit. As the familiarity of knowing is replaced by an uncertainty with regard to what to expect or look for in the situation, this can cause a profound sense of vertigo and insecurity. In artistic research processes that probe for new insight and developmental shifts, such precarious stages or situations will be unavoidable.¹³³² Here, this experience was aggravated, as I combined the processing of the overwhelming impressions from our fieldwork with an explorative movement approach that was new for the performers. This added an extra, uncharted layer to the precariousness already inscribed in the project's socio-political context and thematic focus, which intensified the situation. This example points back to the one of the core dilemmas I faced in this project: how to aesth|ethically

¹³³¹ Boal (1995: 38).

¹³³² See, for example, Gunn Engelsrud (2010), Halprin (1995), Rouhiainen (2003), and Barrett (2007).

accommodate and balance the different and contradictory needs and concerns embedded in the project.

Balancing contradictory needs without contributing to more violations

The crucial challenge was to pursue the socio-political concerns that the project addressed and produce a performance that was artistically potent without violating the trust I had built with the many people involved in the project. In addition to the performers and the crew involved in the production, this also included the large number of people who I had met and who had shared their knowledge or personal stories, or in other ways contributed to the project. The challenge was to ensure this critical balance of concerns.

When professionally trained, a choreographer should supposedly be prepared for handling such a transdisciplinary artistic production process.¹³³³ Nevertheless, the composite demands of docudancing grieving and engaging in this contextually based project added another level of complexity to this artistic endeavour. Here, the multi-voiced and precarious challenges I faced gave me as choreographer-researcher professional reasons for not always going for the simplest solution, including when I should accommodate the emotional needs voiced by the performers. I would rather, if needed, alter the emphasis in the choreographic process, for example, as I did after the fieldwork in Bosnia in July 2005 when experiencing the raw and unwrought impact this exposure had on the Norwegian performers.¹³³⁴ Although the fieldwork fuelled and motivated their engagement in the artistic project, its impact also revealed to me the need to provide conceptual frameworks to contain this energy. My concern was to ensure a critical distance in the choreographic response to the socio-political situation we addressed in the project. I could instead have focused on the performers' personal and raw

1333 I am referring here to my background from the programme of choreography at KHiO that used to emphasize the hands-on skills of running and staging choreographed performances within the production apparatus of the theatre. However, I am aware that there exists a wide range of choreography programmes in Europe today, as well as the fact remains that a large proportion of the performances presented are made by artists without any formal choreography degree or training. Nevertheless, the role of a choreographer is rarely only about grappling with formal compositional concerns as an independent and individual artist, but most often as here, includes the responsibility as a leader/manager for a crew of the other artists and production assistants involved. This responsibility implies for me to ensure that everybody involved is also so, and shares an understanding of the process that is taking place while in the creative flux

1334 Cf. Chapter 7.2 and fieldnotes and video recordings from our exchanges and discussions during the process.

impressions of this reality and made an evocative production that would probably also have satisfied their needs, desires, and aesthetic sensitivity, as well as emotionally stirred a general audience in Oslo. For me, however, this option would have misused or even violated the confidence and trust that our collaborators and informants had shown in us. I felt it would have compromised the core of this project: to pay homage to the faceless victims of the Bosnian War through addressing the situation of communal grieving that their deaths had caused. For me this griefscape included the tens of thousands of survivors who every day had to face the consequences of the war, whether they lived in Bosnia-Herzegovina or in its greater diaspora, in exile overseas or in any of the neighbouring countries that were directly involved in the conflict.

To take into account the complexity of these different concerns had consequences for my approach to construct the third part of the performance trilogy. Though I was acutely aware of the danger of simply projecting my own experiences on to the performers, I trusted my own gut feeling here. After all, it was based on a composite experience, contextualized over years through extensive exposures and critical discussions with local colleagues, both concerning the socio-political situation in the region as well as debating my personal motivation for making this project.¹³³⁵ Paired with a self-reflexive scrutiny, I had combined these exposures with thorough background research and references informing the work process.¹³³⁶ Altogether, this composite experience cautioned me as an informed outsider to steer clear of approaches that leant on a self-centred or self-absorbed probing into the private-emotional upset that confrontations with this reality may have caused. In this way, we could easily lose touch with the entangled complexity¹³³⁷ embedded in the griefscape. Instead we could end up, not only letting go of the respect for the victims and the survivors, but also breach the trust of our informants, cheat our audiences as well as ourselves. However, as I wanted to pursue the double finality of investigating both the socio-political context of grieving as well as exploring the craft of moving itself, I searched for a choreographic approach that could channel and elevate the performers' engagement in this dual respect.¹³³⁸ This strategy meant that in addition to exploring the

¹³³⁵ Cf. Chapter 1 on my personal background in the region and discussion of this in Chapter 7.1.

¹³³⁶ Outlined in Chapters 2-4. Included here is the theoretical foundation I had from trauma theory and performance studies as well as my background in history and social sciences with an ingrained knowledge from social sciences about the methodological challenges involved in conducting informal interviews and utilizing statistics.

¹³³⁷ Cf. West (2006: 20).

¹³³⁸ Accounted for in Chapter 7.3.

relationship between choreography and contextual background research, I also had to question my understanding of movement and dance as artistic means.

From what position are we dancing? Questioning our understanding of dancing

Thanks to my combined background – from conventional dance training, subsequent studies of somatic practices, dance improvisation and instant composition,¹³³⁹ supported by dance anthropology and dance history and theoretical perspectives from performance studies¹³⁴⁰ – I had an awareness of the multiple ways in which we may address the body. From my perspective, this meant that improvisational-based movement explorations could be understood and approached from a range of preferences and/or interests. For example, the movements might be motivated from an interest in graphical shapes, emotional sentiments, cognitive reasoning (systematic studies) or cognitive associations (eclectic juxtapositions), rhythmical patterns (such as playing with altered and syncopated phrasing), theatrical situations (action driven scores), kinetically articulations (sensory based explorations), and so forth. This is for me about craftsmanship. In knowing about this available range of co-existing interests and the different possibilities they offer, this provides a richer pallet to choose from when engaging in movement exploration. What interests me to emphasise while improvising would for me depend on the actual artistic project and the assigned task for the devised movement exploration.

Even as I was choreographically developing *A Rehearsal for Mortals*, it became clear to me that I had taken for granted this craftsmanship and my understanding of insight and skills on movement development and improvisation. I realized this first after seeing how completely different the three performers approached their movement exploration. My assumptions were confirmed through our group discussions and exchanges about the experiences from exploring the movement tasks that I had proposed. In a simplified overview this meant, for example, the following: as one performer would stay close to the given kinetic task and work strictly with a sensorial interpretation, another would choose to approach the

1339 I am foremost referring to the tutelage of dance artists such as Julyen Hamilton, Simone Forti, Lisa Nelson, Steve Paxton, Deborah Hay, David Zambrano, as well as Katie Duck, Nina Martin, Frances Becker, Wendell Beavers, Kirstie Simpson, and Mark Tompkins. I would also like to mention the insights passed on to me from the Odin Theatre by their actors Julia Varley, Roberta Carreri, and the late Torgeir Wethal, and from the theatre of Jerzy Grotowski by the late Zygmunt Molik.

1340 From NTNU in Trondheim and NYU in New York. Cf. Chapter 1.2.

same tasks from an emotional angle – intermixed with associative leaps, while the third would make use of a more multiple approach. This meant that the articulations conveyed through their improvisations were built on different grounds. In the process of making the compositional choices and recreating and reconnecting the selected movements fragments, their different strategies mattered less to me choreographically as I finalized the first public version of our work in March 2005. The more fundamental consequences of these differences first began to surface as we restaged the work in October 2005, when we revived the set movement structures and the performers furthered their interpretative moulding of the material as individual performers. Then a shift in emphasis took place, which altered the choreographic expression. I now experienced the ways in which our differences in interest and understanding of movement development come to influence the choreographic expression of the movements we had developed and set six months earlier, simply as the performers' individual understanding, interest and embodied skills made them approach the process of recapturing the movements differently. These differences had subtle implications for the movement quality expressed and, hence, on an unconscious level slightly shifted the choreographic emphasis in the performance as it was restaged and performed. This led to an expressive shift not intended from my side, unconsciously diverting the original reasons I had had for selecting the movements and making the choreographic composition. Besides distorting the temporal and spatial interrelationship between the three interwoven solos, which the performance was built up around, the shift made it choreographically less rich for me. This was with respect to its kinaesthetic articulation in terms of sensory nuances and dynamic subtlety, despite the fact that each performer felt more in control of their individual material than they had been at our first public showing in March. At the time, I could not understand what was going on: it seemed as if the piece was falling apart, but I could not see what caused this outcome. Neither did the three performers, but we all experienced the consequences of it, particularly in relation to the timing in the choreography. Together we discussed what could cause this effect. They all insisted that they were staying true to their original material as it was performed in March. But what that meant for each of them was obviously not the same. One of the performers got the group's attention first as the execution was much slower than the two others when we compared it to their interrelationship on the video documentation from the first public showing. This also contributed to shifting the original spatial relation set between them. The difference related to how this performer had recaptured the movements. It

turned out that the performer had also consulted the edited video of the original improvised raw material, from which the set choreography derived. The intent behind this was to better capture the motivation behind the moves. This strategy had increased the choreographic details in the movements, but at the expense of a slower speed and partly erasing the choreographic reworking and alterations made on this material – changes that had taken place in-between the time of the original improvisation and our first public showing. In contrast, one of the other performers had simply concentrated on recapturing what was documented on the video from the previous and first performed version in March. The third performer had done likewise, but instead of meticulously copying and probing into this version, used it as a point of departure for a further investigative and interpretive moulding of the material. This strategy had rather increased the speed of the execution. Together we resolved the issues related to their spatial and temporal interrelationship, thanks to our mutual trust in each other and shared investigative interest in the project, though the underlying expressive shift was not resolved, as the reasons seemed less tangible to address at the time and we were heading towards the opening. Nevertheless, the unravelling furthered our shared reflections on moving and performing in the project. Even though the discovery caused me some practical distress as a choreographer at the time, it intrigued me greatly as a researcher, as the findings offered me a strong impetus to critically reflect upon the process I had conducted. This made me both re-examine and question my intentional precision and role as a choreographer in leading the process of developing movements and fitting them together compositionally.¹³⁴¹

However, I understood only much later that the differences in how to recapture set choreographic movement material among the performers were, in fact, reflecting their individual approaches to moving. I experienced this as a physical reality when I had to replace one of the performers on a later occasion and then had to study in detail the choreography from one of the performers' point of view. In the process of learning this part, I returned to the various video documentation of the choreography, including the video based on my original edited selection of movement material from the long process of explorative improvisations with the performers. In comparing these, I saw the gap between

1341 This assessment included the cost of multitasking in a choreographic production, which during this restaging meant that the performers worked at periods by themselves to recapture their movements from the video documentation, while I solved challenges related to the video projection framing the performance situation.

my initial selection of this material and the performer's actual development of it over time. My initial interest in the selected movement material had been conditional on a continuous kinaesthetically and sensory investigation in the performers as they executed these movements. However, I realized in retrospect that this sensory focus on the movement material that I was searching for would easily fade away when these concerns had not played a pivotal role in the performer's initial motivation, while improvising the tasks I had assigned. As these tasks were based on insights about somatics and the physical mechanics or functioning of the body, their focus differed from what is normally considered as dance, like an expressive means and "technique." In cases where the performer did not have a strong interest, experience, or understanding of such a somatic focus, the movement material created had a tendency to gradually and slightly shift its appearance. Its articulation and execution would lose some of the crisp and sensory freshness, the kinaesthetic quirkiness and the dynamics it had at our first public showing. Instead, the selected choreographic material seemed to me to be locked in the performer's emotional exploration and interpretation of it, rather than being left to an open-ended sensory-based kinaesthetically exploration of the movements.¹³⁴² I thought this latter option would have allowed for a more transparent and open reading for the audience, as well as produced a richer and more finely tuned bodily dynamics. At first I thought the subtle choreographic shifts I had observed were mainly the unwanted side effects of deciding upon a set choreographic structure and rehearsing the movement paths we had developed; but through our later dialogues as well as by restaging the choreographed performance, I understood better the reasons for the unexpected shifts and changes described above.

Through studying this transformation, I became aware how this kind of expressive shifts, perhaps more than anything else, can be a symptom of more underlying systemic challenges. From this perspective, I also gained valuable insights into the complexity embedded in a choreographic work process. For example, in this case, the shift revealed to me how I had underestimated the forceful, lasting impact of professional dance training, which shapes dancers, not only physically, but also tacitly as it embodies an understanding of our bodily means. I had simply ignored this heritage that we shared: a conventional training that had been based on classical, jazz and modern ballet techniques, based on a visual

¹³⁴² Cf. Selver's comment on the importance of perceiving the difference between a sensory experience and emotions (Selver 1995: 18-19).

aesthetics,¹³⁴³ but paired with an emphasis on emotional expressiveness. This emphasis would often be combined with a stress on “authenticity” for those with an interest in contemporary dance. Despite the best intentions, this conventional training – as I had experienced it – did not provide sufficient knowledge or skills to educate a co-creative performing artist to probe into movement developments from a kinaesthetic point of interest. On the contrary, my hypothesis is that it more often than not makes the dancer into a colonized object with trained body reflexes, rather than nurturing a self-reflexive and emancipated individual body ready to make his or her sensory moves. In this case, the Norwegian dancers and I shared a critical stance towards this tradition of our past, but I had underestimated the differences held in accumulated and embodied insights. I had, after all, come to this training with a background in social sciences that emphasised analytical skills and reflexive thinking. Moreover, after graduating from this dance tradition I had spent the subsequent years deliberately and systematically retraining my body in order to counter this backlog I felt had been imposed on me, largely through investigating martial arts and somatic practices¹³⁴⁴ to the extent that I had taken this insight for granted, which it is not,¹³⁴⁵ but is also a result of accumulated practices and experiences.

I will stress that these observations and reflections are not a criticism of the actual dancers who took part in this process. On the contrary, without them, I could not have made this project or these reflections. Their support of my research project was unflinching and it is thanks to them and the experiences I gained through our collaborations that I could clarify my choreographic interests and concerns in this project: my choreosomatic strategy for docudancing grieving. This clarification enabled me to choreographically develop our embodied construction of the socio-political griefscape. Compositionally, it was based on a deconstructive process of identifying specific movement tasks, which the performers could experientially explore through their bodies while performing. However, I understood from these experiences that in addition to providing a contextual understanding, as I had emphasized while working with the performers on *A Rehearsal for Mortals*, this strategy also required that I developed and fostered a shared understanding of the bodily approach to performing, an approach that

1343 See Fabius (2009: 331-343).

1344 Including Ashtanga yoga (since 1990), Aikido (1990-2000), Body-Mind Centering (1992-95), Feldenkrais (1993-2000), Qi Gong (since 1999), and Jacoby-Gindler-based work/Sensory Awareness (since 2004).

1345 Cf. my discussion towards the end of Chapter 3.2.

relied on a kinaesthetically attentiveness to the sensory experiences of actually executing the movement tasks constituting the choreographic composition. In this approach the performers, rather than “performing,” could simply share their movement explorations with the audience as witnesses.

To provide the ground for such ongoing research, while performing, facilitates probing into the medium of moving itself, or what Hal Foster would describe as working in “a diachronic engagement with disciplinary forms.”¹³⁴⁶ This insight shaped my approach as I made the final part of the trilogy *Life & Death, An Unfinished Story*.

On a practical level, this meant that I became crucially aware of the importance of questioning what we were focusing on while doing our movement explorations. In this respect I came closer to Halprin’s view of dancing: “I prefer to have people told what to do but not how to do it.”¹³⁴⁷ This meant that I concentrated on becoming more precise in directing the kinaesthetic focus in the choreographic process. I therefore spent my energy on defining and redefining the underlying principle involved in the movement tasks we were exploring, rather than stressing how the execution should look visually, while questioning the position we were dancing from.

Discussing the choice of a task-oriented choreographic strategy

In addition to opening up to issues that touch upon questions relating to agency and body politics in general, the experiences gained from making *A Rehearsal for Mortals* made me explicitly aware of the importance of not taking a common understanding of moving and the body in a choreographic process for granted. Rather than focusing on the development of creative and “interesting” material, I became, instead, very specific with regard to the kinetic focus of the open-ended tasks given, which therefore resulted in the much more task-oriented choreographic process and choreography in *An Unfinished Story*.¹³⁴⁸ From a theatrical perspective, this approach might seem rather strict and conceptual, in spite of not leaning on the needs of conventional dance practice for an exact replication of fixed movements and temporal timing according to the metre of counts. On the other hand, the choreographic approach was primarily rooted in a skilful interest to identify and deconstruct the bodily mechanics and core issues at stake

¹³⁴⁶ Foster (1996: 199).

¹³⁴⁷ Halprin (1995: 249) – in an interview with Schechner, see also Chapter 3.1.

¹³⁴⁸ Cf. Chapter 7.3

in specific movement tasks. This approach relied on a sensory attentiveness to changing breathing patterns, a sense of bodily volume and the pull of gravity experienced through the body in the execution of the tasks.¹³⁴⁹

From this perspective, I was asking the performers to engage in the movement material with an actuality. As one of the performers spontaneously expressed it while reflecting upon the choreography: “You cannot dance this, you just have to do it!”¹³⁵⁰ The exclamation made me very happy, because it reflected an understanding of the need to approach the movements from another state of mind than the one the performer knew from before (coming from a modern/contemporary dance background). This ‘actuality’ is similar to the way children engage in play. I build this claim on Jon-Roar Bjørkvold’s musicological studies of the phenomenon of play in which he shows how children play for real.¹³⁵¹ He stresses that this does not mean that children are unaware of the fact that they are “only” playing, rather on the contrary, but they do it “as if” it was real.

For me Bjørkvold’s findings underscore and resonate with the way Schechner looks at “the workshop-rehearsal process” in the performing arts, a viewpoint Schechner comes to when he connects Victor Turner’s anthropological concepts of subjunctivity/liminality to theatre with Konstantin Stanislavsky’s concept of the “magic if” in theatre:¹³⁵² “What would I do if certain circumstances were true?”¹³⁵³ I will argue that in a kinaesthetically driven choreography this explorative mood can also continue as an operational approach while performing the choreographed work.¹³⁵⁴ Despite the fact that the dance performance might visually appear as a “more or less invariable presentation of what’s been found, kept and organized;” it does not have to turn the inverse of the work done in the workshop-rehearsal, as Schechner seems to claim is the case for theatre.¹³⁵⁵ The reason for this is simply that if the focus is on a sensory exploration while doing

1349 Cf. Chapter 7.3 as well as Chapter 3.2 as the approach drew especially on KA® and Jacoby-Gindler-based work/Sensory Awareness.

1350 Quote from fieldnotes, April 2006.

1351 Bjørkvold (1992).

1352 Schechner (1985: 102-103).

1353 Stanislavski (1961: 33). *Creating a Role*. NYC: Theatre Arts Books. Here, as quoted by Schechner (1985: 102).

1354 Schechner describes how the performance work in Euro-American theater transforms from being a playful “as if” exploration of possibilities in the rehearsal-workshop to an “is” presentation of “what we have got” in the performance. I recognize this pattern, but believe that for choreography constituted on a sensory awareness this does not necessarily have to apply. This knowledge comes out of years with various body practices, such as Jacoby-Gindler-based work/sensory awareness, martial arts, and yoga.

1355 Schechner (1985: 103-104).

the movement tasks, this experience is never ‘done,’ but always experienced in its becoming. The performer can always turn to the choreographed performance in an explorative mood, as the performance is constructed to enable the performers to make new experiences from tuning into the sensory micro level of the body and its shifts by the help of an inquisitive “as if.”

However, such an approach to performing asks for a fundamental different understanding of the art of moving than the one relying predominantly on ocular aesthetics alone. It draws on a knowledge of somatics, body mechanics (anatomy and physiology), and a finely tuned ability to be attentive to the sensory experiences played out in one’s body.¹³⁵⁶ This is a strategy to moving that redefines the role of the “dancer: “it shifts the primary focus from the execution of visual aesthetic and or emotional intensity¹³⁵⁷ to that of embodying a kinaesthetic focus in the interpretation of choreographic compositions. This is a difference also stressed by Fabius.¹³⁵⁸ To approach the act of moving with this kind of sensory awareness calls for a sensuous playfulness that pays close attention to the initial starting point and intent of the movements on the micro level in the body.¹³⁵⁹ Hence, for a performer this implies a sensory alertness in actuality. Instead of a rut repetition of something already found and decided, the performer approaches the movement tasks each time in a set choreographic structure as a new opportunity to make embodied explorations and interactions. This focus on the actuality in the “doing” corresponds to how our bodily being on a micro level is never constant and the same, but always in a processual flux.¹³⁶⁰ In response to this insight emerged what I now call a choreosomatic strategy to moving, which fused choreographic and somatic knowledge as I approached the traumatic concerns embedded in this project.

1356 Cf. the somatic insights that I discussed in Chapter 3.2 and applied, for example, in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.3.

1357 Features of conventional dance practice, discussed, among others, by Halprin (1995) and Marques (2007: 151).

1358 Fabius (2009: 331). See also Chapter 3.1.

1359 This perspective closely resonates with the body practices deriving from the Jacoby-Gindler work, such as Sensory Awareness and KA®, as well as BMC™. Cf. Chapter 3.2. From a performance studies perspective, Lepecki (2000: 334-366) has discussed what he calls the microscopic perspective in contemporary dance.

1360 Cf. Chapter 6 and the physiological states of the dying body.

The reasons for discussing “the pain of getting involved” and the understanding of dancing

I dwell on these intra-choreographic processes related to the pain of getting involved and the craft-based issues of dancing and performing, because they are implicitly interconnected with my artistic enquiry to explore a contextually based approach to choreography in this project. In this process, reflexivity became strikingly important. By this, I refer to my awareness as a choreographer-researcher of the analytic focus on my relationship to the enquiry. In this respect, the reflexivity provided a methodological tool to question both my approach to the socio-political context and the impact embedded in it, as well as to the artistic practice of dance and choreography, thereby, to question how I developed the artistic research process and embodied its outcome, while I reflected on the skills and experiences that I utilized in the process, including the familiarity with feeling lost when encountering new grounds. Out of this process of docudancing grieving also emerged, on a micro level,¹³⁶¹ the concept of a choreosomatic strategy to movement development and dancing. On a macro level, I realized through this process how our understanding of dance and choreography embodies and intertwines with socio-political issues related to agency and body politics in our field. I will base this experience next through drawing on interviews that I had had with the performers. The interviews were carried out at the end of our stay in Bosnia and Serbia in 2006. Then, I asked the performers for a final assessment linked to the process. This also included an individual in-depth interview with each performer, which was conducted in conjunction with our performance in Belgrade in June 2006. The advantage of the Norwegian performers was that they had participated in developing both the last parts of the trilogy, and at this point, they could therefore compare these two processes. This explains why I also largely draw on this final interview and mainly refer to the Norwegian performers' viewpoints in the following discussion. Thanks to these interviews, I gained a more composite overview of the artistic research process and my choreographic approach to docudancing grieving. It is therefore through a braid-work of quotations from these interviews that I will reflect upon some of the challenges that I encountered while making the last part of the performance trilogy.

1361 Cf. Chapter 1.3 on micro and macro levels.

Facing unfulfilled expectations but in an enriching process

In brief, the performers praised the participatory and fieldwork-based approach to create choreography, which had experientially presented them with unknown realities, and engaged them, radically different than all the previous processes in which they had been involved. This was, above all, the case with the latter production, which they paradoxically had also enjoyed the least with regard to its studio process and choreographic outcome, mainly due to the feeling that their personal experiences from encountering the griefscape in Bosnia had not been fully utilised and integrated in the artistic. This was a frustration and concern voiced by some of them already early on in the process, while we were working in Belgrade in December 2005. Here, one of the performers had accurately described how the confrontation with the many testimonies and pieces of evidence of the traumatic griefscape had also brought up unresolved personal histories which demanded attention. As the performer expressed it at the time:

It is as if some of my own memories are ripped up within me....[long pause] making this a very personal journey, this stay, this project a very personal journey for each of us.¹³⁶²

With hindsight, for me the performer exemplifies here what Herman points to when she states: “Trauma is contagious.”¹³⁶³ These experiences from encountering the context of the Bosnian War certainly created a strongly felt need to integrate the personal stories into the performance project for some of the performers. At the time, I acknowledged and treated with great respect these transferential / countertransferential reactions,¹³⁶⁴ which are well known from individual therapy and the therapy room.¹³⁶⁵ However, the reactions also con-

¹³⁶² Excerpt from log transcript, 14 December 2005, Belgrade.

¹³⁶³ Herman (1997: 147). For example, see also Christianson (342-346) and from an anthropological viewpoint, John Borneman (2009: 119-134).

¹³⁶⁴ Transference refers here to the action of redirecting to a substitute, which in a therapeutic setting would be the therapist, emotions that originate, unconsciously, from earlier experiences. Countertransference relates, hence in psychoanalysis, to the emotional reaction of the therapist to the client's statements or contributions, that is, the therapist's emotional entanglement with his or her client. See, for example, Ogden (2006: 176 - 182).

¹³⁶⁵ See for example Ogden (2006: 176 - 182) and Herman (1992: 140-7). As Herman stresses: “Just as no survivor can recover alone, no therapist can work with trauma alone” (1992: 141). Though I was not involved in individual therapeutic work with the performers, the choreographic process touched upon these issues. This made the support of my artistic advisors and supervisors important, and in particular, my discussions with Rimestad, who also was a body practitioner of Jacoby-Gindler-based work, in combination with my individual sessions in Jacoby-Gindler-based work with Torgersbråthen in Oslo.

firmed my decision to approach the choreographic process from another angle: to primarily focus on the neurological system in the body and the psychobiological effects of trauma, rather than the performers' personal experiences as the core sources for developing the choreographic material.¹³⁶⁶ This was done, mainly, to provide us with a critical distance, as discussed in the first part here. Nevertheless, since a person is always a complex whole, the bodily exploration also resulted in transferential and countertransferential experiences that the performers and I, through our work, each had to solve. In retrospect, I can see that I underestimated the strains of these experiences. My choreographic strategy hence caused frustrations for some of the performers, which was also expressed in the last interviews:

I have not felt the connection between my experiences here, what we experienced here last summer, and the content of what we are doing in the piece....[*pause*] it has been frustrating that I have not felt this, and it creates a distance between me and what I do in the space.¹³⁶⁷

This frustration can seem to indicate that my aesth|ethical attempt to create a critical distance in this project was too thorough. However, while leading the process I did not abandon my concern for the needs of the performers involved, even though the choreographic solution became different from what some of them had envisioned. The tools I offered them to bridge the gap mentioned above with, that is, to deal with the experiences that were not directly utilized in the performance, are simultaneously what allowed these open-hearted interviews to take place, since, throughout the process, I encouraged and facilitated an open and a dialogic way of communicating. Here, the goal was not necessarily to agree upon everything, but primarily to hear each other out, and rethink our individual positions. Therefore, the frustrations and returning concerns that some of the performers experienced and voiced during the rehearsal periods also provided an important impetus for fruitful clarifications in the process, which impacted the choreographic result. As they challenged me to rethink the choices I had made, they thereby propelled me to refine the concept and my articulation of intent and focus in the choreographic work and its tasks. This process made the focus in the movement work become much more precise, choreographically speaking, than in the previous work. Likewise, it has to be added that despite

1366 Cf. Chapter 7.2 - 7.3.

1367 Transcript from video interviews recorded on 14 June 2006 in Belgrade.

disappointments, frustrations and a sense of disconnection felt at times by some of them, they remained highly committed to pursuing the issues at stake in the performance project, as expressed here:

I have tried to think that the connection is there on one or another level, nevertheless.¹³⁶⁸

This effort of keeping an open door to the indefinite made all the difference for the outcome. Moreover, while reflecting upon the choreographic outcome and the sense of disappointment towards it and the rehearsal process, the performer comes to the following:

This is perhaps something I feel strongly because the previous production was so extremely the opposite; there I told stories the whole way, I had information and reasons from A to Z. There I really experienced that it was my voice that I used as I dealt with the tasks you had given us. That experience was so powerful and good.¹³⁶⁹

This rewarding experience from *A Rehearsal for Mortals* in combinations with the mind-blowing fieldwork we did in July 2005 had raised expectations about the last part of the project. This made the stakes high and therefore difficult, if not impossible, to fulfil. Anyway, when the studio work did not live up to this anticipation, but rather opened up to something other than expected, this naturally created a disappointment. In reflecting on this process, I also wonder whether the choreographic tasks we worked with in *An Unfinished Story* can have created subtle psychobiological reactions in themselves. As we explored traumatic reaction patterns that focused on bodily states that are not pleasant to inhabit, such as doing off-balance movements with one's eyes closed, moving with high bodily tension under extremely constricting limits, or interrupting movement flows with sharp and abrupt disruptions, these are all unsettling and destabilizing movement patterns to investigate and re-experience. The combination of being in a state of intense alertness and dependent on the others' actions, particularly in the first part of this performance, made each performer less of a single individual than a nameless member of a group, a communal griefscape, whereas in *A Rehearsal for Mortals*, though dealing with death and dying, the body was allowed, self-indulgently, to take over and playfully run the choreographic unfold-

¹³⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁶⁹ Ibid.

ing in three interwoven, but largely independent soli. This meant two completely different situations for the performers to inhabit sensorially while performing.

On the other hand, despite these challenging conditions that the performers worked under, I experienced that their respect, commitment, and understanding related to the socio-political context of grieving in Bosnia and Serbia, just grew stronger over the period of the project. As one of the performers conveyed it, while describing the sensation of performing at the première in the large and partly ruined Vijećnica in Sarajevo:

It became very important for me to stay true to the tasks.[*pause*] because what we were in was so big, had so many layers, so many stories that it made me feel rather small and not so important, just a little person in midst of all these stories.¹³⁷⁰

The performer describes here how the enormity and scale, and also the qualitative aspect of complexity and multiplicity involved in the griefscape we addressed became daunting. In this situation, it seems as if the tasks also fulfilled a role for the performer as a tool or strategy for coping with this overwhelming scenario. The sense of feeling overwhelmed when performing in Vijećnica was an experience shared among the other performers. This led similarly to a critical introspection of their place in this scenario, as this performer expressed it:

I wondered if I had anything to say, if I had the right so say something there, because I had not experienced the war, but, I had experienced meetings with people, places and situations caused by the war, and it is obvious that this has done something with me and my body in that space [*referring to the socio-political context*] – so it is obvious that this has a value in itself as I am carrying with me these experiences I have had in this space [into the performance situation].¹³⁷¹

This introspection discloses how the performer's role was no longer considered as something that could be taken for granted, but had to be defined contextually. One of the other performers came to similar conclusions after having overcome the shock of performing in the large and impressive, but (physically speaking) cold and dark ruin of a building, solidly built from stones and bricks:

1370 Ibid.

1371 Ibid.

I felt so temporarily, (...) perishable compared to the building. (...). But as the hall was so dead, cold, I felt I made a difference or large contrast just by being there as a human being.¹³⁷²

Their experiences of performing in Vijećnica resonated with what I came to realize while preparing for the project. After years of exposures to the situation in the region,¹³⁷³ this had produced a mute throbbing within, echoing the Italian-Jewish author and survivor of Auschwitz Primo Levi's challenge to us in *If this is a man?*.¹³⁷⁴ Who am I as a human being here? What does it imply to stand upright in such situations?

In channelling this upset through a sensorial probing into the basic neurological reaction patterns in the body, I believed that I had identified a structural rigour that both could contain our unsettling fieldwork experiences and also respectfully address the context of grieving at a critical distance. For some of the performers, however, this was not the case. The approach felt alienating to them, as if it reinforced an upset rather than helping them to channel their experiences.¹³⁷⁵ Although this unforeseen effect of the approach complicated their work process on a basic human or existential level, and left earlier expectations about the project unfulfilled, it nevertheless had something to offer them as well, as this performer poignantly describes:

I also experience that I have learned a lot now – both in relation to the places we have been and seen.... By seeing another reality, but also in relation to the work, though there have been things that have been difficult, I still have learned a lot ... about our art medium [...] I strongly feel that this has had an immense impact on the way I relate to movements and physicality, the whole discipline [of dancing], and that is very nice. It is rare that I have it like that when working. Also, because the theme our work evolves around is in many ways of a different character, it does something with how we relate to the physical [work]. Which you have talked a lot about and that for me is incredible exciting and very instructive.¹³⁷⁶

So, despite the distress, the outcome of participating in this composite process was also experienced as being incredibly rewarding artistically. This feedback

1372 Ibid.

1373 See Chapter 7.2

1374 Levi 1987.

1375 Cf. Chapter 7.3 and my discussion with Rimestad on these issues in December 2005.

1376 Transcript from video interviews recorded on 14 June 2006 in Belgrade.

was only one out of several that confirmed that the process had succeeded in ensuring that the performers left the project with more insight than when they entered, despite some unfulfilled expectations and all the hardships endured.

At the time, I was puzzled by the fact that the performers who had participated both in part two and three of the trilogy had found the latter more difficult to relate to artistically. Here, I had deliberately struggled to provide the performers with a twofold opportunity: through combining extensive fieldwork exposure with a thorough and specific probing into the fundamentals of moving, which on a micro level challenged the craftsmanship of the performers, as movers, too.¹³⁷⁷ For me this strategy created a much more complex and finely crafted artistic enquiry.¹³⁷⁸

In hindsight, however, I acknowledge that I underestimated the fact that few of them had from their arts educational background the methodological skills or practical training to support such a movement exploration and its process, which will often arouse automatized or habitual movement patterns, and can therefore be experienced as unsettling.¹³⁷⁹ For some of them the dual situation of not-knowing and moving on unfamiliar ground probably made the choreographic tasks in *An Unfinished Story* appear as dead ends rather than as intriguing interstices to explore, despite their expressed interest in exploring blind spots, both as human beings and as performing artists/dancers. Yet it is important to keep in mind that negotiating blind spots takes time and puts both parties negotiating them into uncharted territory. As such enquiries require intuition and haphazard attempts to gradually shed light on them, this suggests to me that it was not the background of the performers alone that impacted the situation I have described, but also the temporal factor involved.

After all, the performers had had less than a year from the start of the production to the premiere to digest the immensity of the communal grieving we faced, while I had spent eleven years to digest my first direct encounter with the war and had wrestled over a period of six years to figure out how to specifically approach it. This temporal difference made us unsynchronized, especially when one compared it with the process of making *A Rehearsal for Mortals*. This dif-

1377 Cf. Chapter 7.3.

1378 In comparison, the process to create *A Rehearsal for Mortals* had combined a more confined and controllable fieldwork with a greater experimental freedom to explore their own bodies and autobiographical histories related to death and dying.

1379 A phenomenon known from body practices, see, for example, Hartley (2004: 40), Hackney (1998: 13-14), Brooks and Selver (2007), and Todd (1937: 293-4).

ference was also manifested in the fact that I arrived at the basic compositional structure of the choreography shortly after commencing the studio work with the performers, at a time when they were far from ready to start probing into details but still struggled with the shock of facing the legacy of the Bosnian War. This temporal disjunction may also have made it more difficult for them to relate to and recognize the potential impact of my movement approach that they were actually exploring in the workshop-rehearsal at the time. As pinpointed by Bolt, however, such lack of recognition is a familiar phenomenon that occurs in artistic research processes:

The problem for the creative arts researcher is recognizing and mapping the transformations that have occurred. Sometimes the transformations may seem to be so inchoate that it is impossible to recognize them, let alone map their effects. At other times the impact of the work of art may take time to "show itself," or else the researcher may be too much *in* the process and hence finds it impossible to assess just what has been done.¹³⁸⁰

I recognize the different scenarios that Bolt outlines here, which explain the problems of registering the transformations taking place within an artistic research process. Thanks to the trust and dialogical communication that had developed between the performers and me while making *A Rehearsal for Mortals*, we could at least discuss our differences as they surfaced while constructing *An Unfinished Story*, although I believe that the traumatic context we faced in this last process challenged us more fundamentally than we realized, and on an intrapersonal level. This impact might have demanded a more substantial redressing than we were up to at the time. From this perspective, the distress experienced by the performers here, evidences, in part, how the trauma at the centre of our enquiry seeped into the core of the artistic process itself and, in that sense, challenged us by the return of the real.

So this experience also demonstrates for me how the complexity involved in co-ordinating the polyphonic demands of a choreographic process intensifies when engaging ethnographically in socio-political contexts, especially when they are marked by traumatic events as here, stressing why Hal Foster calls for reflexivity and a critical distance when approaching such artistic enquiries.¹³⁸¹ This

1380 Bolt (2008: 13). Italics as in the original. Bolt stresses that the impact of the artwork is not restricted to its performance, but also includes its "effect of the work in the material, affective and discursive domains" (ibid.).

1381 Foster (1996: 203).

critical strategy, however, does not necessarily protect one against the pain of getting involved in socio-political realities, as this process demonstrates. Yet, when artistically constructing an understanding of these contexts, I will nevertheless argue that this critical strategy can enable an aesth|ethical move towards a co- or trans-subjectivity with the people implicated in them, including the audiences who will witness these embodied outcomes as choreographed performances, and in this respect, “choreographing empathy.”¹³⁸²

This concern is reflected in the two key concepts, *docudancing* and *griefscape*, which emerged as an outcome of this study and my contextually based choreographic enquiry on grieving. Next, I will clarify my understanding of this outcome.

8.2. Docudancing griefscape and the politics of choreographing

Docudancing: a documentary-based choreographic approach

With the two composite parts ‘docu’ and ‘dancing’ constituting the term docudancing, I want to underline how this approach to choreography builds on contextual enquiries and documentary material both in the making and the staging of a choreographed performance and, moreover, how it results from a dynamic and emergent engagement like ‘dancing.’ The term evolved from the name of a blog I was in charge of and used while making the last two parts of the performance trilogy.¹³⁸³ This blog and the process of blogging were a part of another but related research project on multimodal composition in which I participated as a researcher with my project and thereby involved the performers.¹³⁸⁴ In the blog we traced and documented the ephemeral processes that normally remain invisible or pass as unnoticed in a choreographic process, both for the public and for us involved, hence, docudancing. However, through making the process tangible for us as a group in the body of the blog and for an audience

1382 Cf. Susan L. Foster (2011).

1383 For more on the blog project, see Morrison and Thorsnes (2010: 255 - 294).

1384 The blog was a part of an experimental research and design project into the medley of dance, documentary and creative, research mediation, called MULTIMO – on multimodal composition. MULTIMO was initiated and run by Morrison, who is media researcher in interdisciplinary design and composition, in collaboration with Intermedia under the Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Oslo. I took part as a collaborating partner here with my artistic research project. On the MULTIMO project in general, see, <http://www.uv.uio.no/iped/english/research/projects/multimo/> (Accessed 17 July 2013)

of followers, this altered our self-reflexive awareness towards the work process itself. In this way, the process also became a visible part of what we were “making.” The blog therefore enhanced a critical perspective as it allowed us to see the process traced – as if viewed from outside. In combination with the ethical dilemmas integral to blogging in general,¹³⁸⁵ this critical and process-oriented focus contributed to highlighting the aesth|ethical issues embedded in my choreographic approach. From this experience, I discerned that the notion of *docudancing* could also be used to describe my choreographic approach as such in this artistic research project. After all, the blog was through its compositional use and multimodal interweaving of photographs, video, different text formats, shared links and sound files that referred back to ‘real’ situations existing inside and outside our fieldwork and studio explorations, representing more than its separate components. It was also a totality on its own, whose performance and content drew on all these different sources.¹³⁸⁶ The same can be said about the choreographic approach used to construct the performance trilogy *Life and Death*. It is also based on a multifaceted pool of components that contained contextual information and documentary material. The artistic outcome results from combining a selection of all these collected references to the social realities we explored, including our fieldwork experiences. Within the limits set by our production conditions, these inputs were processed through our bodily speculations and imaginary questioning: “What if?”, that is, questioning what it could have been like, if the defining context for our actions and movements had been different.¹³⁸⁷ In this process, I searched for ways in which the different pools of sources and information could relate to each other and form new compositional expressions that were relevant to this project. Here, the imaginary provided a tool to explore how one could connect the different elements that we had identified from our contextual background research. In this way, the imaginary complemented my contextually based approach not only as an explorative tool

1385 Spanning from issues related to ethics (the need to protect our informants and respect the privacy of everyone involved), technology (challenges of building and running the site), to aesthetics (concerns related to compositional rhetoric with the use of multimodal means for communicating). The process of blogging enhanced a self-reflexivity by making us aware of how we communicated with each other as well as with the public, both with regard to content and format, and on how to differentiate between what to share publicly, keep among us in the group, or let remain in our private log books.

1386 Morrison and Thorsnes (2010: 255 - 294).

1387 In social theory, for example, C. Castoriadis (1987) has discussed the importance of the social imaginary, and C. Wright Mills (1959) the sociological imagination. See also I. Mountian (2009). Here, I leave these strands aside and focus on the practical implication of the imaginary as a tool in an artistic process.

but also as a means for welding together what I had encountered and absorbed about a social context in order to construct a choreographic outcome.¹³⁸⁸ Therefore, the artistic potential of this composite process of *docudancing* also partly lies in how I address the gaps and absences left for imaginary speculation when examining the collected data from background research into a socio-political context. In essence, the artistic challenge is how to intertwine and merge such multiple sources of information about a socio-political reality with the help of an imaginary speculation into a choreographic body: a performance constructed and embodied in collaboration with the participating artists and performed to whoever would listen to their moves.

As an artistic strategy to the trauma of grieving, docudancing bears resemblance to Winfried G. Sebald's documentary-based fictional writing, which combines facts and photographs with fiction while addressing issues of memory and loss, such as in his book *Austerlitz*.¹³⁸⁹ Another artist who makes use of contextual research to address a haunting legacy of the past is Toni Morrison. In the interview entitled "Predicting the past,"¹³⁹⁰ she explains how her fictional writing builds on factual background research in order to situate and frame the questioning in her artistic enquiries when facing a traumatic past.¹³⁹¹ In the article "The Site of the Memory," she expands on what this strategy leaves open for her to do artistically: "My job becomes *how* to rip that veil over proceedings too terrible to relate."¹³⁹² This challenge resonates with my struggle to get at the traumatic cores of the contexts in this project and embody them as griefscapes.

The griefscape – a research-based construct

My understanding of the notion *griefscape* evolved from a visceral intuition into becoming a research-based construct and concept. This conceptual development

1388 Therefore, I conceptually feel an affinity with other art projects that are also based on documentary material and research into a specific socio-political context, such as the performances by Vera Mantero (1996) and Alan Platel (2010), and the more explicit performance-documentaries of Rimini Protokoll (2008), Ong Ken Seng (2001), Jérôme Bel (2004), and Lloyd Newson (2012). See *References: RI*. Likewise, I feel a kinship with the contextually based strategy behind the fictional writing of W. G. Sebald and T. Morrison on which I shortly will expand.

1389 Sebald (2001). See also Sebald (1996).

1390 Susanna Rustin (2008).

1391 Though her projects are based on insights and a critique of American history and the legacy of slavery, she states: "My books are always questions for me. What if? How does it feel to ...? Or what would it look like if you took racism out? (...) And so you ask a question, put it in a time when it would be theatrical to ask, and find the people who can articulate it for you and try to make them interesting. The rest of it is all structure, how to put it together" (Morrison as quoted by Rustin 2008).

1392 Morrison (1990: 302, the italics added)

stems from my experiences of conducting the background research and fieldwork while making the performance trilogy. In the reflective process of examining the numerous sources of information and experiences gathered about a specific context of grieving, I identified an intertwined field of concerns constituting what I call a griefscape. Despite designing and conducting this process, I could not foresee the multimodal and multidimensional mesh that this interwoven pool of information would reveal. In part, each context would, on its own terms, present me with scopes that were larger and more complex than what I fully could address as a choreographer-researcher in this project. As a research-based construct, the griefscape would, in this way, bring about insights that framed and directed the further course of both the research process and my artistic response, for example, as in the second part of the performance trilogy where I had originally set out to make a burlesque, black-comedy-inspired performance addressing our common ground in life: *memento mori* – remember we are all mortals and shall die. I had conceived it as a breathing space for myself between the two performances probing into, respectively, the private grieving and the communal grieving. The outcome would eventually become completely different, as Chapter 6 has demonstrated, primarily, out of respect for the material, the sources and informants I encountered while doing the research for what resulted in *A Rehearsal for Mortals*. This performance ended up as a persistent meditation on death and dying.¹³⁹³ If judged from the feedback I received from our audience, the performance became, without doubt, the most demanding and uncompromising of the three in the trilogy.¹³⁹⁴ This altered trajectory exemplifies how a choreographic approach based on a contextually-/ethnographically-based investigation could have direct consequences for the artistic process and its outcome.

Though viscerally perceived, a griefscape emerges for me as an aggregate of the knowledge gathered through an enquiry about a context of grieving. This aggregate materializes from an amalgamation of singular nodes of data that merge into interconnected clusters of information, which both frame and create the density of insights forming my understanding of the specific situation of grieving at stake, as a griefscape, exemplified in the figure below where I attempt to illustrate with some keywords how interconnected nodes of inputs, their sources and/or perspectives, come to create the aggregated mesh that

1393 Cf. Chapter 6.

1394 See, for example, Mats Klockjüng's (2007) review of the performance in the magazine *Fotnoten*.

constituted my understanding of the griefscape related to our mortality that led to the performance *A Rehearsal for Mortals*:

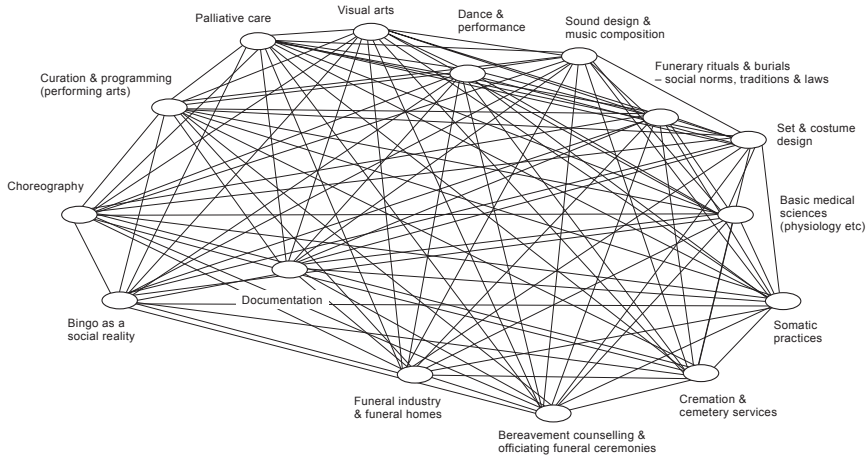


Figure 26. A systemic model of the griefscape behind *A Rehearsal for Mortals*

For me the intersecting lines between the different nodes in the model above create a graphic still-image of the interlaced structure of inputs and concerns that informed the making of *A Rehearsal for Mortals*. Each singular node here represents a socio-cultural context on its own, which may consist of several sub-contexts. Despite the static limitation of the model visually, I consider each of the components in this mesh, the singular nodes, as well as their connecting lines, as variables with a different qualitative and dynamic impact. Together, they form the intangible composite that constitutes my understanding of this context as a griefscape: a fleeting, three-dimensional and organic entity with a pliable and changeable structure built on a mosaic of inputs. With this simplification, indicating synaptic connections and cross-fertilisations, the figure illustrates for me a systemic model of the griefscape behind *A Rehearsal for Mortals*: displaying the layered disciplinary perspectives and objectives I engaged with in this project. In addition to pointing to my dual attempt, both to grasp this particular situation of grieving and to secure a critical approach or balance while doing so, the model is likewise an attempt to depict how I view the griefscape as an aggregated construct, that is, as a construct accumulated from a composite of field experiences and background research. In this way, the concept of the griefscape also reflects the underlying transdisciplinary and kaleidoscopic research optic that grounds this artistic research project, overall,

as outlined in Chapter 2. From an ethnographic perspective, the griefscape can thereby be seen as a “messy text”¹³⁹⁵ drawing on a plethora of sources, some even incommensurable. With this research-based construct, I sought to provide myself as a choreographer-researcher with a “thick description”¹³⁹⁶ of the actual context of grieving. Through combining dense layers of data, multiple approaches and perspectives with a thorough questioning, my understanding of the context developed as an aggregate. I therefore consider the enquiries constituting it as an intrinsic part of my choreographic process, because they shaped the project choreographically as well as discursively – as I constructed the performance trilogy and wrote this study.

In the course of this process with its fieldwork, through the multiple voices and aesth|ethical paradoxes I encountered, my understanding of the three griefscapes was refined and defined. These experiences also shaped their embodiment, as well as engaged and confronted us in this artistic research project with a large range of issues: spanning autoethnography and grieving, trauma and traumatization, pathology and the funeral industry, to Human Rights and political justice. In sum, these issues forwarded fundamental and existential questions related to body and identity, loss and grieving, memory and historical narrative. In this way, the project also connected the choreographic process to a large number of people from other fields and backgrounds, as described in Chapters 5-7. This situated the choreographic process within larger socio-political frameworks.

As this approach would destabilize the divide between the categories of research, art, and society, as well as the distinction between private and public, personal and professional, it had consequences for the way I was thinking about choreography and dance, including how to conduct the rehearsal processes. I strived to create challenges that could possibly empower everyone involved and enhance a self-reflexive social awareness in the project, both in relation to our context, process and artistic outcome. This effort drew on the legacy of critical pedagogy and emancipatory thinking of Paulo Freire, introduced to me in part by Boal,¹³⁹⁷ a thinking that informed my approach in this project, and explains why I view the accumulated experiences and impact of the artistic processes as

1395 Messy texts are composed of several and disparate sources of information. See, for example, George Marcus (1994: 563-74) the anthropologist that introduced the concept, as quoted by Heaton (2002: 2) here. As Denzin has pointed out, the concept is an “attempt to reflexively map multiple discourses that occur in a given social space,” and thereby represents a potent methodological approach (Denzin 1997: xvii).

1396 A term introduced by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973: 3-30).

1397 See Freire (1996 [1970]) and Boal (1992, 1995). On Boal, see also Chapter 1.2.

part of the artistic outcome. From this perspective, I consider all those who have attended the many work-in-progress-, conference- and seminar presentations that I have made over the years, as well as the readers of this study, as the audience of this project. In this way, and as introduced in my discussion of Davis' argument about "performative time" in Chapter 4.2,¹³⁹⁸ I want to stress that a choreographic approach – even in a more narrow sense such as "dance-making" – is an action that has a social impact beyond the duration of the actual staged performance itself. Through docudancing griefscapes, I therefore came to reconsider my notion of choreography.¹³⁹⁹

Embodying grieving: performing a co-subjectivity that crosses contextual divides

In probing into death and dying, loss and grieving, the process of docudancing grieving meant that I crossed different contexts, which brought up fundamental questions and aesth|ethical challenges related to the politics of our being, issues that engage me on multiple levels: artistically as a professional choreographer, scholarly as an artist-researcher, as well as personally as a human being. In docudancing grieving, I experienced that these issues and levels were intertwined and co-existed as a composite for me.

Taylor draws attention to a similar composite experience when from a performance studies perspective she reflects on the impact of the televised death and burial of Princess Diana in 1997.¹⁴⁰⁰ As the news coverage poured into her sitting-room in New York, she observed how this death set in motion an odd mirroring effect, both on a personal level, as well as on the streets outside, where other ghostly stories from the American continents, such as those of Marilyn Monroe/ Norma Jean and Evita Perón, resurfaced and were intermixed with the death of Diana. Together with other iconographic figures such as Mother Theresa, the image of Diana, encapsulating her destiny, were appropriated in Latino murals and their graffiti comments around Lower Manhattan. Whilst Taylor observed the broadcasted funeral from her apartment in New York, I was at Kensington Gate in London, and saw the slender Italian-shaped coffin pass by on an open

1398 See Davis (2010) on the notion of performative time, and Lepecki (2006) on the understanding of choreography as a critical practice.

1399 Despite differences in trajectories and concerns, several have voiced the need for such reconsideration, for example S. L. Foster (2010) and Lepecki (2006).

1400 Taylor (1999)

carriage.¹⁴⁰¹ Shortly afterwards, I experienced the hush of silence shared by more than 250,000 people crowded together in front of the wide screens in Hyde Park as her coffin was carried out of Westminster Abbey.¹⁴⁰² The performative effect was immense as the painful reality and the iconographic myth merged into one in the public funeral rite: Princess Diana proclaimed as “The Queen of Hearts,”¹⁴⁰³ while two little boys were forced to face the definite loss of their beloved mother. The sum of these two elements exceeds their nominal numbers, as the first will live on as young and beautiful forever while the other was already in the process of rotting away, and a mother’s bodily touch was irrevocably lost, exemplifying the core of what Joseph Roach as a performance studies scholar has called the “It-Effect,” which gives celebrities

two bodies, the body natural, which decays and dies, and the body cinematic, which does neither. But the immortal body of their image, even though it is preserved on celluloid, on digitalized files, or in the memory of the theatregoing public as an afterimage, always bears the nagging reminder of the former.¹⁴⁰⁴

I will argue that images linked to highly traumatic events may produce a similar iconographic effect, making the “two bodies” perhaps even more intrinsically linked to each other. The video footage of the young Bosniak men that the paramilitary group the Scorpions executed during the Bosnian War has left such an imprint on my memory.¹⁴⁰⁵ The footage arrests them in an eternal dying, screaming out loud about genocide and violations of fundamental human rights, while their “body natural” has since long turned to dust. The image of their immortalized bodies, on the other hand, “bears the nagging reminder” that it could have been my lover; it could have been my brother; it could have been my father; it could have been my nephew; it could have been me.... This empathetic identification is a phenomenon that I discussed in Chapter 4.1. As a phenomenon, it evokes and refers to what brought about Silverman’s concept of “heteropathic memory” to describe “identification-at-distance;”¹⁴⁰⁶ charged

1401 For a summary, see, for example, Dan Baiz’s (1997) report in the Washington Post on the event.

1402 According to Neil Sears (2009) in the Daily Mail, London.

1403 Earl Spencer, Diana’s brother, in his eulogy at Westminster Abbey. See Taylor (1999: 59).

1404 Roach (2007: 36).

1405 Discussed in the previous Chapter 7.3, see also Judah and Sunter (2005).

1406 Silverman (1996: 185). Discussed in Chapter 4.1 in conjunction with Hirsch’s reading of the famous photograph of the little Jewish boy hoisted out of his hiding in the Warsaw ghetto during the Second World War with his arms raised above his head. The photograph is depicted, for example, in Hirsch (1999: 2).

Hirsch to discuss in “Projected Memory” the impact photographs can have on personal and public imagination;¹⁴⁰⁷ and stirred Zelizer to question the efficacy of the *Holocaust memory through the camera’s eye*.¹⁴⁰⁸ In spite of their differences, all three of them discuss the potential for empathetic identification through seeing. When faced with such nagging reminders of a traumatic past the historian and cultural analyst Griselda Pollock asks us

Can there be an encounter through aesthetic means that changes the terms of the ethical encounter to enjoin a co-subjectivity that is at once differenced and joint so that, in being affected, something of the other is possessed by the viewer – not as repeating trauma, but as working through, as Freud conceived both transferential analysis and the work of mourning?¹⁴⁰⁹

In the same way as Pollock, I am interested in how through aesthetic means one can enhance a co-subjective, ethical encounter. In this project, I therefore tried to engage the performers involved in encounters with socio-political contexts as integral parts of the choreographic process; this was an attempt to make “something of the other” present, not only in the choreographic compositions themselves, but also in the performers’ performance of the griefscapes in question. This might be seen as an attempt to arrest what Lepecki describes as “an absent presence and an absent movement,”¹⁴¹⁰ but I will argue on the contrary that this containment in a choreographic form may rather contribute to freeing the griefscape from its ghostly grip. As discussed in Chapter 7.3 and the first part of this chapter, my choreographic approach and composition was a result of a strategy striving to ensure a critical balance. That is, avoiding an over- or under-identification, whilst still trying to touch the core issues at stake in these griefscapes.¹⁴¹¹ In my assumption here I am drawing on what Phelan suggests in *Unmarked*: “that by seeing the blind spot within the visible real we might see a way to redesign the representational real”;¹⁴¹² though keeping in mind that by

1407 Hirsch (1999). See Chapter 4.1.

1408 Zelizer (1998). See Chapter 4.1.

1409 Pollock (2008: 234).

1410 Lepecki (2004: 129).

1411 As Schneider stresses, I will emphasize that “[t]o touch is not to become coextensive, to fully become that which is touched or which touches, but it is to (partially) collapse the distance marking one thing as fully distinct from another thing” (Schneider 2011: 35).

1412 Phelan (1993: 3). I will refrain from unpacking the Lacanian theory she builds on here, but simply use her argument in order to point to subjective experiences that are often lost sight of in the visibly representable, but which still works within and among us as a subject.

“seeing it I am marked by it” as well,¹⁴¹³ as I experienced in this project after my fieldwork in Potočari 2004.¹⁴¹⁴

This experience materialized not only in photographic images but inscribed in me a kind of a holographic snapshot, which viscerally made the traumatic absences, the loss and grieving over those who were killed and disappeared in Srebrenica, perceptibly present. In bringing forward this abyss, the fieldwork revealed for me the ghostly matters that prevailed and formed this tangible griefscape, which physically was conjured of the tens of thousands of people gathered for the burial of the hundreds of green coffins. The ceremonial ritual gave the grieving shape and contained it. However, with all the intertwining public and private agendas involved, the ritual also displayed the complexity and the politics at stake in such commemorations. In this respect, the ceremony evoked the juxtaposition I had first observed in Hyde Park in 1997, where it seemed as if the iconographic death and the irrevocable loss converged; in defying being contained, trauma therefore seeped out into the fabric of our contemporary lives, affecting us all, crossing temporal divides as it still reaches me now as I am writing. As Pollock states, “the leakage of trauma cannot be contained by time.”¹⁴¹⁵ This phenomenon illuminates the complexities involved in taking on a traumatic socio-political context such as the Bosnian griefscape, and my discussion on the pain of getting involved here. As the Bosnian trauma seeped into our work process, it affected all of us. However, as we worked on reciting the bodily impact of this trauma into our constructed embodiment of it, as the performance *An Unfinished Story*, it not only marked us but also resited us.

The artistic outcome re-cited and re-sited through relocations

In examining my observations from performing *An Unfinished Story* in different settings, I realised how these experiences both re-cited and re-sited the outcome of our artistic process for me as a choreographer-researcher. In this section, I want specifically to discuss some of these discoveries related to the relocations of the performance, and the significant role that the writing of this study played for my comprehension of this impact. As Daniel W. Heaton emphasizes, ethnographic writing first “become[s] critical ethnographies when they are self-reflexive, evaluative, and take into account the researcher’s role in performing the writing

1413 Phelan (1993: 27).

1414 Cf. Chapter 7.2.

1415 Pollock (2008: 234).

of the ethnography.”¹⁴¹⁶ Like Heaton, I am here drawing on the ethnographic observations of John D. Dorst that the ethnographer fills:¹⁴¹⁷

the dual role of re-citer/re-siter, one who “tells over again” and thereby “relocates” the already inscribed citations by inserting them into a new context, in effect rewriting them.¹⁴¹⁸

For me this dual role means, as Heaton claims, “The post-ethnographer has two positions to fill.”¹⁴¹⁹ Even early on in the artistic research process, I was struck by the responsibility embedded in this double position as re-citer and re-siter, and the effect of re-contextualizing complex and traumatic grieving in this project. While trying to come to grips with the multiple and often divergent needs of the production, I felt at times overwhelmed by the cross-pressure and responsibility I experienced.¹⁴²⁰ Yet, in the midst of the artistic process it was merely a question of registering on the spot the issues at stake: in order to make swift decisions based on assumed implications they might have about the project. However, in writing this study in retrospect, I can reflect upon my experiences from exploring an ethnographically based approach to choreography. In re-citing and re-siting these experiences and the underlying perspectives grounding this process of docudancing grieving, I am, in fact, rewriting and hence extending the choreographic outcome, as this effort augments my notion of the creative potential of choreography: to frame, produce, and present composite situations or “realities” to an audience. Therefore, through writing this study, the project is given a fourth body, which supplements the live performances with their video documentations and the experiences living-on in the participants who were involved in the process of making the trilogy. Together this constitutes four different formats and temporal modes for performing a choreographic practice. In addition to (1) the actual process of making and presenting the live performances, these include (2) the video documentation of the performances, and (3) the excerpts of an accumulated practice shared in workshop situations and lecture-demonstrations,

1416 Heaton (2002: 4).

1417 Dorst (1989).

1418 Dorst (1989: 206).

1419 Heaton (2002: 4-5).

1420 In balancing the considerations and respect given to, respectively, the actual socio-political context of grieving; the need of the individual performer and artist participating; the reality consultants and their shared experiences; the effort of the audiences; the funders' conditions; and the requirements of the doctoral programme.

as well as (4) the written research papers and studies produced, like this one.¹⁴²¹ The last two enable me to share choreographic insights, considerations and experiences that otherwise would have been lost.

I became particularly aware of this potential when, as a choreographer-researcher, I began presenting papers on the project and writing this study. To exemplify this potential here, I will share two situations of re-siting, which, like those Dorst points to above, added new meanings or dimensions to the project for me.

The first example relates to what I observed when the performance *An Unfinished Story* was relocated geopolitically, which, among other issues, altered the significance of the Ezan – the traditional Muslim call to prayer – used in the performance.

The second example relates to what I noticed in the transferral of the live performances to video, which, in drawing on Dorst again, I consider as a “re-writing” that choreographically inscribed the performances into an uncharted future. In addition to making me aware of how different relocations might impact my perception of the performance, both examples have this in common: they also demonstrate how the artistic concerns of a choreographer can extend beyond a narrowly defined concept of choreography and dance. Moreover, the two examples relate to an impact that I mainly witnessed alone, due to my role as the choreographer-researcher in this project. Through this study, however, I can both re-cite and re-site my subjective observations here and thereby convey them into a shared intersubjective field of meaning-making. I will expand on the implications of this possibility for me as a choreographer-researcher at the end of this chapter, after having presented and discussed the two examples.

Making a difference through relocating the performance geopolitically

The experience of hearing the Ezan in *An Unfinished Story* differed considerably, depending on the socio-political cityscape in which we performed. The fact that the performance was presented in quick succession in four different cityscapes in 2006 gave me an opportunity to register these differences.¹⁴²² In Sarajevo the

1421 I refrain here from discussing the differences between these modes of a choreographic practice, though interesting, as it will go beyond the framework of this report.

1422 Their status and population differ: Sarajevo has approx. 420 000 inhabitants, Belgrade approx. 1,630 000, Oslo approx. 590 000, and Bijeljina approx. 100 000; the first three are capital cities, while the latter is not. The impacts of the Bosnian War on the four cities were radically different; Sarajevo and Bijeljina were ‘battlefields’ in the war, Belgrade and Oslo were not, though Belgrade was still

performance was scheduled to correspond with the daily calls from the local mosques surrounding the venue. In this way, I accommodated our need in the performance without the need for a recorded version of the Ezan. We simply could utilize the natural soundscape of the city itself, whereas in Bijeljina this was not the case. In spite of being historically a predominantly Muslim city,¹⁴²³ it was one of the first to become ethnically “cleansed” during the war. In this effort the unwanted reminders of Bijeljina’s historical past was erased, which meant that several historical monuments were demolished, including 16th century Ottoman mosques.¹⁴²⁴ Since 1992, the city has been a stronghold of Bosnian-Serb nationalist sentiments, and when we performed there in 2006 the city remained fiercely pro-Serbian and anti-Muslim.¹⁴²⁵ Though we performed for an invited audience consisting of young human rights’ activists from the local Helsinki Committee, it still felt daring and on the brink of being an irresponsible act to let the recorded Ezan fill the space of the school auditorium in which we performed. As I pushed the button setting off the recording of the Ezan – it felt as if I was committing a secular sacrilege, a deliberate offence and an act of civil disobedience against the ruling ideological order governing the city. I feared that I might put all of us at risk of a violent payback. I was particularly worried about the repercussion it could have for our young local audiences, in case some nationalistic-minded teachers, janitors, caretakers or others would accidentally pass by and witness it.¹⁴²⁶

In Belgrade, on the other hand, we performed in one of the most progressive venues in the centre of the old city in what used to be a Jewish congregation hall before the Second World War.¹⁴²⁷ The sound of Ezan fitted the liberal crowd’s outlook – if not their political views – in daring their fellow citizens’ conventions. In this way the performance unintentionally inscribed itself into the city’s

deeply affected on several other levels, Oslo mainly received a fair amount of refugees from Bosnia. (Belgrade later became the target of the NATO bombing during the Kosovo War in 1999).

1423 Malcolm (1996: 236).

1424 See, for example, Asim Zubcevic (2006) and Malcolm (1994: xxiv). According to Zubcevic, the most famous of the mosques demolished in Bijeljina was the Atik Mosque. It was built between 1520 and 1566 and was an important historical monument from the early period of the Ottoman Empire in the region (the period of the Ottoman Sultan Suleyman – the Magnificent). In 2006, the mosque was rebuilt thanks to international funding, but an approx. three meters’ high wooden fence due to security reasons surrounded its premises in the city centre. The sight reminded me of the photographs of the enclosed ghettos in Eastern European cities during the Nazi era, such as Warsaw and Łódź.

1425 See, for example, Koen De Feyert et al. (2006: 259-60) and Zubcevic (2006).

1426 In fact, the contrary happened afterwards as the cleaning-staff who were accidentally present while we performed came up to me and expressed a deep gratitude for our work. This might have been pure luck, but I trust that the local HC knew what they were doing.

1427 Rex – Cultural Centre in Jevrejska (The Jewish Street) is known as a laboratory for research of new fields of culture. See *References: R5*.

sub-cultural heritage: the pride of being a place for experimental art and political dissidents, and identified in its ability to push boundaries.

In Oslo the situation was completely different. To paraphrase the cultural theorist Edward Said, here, the Ezan became partly a marker of the conflict, and partly the exotic mist, enveloping and subjugating people from the areas of the former Ottoman Empire.¹⁴²⁸

To briefly compare my experiences of the Ezan in these different locations, I would say that while in Sarajevo the Ezan mainly confirmed a central part of the city's traditional identity; in Bijeljina it would primarily provoke the self-identity of the area's dominant ideological rule; whilst in Belgrade's liberal circles, this daring was well-received as a progressive move that asserted a shared kinship in a hostile environment. In Oslo, little of this political tension was experienced as a reality; the Ezan was perhaps firstly perceived as a beautiful and exotic lament providing an ambient backdrop that could evoke sentiments in the performance. Coincidentally, this effect contrasted the plethora of negative inputs associated with Islamic culture and the rise in xenophobic attitudes against Muslims in the aftermath of 9/11/2001. Out of this incidental paradox, I experienced the performance in Oslo coming across to me with a more layered complexity than what I had first dared to dream of, partly thanks to the Ezan.

To summarize briefly: as the placement of the Ezan in the performance remained the same, it was the radical differences in the geopolitical situations where the venues were located that made the reciting of the Ezan in the performance appear to have different meanings for me when resited. In playing into the local economies of politics and representation, the Ezan would likewise also resonate different qualities and ambiances for local audiences. For me as the choreographer-researcher and sole "audience" that witnessed all these different performances, the Ezan came simultaneously to carry all of these connotations. However, it is not until I write this study that my experience of the performative impact of relocating the performance can be shared as a reality. I mention the example of the Ezan, in part, also to point to another and more general challenge related to relocating the performance *An Unfinished Story*, namely, the dissimilar local needs for reminders to situate the contextual backdrop of the performance. In Sarajevo the recent history and legacy of the war could not be ignored; it was in the very materiality of the building we performed in, down to the holes

1428 Said (1995) on the Occidental conceptions of the Orient.

left in the damaged and unrepaired floor,¹⁴²⁹ caused by the missiles that hit the building at the outbreak of the war in 1992. In Bijeljina our young audiences told us about how they also faced the material consequences of the war on a daily basis: how xenophobic violence on the streets in combination with ideological and authoritarian social control exercised by teachers, school boards, and local authorities, affected all parts of their lives, not least their school days.¹⁴³⁰ Only a few months after we had performed in Bijeljina the local leader of their HC was assassinated at his home, because of his human rights involvement.¹⁴³¹ In neither of these places were any extra reminders of the war needed.



Figure 27. From the forest close to Potočari where we witnessed a newly uncovered mass grave in July 2005, cf. Chapter 7.2. The image was used as a backdrop for *An Unfinished Story* outside Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In Belgrade I only added as a backdrop a projected still image that showed a forest (photographed south of Srebrenica, close to Potočari in 2005). This was to

1429 Cf. the photographs from Vijećnica in Chapter 7.3

1430 Based on fieldnotes from meetings with the youth group in July 2004 and 2005. See also Hjort (2007).

1431 Dusko Kondor (1947-2007). See <http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/taxonomy/term/240> (Retrieved 6 July 2010). His daughter was also injured. She had taken part in our workshop in conjunction with the performance in Bijeljina.

stress that the trauma the performance centred on was not the after-effect of the NATO bombing of the city of Belgrade in 1999, despite its devastating effects,¹⁴³² but rather related to what had happened outside Belgrade, such as in the rural areas around Srebrenica in 1995. The absence of any humans present in the forest greenery hinted at the ghostly matters we addressed in the performance.

In Oslo (and hence in the video documentation), I added to this projected forest image a ghostly flash of authentic video excerpts from the Bosnian War at the beginning of the performance. They successively emerged out of this projected greenery as if this still image for a short instance had come alive and the forest had brought forward its ghostly matters from the past.¹⁴³³ This video montage introduced a soundscape that consisted of shuffling spades cutting into soil, the thump of earth hitting wood, combined with the bustle of people moving, shouting and wailing. The sound was based on a recording from the mass burial in Potočari Memorial Cemetery that I made in 2004.¹⁴³⁴ Just as the video images threatened to overtake the whole screen, like traumatic flashes haunting us, they froze into stills, hovering in the air before gradually fading away and allowing the intense beauty of the forest greenery reappear as the sole image on the projected backdrop. Since the Norwegian premiere took place more than fifteen years after the war had ended, numerous other televised catastrophes had added imagery to our public memory, which meant that the Bosnian War at large had disappeared into oblivion for most Norwegians by 2006. Therefore, when resiting the performance in Oslo I also wanted to recite the war footage from Bosnia in order to evoke this visual memory and thereby contextualize the ghostly backdrop of the project, because as Sontag evocatively reminds us: “Narratives can make us understand. Photographs do something else: they haunt us.”¹⁴³⁵ As Siegfried Kracauer¹⁴³⁶ and Barthes¹⁴³⁷ before her, Sontag pinpoints here the photographic image’s ability to haunt us. The efficacy of this observation can be explained more analytically as Eduardo Cadava does in his philosophical reading: “Although what the photograph photographs is no longer present or

1432 The impact of the bombing was still partly visible in the cityscape in 2006.

1433 The video montage was inspired by Act 5, scene 5, in *Macbeth* that refers to the predictions of the fall of Macbeth and his rule: “Fear not, till Birnham wood / Do come to Dunsinane: and now a wood / Comes toward Dunsinane. – Arm, arm, and out! –/ If this which he avouches does appear, / There is nor flying hence, nor tarrying here” (Shakespeare 1999: 222).

1434 Recorded by me. Cf. my description of this experience in Chapter 7.2.

1435 Sontag (2003: 80).

1436 Kracauer (2005 [1927]).

1437 Barthes (1981). See also Stefanie Harris (2001) and Eduardo Cadava (1992).

living, its having-been there now forms part of the referential structure of our relationship to the photograph.”¹⁴³⁸ In this way, as Sontag illuminates, the photographic images can “help construct – and revise – our sense of a more distant past,” and thereby contribute to “building our sense of the present and immediate past.”¹⁴³⁹ This potential made it pertinent for me to introduce our performance with images from the Bosnian War when showing it outside the Western Balkans. As Cadava and Sontag observe, the photographic images can create referential structures that operate cross-temporally for us. This explains why I have repeatedly referred to such images in this project on grieving. As the dual potential as (shared) references and iconographic containers,¹⁴⁴⁰ these images can trigger memory. Hence, they could contribute to contextually situating the traumatic events that were causing the wounds haunting the griefscapes I was embodying in this project. With the help of photography, I could establish the settings circumscribing my moves and movement exploration in this artistic research project on docudancing griefscapes.¹⁴⁴¹ This impact was fundamental, not only for the artistic outcome (the staging of the performances), but also in the choreographic process itself as an important source of information and insight; such as the medical imagery used in *A Rehearsal for Mortals* or the videos of the killings in Bosnia which I accessed while making *An Unfinished Story*. Moreover, photography came to play a crucial role in documenting and building a shared memory of the developmental processes in the project. Central here was the use of video as a means both for making fieldnotes and for capturing choreographic sketches. In fact, I have been drawing heavily on this pool of material in writing this study. Through revisiting and reflecting upon these processes, memories have resurfaced and made new sense to me, as exemplified with my experiences with the Ezan. In re-siting these experiences as citations from the artistic process in this study they give a body to what otherwise would have remained in oblivion, voiceless and unarticulated.

As Benjamin reminds us in his “Thesis on History,” the past ceases to exist, except for the fragments we seize at the present time.¹⁴⁴² This claim situates the

1438 Cadava (1992: 91).

1439 Sontag (2003: 76).

1440 Cf. Chapter 4.1

1441 To draw on my eight years as a dancing cantor in the Deaf Church in Oslo, I would say that the important role the photographic images played in this project, as markers for establishing the settings of our movements, likens that of establishing a shared “scene” in the syntax and meaning making when communicating in sign languages.

1442 Benjamin (1968: 255).

stakes involved in re-siting/re-citing lived experiences of the past, including those connected to my process docudancing. As I developed the project, I explored how to accommodate this challenge, not only with respect to how I addressed the traumatic contexts of the trilogy, but also documented the processes that led to the choreographed performances, such as in the aforementioned side-project on blogging.¹⁴⁴³ Through my exploration, I came to realize how the choreographic research project could also have a public impact when being re-sited/re-cited through other means of media than just the live presentations of the choreographed performances. For example, through this study or a performance lecture that combined the live element with means like photographs, video, sound files and written text. As an artistic outcome, my project on docudancing griefscapes could thereby partake in the more general economy of our shared memory, especially related to the discursive field of choreography, but beyond the temporal confinement of the actual choreographic processes and their performances.¹⁴⁴⁴ In the case of the video documentation of the live performances, this effect is evident.

Using video to re-cite/re-site choreography: a relocation that both rewrites and empowers

Through video documenting the live performances, I was evidently both re-citing and re-siting the choreographic outcome in this project. In drawing on Dorst and his ethnographic vantage point, I thereby relocated “the already inscribed citations,” the choreographed performances, into a new context with different parameters or limits and was therefore “in effect rewriting them.”¹⁴⁴⁵ As video played a crucial and integral role in this artistic research process, I want to expand on this new context that video provides, which radically alters the conditions for watching choreographed compositions. This change comes at a cost, such as the loss of a shared immediacy in witnessing a live performance, and the dependency on the recordings made of the event.¹⁴⁴⁶ However, this relocation also offers some striking advantages. Firstly, the video enables a non-linear viewing: I can stop and review scenes again, enlarge, run them in slow motion or move fast forward, jump scenes, control the sound output etc. in ways that are not

1443 Morrison and Thorsnes (2010).

1444 See, for example, Roar (2011) and www.choreomania.org, edited by Johannes Birringer and Josephine Fenger (2011) as an example of such attempts.

1445 Dorst (1989: 206).

1446 For more on video documentation, see *Appendices: A2*, and on the issue of immediacy, see Chapter 4.2.

possible in the live presentation of the choreographed performances.¹⁴⁴⁷ As choreographer-researcher, this advantage provides me with an especially potent tool for studying the choreographed composition or the movement material used in details, not only when writing a study as I am doing here, but more importantly in the process of both making and restaging the performances. As a tool, the video also definitely benefitted the performers involved in this artistic process, cf. Chapters 6 and 7. From my experience as a choreographer-researcher, video is for choreographic practice what writing is for thinking: providing a tool that can create both material to work with and means for re-citing/re-siting an outcome. At the core here is the potential of access: the outcome of choreography and choreographic compositions is no longer strictly restricted to the actual locations in time and space of their live performances, as once was the case. Despite the fact that these relocations come with a cost, as mentioned above, video can offer access in a way that live performances cannot deliver. As an outcome, the transfer to video enables the choreographic work not only to be “re-cited,” but also “re-sited” as this relocation can transgress the temporal confinement of the live event. In this way, the relocation to video may also potentially ease some of the geopolitical constraints imposed on the field.¹⁴⁴⁸ Altogether, in addition to enhancing the development of movements and compositional structures in the choreographic process,¹⁴⁴⁹ simplifying the restaging of previously made performances and the means for distributing them, video recordings can serve multiple other functions, for example, those related to research purposes, such as here, and to providing future references to new generations of dancers and choreographers.¹⁴⁵⁰ In combination with the rapid development of high-quality recording facilities to lower costs and the emerging range of new viewing platforms over the last decade, this has created an unprecedented situation for choreography and the performing arts, to develop, disseminate and study choreography.

1447 See Cadava (1992: 105).

1448 Traditionally the geopolitical location and its temporal fashion have decided the exposure of choreographed performances. The dissemination through video recording and the internet offer low-cost possibilities for exposure that are not controlled by the local gatekeepers in the field. Paradoxically an ontological emphasis on the performance's ephemeral quality, which is often advocated in defence of the art form, will mainly privilege the gatekeepers of the performing arts industry and a few geopolitical centres in the world with their curators and researchers, not necessarily the field of choreography in general.

1449 Cf. Chapters 6 and 7.

1450 The website dance-tech.net – interdisciplinary explorations on the performance of motion – run by Marlon Barrios Solano may serve as one vibrant example of this development. See www.dance-tech.net (accessed 5 July 2010)

In my situation, that is, being engaged in artistic research, while situated on the socio-cultural periphery of the world and coming from an art form that for centuries has suffered from the lack of more stable sources of references,¹⁴⁵¹ I welcome this digital media development. Although I mainly discuss the means of video here, I believe that the long-term impact of these possibilities for disseminating and studying choreography cross-generationally and geo-politically will prove incredibly important, especially for the emerging research activity in the field. I believe that the opportunity to accumulate archives of different choreographic strategies, their practices and performances, will make the art field more robust and confident.¹⁴⁵² Despite seemingly pointing to the past, the function of the archive is, as Jacques Derrida philosophically has explained it, to “call into question the coming of the future.”¹⁴⁵³ This cultural-political promise, however, does not exempt us from taking on board the methodological issues involved in creating an archive.¹⁴⁵⁴ For example, as a choreographer-researcher who used video as an integral tool to record notes from my contextual fieldwork as well as in the process of developing the choreographic compositions in the studio, I had to deal with the more mundane and practical consequences of accumulating an archive, in this case, a vast and composite pool of documents and recordings that manifested the work process. Here, my tacit knowledge from social sciences on how to methodologically handle gathered material and data helped me.¹⁴⁵⁵ From early on, this made me intuitively aware of the multiple demands that an accumulation of documentation material imposes, including the challenges of how to integrate documentation as part of the research process, without letting it distort the flow in the ethnographic fieldwork and the choreographic studio explorations I conducted. My primary aim remained throughout this process to seek a critical balance between the disparate needs of being both the choreographer and the researcher here. The methodological challenges embedded

1451 For me this situation seems to have contributed to weakening the art discipline as a reflexive and enquiring practice, and instead often led to an emphasis on reproducing traditions or aesthetic mannerism.

1452 For example, in making choreographers less dependent on the current trends among the local gatekeepers in their respective geopolitical locations in the field, that is, local curators and artistic directors and funding boards.

1453 Derrida (1996: 36).

1454 Including dealing with what Derrida calls the archive fever, and describes as “a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire,” which latent tendency can be likened to “a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement” (Derrida 1996: 91). In my effort to tame such a desire in this project, I have focused on the practical needs related to the writing of this study when building up the archive documenting this artistic research process.

1455 Cf. Chapter 2 – on qualitative research as tacit knowledge.

in this composite role actualized my dual role as a re-citer/re-siter, even when I was making my choreographic decisions in the project, for example, when deciding on what to re-cite/re-site of the contextual insights obtained about the different situations of grieving – in order to construct and embody each part of the performance trilogy. They are challenges I have discussed in the previous chapters while describing the development of the project.

However, in writing this study I had to face the sheer breadths of experiences embedded in this accumulated pool of documentation material from docudancing grieving. In addition to the edited versions of the live performances, the documentation material also consisted of a large number of unedited video recordings, both from other live presentations and various stages in the workshop-rehearsal process, including audio- and video-notes, as well as written field notes, blog entries, and photographs made during the process of making this performance trilogy.¹⁴⁵⁶ This study is therefore written simultaneously both *into* and *out of* this archive, which for me meant that when writing this study I also took part in performing the project. Through re-citing and re-siting the lived experiences, reflections, and choreographic thinking embedded in our work, I could give the choreographic processes yet another compositional format and public context in addition to those manifested in the performance trilogy. This perspective on my artistic research process altered my view on what constituted the choreographic outcome in this project. The study gave a body to my choreographic thinking and the developmental work and knowledge accumulated through my choreographic process and practice here. It enabled me to share this insight that otherwise would have been lost if the choreographic outcome had been performed only through the live or video documented performances. Through this research process and effort, I became aware of the tacit and unarticulated insight that normally is left aside when a choreographic project is presented. Here, this mere-value included insight related to craftsmanship and personal-artistic development, as well as to the contextual settings of the themes involved and to the process of artistic research in general. In this case, the experience of hearing the Ezan re-cited and re-sited can serve as a specific example of such insight that normally would remain unarticulated. In spite of probably being the only one registering this, the experience, nevertheless, impacted my view on the project,

1456 Additionally the performers personal fieldnotes and logs exist. I did not ask for access to these notes here. The reason for this is out of respect for the performers' privacy as well as the focus of this project. To utilize these sources would imply another focus in my study. However, this material exists and could be of interest to other researchers.

related to this performance and its significance, as well as my understanding of choreography in general. So was the case when the choreographed performances were transferred to video in the post-production phase of the project. As I wrote this study, I could reflexively examine, process, and share these and similar experiences in a compositional format. Through this process, I recognized to what degree my professional as well as my personal life experiences and cultural background affected not only how I portrayed an event, but also how I had observed it in the first place. In this way, the writing process also made me acknowledge my own, situated research position as a choreographer-researcher, and how this, my outlook, differed at times, for example, from the perspective of the performers involved, despite my dialogical collaboration with them. Naturally, if this study had been written from their perspective, it would most likely have emphasised other concerns in the artistic research process than those I have covered, as a choreographer-researcher.¹⁴⁵⁷ I was primarily concerned about shedding light on the choreographic-research process, and how its kaleidoscopic research optic¹⁴⁵⁸ informed my artistic perspectives and shaped the outcome emerging from it, especially how this ethnographically driven and contextually based approach to address socio-political contexts of grieving choreographically added an enriching complexity to the research process and my understanding of choreography. In hindsight, the process confirmed what Hal Foster has claimed; it is a heavy load to co-ordinate such composite contextual concerns in an artistic enquiry.¹⁴⁵⁹ Nevertheless, through writing this study, I could create a body that illuminated and thereby partly performed this layered complexity embedded in the project.

I connect this performative outcome of the study to the potential that Laurel Richardson and Peggy Phelan respectively see in writing. As a sociologist, Richardson points out how writing is a method or means for thinking and clarifying observations.¹⁴⁶⁰ As a performance studies scholar, Phelan shows us

¹⁴⁵⁷ That said, this process also involved a larger range of concerns than what I have emphasised in this study, such as strictly managerial issues related to planning, organising, and running of the production, including fundraising, drafting contracts, negotiating with venues, overseeing the marketing and documentation of the performances, operating within the budget limits, and providing accounts and reports to various funders, responsibilities that all come in addition to the artistic process I cover here, the experiences drawn from: conceptualizing the project, planning and leading fieldwork, workshop-rehearsals, staging and restaging of performances, the post-production of video, as well as crafting lecture presentations and articles. For my logbook entry dated March 2005 illustrating this situation, see *Appendices: A3.2*.

¹⁴⁵⁸ Cf. Chapter 2.

¹⁴⁵⁹ Foster (1996: 202).

¹⁴⁶⁰ See Richardson (2005: 959-978).

how we through writing can place ourselves and reveal a process of becoming in face of the unknown.¹⁴⁶¹ In my case, through writing this study, I experienced likewise that my understanding of the project and my place in it became more articulate and clear. From this reflexive probing, and especially from focusing on the trauma of grieving, I began to question my understanding of choreography as a live act. Conceptually, Davis inspired this reconsideration with her discussion on the impact of historical events.¹⁴⁶² Here, she implicitly questions the ontology of performance that Phelan once suggested,¹⁴⁶³ as she uses the notion of performative time to problematize what is “live” – and when the impact of such events ends.¹⁴⁶⁴ In building on Davis’ claim, based on citationality and the notion of performative time, I believe that a re-citing/re-siting of an artistic outcome can extend the “live” impact of a project beyond its actual temporal performance, as it also allows for nonlinearity and indeterminacy, in parallel to how a traumatic event can return in a flashback and still be experienced as real.¹⁴⁶⁵

With this, the return of the real spiralling through my study, I am hence suggesting, as Davis is doing, that ephemerality does not equal perishability. On the contrary – the ephemerality of a live performance can have an impact, which may change and move us, and leave traces in our mind-bodies that may resonate repetitively. Through reiteration and retelling, whether through the means of documentation or live witnesses, the event will re-appear, however different, still intrinsically linked to its live appearance, whether as a physical reality, psychobiological sensations, or conceptual challenge. This transformed liveness comes with a loss and a giving, as long as its impact resonates in people, whether firsthand, secondhand,¹⁴⁶⁶ or cross-generationally through reiteration.¹⁴⁶⁷ Just as repetition is one of the paradigmatic characteristics of performance, so is the repetitive condition of trauma; the traumatic memory might not speak, but is not mute. It performs – through its repeats.

1461 Phelan (1993).

1462 Davis (2010: 142-167).

1463 Phelan (1993: 146-166).

1464 Davis (2010: 145-151, 155). See also the discussion in Chapter 4.2.

1465 Cf. Chapter 4.2.

1466 Cf. the term second-generation survivors, often used in connection with the impact of the Holocaust. See Eva Hoffman (1989), Hirsch (1999), and Mendelsohn (2007).

1467 Cf. the battle in Kosovo Polje in 1389 where the Serbian Prince Lazar fought the Ottoman Empire and lost, but ‘won’ his soul and dignity. The reiteration of this story played a central role in Serb nationalist war-rhetoric from the late 1980s and to present-days politics with the resistance against giving up the Serbian claims on Kosovo. See Judah (2000: 29-47).

On this background, after having processed the composite experiences accumulated in this project, I have arrived at the following position: as choreographers, we are through our re-citing and re-siting, whether we like it or not, participating consciously or unconsciously, though often insidiously, to re/produce and re/circulate embodied attitudes and ideological claims in our performances. Through our choice of artistic strategy, the conduct of the artistic process, and the presentation of the choreographic outcome, we are making decisions that are conveying sensory experiences and embodying socio-political and ethical attitudes that all leave visual, visceral, and cognitive imprints. These traces will intrinsically link the choreographic practice to the politics of bodies and movements, as explicated with surgical precision in Lepecki's *Exhausting Choreography*.¹⁴⁶⁸ This interrelationship between choreography and politics comes for me with a political responsibility.

Choreographic practice and the politics of choreographing

In linking choreographic practice to politics, I will turn to Mark Franko's arguments on dance and the political,¹⁴⁶⁹ who states as a dance historian:

Power cannot function outside of the representational field, and representation, along with its crises, is an aesthetic matter. This is why I believe not only that dance and politics have much to do with one another, but also that a theory of dance and the political need not necessarily resolve itself into action or be propagandistic.¹⁴⁷⁰

His arguments draw attention to two central issues for me. The first relates to the interrelationship between power, representation, and aesthetics that explains the affinity between politics and dance. In pointing out that "the representation of political reality itself is what allows us to understand aesthetics precisely as historical insight,"¹⁴⁷¹ I am reminded of this dialectical and intertwined relationship between politics and aesthetics. The second issue relates to how an interest for dance and the political can be resolved. In the same way as Franko in regard to a theory of dance and the political, I believe that the politics involved in a choreographic practice is not expressed only through those means associated

¹⁴⁶⁸ Lepecki (2006).

¹⁴⁶⁹ Franko (2006: 3-18).

¹⁴⁷⁰ Franko (2006: 14).

¹⁴⁷¹ Franko (2006: 14). See also Marie-Claude Canova-Green (1995: 395-403) and Sara Melzer and Kathryn Norberg (1998).

with explicit public and activist manifestations of political views. On the contrary, as Franko argues, the implications of politics or “the insights associated with it can be subtle and pervasive.”¹⁴⁷² I share this outlook, which, I believe, gives us as choreographers reasons for paying close attention to the pervasive subtlety of politics embedded in our choreographic practices. Therefore, I will argue that choreographers, as professional wizards in the representational and performative field, need to develop a sensorial and mindful awareness of these subtle economies of politics in which we are intrinsically entangled and engaged.¹⁴⁷³ For me this is about questioning our own contributions – the visceral and aesthetic images, propositions and experiences we put out into society – and their role in remaking or reproducing prevailing attitudes and the political reality in which we are a part. Such a self-critical questioning may prevent us from ending up as useful “idiots” perpetuating circulations of questionable stereotypes and destructive blindness.¹⁴⁷⁴ Instead, such a questioning can challenge our art discipline to rethink what we choreographically create as well as how we artistically produce it. This is also a challenge that engaged me in this project, both in the process of developing the performance trilogy and in writing this study. In particular, as I observed how my artistic enquiry and choreographic thinking developed in tandem with the processes involved. With the project, my interest was not to claim an example of a “best practice” or a specific method for others to follow. Rather, my focus was on tracing a choreographic thinking through critically looking at my experiences from approaching choreography contextually, as an intrinsic political and layered aesth|ethical practice.

On this background, I align with Franko when he argues, “the intertwining of research and writing with choreography and performance is, for me, also a political move, one in which dance accedes to the discourse of its own interpretation.”¹⁴⁷⁵ Likewise, as a choreographer-researcher, I see the composite outcome of an artistic research project as a political move. In writing out of my

1472 Franko (2006: 14).

1473 Cf. Chapter 4.1 and Sturken (1997) and Cvetkovich (2003).

1474 Under ‘the state of emergency’, such as the time of Slobodan Milošević’s regime in Serbia during the 1990s, this challenge becomes more crude and the need to make decisions more acute. While some artists chose to collaborate (Seierstad 2000; 2003), just as the film director Leni Riefenstahl had done half a century earlier in Nazi Germany, others declined this option, such as Marija Opsenica who participated in this project. In the context of North Europe today this challenge is more subtle and insidious, though not absent. The gender roles and body regime reinforced by casting, staging and repertoire politics in dance companies, for example, in the Norwegian National Ballet until 2011, may serve as an example of such subtle blind spots in the field of dance.

1475 Franko (2006: 14).

choreographic practice, I am both addressing and experiencing an intertwined process of practice and research, performance and writing. I believe the result of this effort can contribute to the discourse and practice of choreography and dance. I therefore postulate, as Franko:

Dance, when conscious of its own politics, stands in the most unmediated or immediate relation to itself. The very awareness of the political history carried by the body enables us to think the relation between dance and the political choreographically, and therefore within the logic of movement and its performance.¹⁴⁷⁶

Similarly, I believe that if choreographic practice becomes more conscious of its embedded politics that is, relating to its practice with a critical view on its history, its use of bodies and the context(s) of its interventions, it will also mature and develop its very practice. My claim is that such a move will enable choreography to have a more pro-active and progressive role within the (performing) arts world¹⁴⁷⁷ as well as in society as such.¹⁴⁷⁸ Though coming from a different vantage point, Borgdorff arrives at a similar conclusion when he discusses the potential of artistic research. In stressing the reflexive nature of arts, Borgdorff points to the potentiality embedded in the enterprise of artistic research to play a subversive but active role as an agency for change when stating:

in addition to producing artefacts in the form of artworks and artistic practices, artistic research also generates fundamental ideas and understandings which, although nondiscursive as a rule, make the world into what it is or could be. Here lies the performative and critical power of research in the arts.¹⁴⁷⁹

¹⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷⁷ For example, as demonstrated in Kassel at Documenta 12 in 2007, one of the most influential musters of contemporary fine art in the world, when the choreographer Trisha Brown was represented with seven different works that ranged from drawings, video, to live performance of one of her choreographies. For more information, see Roger Buegel and Ruth Noack, ed., (2007: 361). The works of choreographers such as William Forsythe, Boris Charmatz, and Meg Stuart demonstrate a similar ability to implode the art of choreography from within as they critically question the parameters for their dancing, as accounted for by Fabius (2009: 331-45), Cf. Chapter 3.1. See also under *References: R4*. For more specifically on Forsythe, see, for example, Senta Driver (2000); on Charmatz, Sandra Teitge (2013); on Stuart, Gia Kourlas (2009) and RoseLee Goldberg (2009).

¹⁴⁷⁸ Contributions by choreographers directly challenging societal opinions are, for example, the choreographic works related to gender or sexual and bodily stereotypes and prejudices, such as Lloyd Newson/DV8 (1988, 2003), Bill T Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company (1994), or Alan Platel / Les Ballet C de la B (2010). In the latter, a group of retired drag queens and transsexuals makes us question simplified notions about femininity and masculinity. For more, see *References: R1*

¹⁴⁷⁹ Borgdorff (2007: 83).

Barrett suggests in her introduction to *Practice as Research* what such a performative and critical potential in artistic research stems from when she proposes that artistic practices are

viewed as the production of knowledge or philosophy of action. Drawing on materialists perspectives, including Martin Heidegger's notion of 'handlability, our exploration of artistic research demonstrates that knowledge is derived from doing and from the senses.¹⁴⁸⁰

For Barrett such an approach to research represents a new species of research through being a “generative enquiry that draws on subjective, interdisciplinary and emergent methodologies that have the potential to extend the frontiers of research.”¹⁴⁸¹ As a choreographer-researcher, I am deeply entrenched in an artistic practice that comes out of accumulated experiences from engaging in artistic enquiries grounded on interdisciplinary collaborations and multitasked operations over the last centuries.¹⁴⁸² For me this backdrop makes our contemporary practice of choreography particularly suited as a starting point for exploring what Barrett calls new species of research as well as for engaging in what Borgdorff, on his part, describes as transdisciplinary artistic research. For Borgdorff, this research is characteristically “combin[ing] the aesthetic project and the creative process with questions and topics from broader areas of life,”¹⁴⁸³ and let this be manifested in “[t]he synthesis achieved in the artwork.” This achievement has “something additional – or different – to offer, both conceptually and perceptually, than the outcome that would have resulted from a purely disciplinary approach,” for example, in sociology or ethnography. For Borgdorff “[t]he difference ... lies in the central place which art practice occupies in both the research process and the research outcome.”¹⁴⁸⁴ For me this surplus that Borgdorff tries to describe, reminds me of the artist-researcher Bolt's one-liner on what creative arts enquiry is about: “The magic is in handling.”¹⁴⁸⁵ The handling means here “the iterative and citational practice that artists engage in their artistic practice.” For Bolt it is through this handling “originary knowledge or the new is revealed:”¹⁴⁸⁶ it “arises

1480 Barrett (2007: 1).

1481 Ibid.

1482 Cf. Chapter 3.1 and Michelle Kennedy (2009: 65). For a more general historical overview, see for example, Jack Anderson (1992) and Franko (1993). I have also discussed this in Roar (2004).

1483 Borgdorff (2009a: 3).

1484 Ibid.

1485 Bolt (2007: 27).

1486 Bolt (2007: 8).

in and through re-iteration and citation.” The consequences and outcomes of this process are what “allow us to understand art as an effect and appreciate what art does in the world.”¹⁴⁸⁷ For Bolt, the handling therefore becomes the keyword for understanding the contribution of artistic research. This also explains the central part I have assigned to the conceptual thinking embedded in my contextual approach to grieving in this study, as this effort represents a crucial part of the handling that shaped my choreographic project on docudancing griefscapes.

Viewed from this perspective and informed by Franko’s understanding of politics, my project of docudancing grieving is not only brought into dialogue with the concerns that once were raised of Elaine Scarry in *The Body in Pain* on “the way other persons become visible to us.”¹⁴⁸⁸ It is also implicitly about how we – the performers and I, and, I hope, also some of our audiences – become visible to ourselves, as political and historical beings, interwoven into larger griefscapes of death and dying. The project is in this respect confronting us, the artists as well as the audiences involved, with these existential challenges, and is in this way making choreography as an aesthetical practice highly political. My artistic attempt to let each context of grieving intrinsically permeate the making of the choreographed performances is reflected in the methodological strategy of the project with its ethnographic approach to construct an embodied understanding of these griefscapes, including the indexical as well as the iconic usage of documentary material in both the process of making and staging the choreography,¹⁴⁸⁹ cf. Chapters 5, 6 and 7. What I call docudancing results from combining my interest in socio-political contexts with this extensive application of documentary sources in the choreographic processes. However, the performances created are offered as propositions for an audience to witness - and complete, through engaging their kinaesthetic senses, life histories, and cognitive creativity. Without this effort, the choreographies will remain unmarked.

On this background, I find a special affinity with Heaton, who in referring to Denzin, argues, with regard to ethnography, that it is

[b]y experimenting with forms of writing that question and expand the generic boundaries of ethnography, the ‘new writers’ of ethnography discover ‘there are other ways of

1487 Ibid.

1488 Scarry (1987: 22).

1489 Both terms refer to the meaning making created through the usage of the documentary material, whether this usage is indexical and hence depends on the setting in which the material is also used, or predominantly iconic and mainly depends on the signification it carries,

knowing, other ways of feeling our way into the experiences of self and other' that perform rather than represent the world.¹⁴⁹⁰

With his inserted quote of Denzin, Heaton draws attention to more visceral and bodily routes to knowledge such as those explored in sensory ethnography,¹⁴⁹¹ which likens my contextually based, choreosomatic approach in this project. In similar ways as Heaton, I was interested in experimenting with forms in this project, but through the means of choreography and artistic research. In paraphrasing Heaton, I would therefore argue it is through experimenting with choreographic strategies that question and expand the generic boundaries of choreography and dance, the 'new makers' of choreography discover what Denzin suggests: "there are other ways of knowing, other ways of feeling our way into the experiences of self and other,"¹⁴⁹² which as Heaton concludes, "perform rather than represent the world."¹⁴⁹³ From the process of constructing and embodying griefscapes, I recognize this experience of alterity that perform through a process that sensorially connects me to other ways of perceiving. My experience of docudancing grieving therefore brings forward the observations of Francoise Vergés, a cultural studies scholar with a background in political science and post-colonial theory, who stresses:

When artist seek out the disremembered past, the aim of such truth-seeking is not to bring the narrative of history to an end, but to work through the memories of trauma in order to symbolize it Opening the grave, freeing the ghosts, mourning the dead would be a start in the processes of anamnesis.¹⁴⁹⁴

This interrelationship between aesthetics and politics in working through memories of trauma points to the potential that the artistic strategy of docudancing grieving might harbour. In my case, through looking at processes of grieving with the means of choreography, also surfaced issues that made me question my understanding of my own, but also society's past, present and future being. In this respect, the act of docudancing griefscapes relates to the political and brings forward the social theory of political action that Arendt launched and

1490 Heaton (2002: 3). The inserted quote refers to Denzin (1997: xviii).

1491 On sensory ethnography, see, for example, Pink (2009).

1492 Denzin (1997: xviii).

1493 Heaton (2002: 3).

1494 Vergés (1996: 64).

discussed in *The Human Condition*.¹⁴⁹⁵ Arendt argues here that political action lies in the realm of social interaction that builds new forms of life. For Arendt this makes “the theatre” in particular stand out as an excellent example of political action, a claim underlined in the fact that its sole subject lies in the human being and its relationship to others.¹⁴⁹⁶ This viewpoint on political action bears not only relevance to this project of docudancing griefscapes, but challenges me as a choreographer-researcher to extend my experiences from this study into further explorations on how choreography and artistic research may function as interventional acts in society.

Concluding thoughts: There is no outside

At my endpoint for tracing *Life and Death* and recounting *Docudancing Griefscapes*, I want to revisit the theme that set off this project with its focus on death and dying, loss and grieving through another endpoint: that of Harvey Fierstein’s play *Torch Song Trilogy*,¹⁴⁹⁷ quoted in the epigraph to Chapter 5. Here, the main character Arnold suddenly interrupts a ferocious row with his mother by exclaiming how much he misses his life partner who got violently killed much earlier. This turns the whole situation around. Their life trajectories come together and meet in this raw feeling of loss, as she tries to comfort him. As time goes by, she says, he will get used to it. It is like learning to wear glasses; it will become a part of who he is and how he views the world. In being someone who is totally dependent on glasses or contact lenses, this analogy made bodily sense to me. Combined with my personal experience with grieving, this might also in part explain why I have used optics as a device to describe my research perspective in this study. However, in contrast to glasses, for me the optic of grieving kaleidoscopically affects all my bodily senses. When encountering death and dying we are all forced to manage even when the loss seems impossible to cope with and the circumstances are far too much to handle: rupturing everything and leaving us seriously wounded or marked for life, as this rupture will continue to haunt and frame our future being. To approach situations of traumatic grieving is therefore complicated, as I in this study have tried to demonstrate, like navigating in a vast and dark resonance chamber in which a newly occurred loss could suddenly trigger and reverberate previous layers of grieving around us,

¹⁴⁹⁵ Arendt (1998).

¹⁴⁹⁶ Arendt (1998: 188)

¹⁴⁹⁷ Fierstein (1979: 172).

and distort everything we thought we knew.¹⁴⁹⁸ This situation requires careful handling that pays attention to the circumstances revisited, the moves taken, and the resonance evoked in the process of docudancing griefscapes.

In this study I have reflected upon my experiences from constructing the performance trilogy *Life & Death* in order to identify some of the most pertinent challenges and insights that came out of this process of docudancing griefscapes for me. In undertaking this effort, I recognized the challenges that the Norwegian novelist Sandmose describes in his epilogue to *A fugitive crosses his tracks* where he writes about “Halfway Mountain,” quoted in the epigraph to Chapter 8.¹⁴⁹⁹ Here, he points out how this mountain, which rises up from flat forest land in Newfoundland, can appear entirely different from one place to the next when walking round it. This opens up several and equally accurate ways of recounting the experience of the mountain, but for the observer stuck in one spot the awareness of its multifaceted characteristics will get lost. In writing this study, I was deeply aware of a similar dilemma as I began rendering my experiences of this artistic research project. The challenge was how to provide a mapping that both situated the project as a total entity (Chapter 1.1) as well as my specific artistic approach here (Chapter 1.3), while inspiring the reader to think beyond the limitation of my perspective. For that reason it became pivotal for me, as a choreographer-researcher, to first clearly define my research position (Chapter 1.2), and likewise, to describe and contextualize the optic angle and the transdisciplinary backdrop of perspectives that informed this artistic research project (Chapters 2-4) and shaped my choreographic thinking and process here (Chapter 5-7). Out of this artistic enquiry and as its core outcome emerged the contextually and ethnographically based approach to choreography that I call docudancing and the notion of *griefscape*. The griefscape is a research-based construct of the ephemeral realm of grieving that envelope people who have been exposed to traumatic loss. As used in this study, it can vary in impact and scale, from being more private to being more communal and is, as such, an aggregate that derives from a subjectively situated probing into specific socio-political contexts

1498 Cf. Fyhr (1999: 33) that I referred to in Chapter 1.1.

1499 Sandmose (1962: 431). The segment is from his book *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks*. Here, Sandmose coins the term “the law of Jante” – that can be seen as a principle of egalitarian individualism governed by strict social control. See Valerie Borey and Tove I Dahl (2010: 71). “Playing with Meaning in a Norwegian Language Immersion Valley.” In *Children under Construction: Critical Essays on Play as Curriculum* by Drew Chapell (ed.): 63-86. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

of grieving. In brief, it is through the artistic approach of docudancing grieving that I have been able to construct and embody griefscapes choreographically.

In Chapter 8 I have brought together some of the aesthetical, ethical, and social contextual concerns and challenges that surfaced while I was docudancing griefscapes. In this way, I wanted to show how this transdisciplinary approach not only challenged me artistically in the choreographic process, but also as a choreographer-researcher in writing this study. More than outlining a narrowly defined choreographic process with its compositional decisions, I wanted especially to trace the underlying core issues and thinking that informed my choreographic approach and decision-making in constructing the performance trilogy *Life & Death*, and how my underpinning interest in socio-political contexts or realities shaped and developed new choreographic strategies for me. In examining this process of docudancing griefscapes, I wanted to probe deeper into how trauma, performance and the political are entangled and experienced as coexisting in larger, composite griefscapes.

Over the years of working, however, I have encountered dance colleagues and students even within the field of choreography who, when faced with the composite challenges that a contextual approach to choreography raises, have pleaded: “I am not into politics”; “I just want to (make) dance.” Though I have sympathy with those feeling overwhelmed, there is no place called ‘outside’ in the age of globalization. Even the most remote corner of the world is deeply affected and entangled with the rest of us in the global economy.¹⁵⁰⁰ This likewise applies to artistic endeavours. As there is no outside, the question becomes how to be inside.¹⁵⁰¹

As an art discipline and practice, choreography exists within the larger field of dance and performance, its practices and methodologies, and is therefore embedded in cultural codes and traditions,¹⁵⁰² which marks us bodily as well as

1500 By ‘economy’ I am here not primarily referring to financial wealth and resources, but primarily to standards of values and their careful usage, such as expressed by the phrase the ‘economy of words.’ From this perspective it follows that there is no art that does not play a part in the political economy - whether we depend on public funding, private sponsorship, or are forced to ask for police permission and undergo censorship before presenting each new performance. These are only different kinds of “economies,” but they are all conditioning circumstances for an artistic production.

1501 For further perspectives on this position, see for example, Roland Robertson and his concept of glocalisation (1995: 25-44). For me this includes a critical perspective on the ways we are “othering” other individuals or groups of individuals.

1502 As illuminated, for example, by Kealiinohomoku (2001 [1970]: 24-33). In discussions among professionals methodological concerns surface repeatedly, especially when encountering artistic approaches that question the strategies taught institutionally in the formal art education, and which are given public attention. It seems as an inherent resistance against critically examining

cognitively. I want to stress however that traditions are something we continuously reinvent ourselves, as the historian Eric Hobsbawn has demonstrated.¹⁵⁰³ This means that we as choreographers, through our choreographic approaches and artistic engagements, are participating in this continuum of reinventing the traditions of choreographing, dancing, and performing what choreographic knowledge can contribute towards. On this privilege also rests a responsibility to seize this potential.

I am not saying that this is necessarily easy to do. On the contrary, as I have demonstrated throughout this study while referring to Foster,¹⁵⁰⁴ it is demanding to pursue and co-ordinate a choreographic practice that aims for such a “double finality,”¹⁵⁰⁵ this is, a composite, aesth|ethical thinking, which both explores a socio-political context and its art medium. For this reason, I have argued that self-/reflexivity is essential for artists, as a tool for ensuring a critical distance and balance, in particular, when we as artist-researchers approach precarious and emotive situations, and operate outside the comfort zone of our professional skills and studio practice, such as in this artistic research project on docudancing griefscapes.¹⁵⁰⁶ Then, the need to negotiate a sensible critical distance in the artistic process becomes urgent. Throughout this study, I have tried to exemplify and discuss this challenge and explain why this artistic endeavour of embodying griefscapes is calling out for caution, because when faced with this the returns of the real attitudes are not enough. There is no outside to hide in. We are all part of a shared economy here: the choreography of life and death.

the educational conventions out of concern for blurring old disciplinary memories, diluting achieved skills, threatening traditional craftsmanship, and thereby risking endangering the art form itself. A discussion is often complicated through an undercurrent of non-articulated issues linked to positions, power and control, which tend to be fuelled with an anxiety about losing any of these assets within the institutionalized art world. These underlying issues distort the possibility of having a constructive exchange, and more often than not, create a conservative force in performing arts schools, as well as in professional companies and institutions, though I will argue that in leaving our practices unchallenged, our dancing will remain as a rather marginalized art discipline, existing as an entertaining or poetic abstraction, an enchanting ‘divertissement,’ but irrelevant to the society in which it takes place, but where art may engage and make a difference.

1503 Hobsbawn (1983: 1).

1504 As in my last part of Chapter 6 and Foster (1996: 202).

1505 Cf. Guattari (1995: 130).

1506 Both “to protect against over-identification with the other,” as well as to avoid “a murderous disidentification from the other.” Foster (1996: 203).





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Paxton, Steve. (2009). *Steve Paxton – material for the spine. A movement study*. Duration: 240 min. France: Contredanse.

Polanski, Roman. (2002). *A story of survival: behind the scene of "The pianist."* Duration: 40 min. USA: Focus Features, Universal Studios Home Video.

Warsinski, Maria Fuglevaag. (1998) *Crime and Punishment: Witnessing the Massacres in Srebrenica*, Duration: 75 min. Norway: Speranza Film AS Oslo.

Watts, Edward. (2012). *Norway's Massacre*. Duration: 60 min. United Kingdom: BBC 2.

Woodhead, Leslie. (1999). *A Cry from the Grave*. Duration: 104 min. United Kingdom: BBC2/PBS.

Zabanic, Jasmila. (1997). *After After*. Duration: 16 min. Bosnia-Herzegovina: Deblokada.

Films based on socio-political material or contexts

Kenovic, Ademir. (1997). *The Perfect Circle* (Original title: *Savrseni krug*). Duration: 113 min. France and Bosnia-Herzegovina: Parnasse international / Document Sarajevo with La Sept-Cinema, Le Centre National de la Cinematographie.

Kusturica, Emir. (1995). *Underground* (Original title: *Podzemlje*). Duration: 167 min. France, Germany, and Yugoslavia: New York Video.

Kusturica, Emir. (1998). *Black Cat, White Cat* (Original title: *Crna macka, beli macor*). Duration: 135 min. Germany: Arthaus Filmverleih.

Manchevski, Milcho. (1994). *Before the Rain*. Duration: 113 min. F.Y.R.O.M, France, United Kingdom: Aim

Mihaileanu, Radu. (1998). *Train de Vie*. Duration: 108 min. France and Rumania: Arthaus.

Newson, Lloyd. (2003). *The cost of living*. Duration: 35 min. United Kingdom: DV8 Films Ltd. Commissioned by Channel 4 Television.

Nichols, Mike. *Angels in America*. Duration: 337 min. USA: HBO Films, distributed by Sandrew Metronome Norge A/S. Based on Tony Kushner's play.

Polanski, Roman. (2002). *The Pianist*. Based on the story of Wladyslaw Szpilman. Duration: 143 min. France, Germany, Poland, United Kingdom: R.P. Productions, Heritage Films, Studio Babelsberg.

von Trotta, Margarethe. (2003). *Rosenstrasse*. Duration: 130 min. Germany & Netherlands: Studio Hamburg Letterbox Filmproduktion, Tele München Fernseh Produktionsgesellschaft (TMG), Get Reel Productions.

Zabanic, Jasmila. (2006). *Grbavica: The Land of My Dreams*. Duration: 107 min. United Kingdom: Coop99 produktion and Deblokada.

Zalice, Pjer. (2003). *Fuse* (Original title: *Gori Vatra*). Duration: 105 min. Bosnia-Herzegovina: Refresh Production Sarajevo.

R.3 Music recordings (excerpts)

Anastasia, which is, Goran Trajkoski, Zlatko Origjanski and Zoran Spasovski. (1995). *Before The Rain [Original Motion Picture Soundtrack]*. F.Y.R.O.M and United Kingdom: Polygram Records.

Bach, Johann Sebastian. (1961). *Complete Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin (performed by Arthur Grumiaux)*: Philips Classics.

- Björgum, Halvard T., and Torleiv H. Björgum. (1990). *Skjoldsmøyslaget*. Nomeland, Setesdal: Sylvartun Folkemusikk.
- Boine, Mari. (2001). *Eight Seasons - Gávcci Jahkejuogu*. Universal Music.
- Bregovic, Goran. (1995). *Music inspired and taken from the film Underground. (Compositions, arrangements and production by Goran Bregovic)*. Paris: Mercury France.
- Dordevic, Bojan. (2002). *Srbija: Sounds Global 2*. Belgrade: B92.
- Dun, Tan. (1997). *Ghost Opera (1994) for String Quartet and Pipa with water, stones, paper, and metal. 5 Acts*. New York: Nonsuch Records.
- Garnås, Agnes Buen, and Jan Garbarek. (1989). *Rosenfole (Music based on medieval songs from Norway)*. Munich: ECM Records GmbH.
- Levin, Ted, and Ankica Petrovic. (1993). *Bosnia: Echoes from an Endangered World*. Washington DC: Smithsonian Folkways Recording.
- Rosenberg, Dan. (editor). (2003). *The Rough Guide to the Music of the Balkans*. Great Britain: World Music Network.
- Schubert, Franz. (1989). *Impromptus, Op. 90 D. 899 and Op. 142 D. 935 (performed by Alfred Brendell)*. Philips Classics.
- Sebestyén, Márta. (1993). *Dúdoltam én: Sebestyén Márta*. Budapest: Hungaroton.
- Singh, Talvin. (1997). *Anokha: Soundz of the Asian Underground*. Omni Ltd.
- van Beethoven, Ludvig. (1997). *String Quartets Opp. 131 & 132*. EMI Records.
- Winter, Miriam Therese. (1966). "Joy is like the rain." In *Joy is like the rain*. New York, NY: Avant Garde Records Inc.
- Zecaj, Emina. (2003). *Traditional Bosnian Songs*. Sarajevo: Gramofon.

R.4 Artists and Companies – in performing and visual arts

- Antonovic, Nela; and the performance group Mimart. See: <http://www.teatarmimart.org.rs>
- Asentić, Saša; and the production company Per.Art. See: <http://www.perart.org/>
- Avdal, Heine. Until 2013 with the production unit Deepblue, from 2013 with Fieldworks, see: <http://www.field-works.be/>
- Bausch, Pina. See: <http://www.pina-bausch.de/en/>
- Bel, Jérôme. See: <http://www.jeromebel.fr/eng/index.asp>
- BVLK (Tord Knudsen og Jan Martin Vågen). See: <http://bvlk.com/>
- Charmatz, Boris. See: <http://www.borisharmatz.org/en>
- Candoco Dance Company. See: <http://www.candoco.co.uk/>
- Carstensen, Stian. See: <http://www.stiancarstensen.no> and <http://www.allmusic.com/artist/stian-carstensen-mn0000937175>
- Djimat, I Made. See: The Balinese dance master in a work demonstration from ISTA- Copenhagen 1996: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSSmYqUcOkY&feature=related>.
- Dominguez, Juan. See: <http://juandominguezrojo.com>
- Forsythe, William; and The Forsythe Company. See: <http://www.theforsythecompany.com/>
- Hamilton, Julien. See: <http://www.julienhamilton.com/>

Hay; Deborah, and The Deborah Hay Dance Company. See: <http://www.deborahhay.com/>

Jaar, Alfredo. See: <http://www.alfredojaar.net/>

Johannesen, Ellen; and her company Karmaconsult. See: http://sceneweb.no/nb/organisation/1840/Ellen_JohannesenKarmaConsult

Jones, Bill T.; and Bill T Jones /Arnie Zane Dance company. See: <http://billtjones.org/>

Keersmaecker, Anna Teresa de; and her company Rosas. See: <http://www.rosas.be/>

Larsson, Jørgen. See: <http://www.jorgenlarsson.org>

Le Ribot. See: <http://www.laribot.com/>

Le Roy, Xavier. See: <http://www.xavierleroy.com/>

Lossius, Trond. See: Musikk fra stillheten: <http://trondlossius.no/>

Mantero, Vera. See: <http://www.nxtstp.eu/vera-mantero>

Medical Mission Sisters. See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCIXVPYJuSg>

Newson, Lloyd; and his company DV8. See: <http://www.dv8.co.uk/>

Platel, Alain; and his company Les Ballets C de la B. See: www.lesballetscdela.be

Sehgal, Tino. See: <http://www.escapeintolife.com/art-reviews/tino-sehgal-living-sculptures/>

Seng, Ong Ken; and his company Theatreworks. See: <http://theatreworks.org.sg/>

Spångberg, Mårten. See: <http://martenspangberg.org/node/13>

Staurland, Leif Gaute. See: <http://leifgaute.com>

Steggell, Amanda. See: <http://www.testingtesting.org>, and <http://ajsteggell.wordpress.com/>

Stuart, Meg; and her company Damaged Goods. See: <http://www.damagedgoods.be/>

Tanzelarija, organization for the promotion of contemporary dance in Bosnia-Herzegovina, by Stephanie Kregel. See: <http://identitymove.eu/tanzelarija.html>

Tompkins, Mark. I.D.A. See: www.idamarktompkins.com

Toyboys Company by Terje Tjøme Mossige and Ulf Nilseng. See: <http://www.toyboys.org/>

Unander-Scharin, Åsa. See: Scen och Sinne: <http://scenochsinne.com/> and <http://www.operamecatronica.com>

Wittusen, Anders Brodtkorb. See: <http://mmw.no/crew/artists/anders-brodtkorb-wittusen>

R.5 Performing arts venues, festivals, and art initiatives

BITEF – Festival and Theatre: <http://www.bitef.rs/>

Bosnian Cultural Centre in Sarajevo: <http://www.bkc.ba/>

CZKd – Centre for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade: <http://www.czkd.org/>

Dansens Hus i Oslo (Dance House Norway Oslo): www.dansenshus.com

Guca - folk music festival: <http://www.guca.rs/>

MESS – International Theatre Festival Sarajevo: <http://www.facebook.com/festivalMESS>

Norwegian Center for Technology in Music and the Arts, NOTAM: www.notam02.no

Rex Cultural Centre Belgrade: <http://www.rex.b92.net/en/>

TkH: Walking Theory, Belgrade: <http://www.tkh-generator.net/en/platform>

R.6 *Educational institutions and programmes for research*

Corvinus University of Budapest (former: Karl Marx University in Budapest): www.uni-corvinus.hu

The National Norwegian Artistic Research Fellowships Programme: www.kunststipendiat.no/

New York University (NYU): www.nyu.edu

Department of Performance Studies: <http://performance.tisch.nyu.edu/page/home.html>

Nordic Summer University (NSU): <http://www.nsuweb.net/first/html/>

Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH): www.nmh.no

Norwegian Center for Technology in Music and the Arts (NOTAM): www.notam02.no

Norwegian University of Science and Technology Trondheim (NTNU): <http://www.ntnu.edu>

Programme of Dance Studies: <http://www.ntnu.edu/studies/bdans>

Oxford University: www.oxford.ac.uk

Wadham College: www.wadham.ox.ac.uk

Oslo National Academy of the Arts (KHIO): www.khio.no

University of the Arts Helsinki: <http://www.uniarts.fi/en/>

Theatre Academy Helsinki (TEAK): www.teak.fi

Colloquium on Artistic Research in Performing Arts (CARPA): <http://www.teak.fi/Tutkimus/carpa>

University of Dance and Circus (DOCH): <http://www.doch.se/>

Conference series Close Encounter: <http://www.doch.se/forskning/close-encounters>

University of Oslo (UiO): www.uio.no

InterMedia: <http://www.uv.uio.no/intermedia/>

R.7 *Professionals working with death (interviewed and / or consulted)*

Begravelsesbyråenes forum (Forum for funeral homes Norway): www.bfn.no

Bentzen utstyr (Supplier of funeral equipments): www.bentzenutstyr.no

On issues of hygiene, see: <http://www.bentzenutstyr.no/default.asp?side=9&meu=3&meu2=5>

Church of Norway, reverend Grete Hauge at Paulus Church in Oslo.

Jølstad Begravelsesbyrå (Jølstad Funeral Services): www.jolstad.no

M. Jacobsens etft. AS Begravelsesbyrå (M. Jacobsen & Sons Ltd. Funeral Services): <http://www.gravferd.no/>

Sibi (Supplier of funeral equipments): www.sibi.no

Klonowski, Eva Elvira. Forensic anthropologist. See: <http://www.ljudmila.org/ipak/klonowski/first.html>

Gravferdsetaten, Oslo Kommune (Oslo Municipality – Funeral Services), Anne Brøndelsbo (director of the crematoria in Oslo Municipality) and members of the staff at Østre Crematorium and Cemetery in Oslo (2004-2006): Tom Øverland (supervisor), Randulf Rønning (work manager), Rune Andresen (cremator), and Anne-Gurin Garvik (cemetery manager). See: <http://www.gravferdsetaten.oslo.kommune.no/>

Wang begravelsesbyrå (Wang funeral services): www.wangbegravelse.no

R.8 *Healthcare professionals (interviewed and / or consulted)*

Brabrand, Knut. Senior consultant at the Radiology Department and Director of the Ultrasound and Interventional Department at Oslo University Hospital (Rikshospitalet). See: <http://www.neorad.no/management.htm>

Brennen, Tim. Professor at Center for the study of Human Cognition, University of Oslo, (research on Trauma, PTSD and cognition, with a particular interest in memory). See: <http://humancognition.org/index.php/tim-brennen> and <http://humancognition.org/index.php/memory-processes-after-exposure-to-severe-trauma/39-projects-description/56-memory-processes-after-trauma>

Glover, Joel. Professor at Laboratory of Neural Development and Optical Recording, Institute of Basic Medical Sciences, University of Oslo. See: <http://www.med.uio.no/imb/english/people/aca/joel/index.html> and <http://csc.rr-research.no/?k=cast%252FGroups&aid=6932>

Hofstad, Bjørn. Dr. Med. and Chief physician at the Gastroenterology Department at Oslo University Hospital (Ullevål). See: <http://tidsskriftet.no/article/1602701>

Haugerud, Arne. Orthopaedic Engineer at Sophies Minde Ortopedi AS, Oslo University Hospital. See: <http://sophiesminde.no/nb/ortopediingeni-r-3>

Ihlen, Heidi. Psychologist at *Ihlenpsykologene* with focus on teambuilding and communication. See: <http://www.ihlenpsykologene.com/>

Lindner, Evelin G. Dr Psychol., Dr Med. (research on humiliation and international conflict and founding leader of Humiliation Studies). See: <http://www.humiliationstudies.org> (Accessed 2 September 2009).

Stålsett, Gry. Dr Psychol. at Modum Bad Research Institute, (research on religion and psychology with focus on existential issues). See: <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/video/gry-stalsett-o-presudi-breiviku>

Sveaass, Nora. Associate Professor at the Department of Psychology, University of Oslo: <http://www.sv.uio.no/psi/english/people/aca/norasv/index.html>

Økland, Henning. Physician and former dancer, Oslo University Hospital (Ullevål).

R.9 *Somatic practitioners and their practices*

Alexander, Frederick Matthias. Founder of the Alexander Technique. See: <http://www.alexandertechnique.com/>

Bartenieff, Irmgard. Founder of the Laban-Bartenieff Fundamentals that furthers the principles of movement analysis formulated by Rudolf Laban. See: <http://www.limsonline.org/>

Cohen, Bonnie Bainbridge. Founder of the Body-Mind Centering (BMC™) - an embodied approach to movement, body and consciousness. See: <http://www.bodymindcentering.com/>

Feldenkrais, Moshe. Founder of The Feldenkrais Method. See: <http://feldenkrais-method.org/>

Gindler, Elsa; and Jacoby, Heinrich. The founder of the Jacoby-Gindler work. See: <http://www.jgstiftung.de/>

Jois, Shri K Pattabhi. Founder of the Shri K Pattabhi Jois Ashtanga Yoga Institute (KPJAYI), Mysore. See: <http://kpjayi.org/>

Kerstenberg, Judyth. Founder of The Kerstenberg Movement Profile. See: <http://www.kestenbergmovementprofile.org/>

Klein, Susan T. Founder and master teacher of Klein Technique. See: <http://www.kleintechnique.com>

Pilates, Joseph. Founder of the Pilates Method. See, for example: http://www.pilatespeople.co.uk/pilates_founder.html

Rosen, Marion. Movement therapist and founder of the Rosen Method. See: <http://www.rosenmethod.org/>

Selver, Charlotte. Movement therapist and founder of Sensory Awareness in the United States. See: <http://www.sensoryawareness.org> and the video interview with Selver, aged 101: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3cSAQzseGXM>

Summers, Elaine. Founder of Kinetic Awareness. See: <http://kineticawarenesscenter.org/>

R.10 International organizations

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) - US-Helsinki Commission: <http://csce.gov>

Front Line – Protection of Human Rights Defenders: www.frontlinedefenders.org

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC): <http://www.icrc.org>

International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY): <http://www.icty.org/>

International Refugee Committee (IRC): <http://www.rescue.org/>

International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies: www.istss.org

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE): <http://www.osce.org>

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): <http://hdr.undp.org>

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE): <http://www.unece.org/>

World Council of Churches (WCC): www.oikoumene.org/

Women for Women International (WWI): <http://www.womenforwomen.org/>

R.11 Sources on Trauma and PTSD

The American Psychiatric Association (APA): www.psych.org

On DSM-IV, see: www.psych.org/MainMenu/Research/DSMIV.aspx

On APA's Practice guidelines, see: www.psychiatryonline.com/pracGuide/pracGuideTopic_11.aspx

For further brief overviews on DSM-IV, see:

Behavioral health care information and resources online: www.behavenet.com/capsules/disorders/ptsd.htm

National Center for PTSD, U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs, Friedman, Matthew J. (2010), Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: An Overview: <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/pages/ptsd-overview.asp>

Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies (HumanDHS): www.humiliationstudies.org/

International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies: www.istss.org

Resources for clinicians (diagnostics tools): <http://www.istss.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=ResourcesforClinicians&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=1549>

Norwegian Center for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies, (research on migration and psychological effects of impunity), see: <http://www.nkvts.no>

R.12 Initiatives addressing Human Rights Issues (incl. the Bosnian War)

Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN). Publishes online the Balkan Insight: www.balkaninsight.com

Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies: <http://www.berghof-foundation.org/en/>

Centre for Cultural decontamination (CZKd) in Belgrade: www.czkd.org

Crimes of War Educational Project (CWEP): <http://www.crimesofwar.org/>

Danish Jewish Museum: <http://www.jewmus.dk/>

Front Line – Protection of Human Rights Defenders: www.frontlinedefenders.org

On the murder of Dusko Kondor, see: <http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/taxonomy/term/240>

Helsinki Committee:

Norway: www.nhc.no

Serbia: www.helsinki.org.rs/

Republika Srpska: <http://www.helsinki.org.rs/>

Bosnia-Herzegovina: <http://www.bh-hchr.org/>

The Holocaust Memorial Berlin: <http://www.holocaust-mahnmal.de/>

Human Rights House Network: <http://humanrightshouse.org/>

Sarajevo: http://humanrightshouse.org/Members/Bosnia_and_Herzegovina/index.html

Oslo: http://humanrightshouse.org/Members/Norway___Oslo/index.html

The Imperial War Museum, London: The Holocaust Exhibition: <http://www.iwm.org.uk/exhibitions/iwm-london/the-holocaust-exhibition>

International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) in the former Yugoslavia: <http://ictj.org/our-work/regions-and-countries/former-yugoslavia>

International Commission on Missing Persons in Sarajevo: www.ic-mp.org/

International Committee of the Red Cross in the Western Balkans: <http://www.icrc.org/eng/where-we-work/europe-central-asia/serbia/index.jsp>

On missing people dated 25 October 2010, see:

www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/news-release/2010/belgium-news-251010.htm

International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia: www.icty.org

See: ICTY Case No. IT-04-81_T dated 30 September 2009, “Second Decision in respect of Srebrenica Agreed Facts”: <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/perisic/tdec/en/090930.pdf>

Jewish Museum Berlin: <http://www.jmberlin.de/>

Jewish Virtual Library: www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org

A brief on the history of the Jews in Sarajevo: http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0018_0_17524.html

A brief on the history of the Jews in Belgrade: http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0003_0_02350.html

Mars mira put slobade (Peace march to Freedom): www.marsmira.org/

Mediaonline. Southeast European Media Journal: www.mediaonline.ba/en

On the dispute in the Serbian Parliament 2001 over a documentary on Srebrenica: <http://www.mediaonline.ba/en/vijesti.asp?ID=271>

Nansen Dialogue Network: <http://www.nansen-dialogue.net/>

Nansen Dialogue Centre Mostar: <http://www.ndcmostar.org/>

Nansen Dialogue Centre Sarajevo: <http://www.nansen-dialogue.net/ndcsarajevo/>

Office of the High Representative for Bosnia-Herzegovina (OHR): <http://www.ohr.int/>

For the Dayton Peace Agreement, see: http://www.ohr.int/dpa/default.asp?content_id=380

Research and Documentation Centre Sarajevo (IDC): www.idc.org.ba

Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial and Cemetery for the Victims of the 1995 Genocide: <http://www.potocarimc.ba/>

United Nations Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington DC: <http://www.ushmm.org/>

Testimony by Nataša Kandić: http://www.ushmm.org/genocide/take_action/gallery/portrait/kandic

Žene Ženama Sarajevo (Women to Women Sarajevo): www.zenezenama.org

Žene Srebrenice (Women of Srebrenica): <http://www.srebrenica.ba>

Žene u crnom Beograd (Women in Black Belgrade): www.zeneucrnom.org/

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 1998. *The directive relating to transport, handling and wrapping of corpses, including funerals*. Norwegian Laws FOR-1998-04-03 No. 327. The Norwegian ministry of health and care services.
 2001. Case No. IT-98-33-T. Prosecutors vs. Krstic. Judgment. ICTY, International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Former Yugoslavia since 1991.
 2002. *Funeral - general provisions for funerals*. Church of Norway. 9 November 2002.
 2009. Case No. IT-04-81-T. Prosecutor vs. Momcilo Perisic. Second decision in respect of Srebrenica agreed facts. ICTY, International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Former Yugoslavia since 1991.
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 2009. UNDP, United Nations Development Programme. *Human Development Report*. New York: United Nations.
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Appendices

*A1. Overview of cast, crew and collaborators in the performance trilogy **Life & Death***

*A1.1. **A Song to Martin (2003)** – part one of the trilogy.*

Premiere: 7 November 2003 at Oslo National Academy of the Arts.

In memory of Martin
(Martin Hoftun 1964 – 1992).

Concept/choreography/set/performance: Per Roar.

Video footage: NRK, Per Roar, Leif Gaute Staurland.

Video editing and visual advisor: Leif Gaute Staurland.

Lights and technical crew (2003 version): Harald Fetveit.

Voices: Martin Hoftun, Narayan Man Biyuche (Rahit), Adam Steinhouse, Anita S. Schrader, Bjarte Hjelmeland, Per Roar; Tullis Hoftun et al. See below for more details.

Music: “Ghost Opera” (1994) of Tan Dun, performed by Kronos Quartet and Wu Man.

Sound technicians: Atle Pakurs Gundersen, Leif Gaute Staurland and Olav Torget.

Costume assistant: Annette Werenskiold.

Orthopaedic corset: Arne Haugerud, Sophies Minde Ltd.

Wheelchair supplier and advisor: Tormod Dammen.

Remote controlled system: Pål Hagh Sandberg.

Press and PR material: Kari-Lise Kolaas, supported by Tove Gravdal and Unni Harsten.

Producer: Cathe Sjöblom.

Photography: Tove Gravdal and Håkon Styri.

Video documentation: Leif Gaute Staurland

External eyes and consultants in the artistic process: Harald Fetveit, Konrad Gabriel, Tanya Garland, Kristina Gjems, Kristin Hestad, Ellen Johannesen, Ebba Johansson, and Leif Gaute Staurland, Efva Lilja (University College of Dance and Circus, DOCH) and Ingunn Rimestad (KHIO).

Collaborators facilitating the technical production:

Børre Arnøy (City Mission Centre Tøyen, Oslo), Christian Sommerfeldt (NRK) and Bjarne Kvinsland (Norwegian Centre for Technology in Music and the Arts, NOTAM).

Producing partners: Teater & Dans i Norden.

Co-producer: The Faculty of Performing Arts, KHIO.

Funding: Teater & Dans i Norden (Culture Point North), Fond for utøvende kunstnere, Fond for lyd og bilde, and the Arts Council Norway.

Overview of collaborating informants and interviewees who shared insight, material and experiences related to Martin:

In Norway: Odd and Tullis Hoftun, Erik Hoftun, Jannicke Jæger, Hans Olav Mugaas, Tove Gravdal, Ellen og Peter Svalheim, Hilde Frafjord Johnson, Ingvar Evjen Olsen, Astrid Hovengen, Svein Fuglestad, Anders Brodkorb Wittusen and Tonje Claussen. In England: Staff at Wadham College, Tanya Garland, Brian Todd, Melanie Mauthner, Helen Lawrence, Adam Steinhouse and Anita Schrader McMillan.

Overview of the footage used in the performance: all footage was either documentary material connected to Martins life and the accident, or footage taken retrospectively in Oxford at locations shared with Martin. These locations were: Wadham College, Port Meadow, the Indian Institute Library and the main road leading out of the city centre of Oxford. Supplied with images of the choreographer-performer captured in 2002-2003.

Overview of the sound sources used in the performance: in addition to the Ghost Opera of Tan Dun, they are, as chronologically listed, Per Roar in a reading of a log excerpt written in 2002 (in Norwegian); Martin Hoftun in a fieldwork interview with Narayan Man Biyuche or Rahit done in c. 1990 (in Nepali); Adam Steinhouse and other Oxford friends in a recording from a gathering held shortly after the accident in 1992 (in English); Anita Schrader McMillan in an excerpt from a speech held at the memorial reception in Oslo in 1992 (in English); the poem "The Chapel at Wadham College, Oxford 1921" of Nordahl Grieg read by the actor Bjarte Hjelmeland (in Norwegian); Per Roar in a reading of a diary excerpt written in 1986 (in Norwegian); Martin Hoftun dictating the introduction to his D.Phil. thesis recorded ca in 1990 (in English); Tullis Hoftun (Martin's mother) sings "Joy is like the rain" accompanied by her grandchild Marlene Jæger Hoftun, age 12, recorded in 2002; Martin Hoftun, age 11, interviewed in Kathmandu by Arne Fjørtoft for NRK in 1975 (in Norwegian); and finally Surya Soni reminiscing in the recording from Oxford, 1992 (in English).

A1.2. A Rehearsal for Mortals (2005) – part two of the trilogy.

Premiere: 20 October 2005 at Dansens Hus Oslo.

In memory of Bill
(William Reaper 1959 – 1992).

Concept and choreographic and artistic direction: Per Roar.

Developed with and performed by: Peder Horgen, Kristianne Mo and Terje Tjømø Mossige.

Funeral directors participating in the performance: Per Erik Larsen and Stein W Westad.

Sound: Jørgen Larsson.

Video footage: Per Roar in collaboration with Leif Gaute Staurland on camera.

Video editing and visual advisor: Leif Gaute Staurland.

Video projection system: Idun Sem in collaboration with Jørgen Larsson.

Lights: Boya Bøckman.

Costume: Ebba Johansson.

Stage set: Per Roar in collaboration with set designer Silje Kiise.

Video documentation: Leif Gaute Staurland and Ingrid Lindberg (performance).

Press photography: Kim Sølve.

Artistic supervisors: Efva Lilja (DOCH) and Ingunn Rimestad (KHIO).

Technical stage crew: Thomas Harbo Larsen (stage manager), Sven Syversen (blacksmith), Anders Hamre (carpentry), Gaute Isachsen (set assistance), Olaf Stangeland (sound system), Inger Johanne Byhring (light system), and Ellen Christiansen (technical producer).

Web design for the project blog: Hans Magnus Nedreberg.

Layout program and PR material: Trine + Kim design studio (www.trineogkim.no).

Producer: Cathe Sjøblom.

Supporting partners: Norwegian Artistic Research Programme (Bergen), Intermedia at UiO, Close Encounter / DOCH (Stockholm), and Rex Cultural Centre (Belgrade).

Co-producers: Dansens Hus i Oslo and KHiO.

Funding: Fond for utøvende kunstnere, Fond for lyd og bilde, and Arts Council Norway.

Overview of collaborating informants and interviewees who shared insight, material and experiences related to death and dying, mourning and bereavement: Firstly, Jølstad Funeral Agency with their director Odd Borgar Jølstad and staff; the staff at Østre Crematorium and Cemetery in Oslo with Tom Øverland (supervisor), Randulf Rønning (work manager), Rune Andresen (cremator), Anne-Gurin Garvik (cemetery manager), and Anne Brøndelsbo (director of the crematoria in Oslo Municipality); Reverend and parish priest Grete Hauge; specialist psychologist at Modum Bad Dr. Psychol. Gry Stålsett; professors Svein Olav Kolseth and Joel Glover at the Institute for basic medical sciences, UiO; physicians and medical experts at Oslo University Hospital, including supervising chief physician Bjørn Hofstad (department of gastroenterology at Ullevål), physician and former dancer Henning Økland, chief physician and director Knut Brabrand (department of radiology at Rikshospitalet); and OK Bingdrift Oslo and its staff at Storgata and Grønland.

Overview on the documentary footage used in the performance: Primarily, the footage from a cremation, including the handling of the remains and their burial, shot at Østre Crematorium and cemetery in Oslo, supplemented with close-ups of flower arrangements used in funerals, and combined with medical imagery. This included microscopic images of cellular tissues and cellular migration, electrocardiogram, images from a Doppler ultrasound examination (that uses sound waves to see how the blood flows through a blood vessel) of the major arteries in the liver, via video images of a gastroscopic examination of the upper part of the alimentary tract and the stomach, X-ray images of the intestines, and drawings of the lymphatic system.

Al.3. An Unfinished Story (2006) – part three of the trilogy.

Premiere: 7 June 2006 at Vijecnica in Sarajevo.

In memory of Marcus
(Marcus Krusenotto 1960 – 1985).

Concept and choreographic and artistic direction: Per Roar

Developed with and performed by: Peder Horgen, Kristianne Mo and Terje Tjøme Mossige, Marija Opsenica and Slaven Vidak.

Sound: Jørgen Larsson (In Sarajevo supported by: Ivan Vrhunc).

Singing: Marija Opsenica.

Lights: Murat Begović.

Costume: Samina Zajko.

Stage set: Per Roar in collaboration with set designer Silje Kiise.

Press and PR material: Gorgon Production

Documentation (photography and video): Per Roar.

Press photography: Foco Fuoxos.

Artistic supervisors: Efva Lilja (DOCH) and Ingunn Rimestad (KHIO).

Co-producers: Mess (Sarajevo), Rex Cultural Centre (Belgrade), and Dansens Hus and KHIO (Oslo).

Project coordinators: Ivan Vrhunc (Sarajevo), Dušica Parezanović (Belgrade), and Sandra Sandbye (Oslo).

Funding: Norwegian Artistic Research Programme, Fond for Lyd og Bilde, The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Arts Council Norway.

Overview of collaborating informants and interviewees who shared insight, material and experiences related to the artistic process of developing part 3 of the trilogy *An Unfinished Story*: The numbers of people involved were large and their insights ranged from issues related specifically to the Bosnian War and the socio-cultural history and political situation in the area to human rights issues on political violence and reconciliation processes in general, including knowledge about the psychosomatic impact of trauma and neurology. Below follow a list of these key participants.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina our collaborators included among others: film-director Maria Warsinski Varsi; actress Minka Muftić; composer and producer Ivan Vrhunc; the contemporary dance initiative Tanzlarija with Stefania Kregel; writer Eli Tauber and the Mosaic congregation in Sarajevo; development manager Nebojša Dimitrijević and director Ljilijetta Goransko-Brkić at NDC -Sarajevo; director Elvir Djuliman at NDC in Mostar; regional coordinator Alexandra Letić and late leader Dusko Kondor at HC in Republic Srpska, Bijeljina; the folkdance ensemble Kolo Bosansko and their leaders Mersiha Zembo and Mukidis Čolić and Nijaz Dusić at Bosnian Cultural Centre in Sarajevo; executive producer Nihad Kreševljaković and director Dino Mustafić at MESS in Sarajevo; folk dancer Sandra Ramić; the women we met from Žene Srebrenice (Women of Srebrenica); and our fellow marchers in “Mars mira put slobade” (Peace march to Freedom); as well as the staff at the Norwegian Embassy in Sarajevo.

In Belgrade: choreographer Nela Antonović; the staff at Rex Cultural Centre; theatre director Stevan Bodroža; theatre director and professor Ivana Vujić; art historian and curator Ana Popović; local guide Miroslav Krajnovi; director Borka Pavicević at Centre for Cultural Decontamination; local coordinator Nebojša Tasić at HC in Serbia; the Jewish Community in Belgrade; performing artist Saša Asentić at PerArt in Novi Sad; and the staff at the Norwegian embassy in Belgrade.

In Oslo: musician Stian Carstensen; Head of Human Rights Educational Department Enver Djuliman at the Norwegian HC; project manager Jorunn Tønnesen at NDC in Oslo; Executive director Maria Dahle at HRHF Oslo; social anthropologist Anders Huuse Kartzow; psychologist Heidi Ihlen; professor in psychology at the UiO Tim Brennen; specialist psychologist at Modum Bad Gry Stålsett; professor in neurological biology at Institute for basic medical sciences at UiO Joel Glover; and research director Nora Sveaas and researcher Melinda Meyer at Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies.

Overview on the documentary footage used in the performance: Primary object was a single photograph of a typical forest greenery captured close to Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial and Cemetery for the Victims of the 1995 Genocide. In the performance outside the West Balkan, this image was combined with several short snippets of documentary footage from the Bosnian War, captured by Bosnian television channels and reporters, and edited into the greenery at the start of the performance, as if the war imageries emerged out of it but only to fade back into it again.

Overview of documentary or contextual sound sources used in the performance: recordings of heavy rain and ezan, the call to Islamic prayer, done at early dawn in Sarajevo; the soundscape of the burials at Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial and Cemetery (recorded in 2004), and the use of four traditional songs. In chronological order as they appeared: (1) “Kad ja pojoh na Benbašu” (tr.: “When I went to Benbaša” – that is, the old part of Sarajevo). The song is considered the musical symbol of Sarajevo. The lyric clearly refers to city, its Muslim heritage and draws musically both

on dervish antecedent and Sephardic Jewish influence, and is well known all over the region of former Yugoslavia. (2) “Smrt Fašizmu, Slaboda Narodu!” (tr.: “Death to the Fascism, Freedom to the people!”), this is a song all children would learn and sing as Young Pioneers, the youth movement, which kids were expected to join until the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1991/1992. (3) “So Maki Sum Se Rodil” (tr. often as: “With Sorrow I was Born and in Sorrow I Will Die”), this sad Macedonian folk tune is likewise known throughout former Yugoslavia and internationally from the film *Before the Rain* by Milcho Manchevski (1994), and then finally, (4) “The Mourner’s Kaddish.” This prayer is a part of the mourning rituals in the Mosaic traditions and is here sung as Eli Tauber from the Jewish community in Sarajevo taught us it.

Crew in the restaged complete version of the trilogy (2006)

The presentation of the completed trilogy *Life & Death* at Dansens Hus in Oslo in September 2006 (from 7. -10.09 to 14. -17.09) required a restaging of all three parts to make them fit together in a consecutive presentation on the same stage. In addition to the performers and the artists involved in each part of the trilogy, this restaging involved members of the technical crew both at Dansens Hus and KHiO. This production team included:

Artistic director and project leader: Per Roar.

Artistic supervisors: Efva Lilja and Ingunn Rimestad.

Project coordinator and assistant production manager: Sandra Sandbye.

Technical stage crew, included:

Stage manager: Thomas Harbo Larsen.

Black smith: Sven Syversen.

Carpentry: Anders Hamre.

Assistance for set and décor: Gaute Isachsen.

Sound system: Olaf Stangeland.

Light system: Thor Støve.

Technical producer: Ellen Christiansen.

Video editing (for part three): Per Roar in collaboration with BVLK by Gudmundur Gunnarson.

Operative system for the multiple video projections: BVLK by Gudmundur Gunnarson.

Light design: BVLK by Tord Knudsen and Jan Martin Vaagen.

Wheel chair operator: BVLK by Jan Martin Vaagen.

Web design for the project blog: Hans Magnus Nedreberg.

Layout PR material: Trine + Kim design studio (www.trineogkim.no)

Video documentation – camera: Jan Thomas Espedal and Erik Hannemann.

Video editing: Ida H. Vennerød Kolstø.

Post-editing: Leif Gaute Staurland.

Photography: Knut Bry and Tinagents.

The video documentation of the trilogy is based on this presentation.

A2. *Comments on the video documentation of Life & Death*

I will offer some few commentaries related to the technical issues of video documenting the trilogy. However, I will not enter into the larger discussion on the relationship between performance and documentation,¹⁵⁰⁸ or expand on the integral usage of video in the construction of the choreography itself,¹⁵⁰⁹ nor discuss the development of the video work used in the staging of the performances,¹⁵¹⁰ but simply comment on the issues raised in documenting them.

On the technicalities of the documentation

The video documentation of the performance trilogy accompanying this study is recorded with audience present and without any extra adjustment related to the performance situations. The documentation was made in two versions: in an edited three-camera version and in a one-camera version. The latter captures the whole stage and offers an overview of the spatial and compositional structure, whereas the first is more viewing friendly as it provides a larger variety of perspectives and details for the eye. Both versions document the linear unfolding of the performances as they appeared. I suggest watching the three-camera versions. The one-camera versions are mainly provided to secure documentation of the total spatial organisation and its choreographic structure when needed.

The video documentations are technically speaking made within the framework of a low-cost independent production, particularly with regard to quality in sound and colour adjustments.

Sound-wise the recordings do not do justice either to the soundscape devised by the sound-artist Jørgen Larsson in the last two parts of the trilogy (12 channels surround system), nor to the extraordinary vocal of Marjia Opsenica in the last performance and the blend of sound sources in First Part.

1508 See Chapter 4.2. Here, I refer to the discussion that followed after Peggy Phelan (1993) published "The Ontology of Performance: representation without reproduction" in *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (1993: 146-166) with Philip Auslander and Amelia Jones' questioning of Phelan's concept of 'liveness.' See, Auslander (1997; 2008) and Jones (1997: 11-18), and expanded further recently by Davis (2010: 142-167).

1509 The video represented also a memory of the things we had seen, explored, and or developed. In the process of constructing *A Rehearsal for Mortals* this meant that each dancers got his or hers movement script on video, based on edited material from our explorative process. These videos provided the raw material for the final choreography. Serving to exemplify this, the last 14 minutes of Peder Horgen's movements here were based on 25 different video segments from his previous explorations that I had edited into a choreographic sketch, which he relearned. In collaboration with me as the choreographic-I, this material was moulded into the final choreographic outcome for his part here.

1510 The videos used in the performances were partly shot by me, or captured in collaboration with video artist Leif Gaute Staurland, who also technically edited the material together with me.

With regard to the recording of *A Rehearsal for Mortals*, the white balance in the one-camera version was similarly distorted early into the performance as the lighting offered to harsh contrasts for the fixed camera position in operation. Moreover, due to human failure, the two main cameras here were not synced up with regard to the white balance, resulting in a distinctive difference of colour tone in the documentation, which had to be modified by post-editing tools. Despite these shortcomings, the video documentation still transmits an impression of the choreographic compositions and their ambiances. Though as with all video recordings, such documentation are equally dependent on the viewers' technological means for viewing it.

On some specific challenges in making the video documentation of A Rehearsal for Mortals

A Rehearsal for Mortals was performed by three dancers and two funeral directors and supported by four video screens on stage, and the audience surrounded by a 12 channel sound system. This set-up created a soundscape in which the sound could appear with direction and a spatial quality in the space, and enhance a sense for the viewer of being inside or a part of a larger ambience. It was beyond our means to capture this impact of the soundscape through the video documentation. However, as the choreography consisted of three intertwined solos, surrounded by four video screens, and included the two participating funeral directors, this performance became also particularly hard to capture on video visually, not only audially. The edited three-camera version here have chosen to concentrate on the dancers and therefore insert the images of the video works used in the performance into the flow of the video documentation rather than relying on capturing all elements in one total shot. Such a satisfactory 'one-total-shot' was very difficult to shoot, because of the light grey floor and the changing intensity of the lighting and hence the contrast level in the performance. For that reason are the full screen shots of the durational video work used in the performance, inserted into the documentation. In this manner, the video could document a sense of the chaptering used in the actual live-performance for the audience present.

The role and presence of the funeral directors in the room, on the other hand, suffered in both video versions. The funeral directors played a framing role in the live performance: from welcoming audience into the theatre to closing the performance in the end, by literally closing the door to the theatre in front of the audience after having escorted them out of the premises. The funeral agents

As the process of dying often is a process that never seems to end when we want it to - and in the case of terminal cancer often exhausts both the dying and the next of kin - I wanted to gently induce or hint to some of this exhaustion. However, to stage such existential exhaustion involved in dying is one thing, but to document it into video another. It was already demanding for the live-viewer witnessing the performance, and the performance recorded can perhaps best be endured if approached as a meditation on our mortality, or as a kinaesthetic unwinding of a countdown towards a standstill.

A3.1. *The signs used as a choreographic shorthand when developing A Rehearsal for Mortals.*



Figure 29. The choreographic shorthand used to develop *A Rehearsal for Mortals*, winter 2005.

A3.2. *The larger scope involved in the artistic research process, when including the managerial issues.*

Here, the mind-map relates to the process of constructing *A Rehearsal for Mortals*. By March 2005, this process included 64 different people/institutions, which I as a choreographer-researcher had to answer for and relate to in my production process. In the log entry I title my mind map as a portrait of “an artistic research project in a production hell” (trl. from Norwegian). I suppose this title is telling for the stress that I felt in the production at the time.

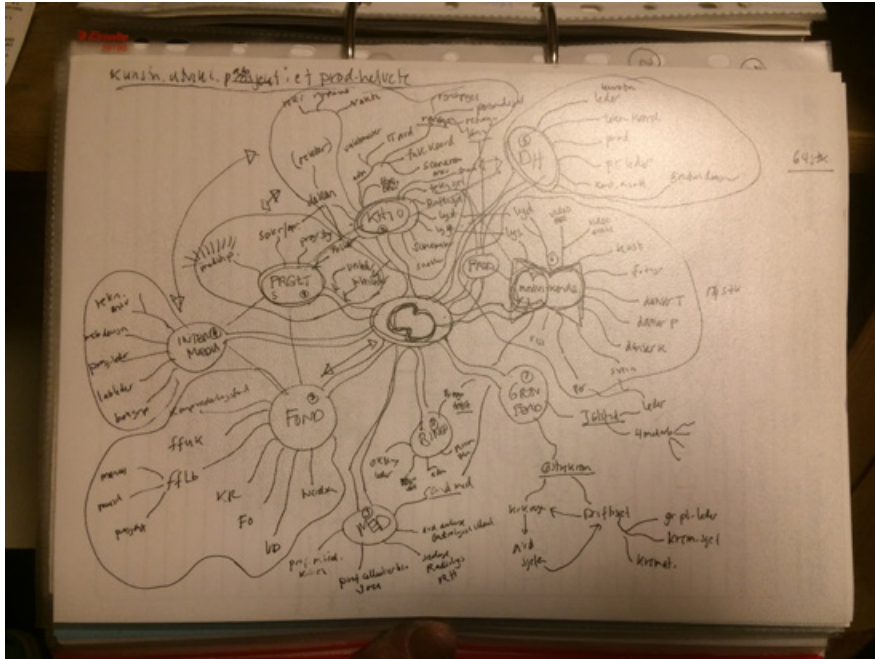


Figure 30: Mind-map of the managerial scope of producing *A Rehearsal for Mortals*, logbook entry 3 March 2005.

Previous publications in this series

1. Pentti Paavolainen & Anu Ala-Korpela (eds.): *Knowledge Is a Matter of Doing*. (1995)
2. Annette Arlander: *Esitys tilana*. (1998)
3. Pia Houni & Pentti Paavolainen (toim.): *Taide, kertomus ja identiteetti*. (1999)
4. Soili Hämäläinen: *Koreografian opetus- ja oppimisprosesseista 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: *Näyttämötaiteilijasta 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)
14. Eeva Anttila: *A Dream Journey to the Unknown. Searching for Dialogue in Dance Education*. (2003)
15. Kirsi Monni: *Olemisen poeettinen liike. Tanssin uuden paradigman taidefilosofisia tulkintoja Martin Heideggerin ajattelun valossa sekä taiteellinen työ vuosilta 1996–1999*. (2004)
16. Teija Löytönen: *Keskusteluja tanssi-instituutioiden arjesta*. (2004)
17. Leena Rouhiainen, Eeva Anttila, Soili Hämäläinen & Teija Löytönen (eds.): *The Same Difference? Ethical and Political Perspectives on Dance?* (2004)
18. Maarja Rantanen: *Takki väärinpäin ja sielu riekaleina*. (2006)
19. Leena Rouhiainen (ed.): *Ways of Knowing in Art and Dance*. (2007)
20. Jukka O. Miettinen: *Dance Images in Temples of Mainland Southeast Asia*. (2008)
21. Helka-Maria Kinnunen: *Tarinat teatterin taiteellisessa prosessissa*. (2008)
22. Erik Rynell: *Action Reconsidered. Cognitive aspects of the relation between script and scenic action*. (2008)
23. Tone Pernille Østern: *Meaning-making in the Dance Laboratory. Exploring dance improvisation with differently bodied dancers*. (2009)
24. Kirsi Heimonen: *Sukellus liikkeeseen – liikeimprovisaatio tanssimisen ja kirjoittamisen lähteenä*. (2009)
25. Maya Tångeberg-Grischin: *The Techniques of Gesture Language – a Theory of Practice*. (2011)
26. Seppo Kumpulainen: *Hikeä ja harmoniaa. Liikunnan ja fyysisen ilmaisen opetus Suomen Teatterikoulun ja Teatterikorkeakoulun näyttelijäkoulutuksessa vuosina 1943–2005*. (2011)
27. Tomi Humalisto: *Toisin tehtyä, toisin nähtyä – esittävien taiteiden valosuunnittelusta muutosten äärellä*. (2012)
28. Annette Arlander: *Performing Landscape. Notes on Site-specific Work and Artistic Research (Texts 2001–2011)*. (2012)
29. Hanna Pohjola: *Toinen iho. Uransa loukkaantumiseen päättäneen nykytanssijan identiteetti*. (2012)
30. Heli Kauppi: *Avoimena aukikierto. Opettajan näkökulma kokonaisvaltaiseen lähestymistapaan baletinopetuksessa*. (2012)
31. Ville Sandqvist: *Minä, Hamlet. Näyttelijäntyön rakentuminen*. (2013)
32. Pauliina Hulkko: *Amoraliasta Riitaan: ehdotuksia näyttämön materiaaliseksi etiikaksi*. (2013)
33. Satu Olkkonen: *Äänenkäytön erityisyys pedagogiikan ja taiteellisen toiminnan haasteena*. (2013)
34. Anu Koskinen: *Tunnetiloissa – Teatterikorkeakoulussa 1980- ja 1990-luvuilla opiskelleiden näyttelijöiden käsitykset tunteista ja näyttelijöiden tunnetyöskentelystä*. (2013)
35. Mari Martin: *Minän esitys. Ohjaajan pohdintaa oman, yksityyksen päiväkirjakatkelman työstämisestä näyttämölle*. (2013)
36. Soile Lahdenperä: *Muutoksen tilassa – Alexander-tekniikka koreografisen prosessin osana*. (2013)
37. Eeva Anttila: *Koko koulu tanssii! – kehollisen oppimisen mahdollisuuksia kouluyhteisössä*. (2013)
38. Linda Gold: *Altered Experience in Dance/Dancing Investigation into the Nature of Altered Experience in Dancing and Pedagogical Support*. (2014)
39. Annemari Untamala: *Coping with Not-knowing by Co-confidencing in Theatre Teacher Training: A Grounded Theory*. (2014)
40. Pilvi Porkola: *Esitys tutkimuksena - näkökulmia poliittiseen, dokumentaariseen ja henkilökohtaiseen esitystaiteeseen*. (2014)
41. Isto Turpeinen: *Raakalautaa ja rakkautta. Kolme sommitelmaa oman elämän tanssista*. (2015)
42. Jussi Lehtonen: *Elämäntunto – Näyttelijä kohtaa hoitolaitsyleisön* (2015)
43. Davide Giovanzana *Theatre Enters! – The Play within the Play as a Means of Disruption* (2015)

In this doctoral research Per Roar introduces the concepts of docudancing and griefscape. He explores here a contextual approach to choreography through making the trilogy *Life & Death* and probing into three different socio-political contexts of loss and grieving, all related to complicated grieving processes brought about by death and dying. They span from private and individual to communal experiences of loss and grieving: from the deeply personal loss of a close friend in an airplane crash, to *memento mori* and our mortality, and the traumatic legacy of the Bosnian War.

In his artistic research strategy, Per Roar approached these socio-political contexts as an ethnographer by making use of ethnographic tools and fieldwork as integral parts of his enquiry. He describes and discusses what this strategy implied – also for his choreographic thinking and outlook, and hence, he questions the potentiality and agency of choreography in the encounter with a socio-political reality such as grieving.

Per Roar works as an artist and researcher based in choreography. He holds degrees in choreography (BA) from the Oslo National Academy of the Arts and in Performance Studies (MA) from the New York University. His socio-political interest and contextually-based approach to choreography and artistic work and research draw on his background in history and social sciences (Cand. Mag) from the University of Oslo and the Karl Marx University (now: Corvinus) in Budapest and the Oxford University in Oxford.



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