



Hochschule für Musik
und Darstellende Kunst
Frankfurt am Main

Dance as a Shared Practice

Laboratory as a Means for Mindful Learning and Exchange in Contemporary Dance

Ulla Mäkinen

November 23,2009

Masters of Arts in Contemporary Dance Pedagogy (MAztp)
Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst, Frankfurt am Main

Prof. Kurt Koegel

Evaluator: Ka Rustler



Hochschule für Musik
und Darstellende Kunst
Frankfurt am Main

Dance as a Shared Practice

Laboratory as a Means for Mindful Learning and Exchange in Contemporary Dance

Ulla Mäkinen

November 23, 2009

Masters of Arts in Contemporary Dance Pedagogy (MAztp)
Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst, Frankfurt am Main

Mentor: Prof. Dieter Heitkamp

Matriculation-No. 10863

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis was composed by myself and that I have used no additional sources other than those cited in the thesis.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ulle M. K.", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Contents:

INTRODUCTION

I Theme of Research	1
II Ways of Research	3
III Intentions of Research	4

PART 1 — Proposals for Practice

1.1 Why Laboratory?	6
1.2 Function of Laboratory	9
1.3 Establishing Practice	14
1.4 Paradox of Goal	18
1.5 On Mindfulness and Collaboration	24
1.6 Approaching Facilitation	28
1.7 Laboratory Practice in Contact Improvisation	32

PART 2 — Experiences from Laboratories

2.1 In the Laboratory with Confucius	35
2.2 Welding the Theft	39
2.3 Naming the Hero	43
2.4 Who is the Teacher?	48
2.5 Who wants to Learn?	54
2.6 Action and Reflection	59
2.7 One More Thing — Agreeing on Conflicts	63
2.8 To see the Other	67

2.9 On Courage, On Generosity (So, My Soul Could Be Sitting On Your Shoulder?)	72
--	----

PART 3 — Proposals for Structure

3.1 Considering Structure	76
3.2 Structure Proposals	80

CONCLUSION	87
-------------------	----

REFERENCES	89
-------------------	----

APPENIDICES

Appendix A Definitions of Terms	92
Appendix B The Interviewees	96
Appendix C The Interviewees' Definitions of Laboratory	98

Fragments of Laboratory — DVD

Dance as a Shared Practice

Laboratory as a Means for Mindful Learning and Exchange in Contemporary Dance

INTRODUCTION

I: Theme of Research

In my thesis work, I propose approaches to working in laboratory settings in the field of contemporary dance.¹⁾ I put forth my research of the potentiality of a laboratory structure for dance practitioners, and examine how the prospects of laboratory settings could be adapted and used for dance education. I direct this research towards dance professionals with experience and interest in teaching, and from there, propose how the work can also be used for mixed groups made up of students and professionals.

My viewpoint is that of a teacher-facilitator, and my approach is andragogical²⁾, examining both professional dance education, as well as the contemporary freelance field. There are moments where my focus fluctuates and incorporates not only the various experiences of non-professional dancers, but also many of the same elements and relevant tools. I focus on how, as a teacher, one can find ways to facilitate laboratories in these fields. I do not limit the subject of facilitating to a certain topic, but rather intend to open the possibilities for different methods and forms to be further researched in a laboratory structure. Although focusing on facilitation, I acknowledge the possibility of working in laboratories without a facilitator, which could even be seen as an underlying intention and direction of the practice proposed.

In my subjective experience, I have often encounter that contemporary dancers do not possess the skills to work in a laboratory, and based on this, I question how

much such working methods as laboratories are addressed in dance education.³⁾ Aside from classes and rehearsals, I see dance students lacking the appropriate settings for exploring and developing their own, distinctive approach to dance. It surprises me how uncommon it is to verbalize and exchange ideas and information in the studies of contemporary dance outside of the traditional one-way teacher to student exchange of information, but in a dialogue weighted less on giving answers and more on research.

From my own experiences in a new-dance based contemporary dance education⁴⁾ -which emphasized mutual exploration together with teachers and process-oriented working methods- and my growing interest in somatic approaches⁵⁾, improvisation, and contact improvisation as dancer, I am strongly influenced by such methods with reciprocal exchange. These ways of working are spreading, but not yet self-evident amongst contemporary dancers. My intention is to draw from the knowledge already existing, for example from contact improvisation where laboratory is a commonly-used tool, and offer my discoveries as applicable to a wider field of dance not yet so accustomed to the nature of laboratory work.

I propose a structure which is more about practice and learning ways to practice; a space to examine one's individual work of art and concomitantly to exchange with others. In co-existence with classes, laboratories support the embodiment of the material previously studied and vice versa: classes supply laboratories with information resources and references. Accordingly, I see the potential of laboratories for professional dancers as an alternative to training in traditional dance classes. This structure can challenge and nourish dance artists more than merely attending classes, offer possibilities for presenting and sharing work and finding work partners, as well as give an opportunity for practicing in-between artistic projects or productions to stay physically, mentally, and artistically fit. The meeting and exchange between artists enables cross-pollination of techniques and personal styles to take place, thus creating space for fresh ideas to emerge.

II: Ways of Research

The topic of laboratory in dance is not new, but it is also not written about much. Thus, my research on the topic is largely based on practical experience.

Central to my research, I invited two dance artists and teachers, Joerg Hassmann (Germany) and Ronja Verkasalo (Finland)⁶⁾ to work with me on the topic of laboratory. Within the duration of four days, we explored this topic by means of discussions, interviews, and laboratory settings. I documented the work and edited this material into a DVD, which supplements the written part of my thesis and can be found in the attachment. This exchange took place in June 2009 in the studios and surroundings of Ponderosa TanzLand, Stolzenhagen.

In addition to interviewing Hassmann and Verkasalo, I also interviewed director-choreographer, performer, and writer, David Lakein (USA/Berlin).⁶⁾

Thirdly, I refer to the Barcelona International Dance Exchange - a platform for professional dancers and students, which I co-created and organize with choreographer and teacher, Sebastian Garcia Ferro (Argentina/Spain) and dancer and teacher, Daniel Werner (Germany). The first annual four-day exchange, focusing on working in laboratory settings, took place in February 2009 in Barcelona and included 35 artists from 14 different countries.⁷⁾

Lastly, I refer to Tanzsprint09, a week of workshops co-organized by the Master students of HfMDK Frankfurt, where I offered a laboratory for dance practitioners and students. Here, I could bring my central proposals into practice. My intention was to gather a mixed group including professional dance workers from the region, as well as students of dance and dance pedagogy.

Throughout my writing, I refer to books, articles and notes I consider relevant and related to the topic at hand (such as artists and teachers including Julyen Hamilton, Deborah Hay, and Mike Vargas). I refer to such methods as Body-Mind Centering (BMC),⁸⁾ Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)⁹⁾, and dance research related to the topic (Eva Anttila, Bojana Kunst). In addition, I incorporate sources

from literature not directly involving dance, such as books from Alphonso Lingis (on philosophy) and Jon Kabat-Zinn (on mindfulness as practice). I also explain how the concept of laboratory is and has been used in the arts, outside of the field of contemporary dance (referring to Mika Hannula), as well as in the field of business (referring to Kirsten Brühl).

In this text, the passages in *italics* are excerpts from my diary and to separate these writings from the main body of the text.

III: Intentions of Research

My intention is to study and write about dance as a shared practice and to define central concepts of a mindful, communicative, supportive, and less hierarchical way of exchange – which I refer to as a laboratory. I foresee this as an attempt to lessen the lack of research about laboratories in dance and encourage dance practitioners, especially teachers, to look for supplementary methods for making, exploring, and sharing within performing arts.

Ultimately, I believe dance practice with mindfulness not only serves the creative development of an individual, but also increases awareness and creativity in our work communities, consequently allowing our art form to influence the way we perceive and interact with the challenges of our society.

1) The word laboratory derives from the Latin "laboratorium", literally meaning a place for labor or work. One of the latest trends in our society has been to apply laboratories, or informally, "labs", to many various fields from the business world to the art world to experiment with innovative ways of working, collaborating, and researching. While these notions could define a laboratory in dance education as well, I want to underline the nature of not-knowing and learning that can take place in such collaborative way of working.

2) "Andragogy" focuses on adult learning, in contrast to the commonly misused word "pedagogy" which originally refers to educating children. In my thesis, I do not focus on teaching children, but refer to learning as a general life-long process and stress laboratory structure for the use of professional dance education and training for adolescents and adults. Thus, rather than using the word pedagogy in my thesis, I refer to teaching, education, and learning processes.

3) For example, offering laboratory structures in events such as BIDE, where most of the dancers are unfamiliar with the form and/or have no experience in facilitating a laboratory situation. However, I am aware that there are studies increasingly focusing on research, thus educating dancers to be more in the

mind of exploration and not-knowing. Also, many performance projects are based on periods of laboratory research, thus dancers are encountering labs in their professional work.

4) New dance is a trend of contemporary dance, born in the 1980's, and influenced by Eastern philosophies, ways of holistic thinking, and various somatic approaches. Mainly through improvisation, new dance is expressed by natural movement, respecting the individual's limitations rather than aiming for certain aesthetics. My own education as dancer in Outokumpu, Finland in 2001-2004 was based on the working methods of new dance, emphasizing experiential processes and research, and producing movement by understanding the body's mechanics. New dance was brought to Finland by Jaana and Jaap Klevering in the 1980's directly from its source, the School of New Dance Development in Amsterdam. Kirsi Monni, a professor of dance, describes contemporary dance as a dance method where two starting points of dance are entwined: the aesthetic-technical dance, deriving from the tradition of aesthetics, and new dance (Anna Jussilainen: *Uuden Tanssin Uskontokulttuuriset ulottuvuudet*, Pro Gradu, Turku, Finland 2007, p. 41. Kirsi Monni, *Olemisen Poettinen Liike*, doctoral dissertation, Helsinki, 2004, p 197).

5) Somatic approach: deriving from the word, "soma", was originally used by Thomas Hanna throughout 1960's and 70's to designate the experienced body in contrast to the objectified body. According to the somatic approach, experiencing the body from within, the body and mind are not separated but are experienced as a whole. Somatics is the study of the body through the personal experiential perspective (Cohen, Bonnie Bainbridge: *Sensing, Feeling and Action*, Contact Editions. Northampton, MA, 1993, p.1). Somatic approaches, however, can be seen to include a range of different methods, such as BMC, the Alexander Technique, and the Feldenkrais Method.

6) An introduction to Verkasalo, Hassmann and Lakein can be found in the appendix.

7) More information about BIDE can be found in www.bide.be.

8) BMC, Body-Mind Centering was developed by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, and the school of Body-Mind Centering was founded by her in 1973. In Bainbridge Cohen's words, BMC is "an ongoing, experiential journey into the alive and changing territory of the body. The explorer is the mind — our thoughts, feelings, energy, soul, and spirit. Through this journey we are led to an understanding of how the mind is expressed through the body in movement" Cohen, Bonnie Bainbridge: *Sensing, Feeling and Action*, Contact Editions. Northampton, MA, 1993, p.1

9) NLP, Neuro-Linguistic Programming, was developed out of the modeling of human thinking skills. The NLP modeling process involves researching how the brain works by analyzing language patterns and non-verbal communication. NLP can be used e.g. to define creative processes by modeling mental strategies, thus provide ways to stimulate and develop personal creativity, as well as creative group processes. In my thesis, I refer to Epstein, R.W.Dilts, and R.B. Dilts in their book about NLP entitled, *Tools For Dreamers* (Capitola, CA, 1991).

PART 1 Proposals for Practice

1.1 Why Laboratory?

Dance, in my way of looking at it, is an ongoing study. I see dance as a practice. For me, it is vividly connected to working in the consciousness of the moment, both in the space of my body-mind, as well as in the space around my being, in relation to other people and the environment and the society I was raised in, with its history and its present situation.

My life is shaped by my patterns of learning and embodiment, inevitably influenced by teachings and experiences I have gained. Each moment unfolds as a conscious or unconscious receiving and filtering of information, and from these moments, my perception builds the way I look at myself, as well as at this planet. It is a dynamic multi-layered picture-in-progress.

Thus, in this dynamic flow of information, I strongly value the notion of ongoing learning. I value curiosity and courage to leave the known, in order to go to the unknown, to the discomfort of the ever-changing reality. Learning, in this sense, is beyond educational aspirations. It is deeply connected to the making of art itself. I am looking for ways to share this process of ongoing learning in dialogue with people of different viewpoints and backgrounds. Such exchange - creating a mutual flow of information- serves me as dancer and dance teacher, as well as serves me as human being, inseparably. This is the nature of my practice and thus, also the base of my work.

My intention is to research laboratory as one method for a fruitful dialogue and practice in dance.

We live in an illusion of mobility and connectedness; in a society where the sense of time is enhanced and with an overflow of methods and information available. In this abundance of choice, how does one decide what to select, what to

listen to amongst all the background noise of all the stimuli in our world? And how does one live, process, and move with all that information?

Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, the founder of Body-Mind Centering, emphasizes how important it is that the attention and intention align with the movement one is doing. She talks about the necessity of the cooperation of that what stimulates you and that what you want to do in relation to that stimulation.¹⁾ I translate this principle of movement into dance practice and say that the teachings we are exposed to as dancers should be in dialogue with the individual intentions and dreams we want to experience, in order to make sense of and to embody that what was learned, and not merely to rush through experiences one after another. I am curious to discover what dancers do with all the stimuli of teachings, all the abundance of actions and how they align them with their dreams, their intention, their direction of art work. I am curious to research what kind of structures and ways of thinking, in this world that we live in right now, could support dance as a practice.

I chose to research laboratory as such a structure, because I see its potential in working with the questions relevant to me, as well as fitting for the times that we live in, in society, as well as in the development of contemporary dance. In laboratory, I can question the effectiveness, the acceleration, the goal-orientation of this contemporary style of work. I can question if collaboration is something deeper than just a trend, if something beyond Nokia is connecting people. I can give time and attention to the patterns of learning and embodying, instead of constantly consuming new information. Referring to Mika Hannula, a Finnish art curator, teacher and critic, and director of Helsinki Academy of Fine Arts: I can bring the attention to the hardware instead of only developing software, "away from computer programs to artistic practice".²⁾

In laboratory, I can work with raw ideas, in exchange with others and, as this opens up the possibilities for new innovations, collaborations and knowledge to be born, it also establishes a way of studying, teaching, dancing, and looking at the world. It is about learning rather than affirming what is already known. It is also

about emphasizing exchange, diversity, and a sense of community without constructing separation between people with different thoughts, styles, values, or goals. For me, it is concurrently enhancing the potentiality of creativity in artistic practice and valuing humanity in learning dance.

In the mind of a learner, this would mean to be encouraged to focus on what is possible and interesting instead of on only what is being taught; emphasizing the process of building an artistic and physical practice instead of merely receiving information. It would mean a certain release from set models of how to think or how to be shaped in order to be a dancer and assign responsibility to the dancer to be the one in charge of creating patterns of thinking, of moving, and of behavior. It would mean humanity in the sense that the subject of the student, the artist him or herself, is responsible for the shapes and directions created; actively taking part in the learning process of dance, and guided in the process of developing and applying the gained knowledge towards individual interests, parallel to the situations of more traditional teachings, and in the framework of a certain educational curriculum.

In the mind of a teacher, this would mean creating those guided chances, introducing ways of practice — as in a laboratory — in dance classes and dance education. As for me, the most intelligent way to educate artists to collaborate in mindful ways would be to introduce structures to do that in the education itself.

1) "It's very important when you do a movement that your attention (which is what is stimulating you) and your intent (which is what you want to do in relation to that stimulation) align up with the movement that you're doing. It's a key" (Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, *Sensing, Feeling, and Action*, Contact Editions, Northampton, MA, USA, 1993, p105).

2) "In our case, we need to move away from software to our version of hardware, away from computer programmes to artistic practice." (Mika Hannula, "Catch Me If You Can: Chances and Challenges of Artistic Research", *Art&Research*, Volume 2 No.2 Spring 2009, <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n2/hannula1.html>, June 5,2009).

1.2 Function of Laboratory

Function — What role does this play in the world and what roles do each of the ingredients play relative to each other and to the whole?¹⁾

One of the functions of laboratory is the situation it creates to encourage dialogue. Instead of having one person in charge of information input, all the participants of a laboratory are resources for the knowledge available for work. To access this knowledge, one needs to open up beyond one's individual knowledge, but also beyond the traditional teacher-student concept of there being someone who knows, and others who do not know. Through accessing the diverse information in the space, cross-pollination between forms, ideas and styles can occur.²⁾

One central advantage of participating as a student in a situation where the teacher-facilitator is not the only source of information is that it provides the next generation to also become such teachers and leaders themselves. The more students are taught in a style of "this is the way to do it", the more they might embody such role themselves later on, instead of deepening and questioning the already known, or letting their students deepen and question the knowledge. Simultaneously, as the roles of dancer, teacher, choreographer, dramaturge, et cetera are blurring in collaborations and artists are creatively multi-tasking with each other, laboratory offers a situation to shuffle, confuse, and contradict the traditional separation of roles. In a laboratory, the facilitator-initiator of research can be the one who learns the most, and the dancer can get engaged with writing, while another dancer might become curious of visual input and the visually-oriented choreographer might find another viewpoint in exchange with the somatic approach of the teacher.

As another central function, laboratory offers a playground for research, for finding out what one can be, beyond what is already known - and for its inversion, finding out what one already knows and possibly wants to un-pattern, or recharge, or develop.

When people reach a certain amount of knowledge in a learning situation, the potentiality to open the situation for individuals to research their own ways of being and doing becomes invaluable. In my interview with Ronja Verkasalo, she states:

“I think often in dance education, there is a certain model that you want to reach, instead of what is actually art — what do you do when you are an artist? If you are scientist, you need to be able to play, you need to be able to put things together in a way that they weren’t put together before. That is the essence of the work. It really strikes me that in most dance education, the students are not brought to face this essence, but lead away from it, because of authority figures who have their own views of how things are. At which point do you give your students the freedom to find their own ways?”³⁾

I believe that this point can and should be reached sooner rather than later. Considering education, I see ways of working in laboratories possible from the beginning onwards. And as the base of knowledge and skills increase and improve, the laboratory settings can also change, open up and deepen. For example, with a workshop of five days, regardless if they are amateurs, students or professional dancers, half-way through the week there is so much knowledge in the room that nobody is a complete beginner on the topic anymore and these structures of working in laboratory settings can easily be applied. This, in my experience, works even with non-professionals - or maybe even better with non-professionals than trained dancers as they have less predetermined notions of what should happen in a workshop!

Concerning professional dance education, I am convinced that laboratory-like structures can be part of the education from the beginning, as well. I believe the capability of working in laboratory settings is available after a reasonable amount of information exists that the people share creating a certain logical whole, concerning a subject or a style in question. For example, after an anatomical approach to the bone structure of a certain body part, a group can research its functions deeper in their own systems, relating to other body parts, each other, or knowledge about

other body structures, just as they can research how to bring it to artistic work, such as performing or choreographing, or perhaps writing or documenting with other media, or even educational or social work - the possibilities are limitless.

Thus, I see a lot of potential in contemporary dance to adopt principles of working already widely used in other fields. I will look at laboratory in the light of open-source principle, which is common for scientific research and is also used in today's business culture. A lot of practices that are spreading in our society and that are definitely contemporary in their ways of thinking horizontally, open-mindedly, and non-hierarchically, have not yet broken through in contemporary dance education; and I believe this has to do with the nature of education. It takes time to make changes in institutions and to challenge the methods of older generations, therefore changes in thinking are slower to take root than in other fields or environments.

However, regardless of all the models that today's progressive networking or communication studies could offer, or the possibilities that the fusions of styles and occupations, availability of multimedia, and the general attitude of interconnectedness could enable, the function of laboratory in dance comes down to the basics of the art form, namely sharing the practice of dance. In her book, *My Body, the Buddhist*, Deborah Hay asks, "how many dance students dance uninterruptedly for at least forty minutes daily, outside of rehearsing, choreographing, or physically stretching? Why is this not a four-year requirement for every college dance student? How else can a person develop an intimate dialogue with their body?"⁴⁾

I agree with Hay, but would even add something to her open-ending statement: how many dance students, after the dancing, share something about their experience with someone else? How else could a dancer create an intimate dialogue with another dancer? Thus, the dancing could become an exchange that continues forming and evolving in words and in the relationship to one another, into a dialogue with the outer world, and feed in back to the inner dialogue again. Through action and reflection, the dancers creates a loop where one nourishes the

other, with each cycle entering deeper into the subject, thus defining his or her approach to the topic and approach to the art itself. This, indeed, I could imagine as a four-year requirement for each dance student.

To summarize and answer Mike Vargas's question in the beginning of the chapter: some of the functions I have found thus far to be relevant in laboratories from the viewpoint of education are: learning to verbalize, to expand vocabulary, to communicate, to facilitate situations, to challenge the known, to be observed and observe, to create, to relate and reflect personal statements, and above all, to establish personal practice.

To establish the function of laboratories in this world and their individual components relative to each other and to the whole, I can only offer my humble, though ideal, vision: a laboratory could offer a structure with less hierarchy, less ambitious goal-orientation and more mindfulness, responsibility and self-responsiveness, less visually-oriented and more holistically-based information, occupied less with linear and more with radial ways of thinking. With less proofing and more not-knowing⁵⁾, we could radically alter the way we perceive ourselves, each other, and our surroundings and increase constructive communication, compassion, collaboration, creativity, support, and sense of community. Asking instead of knowing and listening more than talking as a base of education would, in my ideal world, lead to a more peaceful and open-minded way of participating and living in this world.

1) Mike Vargas, "Looking at Composition Is Like Painting the Golden Gate Bridge – 86 Aspects of composition", *Contact Quarterly*, Summer/Fall 2003, p 28-34.

2) Naturally, this form of working implies that there is already a certain amount of information available. Nevertheless, even with more inexperienced dancers there is a deep knowledge in knowing how to learn, in daring to question, in finding approaches that can bring collaboration much further than only fact-based knowledge or experience as dancer or dance teacher. Working together is as much about social skills as creativity. However, in my research and studies, I do recommend laboratory as a structure parallel or mixed with teaching structures for people to be able to source their physical, as well as verbal knowledge of dance and arts.

3) Author's interview with Ronja Verkasalo and Joerg Hassmann during laboratory research in Stolzenhagen, Germany, May 31, 2009.

4) Deborah Hay, *My Body the Buddhist*, Middletown, CT, 2000, p 1.

5) With "not-knowing", I mean a state where questions are encouraged and with no direct answers provided. Human tendency is to repeat what is already known, but for learning, one needs to expand the known by going to areas yet unknown. Not-knowing is not about undervaluing knowledge, but quite the

opposite: it is an attitude of inviting and giving space for new information, perspectives, and opinions rather than holding on to established ways of thinking.

1.3 Establishing Practice

As a dancer and dance teacher, I am constantly looking for a good practice. A practice of working which has space for dialogue of individual interpretations. A practice, which is guided by curiosity and mindfulness rather than authority, ambition, or self-absorbance. A practice, which, and within which, I can share with my students, with my teachers, or with my collaborates, and which aims for supporting one's artistic subjectivity, as well as the exchange and interaction between individuals.

When I teach, I often wonder, how dancers establish and maintain their practice. How does one choose what one filters and from which ingredients one's own vocabulary and skills are developing in the abundance of methods the contemporary field of dance offers? Is it conscious, what one chooses? Is this process of figuring out one's own practice, learning to exchange and reflect and create, named, valued or guided enough in dance education? It seems that the whole notion of practice is not that often addressed or consciously worked with in dance classes.

So, what do I mean with a practice? In this context, for me it is the actions and reflections that one works with as a dancer, as an artist, beyond any occasional piece of work. Practice is about how one works with one self; it is a palette of rituals with a longer span, which are a part, a support and a mean of one's own artistic research and routine. In Mika Hannula's words, as he is asking what the qualifications for a practice are: "As you might already suspect, they are anything and everything. A practice is any activity, as such, which makes sense, and which is done systematically – potentially like sitting on a bus, collecting fir cones, doing experimental walks in a park while carrying an expressionistic oil painting over your shoulder. A practice that always has a certain past, present and future, but a practice that has to be open-ended."¹⁾ According to Hannula, the process of practice is slow

and opposes the general speed of our contemporary society and institutions: this process is intended to last for a lifetime.²⁾

The concept of a good life being about an ongoing search for a good life, originally from Aristotle, is well applicable to the idea of an artist's good practice. Returning to Hannula, in his article "Catch me if you can: Chances and Challenges In Artistic Research", he talks about artistic research as a practice with e.g. reflecting to MacIntyre's writings about Aristotle's "good life". Similar to the search of a good life, would be the search of a good practice by continually questioning and seeking what is good practice. Hannula writes:

When we say "good practice comes from good practice", it is not tautology if and when the given practice – whatever that might be – is seen not as static, stable and given, but as something that is constantly developing, that is open to challenges both from within its sphere and from similar, adjacent viewpoints. [...] It is an incentive to go back to the basics of the activity of a practice. Asking: what makes it what it is, and what might help it to become a little better at what it tries to do and achieve?³⁾

With this ongoing, open-ended question about a good practice, I research laboratory as a structure to establish, question, and exchange ways of practice. Whatever the theme of work, a laboratory, to me, always has a meta-level of researching what a practice is, both on an individual and on a collaborative level.

Joerg Hassmann states:

In some of the most important moments in studying, when students are supposed to find ideas, have their first try-outs or make their own pieces, they start with a kind of laboratory. That is the normal frame where laboratory is used unconsciously, because there is no other choice. But we teachers didn't give them the tools for it, or not enough tools to create good spaces to find or develop their own ideas. Because what the students know is teaching situations, where knowledge is what matters — but the creative process happens in a moment that they don't know yet, where they have to discover everything on their own. Why do we leave them alone in this most important moment?⁴⁾

The intention with presenting laboratory as a working structure is not in creating new means of working, but in addressing the already existing exchange, naming it and its challenges - and finding ways to give it focus and value. Thus, my

proposal of laboratory is about finding mindfulness and awareness by becoming conscious of this already existing process.

The exchange in itself, of course, could not non-exist; we are plural beings, we are born in a world in which exchange with the environment is implied, constant, and necessary for survival. The exchange is already happening. Therefore, to establish artistic practice means to acknowledge the obvious existence of exchange and become more and more conscious of it.

To be able to exchange, one needs to come out with one's own input, statement, action, reflection. This is taking responsibility of one's own practice instead of staying passively fed from the outside. Practice for me is not about mere introspective indulgence; it is being involved with the inner, as well as with the outer.

Paradoxically, the study of art, such as dance, is not that often based on learning the skills of how to take responsibility, how to create input and take action, how to work as an artist. Verkasalo says, "it is very important that if you are educating artists that you actually give them tools to work as artists, not just as students." According to her, working in a laboratory setting is a step to rise into the responsibility of the work, where it is not only about receiving and processing material. She says:

It is definitely like a professional training, it is something that needs to happen at some point. The earlier and the more naturally people get used to this, stepping up to the responsibility, for the research and for the question of not knowing, and stepping up to the discomfort level of not knowing, and not knowing in front of other people, and then, into the sharing the not knowing and realizing how fruitful that can be, the better equipped they will be to answer the demands of the professional work as artists and independent decision makers.⁵⁾

A structure such as that of laboratories is needed in dance education to support the individuals in researching their own practice and their potentiality. Naturally, the potentiality is not worth much if it is not lived and made into reality, established in one's own discipline. Only through doing can one embody and define practice. In the light of Aristotle's good practice, Hannula writes:

The definition of a good practice cannot stem from somewhere outside it. Each practice must define itself, not alone, but rather in close interaction with other practices and ways of expression. This is done in interaction and through experience. In a larger framework, it is done through tradition, by developing it, breaking away from it, and then returning back to it. It is again the act of getting close in order to distance yourself, the act of push and pull, give and take.⁶⁾

As Hannula says, a practice must define itself, from the inside, but in an interaction with other practices. A practice would not exist without another one, as well as an individual would not exist without another. There needs to be a surface of friction, a perspective, with which to work. In sharing the practice, questions are given space. This notion of practice, as well as the typical research of laboratory are strongly process-oriented, rather than working towards a certain product.

However, being process-oriented does not mean that there would not be any goals or outcome. Working in laboratory eventually brings up the question of goal orientation. What is the outcome of this process? What is this practice for? Is there an individual goal, or a collaborative goal, and if so, how are they approached?

1, 3, 6) Mika Hannula, "Catch Me If You Can: Chances and Challenges of Artistic Research", *ART&RESEARCH: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods*. Volume 2. No. 2. Spring 2009, <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n2/hannula1.html>, June 5, 2009 .

2) "It is a slow process, intended to last a complete lifetime, which in itself places it absolutely in the opposite corner to so many of the trends and dynamics of today's universities, not to mention the rhythms and tempos of contemporary art." Mika Hannula, "Catch Me If You Can: Chances and Challenges of Artistic Research", *ART&RESEARCH: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods*. Volume 2. No. 2. Spring 2009, <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n2/hannula1.html>, June 5, 2009 .

4) Author's interview with Ronja Verkasalo and Joerg Hassmann during laboratory research in Stolzenhagen, Germany, May 31, 2009.

5) Author's interview with Ronja Verkasalo and Joerg Hassmann during laboratory research in Stolzenhagen, Germany, May 31, 2009.

1.4 Paradox of Goal

Process — What is the sequence and nature of the physical and intellectual events that determine the outcome? ¹⁾

In a class situation, the commitment to a traditional teacher-student structure ensures a rather stable starting point. It is clear that the teacher is in the role of defining the focus and goal of the lesson. Normally, in a class, the reasons for being there and queries of a goal are not brought to discussion (although it is natural for a student to ask what the teacher is looking for in an exercise, or what the point is of what one is supposed to do, this in my eyes is not brought to dialogue with the student's own wishes or intuition about his/her goals and intentions), whereas in a laboratory, the various questions, intentions and goals are brought into dialogue and co-existence.

In this chapter, I look at the nature of goals and their role in laboratory work.

A collaboration, in its nature, inhabits a common goal orientation, a certain finalization of the process. In a laboratory, there is not necessarily a common goal, such as performance or showing of the work. The intentions of each individual may, and should, vary. However, I cannot say this means that laboratories should not have a goal. For example, a facilitator might have the goal of bringing more awareness of feedback in the work on a certain moment, or a participant might have an underlying goal of developing his own movement qualities, even when the laboratory itself is not goal oriented. The complexity of working with no common goal, simultaneously being goal-oriented at times, creates a paradox.

Verkasalo states: "the goal puts the focus away from what is already here, what we have." She mentions how often times the concept of goal brings the awareness away from here and now, even when the actual here and now is what is needed to get to the goal.²⁾ This affects the quality of the work. Bojana Kunst touches on the same issue, but from the opposite angle. Her question is how to think about collaboration with no common goal. She says: "when the goal is not defined, we do not work with the quantitative measures; then we can talk about qualitative steps."³⁾ For Kunst, working with a goal means to work with quantity, and only without a goal, can one work with quality.

Having a goal defines the use of time in the process, and the use of time is connected to the quality, to the value of the work. In BIDE⁴⁾, a structure of laboratories was used where each group was committed to one laboratory for the whole day, and in the evenings, we had showings where each laboratory group shared their work. We encouraged the groups to spend the last hour of the laboratory to consider how to present the work that had taken place that day. With some groups, this created some tension of having to present something as a result, thus they could not engage to the process without caring about bringing it to some kind of conclusion which could be verbalized or shown physically. On the other hand, the notion of showing helped to create a container, brought a sense of support and sharing to the event, and clarified the work as it needed to be presented in an understandable manner.

However, having such a presentation can limit the outcome of a laboratory to a narrow product and does not always value the individual discoveries and diversity of outcomes or the still ongoing process itself. In this kind of structure, as with BIDE, the one-day laboratory is brought to a resolution where it can be reflected upon. However, this resolution itself is not the goal. If the process itself is the goal and enough to be presented as such, how can we work without the presentation of our work becoming the goal?

In my interview with David Lakein, I asked for his approach to goal. Lakein states:

Not just specifically in laboratories, but perhaps especially in laboratories, there needs to be a reorienting of our thinking to embrace a notion that a process is a product and a product is a process. That's the only way we have a chance of entering a more experimental state of mind.⁵⁾

Lakein continues with the goal-orientation of education, stating how education is increasingly becoming a product, even in art schools.⁶⁾ In these surroundings, the challenge is, according to him, to "appreciate and embody the paradox." He says:

As much as there needs to be the passion, the insistence, the willingness and the generosity of going into something and trying to discover something, there needs to be simultaneously a non-attachment of success or failure. If we get back into these paradigms and dichotomies of success and failure, which is about product, which is about the way in which we determine whether we've reached a goal or not, then the danger is that we become subservient to that. And we're not able to, in instances where we might be pushed towards entering into more uncertainty, to actually go there, because the pull to something or the pull to reach our goals, overpowers that.⁷⁾

It is challenging to keep going towards not knowing and questioning if there is a pull towards a goal. A goal does not, as a concept, allow uncertainty. However, uncertainty is needed to step into new territories and make discoveries, to learn and unlearn, to have potential for change. I see Verkasalo, Kunst and Lakein touching on the topic of goal in the same sense, though with different words. For not to work merely focusing on a goal, a product somewhere in the future, and to be more in the moment of now, we need to let go of a certain goal orientation. At the same time, there needs to be a direction, and even goal orientation, to bring focus and container to the process.

Hassmann states that in his experience, it is good to have a rough direction for a laboratory. This direction can evolve in the beginning of the laboratory, or be a question, or something that has initiated the whole laboratory itself.⁸⁾ The direction can be, as it was in our case, a starting point - in our trio laboratory with Hassmann and Verkasalo, we decided to have anatomical starting points, but no other intentional goal. This was enough to contain the exploration and serve our curiosity, yet keep the work focused.

For Hassmann, the starting point serves as giving a direction. This can be also established in the beginning of the laboratory, if it is not yet stated beforehand.

Normally, I do find it helpful if there is an idea of the direction already before the laboratory starts so that people who come together already have a certain common denominator, an agreement of which topic(s) the time together will be spent on. This starting point, for example, an anatomy-based question, can serve as something to refer back to if the focus gets too dispersed later on. Lakein says:

What's really good as a strategy, or an approach making that paradox slightly more manageable, is having these moments - some people call them check-in moments, some people call them assessing moments - where one can a little bit step out of the entire project and revisit what the agreements are or whether something needs to be adjusted or not.⁹⁾

I would strongly emphasize having the paradox of a goal available for discussion in the structure of laboratory. The starting points, also the mind-set with which one approaches these starting points, should be named and clarified. For example, if the starting point of the laboratory is anatomical, is there space to connect these anatomical discoveries to educational approaches of exercises or choreographic ideas arriving from the anatomical work? Also, if the approach is to, let's say, initiate movement from the bones of the feet as a starting point, can this open up the possibility of finding the connection all the way to the clavicle? And is there space to find a more philosophical, or political, or very personal statement inside this container?

I see the cross-pollination of different methods and techniques, as well as approaches (focusing on researching movement, teaching, or performance, etc) as the focal point in the laboratory situation. While one engages herself with the possibilities of teaching her students about the bones of the foot, the other one may find a way to relate to the audience by using the notions of the foot to connect to the floor while dancing - these two dancers/teachers are still bound by the same starting point of the anatomy of the foot and can continue exploring and welcoming further ideas, while feeding off each other's expertise and ideas. If, at any point, the process becomes too confusing, the group or facilitator can decide to revisit the agreements of the laboratory, as Lakein suggested. This way, the direction does not hinder individual discoveries, nor does it hinder the possibility to reconsider itself - the direction itself implies the possibility of changing the direction.

So, how can a dancer be simultaneously goal-oriented and not goal-oriented? And in which instances and situations does which one apply? Lakein gives one example to this: "Being goal-oriented has different manifestations and one is the manifestation that I'm gonna stay with this structure until I discover all the limitations of it. And in that instance, I would say that is a kind of goal-orientation which maybe facilitates entering into the unknown."¹⁰⁾

However, there is a difference if the goal-orientation comes from the side of a facilitator or from the side of the participant. If the facilitator is using, in Lakein's words, "the power of perseverance or insistence and not giving up too easily, but exploring where this one particular structure could lead", then there needs to be some kind of mutual agreement from the group that this is acceptable. Otherwise, in my understanding, the facilitator in her goal-orientation can come close to a style of teaching where the teacher wants to give a certain predetermined lesson for the students which I consider questionable. However, if this danger is avoided and the facilitator is guiding the whole group, including him/herself, into the unknown, I see the benefits of occasionally being even dominantly goal-oriented in supporting the common situation rather than only an individual need or ideal.

So, to sum up, the laboratory could be seen as a constant rearrangement between goal orientation and letting go of any intentional goal. To go even further, laboratory is dealing with the notion of common goal, as well as the notion of individual goals. If we look at process being a product and vice versa, as Lakein suggests, then in my understanding, there is a constant balancing between the individual process-product and the common process-product.

Lakein continues:

The way in which you are departing from a moment of being goal-oriented to arriving into a moment of abandoning any notion of a goal, that's as important and as much where moments of potential discovery and transformation can take place - that I am clearly here in non-goal-orientation, or I am clearly here in goal-orientation.¹¹⁾

Even more, it is a constant dialogue between individuals moving from one state to another. It is a constructively unstable, dynamic situation, where permission to

question not only the topic, but the structure itself, prevails and where there is allowance to direct oneself towards one's individual desires, as well as to abandon any intentional direction or goal.

However engaged in the individual goal-orienting or disorienting process, a laboratory is simultaneously a collaborative group process. As much as it is about balancing between not having a goal or having a goal, it is also a balancing between the individual and the whole group. Then, what does it mean to collaborate with this approach to goal?

1) Mike Vargas, "Looking at Composition Is Like Painting the Golden Gate Bridge – 86 Aspects of composition", *Contact Quarterly*, Summer/Fall 2003, p 28-34.

2) Verkasalo: "Being in a class and seeing the goal, what is it that I should achieve, how I should get my leg up or whatever - as if I have a map and I am here on the map, but I want to get there. And if I am just focusing on there, how can I move from here, because I don't know what's around here. So, maybe I should start looking what's around here and eventually I will probably find my way there, or *there*, or even further... Somehow, the goal puts the focus away from what is already here, what do we have? And even - what we have, is what we have to get there. So, if we don't focus on what we have, then we're never going to get there. We might get somewhere that looks like it, but... it's kind of a paradox." Author's interview with Ronja Verkasalo and Joerg Hassmann during laboratory research in Stolzenhagen, Germany, May 31, 2009.

3) Bojana Kunst, freely from her talk in her workshop, "On Embodiment and Collaboration" May 22.-24, 2009. In HfMDK, Frankfurt am Main.

4) BIDE, Barcelona International Dance Exchange 2009, organized by Sebastian Garcia Ferro, Daniel Werner and Ulla Mäkinen.

5) Author's interview with David Lakein, June 26, 2009.

6) Lakein: "All these things about what school is and what learning is for us for so long and the way we think of it in the dominant western educational systems - it is so much goal-oriented and product-oriented. And the whole way that education, I would argue, not that it hasn't fluctuated, but the way it increasingly is becoming a product - an education is becoming a product - even in places or perhaps, especially in disturbing ways in places such as you and I find ourselves in, more artistic things. I am in an art school, and it is... To an extent in which I feel that I am part of a product, that container is extremely strong." Author's interview with David Lakein, June 26, 2009. .

7) Author's interview with David Lakein, June 26, 2009.

8) Hassmann: "For learning processes in general, I have the experience that it is helpful to have a kind of direction. If it is completely open, then you need to be very experienced to negotiate the whole process. So, sometimes I feel the rough direction can help. You might start finding out the rough direction in the lab. Maybe it is anatomy based, that we come back to, that's more the direction of a starting point." Author's interview with Ronja Verkasalo and Joerg Hassmann during laboratory research in Stolzenhagen, Germany, May 31, 2009.

9) ,10), 11) Author's interview with David Lakein, June 26, 2009.

1.5 Mindfulness and Collaboration

Collaboration — if there is more than one person or element involved, how are they cooperating? ¹⁾

A laboratory is one way of collaboration. It is, however, distinctive in its approach to goal and, generally, in its focus to practice for the sake of practice and not for another product than the concept of practice already contains.

I do struggle with using the term "collaboration" in the context of laboratory. While laboratory could be defined as a collaborative process, it also strongly values individual resolution and does not even looking for a common result, if it even searches for a result at all. In her text *Prognosis on Collaboration*, Bojana Kunst, a philosopher and contemporary art theoretician, refers to dance and performance theorist, Myriam van Imschoot, noting that the word collaboration is overused and has become a sort of catch-phrase, losing its meaning in the contemporary society. According to Imschoot, there is an excess of collaboration in our culture. Kunst continues:

The future of collaboration would necessarily have to encroach upon this collaborative excess and radically rethink the exclusivity of the present time, which is what brings people to work together. This is only possible if collaboration is freed from the arrest of the present time: from the arrest of deadlines, speed, simultaneous connections, the illusion of mobility, the hypocrisy of difference, the illusion of eternity, constant actualization. Today, it is namely very difficult (but perhaps easier with the huge crisis on the horizon, which has proved so many prognoses wrong so far) to persist in the potentiality, to open the path for material conditioning of our acts and doings together, to anticipate the future events independently of the already given scenario.²⁾

For me, the awareness of the potentiality in the present moment is essential for laboratory. As Kunst talks about rethinking the notion of collaboration for it to have a future, she also refers to freeing it from the world of deadlines, speed, constant actualization et cetera, which are all linked to our perception of time. I agree strongly with Kunst and would add that there is not only an excess of collaboration, it also seems to be a trend with the danger of creating collaboration just for the sake of collaboration, but without contemplating its meaning. Thus it risks becoming empty, insignificant, and undervalued.

To approach laboratory, I have decided to bring up the concept of mindfulness. I could state that laboratory is mindful collaboration. To me, this way of pairing the words releases collaboration of its contemporary tension and grounds the practice to the here and now, asking for awareness of illusions, hypocrisies, and above all, awareness of the potentiality of each moment. Through mindfulness, any abstract notion of excess becomes irrelevant, because the value and attention is on what we have right now, right here.

Jon Kabat-Zinn, author and Professor of Medicine, is the founding director of the Stress Reduction Clinic and the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. He defines mindfulness as:

Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally. This kind of attention nurtures greater awareness, clarity, and acceptance of present-moment reality. It wakes us up to the fact that our lives unfold only in moments. If we are not fully present for many of those moments, we may not only miss what is most valuable in our lives, but also fail to realize the richness and the depth of our possibilities for growth and transformation.³⁾

Kabat-Zinn continues later stating that mindfulness is the “direct opposite of taking life for granted”⁴⁾. This, I reason, links the definition of mindfulness to the notion of not-knowing and to the openness to the unknown.

In dance, I find it essential how people are introduced to the theme of collaboration. To be able to collaborate, one needs verbal and social skills, which are often undervalued in dance education. And, to be able to collaborate mindfully, one needs, in addition to the skills mentioned above, awareness and curiosity of the present moment and a willingness to be exposed in the learning process and transformation of the self.

I see it as central to cultivate more of a mind of non-judgmental attitude and acceptance in dance education. This does not exclude criticism or critical thinking, just the opposite, this can enable dialogue and dynamic feedback within the learning process. Paying attention to communication skills includes having access to constructive methods of feedback in the actuality of the praxis. In laboratory, this would mean that feedback could deliver awareness also to the giver, not only to the receiver. Being present in each moment keeps the potentiality of learning available for the student as well as the teacher, and the facilitator as well as the participant. This, I see, is the shift that collaboration needs to survive in order not to become meaningless and empty as a generic catch phrase, applicable for anything, but in reality expressing nothing.

David Lakein states:

I think that ultimately the experience of a laboratory and the extent to which it is a generally positive and fruitful experience - and again positive doesn't mean that it's always feeling good, but rather that it in overall brings people something - it is very much dependent on the way in which people collaborate and the way in which people before, during, and after perhaps as well, define and situate what collaboration is.⁵⁾

Communities are formed through conscious interaction, communities which redefine and re-establish themselves in relation to their individuals. The skills to participate, to exchange, to express and get resonance are vital and needed in the everyday life of a creative worker to gain reflection and perspective to the work of the self. Having the skills to share one's collaborative processes and individual artistic work are central in experiencing and belonging to a community. Having a sense of belonging to a bigger picture enables the individual to exist, as a part of and a as a co-creator of a common lineage, as well as a common society.

In the process of education and in the practice of collaboration, this awareness of defining and situating is what it means to collaborate. Only through defining and redefining can one keep one's practice alive, question habits, and in the big picture, question the direction of the contemporary society, and open up the potentiality for choosing differently and implying change.

- 1) Mike Vargas, "Looking at Composition Is Like Painting the Golden Gate Bridge – 86 Aspects of composition", *Contact Quarterly*, Summer/Fall 2003, p 28-34.
- 2) Bojana Kunst, Prognosis On Collaboration, essay, date unknown.
- 3) Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Where Ever You Go There You Are*, New York, 1994, p. 4.
- 4) Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Where Ever You Go There You Are*, New York, 1994, p. 5.
- 5) Author's interview with David Lakein, June 26, 2009.

1.6 Approaching Facilitation

Mystery — How much reference is being made to not-knowing; how big a role does conscious (or unconscious) not-knowing play in conception and execution, and how necessary is knowing or not-knowing for appreciation? ¹⁾

In my experience as a teacher and student, facilitator and participant, as well as an organizer of the BIDE exchange, I think that in general people do not know how to facilitate laboratories. As a result of our education and upbringing, we are deeply encoded and used to the configuration of a class situation. Thus the mind switch between the roles of teacher and facilitator, as well as between the roles of student and participant or a group member, takes mindfulness and time. To help working in laboratories, it is naturally vital that the facilitator knows his or her role, but it is similarly important that the participants have knowledge and awareness of the issues concerning the practice in question, to be able to adjust their patterns of behavior to the shared situation.

To facilitate this process of mind switch, Kirsten Brühl, a communication expert working in the field of business, has written a paper about the differences between facilitator and teacher in collaboration with the dance teacher Wiebke Droge ²⁾. In this paper, Brühl describes the two roles of teacher and facilitator separately, detailing different expectations, responsibilities and values required in these roles. For example, for her, the expectation of teacher is to give concrete input, and from facilitator, to “be a sparring partner in an ongoing process of change”. Brühl sees it essential in either role to be experienced, although in the facilitator’s role it is more about an attitude of (self) acceptance than about expertise. ³⁾

I agree with Brühl's definitions about expectations, as I agree the role of a facilitator is to be a partner in the process. I disagree with her call for expertise - even though she does state the value of self acceptance as well; I have witnessed many successful laboratories with first-time facilitators. It is definitely more about the attitude than experience, maybe even to the extent where I would dare to say that the chances of a facilitator with less experience being truly aware, curious and engaged in the situation, might be bigger than for someone with a lot of experience, who is stuck within his patterns of working as facilitator.

However, according to Brühl, inexperienced teacher-facilitators might fall into the trap of taking authority, because it is safer to teach than to facilitate. I do have to agree with her. It is challenging to compose a situation when no reference to previous experiences can be used to support the mind-set the particular situation needs - with reference from the teacher-facilitator role as well as from the role of participant. Thus, it is vital that in the atmosphere of the laboratory, it is safe to be unsafe. Only through this dichotomy one can expand the known and dare to not know. And not-knowing, for me, is an essential part in the role of a facilitator.

Not-knowing does not mean to underestimate the value of existing knowledge, but quite the opposite. The skills one has, as a teacher, facilitator, artist, and human being, are what one needs to go further, to expand into the unknown. It is similar to the paradox of the goal. As Verkasalo states, and which I quoted in the chapter of goal, we need to focus on what we have in order to be able to go further. She says, concisely, "What we have, is what we have to get there." ⁴⁾

The role of the facilitator is to create a safety net, a structured situation, where it is possible for people to challenge themselves and each other to go towards what they do not know yet. In some situations, this means to create a structure, give input, keep focus and support. However, for me the direction of facilitation is one where the facilitator makes himself consciously less and less needed. With time the participants become more and more responsible and can knowingly take over the facilitation. With an experienced and aware group, and especially in small groups, there is no more need for a facilitator.

This direction of making oneself needless is essential for me to avoid establishing a teacher-like hierarchy of information in the space. This could also be achieved by rotating who is facilitating, and giving the container for the session, in the case of a regularly meeting group of people with more or less common base of knowledge. Rotating the facilitator gives a chance for different approaches to be acknowledged, and diminishes the importance of the facilitator as the main source of information.

David Lakein describes his approach to teaching-facilitating:

What I can really offer, is that my teaching is more being a facilitating experience, facilitating these adventures of discovery. I don't like calling myself a teacher, only because the word teacher, in similar ways of the word workshop, is eliciting people this notion of here I am the student, wanting to consume the information of you, the teacher. Whether, to the extent where I am more or less active or more or less passive, to the extent where I am more or less involved in how the information fits to my personal research, et cetera. I am not saying that because it is inherently a negative thing per se, but because, what is so deeply a part of the learning process, is the unlearning process.⁵⁾

Lakein sees central in the practice of laboratory to be aware of the learning, unlearning and relearning processes. For him, the state of mind in a laboratory supports the possibility of unlearning. Through recognition one can gain awareness, which gives a possibility of not reproducing known patterns of movement or behavior. He states, "If I am really interested in situations where unlearning can take place, it can't really happen if people are holding onto me embodying the role of teacher."⁶⁾

Referring to Lakein's words, I see that the notion of facilitation is not only depending of the mindset of the facilitator, but firmly connected to the mindset of the participants. To facilitate, in addition to creating the space for the process itself, one needs to bring awareness for the meta-process of unlearning the deeply engraved teacher-student roles. In my eyes, this can only be done through mindfulness, through making people aware of their patterns and offering space for choosing differently. Exactly how this can be done is a small mystery, as there is no magic all-purpose tool matching the complexity of human behavior. Because it is

about offering space for awareness rather than asking for a certain action, one cannot teach it, and as Lakein already named, unlearning is not possible if people are holding on to the concept of teacher. To enter into not-knowing demands another kind of approach, one of facilitation, one of being a partner in the practice rather than a treasurer of knowledge.

In other words, touching the same issue, is Eeva Anttila's approach to facilitation:

Within my search I can give space for my students to conduct their search. Somewhere in space and time our paths will cross, and the crossings could become openings for everyone because no one knows what will happen next.⁷⁾

1) Mike Vargas, "Looking at Composition Is Like Painting the Golden Gate Bridge – 86 Aspects of composition", *Contact Quarterly*, Summer/Fall 2003, p 28-34.

2) Brühl's and Dröge's work was presented in a series of lectures in the MaZTP study program in 2008. I refer here only to Brühl as she was presenting the topic of facilitator versus teacher.

3) Wiebke Dröge & Kirsten Brühl, "Meeting the Unknown // A Workshop in Four Parts"

4) Author's interview with Ronja Verkasalo and Joerg Hassmann during laboratory research in Stolzenhagen, Germany, May 29, 2009

5, 6) Author's interview with David Lakein, June 26, 2009.

7) Eeva Anttila, *A Dream Journey to the Unknown - Searching for Dialogue in Dance Education*, Helsinki 2003, p199.

1.7 Laboratory Practice in Contact Improvisation

As I have received a great deal of experience about laboratory and ways of practicing and sharing from the form of Contact Improvisation, and as it is one of my own central practices, I will look closer to why I see that Contact Improvisation has something essential to give to the ways we practice dance.

There has been a rising trend in the Contact Improvisation (CI) community to offer “labs”, laboratories, in the contact festivals.¹⁾ This is serving the experienced dancers as well as the form of CI very well. After years of taking classes, dancers can enjoy the possibility of engaging in research without necessarily becoming a teacher or perpetually staying in the role of a student. Meanwhile, the form of CI gets chances to be redefined, developed and embodied by various practitioners.

The vivid development of Contact Improvisation has evolved through people coming together and sharing their knowledge and curiosity. CI has a form of jam which is rather unique in dance; a focused space where improvisers come together to dance CI²⁾ This gives a frame, with very little structure, for exploration; and I believe that the existence of jams, together with the fact that it takes at least two people to dance the form, have naturally led contact improvisers to “lab” together. In jams, people dance freely with each other for an undefined amount of time, and as there is no preset focus other than the reference of dancing CI, the personal interests of the dancers organically direct the improvisation.

One of the reasons CI is so natural for laboratory can be found in 1975 when the six main figures who had developed CI, considered trademarking their ideas. However, the papers were never signed, and CI stayed as a form free for everybody to practice, develop and teach. Instead of setting a trademark, the Contact Newsletter was created, which later became the well-established magazine Contact Quarterly. In Nancy Stark Smith’s words:

The prospect of policing Contact was not appealing. More interesting was the idea of creating a vehicle for communication in which to report activity and current thinking within the work, to keep the work open by inviting ourselves and others further into the dialogue. This decision not to trademark the name, and instead to encourage communication, seems to have been a crucial one, leading to the considerable expansion and enrichment of the work by many individuals over the years.³⁾

Thus CI stayed open for anyone to use and interpret. This example of letting a form to be free for everyone to develop and define, touches on my understanding of having a practice: supporting diversity rather than protecting a certain form. A laboratory can only support practices open for research. The chance to research enables the individual to approach his/her dance technique in relation to other techniques and methods, opening up possibilities for sourcing and cross-pollinating between different approaches, or making up new and personal statements in the work. When the focus is on open, communicative exploration, rather than non-negotiable fixed proposals, the introspective work is brought to a dialogue with the external world. In this way, research can also lead to developing new individual directions or approaches, or, on a larger scale, new methods.

The luck of CI dancers lies in the immediacy of the exchange in the dance, and the self-regulated dancing in jams, and in the fact that the heart of the method certainly dwells in the jamming. Educationally, this is ground breaking: at the core of the form the teacher steps aside from his authority and lets the dance take over the teaching. The absence of such jam culture in a dance form is not only hindering the possibility for its practitioners to develop the form, it is also providing little, if any, established structure in which to practice or apply what has been learnt.

The form of contact improvisation encourages to play, to research, and to try out new ideas. A jam can be close to laboratory in its lack of hierarchical structure, and a mind space supporting individual practice. Thus it is easy to convey contact into laboratory. The gently anarchistic attitude in the community also supports diminishing the hierarchy setting of a teacher-student situation: there is no inherent custom of a teacher continuously feeding the process of dancing. There is no need, generally speaking, for dancers familiar with CI to receive external input to get involved in the dancing.

As named earlier with somatic approaches creating a more student-centered learning situation, I see the same applying to contact improvisation. The valuing of inner experience is relatively strong in CI and thus supports also individual research to take place.

Meg Stuart, an American dancer and choreographer, sees CI as an ongoing inspiration for questions about what is sharing, what is practice, and what is collaboration.⁴⁾ She states:

This utopian possibility, that experienced performers and newcomers can come together in a space and explore the same questions because they have a shared language, is so incredibly intimate. I find that Contact is generous; it is inherent in the form because you can only do Contact by being generous, having and offering the possibility to dance and improvise with others.⁵⁾

Could this generosity be also a central reason why Contact works so well in laboratories? Could generosity be a key not only to dancing CI, but also to labbing, to the exchange taking place regardless of status and experience? A question of generosity connects, again, to the notion of facilitation: everybody is a source of knowledge and inspiration. This source can only be accessed by being generous, as a participant or a teacher-facilitator, as well as a performing artist.⁶⁾

1) for example in Contact Festival Freiburg, Germany, one of the biggest international CI events, a laboratory on performance was introduced as a parallel structure to intensive workshops in summer 2009. In CI36, an international, biggest-ever event and celebration of CI in Pennsylvania, USA, in 2008, laboratories were given lot of focus as a parallel structure to classes, discussions, performances and jams.

2) the concept of "jam" can be found e.g. In jazz music, where musicians come together to play. However, I do not know of other dance form with such a strong jam concept.

3) Nancy Stark Smith: "A Question of Copyright — some history", *Contact Quarterly's Sourcebook II/ CQ* Vol 23:1 Winter/Spring 1998, Northampton, MA, USA, 2008, p 177.

4) Stuart: "Is CI relevant in contemporary dance practice? The hell yes, especially now. I often wonder, Can we develop new languages? New forms? What's sharing? What's collaboration? What's practice? The CI model is an ongoing inspiration for these questions." "Contact Improvisation and Its influence on Contemporary Dance Practice", excerpts from the Tanzfabrik Panel Discussion organized by Jess Curtis and Karen Schaffman, *Contact Quarterly*, Summer/Fall 2008, p. 44.

5) "Contact Improvisation and Its influence on Contemporary Dance Practice", excerpts from the Tanzfabrik Panel Discussion organized by Jess Curtis and Karen Schaffman, *Contact Quarterly*, Summer/Fall 2008, p. 44.

6) See chapter 2.9, On Courage and Generosity

PART 2 Experiences from Laboratories

2.1 In the Laboratory with Confucius

According to Risto Lindstedt, in his column in Suomen Kuvalehti,¹⁾ Confucius, pondering on wisdom, ended up in defining three pathways to achieve wisdom. The hardest one is meditation, the quickest imitation, and the most bitter one is experience.

Confucius, a Chinese thinker and a social philosopher, (551BC - 479 BC) also said, that “ a man who makes a mistake and does not correct it, is making another.”²⁾

2500 years later, his words still sound relevant.

While I am conversing with a choreographer about the laboratory of the day which she is going to facilitate, I still have no idea what will happen. It is the fourth day of BIDE, Barcelona International Dance Exchange, and we are on our way to spend a full day with this particular group of fifteen dancers and dance makers, researching a subject that this choreographer has proposed. We begin, not knowing what will happen, and get into a forever-lasting warm-up, the choreographer taking us in an army-like movement score across the space, where we move back and forth over and over again.

After ninety minutes of following and imitating movements, the group starts to protest. Demanding for a more open structure, people state that this is not supposed to be a class, but a laboratory - very right of them. We sit down to discuss.

The lab facilitator gives in to a more open structure, lets us break into small groups and define our own doing. She is seemingly upset but does not argue. We begin working with exploring the themes she presented, after a while taking a lunch break and siesta out in the square filled with Sunday-swing-dancers...and getting back into the work in the afternoon.

Something has gone wrong since the beginning of the laboratory. The lab facilitator sits now down in the sofa, losing her interest to what is happening in the lab she initiated. Finally, in the late afternoon, the group reacts again. This is not what a facilitator is meant to do! We need support and structure! This is not working! We get into a circle again.

This time the discussion ends up fiery, teary and strong about the choices of the facilitator. She thought she was rejected and gave space to the group to “do what they want to do” with stepping aside herself – practically, washing her hands and leaving people without a leader into a process which she had initiated. We had already tried to talk about the situation but it had not changed. In the afternoon, the mistake repeated. She did not comprehend the role of the facilitator, nor did she learn from the first mistake.

Meanwhile the group itself had reacted vigorously: not giving space for the facilitator to present her idea fully and being impatient while waiting to work more independently with the ideas offered. This drove the group into a conflict and a long effortful discussion, beginning with blaming and finishing with gratitude.

Eventually, the laboratory ended up improvising all together without much of a plan. The only score was: you can enter and exit when you like, and after exiting, staying at the sides, you can speak. In the presentation of the laboratories that evening, we performed this score, making a strong impression on the audience. People dancing in the center of the space, relating to each other and the people talking on the edges, throwing in words from our discussions and the powerful experiences of the day.

We had found a peaceful conclusion together, and brought our disagreements into the artistic work, and it was well received by the audience.

The day had been tough, it would not be exaggerated to say it had been a bitter experience for all of us. But this had been our pathway to that day’s wisdom, and later I heard a lot of gratitude towards this experience from the participants.

The easy way to wisdom, the process of imitation that the choreographer so eagerly wanted to make us go through, did not work on this day. As the group was tuned in to participate in a laboratory and not take a class, the idea of merely imitating was not digested. As Confucius might have stated, the bitter way was chosen, and the toughness was its price, but we ended up defining something very essential about what is needed in a shared creative process. To quote Mika Hannula quoting Alasdair MacIntyre's thoughts on Aristotelian ethics: "It is through conflict and sometimes only through conflict that we learn what our ends and purposes are."³⁾

It is not necessarily harmonious, and it need not be, to learn. And, sometimes – although such a cliché of the creative process – one does need a crisis to give birth to something new, and to embody a change. To learn through experience means to take the risk of the unknown.

*** 03/03/09***

What is the role of a facilitator in a laboratory? It is not to teach a class. It is to put the ego aside, to focus on a topic, and guide the process of creating and maintaining a common ground for working in a structured way on the decided topic. The facilitator is gently keeping the strings of the process together, and guiding it in an open and communicative manner.

The word facilitate derives from Latin "facilitas" thru French "facilité", translating to "make easy" or "make easier".⁴⁾ Thus, a facilitator's role is to look for how to make the facilitated event easier. This could be a central guideline for a facilitator in dance laboratory: What could I do in the present moment to make the process easier?

Sometimes this means to step back, give space, shut up. Sometimes this means to propose, guide, or even insist and defend. Sometimes to make decisions, sometimes to ask for opinions. Sometimes to get people started, sometimes to make a conclusion. Sometimes to clarify, some other moments to confuse.

For sure, at all times, the initiation to make a process easier needs to derive from a relatively objective viewpoint and not from self-centered goal seeking. The facilitator needs to tune in the mind of the group, and the mind of the space. This means to leave personal goals aside, but nonetheless following one's own interest alongside the interest of the whole group. In the end, facilitator is still the initiator and the creator of the laboratory, and as such also a source for inspiration in the subject of the research.

In this example, in a laboratory in the Barcelona International Dance Exchange 2009 that I was co-organizing and co-creating with Sebastian Garcia Ferro and Daniel Werner, the facilitator (whom I refer to anonymously as the choreographer) did not achieve what she wanted and gave up the whole process in the middle of it - without directly communicating this action to the group. As we are working with arts and creativity, and as facilitators and initiators bringing our personal ideas in front of others, we also need to touch on topics such as responsibility, respect and constructive criticism.

1) Risto Lindstedt, "Aika taskuun", Suomen Kuvalehti, Helsinki, 2/2009, p 63.

2) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confucius>, April 28,2009.

3) Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, London, 1981, p164. Mika Hannula, "Catch Me If You Can: Chances and Challenges of Artistic Research", ART&RESEARCH: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods. Volume 2. No. 2. Spring 2009,

<http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n2/hannula1.html>, June 5, 2009.

4) pointed out by Ronja Verkasalo, in the laboratory of BIDE, Barcelona, February 22, 2009.

2.2 Welding the Theft

In her book *My Body, the Buddhist*, Deborah Hay writes about the thoughts stimulated by a letter exchange with her brother. To comfort her with a topic concerning her current piece of art, he quoted T.S. Eliot: "Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal... The good poet welds his theft into a whole feeling which is utterly different from that from which it was torn." ¹⁾

In her process, Hay had ended up using dancer's material and adapting it to form the dance piece. This, in her words, made her suffer "recurrent bouts of guilt"²⁾.

04/03/09

I have just watched a run-through of a solo by a dance student, a work in progress with a lot of questions. She has a unique and interesting idea to start from, and she has also made the soundtrack herself. After showing me the solo-in-process, she admits that there is a part that she is not sure of. She has taken it straight from someone else's choreography - someone rather famous, to be honest - and asks now for my opinion, if that is ok.

We discuss the topic of "stealing moves", agreeing that we do learn through imitation. Even more, as students, we are encouraged to copy. However, as artists, we are encouraged to do something personal, as absurd as it may seem - something new. In the deepest sense all has been stolen, conscious or unconscious, from someone or something before us. What is ours is the mere embodiment, interpretation.

The students' dance was indeed a creative mixture of innovation and theft. She could distinguish what was hers and what she took from others. I told her the story from Deborah Hay and how she finally came in peace with the work thru the process. I noticed that my solution could as well be an honest theft. I'd make it obvious and state it to everybody; this is my inspiration.

Dance is interpretation. It is a multi-dimensional language and each of us has an individual approach to it, like a fingerprint, like a voice. It is challenging to see the origins of movements and distinguish the borders of adapting universal information and stealing other's individual interpretation for one's own use.

As a Contact Improvisation teacher, I have created a habit of naming the person whom I have learnt an exercise or received an idea from, if it is still somewhat tangible in the way I use it. In the same time I can develop my personal lineage, bring a hint of history and a sense of interconnectedness of improvisation teachers into the work. I have noticed students appreciating the mentioning of origins.

I experienced, as a 24-year old - young - teacher, a well-established leader of a well-known dance studio took my class and afterwards used the entire structure of the class as her own teaching. One day at the studio, as I taught another group than I normally did, they told me exercise after exercise that they had done it already. I was astonished and hurt, as I had created myself a structure that I felt so proud of. Nevertheless at the same time I felt surprised that I had created material that was worth stealing for someone so much more experienced than myself, and I became more conscious of the material I had used and its origins.

I do not wish to teach anybody else's ideas before they have gone thru my digestion track and I have brought them somewhere else - not necessarily further in the sense of better, but into my direction, fitting into my concepts and my reasoning of functions.

And — is it not the aim of each teacher, as could be seen in the traditions of the history of masters and students, to give over their work for their students to bring forward and make it even better? Seeing a student copy out of laziness or carelessness drops my spirit; but seeing a student make it better than I do is - a challenge for my ego, and - the biggest reason for teaching.

Todd Epstein, In Tools for Dreamers, describes his modeling workshops in teaching NLP, where the subject for about five days is called “stealing behaviors”:

You steal other people's mental processes, not just for creating, but for doing just about anything they do. The mental process you used to go through your life and to do all the different things you do can be used by other people for things you never even imagined you could use it for. And likewise, you can use theirs as well. This is not limited to creativity.³⁾

Part of the practice of dance is a practice of theft and interpretation. The deal in a laboratory is indeed to steal, and it is a forum where to steal openly. Laboratory is also the forum to develop something out of the theft, as just the act of theft is by far not enough.

As T.S. Eliot suggests, the good poet's work is to weld the theft into a whole new feeling which does not even resemble the original anymore. Writing about feeling, he reminds me of the necessity of the creation continuing through the embodiment process, through the senses and feelings of the individual in relation to the piece of art. Reasoning a theft demands creating and developing the object to be seen anew.

As an example, the dancer, poet, and a teacher Julyen Hamilton, urges his students to name their heroes, encourages them to have heroes, as a source of

inspiration; to read their texts over and over again in the bus, put their picture under one's pillow, to write down every word they say and taste and dive into their work as long as that is what nourishes, as deep as possible - and from there, growing and developing one's own art until it might one day pass the one of the hero, of the teacher, and one could see they have taken the work of their heroes further.⁴⁾

The honest thief inside of me prefers getting together with people and exchanging openly, instead of getting emotional about ownership and clinging into one's own material. In a group situation, naming who came up with what - it often seems just to "be in the air" - and the necessity of originality in terms of who created the idea first falls secondary, as the creative joy takes over. — Thomas Jefferson⁵⁾ talked about ideas being free as the air, and he claims that ideas should be free, and made available for everyone:

If I light a candle because I have a new idea, and if someone else comes and lights a candle from mine, they haven't taken anything away from me. If I have an idea and I can pass it on to other people to use, nothing has been taken away from me, and my passing it on has given greater light to the rest of the world.⁶⁾

To be able to acknowledge one's heroes, distinguish the ways of theft, and pass on ideas for others to use it is vital to possess a language that can reach from one's own kinesphere to the outer world, and connect the individual to a lineage and to a community. Thus, learning skills of verbalizing dance, exploring and communicating thoughts, beliefs and values to others should in my opinion be central in dance education.

1), 2) Deborah Hay, *My Body the Buddhist*, Middletown CT, 2000, p 66.

3) Todd Eppstein; Robert B. Dilts; Robert, W. Dilts, *Tools For Dreamers*, Capitola, CA, 1991, p.162.

4) " *FIND YOUR HERO, your **inspiration**, / hold on to it, put their picture under your pillow,/ read their text out loud - **again** and again - / in the bus, on the streets, before you go to bed. /dive into the meaning of each word/ get into the core of /what your inspiration is about."* Contact Quarterly Summer/Fall 2009, p. 27, Julyen Hamilton, scribed by author during his class in Frankfurt in October 2008.

5) Thomas Jefferson was the third president of United States, a political philosopher, as well as a significant inventor, architect, archaeologist, paleontologist, horticulturist, statesman and founder of the University of Virginia.

6) Todd Eppstein; Robert B. Dilts; Robert, W. Dilts, *Tools For Dreamers*, Capitola, CA, 1991, p 287.

2.3 Naming the Hero

Tradition – What lineages of creators, styles, philosophies, politics, methods, contexts, or other factors have influenced this composition?¹⁾

Not everyone thinks like Thomas Jefferson, offering his light for others freely to use. In my ideal world, people would indeed act like him. And, there are more examples how the society is changing and concepts such as open source and “copy-left” are spreading in all fields. Mika Hannula writes how open source could be seen as some scary remain of communism, but is actually adapted and highly compatible in the market-driven capitalistic structure.²⁾ He continues:

Open source means that whatever it (as in knowledge) is, it should be free for everyone to make use of and develop further. There is no inherent property value for the person who comes up with a new invention or new ways of combining existing knowledge, it is all “left” for anyone to make the best use of it. The idea is closely founded on commons-based peer production, which is characteristically radically decentralized, collaborative and non-proprietary. Thus, it is about sharing information in order for all of us to be able to do what we do when we do what we do in a slightly better and more meaningful way.³⁾

The concept of open source is easily comparable to the ways we share and collaborate in dance, and is as such, nothing “new” to our field. However, to examine this process and pay attention to the ways we share makes me question how we really are sharing, and what it exactly is that we exchange? My solution is to look for tools to bring awareness to the origins of our ideas in dance and to support students to verbalize and name what they are doing. Balancing movement time with reflection time - writing, discussing - gives a chance to learn to name, state, define, argue. Discussions and reflections should be a part of daily life in

dance education as I am convinced that one of the most valuable skills a dancer can develop is communication. Communication is needed for dialogue, which is needed to give and receive from the world, opposed to living in isolation. Mika Hannula states, "In short, today, almost any field of human interaction is so specific and so complex that nobody can survive alone."⁴ The consequence: in order to function and establish a base as artist, one is challenged not only to create networks, but to develop one's approach to relating to another, and to one's own lineage of knowledge.

Coming from a background of new dance and improvisation, I have often encountered the following exercise: naming what you are doing while you dance. Students mumble across the space: " My knee lifts, I turn, I press my left heel to the floor while I look up..." This exercise, with plenty of variations, has brought me to realize the gap between knowing how to move and knowing how to name the movement. During the years, I have found great value in talking while dancing about what is happening in the dance. For example, this has taught me movement awareness, facilitated my teaching while combining motoric skills of moving with talking, helped to deconstruct actions and separate personal interpretation from general physical information, brought me to clearer articulation and supported my use of speech in dance performances.

Encountering the challenge of naming origins and facing the unavoidable concept of theft in art work, I decided to combine this exercise of naming movement with "naming my heroes" - while improvising, I would take note on who or what might be behind the movements I make. Through this, I could confront the problem of originality, and also adapt and embody information for it to become my own to use. – I would consciously attempt to concentrate on remembering the influence of teachers or artists and not dwell in feelings connected to the moving itself nor stay in only one state, or criticize the value of the influence or the logic of my body-mind. Afterwards, I could write down the notions I still remembered.

04/03/09

I warm up with yoga, Pilates. Already here I am driven by the contradictory pulls of random teachers who have fed me with information. I notice how my fascia remembers touches from even years ago, information of directions, limitations, sensations. I concentrate on warming up.

I lie down on the floor, on my back. I remember when Nancy Stark Smith taught her solo material, Raku, to me when we were rehearsing for a performance in Helsinki. During the time of creating Raku she was heart broken and all she was able to do in the studio was this slow, lava-like movement. So that was what she did, day after day, and eventually that developed into a dance piece.

I sink deeper into levels of cellular being, into cellular fluid, and from there I flow into intercellular fluid system, sourcing from Body-Mind Centering; bringing my awareness to the breath and fluid exchange on the cellular level, in the entire body. A slow, nevertheless, alert, state. I remember how this kind of movement has changed my tone and moving countless times before. I remember a class I took from Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen about ligaments, this takes me into my hips, I remember Jaana Klevering's phrases repeated throughout my dance education, the position of pelvis. Hundreds of notions about pelvis.

I drift into a kind of Authentic movement without a witness, just following the changes and movements that arise, without judging. Tens of people come to my mind, none which I can directly connect to have been my first source of learning the concept of Authentic movement.

I find pathways up and down from the floor and notice it resonates with an exercise from Saliq Savage from a class in 2006, about sinking and rising from the organs.

I do suddenly one of Toula Limnaios's moves which I thought I had forgotten already.

I notice a head-pattern from Riitta Pasanen-Willberg, drawing with the top of the head like with a pen in the space. I recall she was inspired by Forsythe, this links

my movement to what I know from Forsythe's dancers directly. Since the time I did it with Riitta, the head-pattern has evolved with the information what I have from Götz Lehle and Wolfgang Steinmüller, concerning the lateral movement of the cervical spine, and the old head pattern exists now with the new influences.

I remember how Trude Cone quoted Bonnie saying learning happens in blood.

I remember a solo performance from Felix Marchand, where he named choreographers while he was doing "their" moves, and how hilarious it was when he did "Liisa Pentti" because suddenly, for these few seconds, his dance was so like her. I remember doing an alignment partner exercise with Liisa and how she told me my other foot was different, and while I move I can recall how oddly one-sided that felt in my structure. From Liisa, I remember her colleague Ervi Sirén and the undescrivable ease of her movement quality adapted in me that time of spring 2005.

I go into a recurrent squat-standing pattern and remember what Cruz Mata told me about my lower back during a similar movement exercise. This reminds me of what Trude said about not thinking of knees when doing a plié, and I notice I think of the knees because I am thinking of not thinking of them, and this brings Ka Rustler's thoughts to my mind about not using the word "no" in teaching, and while I still repeat the pattern I am focused on thinking how I could formulate "don't think of the knees" without using the word "no". And suddenly I notice that in the dance studio, in just some minutes, a whole crowd is accompanying me: Nancy, Bonnie, Jaana, Saliq, Toulou, Riitta, Götz, Wolfgang, Trude, Felix, Liisa, Ervi, Cruz, Ka - to catch some - and plenty of others that are too quick for my mind to pin down. This notion makes one more person step in: from the door, Kirsten Brühl is reminding me that we are never alone in the space, that the people who influence what we are doing are always there with us as well. Certain of their right to be there, of being part of who I am, I relate to them all through my dance.

Even though this exercise or mindset is not solving the whole problematic of stealing, it brings concepts of originality and processes of learning, teaching and embodiment into consciousness. It can help in questioning one's improvisational or artistic choices and consciously learn or unlearn patterns.

As mentioned earlier, one of my biggest questions in dance is that how do dancers process all the information they gather from all the various teachers and artists they work with. To create a practice of questioning and processing information in relation to one's own ideas already during the studies could help to develop more productive attitudes towards the material taught as well as towards the roles of student and teacher.

Through consciously naming the hero, as Julyen Hamilton suggests, one naturally becomes selective. This also leads into distinguishing the sources that one chooses not to be influenced from. Becoming critical helps to define personal goals and filter outer input through the mind and physicality. Through naming the source, the hero, it will become more evident how the lineage of teachers has brought one to this point in time and space, as a teacher as well as a student. Given this awareness, one can cultivate respect for the immensity of knowledge in and around us, and become critically aware how this knowledge is continuing its transfer through one's own body-mind.

1) Mike Vargas, "Looking at Composition Is Like Painting the Golden Gate Bridge – 86 Aspects of composition", *Contact Quarterly*, Summer/Fall 2003, p 28-34.

2,3) "Funnily enough, even if to some people the open-source principle can sound like a rather moderate, and yet still awfully scary version of communism, recent developments have shown that open source is completely compatible with the rules and regulations of a market-driven capitalist structure. There is a mounting body of evidence that implies that businesses founded on an open-source framework generate results in the form of products that are more reliable and better functioning."

"Our example is provided by Benkler, and is that giant of industry IBM. According to Benkler's study, recently, IBM has made twice the profit from free software based on open- source ideology that it has from old-style copyright products that bring in licensing fees and royalties. IBM's strategy has not been an either/or one, rather it has learned how to be non- exclusive, using both approaches. The company's patent record is the best in the industry and, what is most interesting for us, whereas, in 2000, the volume of open-source business was still close to nothing, by 2003, so-called "Linux-related" services amounted to double the business based on intellectual property rights." Mika Hannula, "Catch Me If You Can: Chances and Challenges of Artistic Research", *ART&RESEARCH: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods*. Volume 2. No. 2. Spring 2009, <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n2/hannula1.html>, June 5, 2009.

4) Mika Hannula, "Catch Me If You Can: Chances and Challenges of Artistic Research", *ART&RESEARCH: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods*. Volume 2. No. 2. Spring 2009, <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n2/hannula1.html>, June 5, 2009.

2.4 Who is the Teacher?

Hierarchy — how are importance and power organized? ¹⁾

Classical pedagogy works linearly; a teacher gives information in portions, step by step. In my proposal for laboratory and learning processes in general, I am using an image of learning as an expansion of the bubble of what oneself consists of. This process is radial in its nature. Accordingly, the entire situation in laboratory can be seen as exchanging knowledge radially, serving and carried by any individual's thoughts, being open to any direction. Even though a laboratory may be structured linearly and be logical in its procedure, the result, the knowledge which unfolds, stays anarchic; it does not submit to any form. What one learns is an individual-oriented choice, not directed from any authority, nor controlled from the outside, and it does not need to fulfill a predetermined concept or a goal. This takes away the need of a gestalt of a teacher leading the process of laboratory.

I am curious how we can use these open structures in dance, already in the education. This means inter-connectedness and dialogues instead of hierarchy - radial instead of linear. Giving completely up the hierarchy in a class is, in my opinion, utopic, as the roles of teacher and student will always be remaining on some level (taking these out completely would also require renaming "class" into something else, e.g. into a collaboration or laboratory). Even when bringing the students into dialogue, the gesture of offering a space for others to speak derives from the superiority of the teacher. This could be examined more with approaches to the concept of critical pedagogy from Paolo Freire, about dialogic relationship is fundamental to human nature and democracy, or with researches concerned with

deconstructing the role of teacher.²⁾ I will not dive deeper in the studies of teacher's role, instead I will touch on the issue of hierarchy: how are importance and power organized (as Mike Vargas asks in the beginning of this chapter), and who is the teacher in the laboratory situation in order for it to function. For in laboratory, it is not possible to have only one source of information, one person defining what is important, or one correct answer; there needs to be space for multiple truths to exist.

Ronja Verkasalo comments on the issue of hierarchy:

About hierarchy, being a teacher; to not be jealous, or afraid, that the students find something that I never found before. To give them the space to really step onto a higher level to where I am. Even if they feel that there is a hierarchy in the class, how can I undo that hierarchy in my mind as a teacher? That I can also think of them (students) as teachers for me, and think of them as people I can learn with and I can learn from.³⁾

In a laboratory, it would be ideal to consider all people as each other's teachers, people one can learn with and from. This requires a group where certain parameters for equality are met. In interviewing David Lakein, the word equality came up, as well as the search for a better, more precise and less misleading word to replace it. However, Lakein defines equality in this context as "equality in relation to the roles and to the definition of roles and the expectation around roles and the expectations around the definitions of roles." He continues stating:

It has as much to do with equality of experiences, so that experiences which may through one particular perspective or projective perception of our experiences be considered more inadequate or less successful or not to the point, are equally valuable to moments of supreme insight, to situations where precise articulation is possible.⁴⁾

Verkasalo states in her definition of laboratory that it is "a sharing between equals". According to her, the equality would be, in this non-hierarchical structure, that everybody comes with a question instead of expecting a superior to provide the question for them. In her mind, equality does not come from age or even experience, but from the fact that everybody's voice can be equally heard.⁵⁾ For me, the concept of equality is slightly misleading, as it resonates with an ideal that is never fully reachable, and not even in all of its meaning, desirable.⁶⁾ However, I have not found a replacement for that word, and for now I would define the notion

as a *sharing with an agreed common ground*. This common ground would be in the interest of each one: the engagement of the group in sharing common space and witnessing each other where everyone is in his learning process or creative practice. Thus the background or relevant question does not play an important role ⁷⁾, and neither is it relevant if each one's voice is heard equally. The main role is the willingness to share a common space for exchange; willingness to learn and unlearn, to question and to be questioned, and, through these common nominators, establish a ground with certain sense of equality.

Joerg Hassmann talks about the importance of agreeing what the shared space is for. If the space loses focus, the contract gets lost, the work is likely to become uninteresting. For example, this can happen in a contact improvisation jam, if there is no facilitator and the jam becomes unfocused.⁸⁾ The dancing might still be interesting, but is more likely challenged when the space around is not supporting it any longer. – The work of laboratory is about starting with a common focus. Hassmann, Verkasalo and myself stated in our laboratory that it is better if the facilitator can participate in the laboratory, rather than observe it from the outside, and bring in a question, but not to know the answer yet. Thus it is truly an exploration and not merely an imitation of not knowing. Verkasalo states, "It is a non-hierarchical structure, as opposed to the class. That would be the equality. And, yes, it is a place to play and learn. Coming with a question, sharing the not-knowing, or sharing the going into the unknown."⁹⁾

Therefore, equality is not only about the common ground. It is the mutual facing of the unknown, and the appreciation for the not-knowing that enables learning to happen. If one does not consent to not knowing how could one reach anything new? It demands a certain humbleness and putting the ego aside but not to give up the knowing completely, because what one knows is also what one needs to go further.

Mika Hannula, in his writing about research process, uses the metaphor that we are always creating a story in whatever we do: "The direction is there, but the vital nuances are unknown. We have no way of knowing what happens on the next

page if we are to keep the element of surprise alive and breathing, evolving and changing, challenging and chasing us.”¹⁰⁾ — My approach to laboratory crystallizes here: the attitude is more important than any other common factors. It is about a group of people coming together to create a story without anybody knowing the end beforehand. No one person will get the prize for finding the solution; each one is the master of one’s individual truth.

Thus, for this challenge to the unknown, who is the teacher? Although it is rhetorical question, I am tempted to give one possible answer, quoting a performance practice from Deborah Hay, “The whole body at once is the teacher.”¹¹⁾ — I am convinced that in our practice as dancers, it makes most sense to listen to one’s own body as the master teacher, prior to whomever else. This is also what could, or even should, guide the process of not knowing.

To sum up, I see the starting point for a laboratory to be the acceptance of not knowing, establishing a common ground and allowing the learning process to be radial instead of linear, individual in its goals, and strongly self-responsible. With this kind of attitude a teacher is not needed for the learning process, and the information can travel from anyone to anyone, and to any direction in interest. With this setting, a laboratory is possible.

I do believe that it is possible to use laboratory structure in classes and also blur the borders between teacher and facilitator. But if a teacher, who is normally teaching more linearly and conventionally, wants to facilitate a laboratory, there needs to be a deep mind-shift from being the story-teller and knowing what the lesson of the tale is, into surrendering to the unknown. It is, again, not about representing a non-hierarchic ideal, or faking to research something one has already figured out, but to give focus and structure for a totally other kind of thinking process where there is no single, predetermined goal.

In her paper about the differences between teacher and facilitator, Kirsten Brühl, a communication specialist working in the field of business, states that “most problems in working with people come from misinterpretations and confusion concerning the actual task and role”.¹²⁾

I have to slightly disagree on Brühl's hypothesis. In some ways most problems in this *world* come from misinterpretations and confusion. Who knows our role and what we are actually doing here? If not seen that general or philosophical however, but related to arts and education, I believe we have to step out from a blunt conception of the world where the input of teacher is the source of knowledge in the studio. The situation in real life is that the people gathered in one space create a common pool of knowledge, and the facilitator's or teacher's task in the situation is to find structures to work with this knowledge: to access, challenge, confuse, question, increase, deconstruct, support it. Although I agree that confusion concerning what the task is and who has which role in it is central, and should be dealt with, I believe that most problems do not derive from the confusion of the roles. The challenge lies in the confusion of people themselves, regarding the question of learning. Mixing up the role of the teacher reveals the motivation, or the absence of one, of the learners. The real question then is not who the teacher is, but rather, who is actually willing to learn?

1) Mike Vargas, "Looking at Composition Is Like Painting the Golden Gate Bridge – 86 Aspects of composition", *Contact Quarterly*, Summer/Fall 2003, p 28-34.

2) For Freire, dialogism is a requirement of human nature and also a sign of the educator's democratic stand. Eeva Anttila, *A Dream Journey to the Unknown - Searching for Dialogue in Dance Education*, Helsinki 2003, p27.

3) Author's interview with Ronja Verkasalo and Joerg Hassmann during laboratory research in Stolzenhagen, Germany, May 29, 2009.

4) Author's interview with David Lakein, June 26, 2009.

5) Author's interview with Ronja Verkasalo and Joerg Hassmann during laboratory research in Stolzenhagen, Germany, May 29, 2009.

6) Indeed, I see equality central in the sense of human rights and giving a space for everybody to be heard and treated with justice. However, I don't want to create an equality which forces each individual to give similar amount of input or speak for equally long amount of times. For example, a structure where everyone has a defined and equal amount of time for speaking can be sometimes useful. This can positively challenge the ones who do not naturally speak that much and limit the ones who tend to babble. On the other hand, if someone, on some day, does not have anything relevant to say to a topic, I do find it perfectly fine to not be as participatory as someone else: I see the equality in a group engaged as individuals, respecting individual needs, characters, perspectives and opinions on all levels, also on the level of equality.

7) As a teacher, it is vital to approach the students individually and pay attention to where they are at, and this is easier when the groups are formed of people with rather similar backgrounds and interests. This can also help in a laboratory, but as there is no need to find common resolution, the confrontation of people from different backgrounds and values can give a healthy kick for the research to go deeper, away from the safe and known.

8) Author's interview with Ronja Verkasalo and Joerg Hassmann during laboratory research in Stolzenhagen, Germany, May 29, 2009.

9) Author's interview with Ronja Verkasalo and Joerg Hassmann during laboratory research in Stolzenhagen, Germany, May 29, 2009.

10) Mika Hannula, "Catch Me If You Can: Chances and Challenges of Artistic Research",

ART&RESEARCH: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods. Volume 2. No. 2. Spring 2009,
<http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n2/hannula1.html>, June 5, 2009.

11) Deborah Hay, *My Body the Buddhist*, Middletown CT, 2000.

12) Wiebke Dröge & Kirsten Brühl, "Meeting the Unknown // A Workshop in Four Parts"

2.5 Who wants to Learn?

As stated earlier, working in laboratory requires each participant to take responsibility of what is happening. With a history of several years spent in conventional class situations each one of us most likely experienced being a student who was obliged to be present and could not choose the subjects or methods of learning, and having, possibly, even developed disinterest towards the learning itself. This is a tragedy. Having been educated in a system that allows passivity but demands interaction, it can be a challenge to shift back to an proactive, responsible participation in learning situations and above all, find curiosity for learning.

Eeva Anttila describes her experiences when she gave space for the students to influence the class content in the frame of her doctoral dissertation research:

This hesitant attitude towards influencing the class content was a surprise for me. Maybe they were so used to being told what to do that they did not really know what it is to be in charge - it seemed to not to be important for them. It seemed more like passivity was the prevailing attitude towards school life.¹⁾

Thus, even if the teacher or facilitator has a very different way of thinking and approach to learning, the participants can be trapped in their previously learnt role. This is a central reason why I am not interested in suddenly bringing an open laboratory structure to be part of a dance education's mandatory schedule. To create a common-ground situation where the participation is voluntary and derives from the interest of each individual rather than a demand from the system, takes more time and care to build up. As an obligatory part of the studies, there is a danger that the laboratory is seen as just another kind of way of doing what is being told.

Ideally, I would see the entire education system being influenced by the structures of laboratory and they could be widely used in the program without

causing conflict with class structures — and I know that parts of this ideal already exist, if not yet so widely in education programs, at least in workshops and festivals, where the participation is based on personal interest rather than in a particular method and/or independent teacher-facilitator.

Besides responsibility, the process of learning is guided by curiosity - but sadly, cultivating curiosity has not been one of the foci in conventional educational system.

In our laboratory with Hassmann and Verkasalo, Hassmann states, “If we give responsibility, we need to trust that the students want to learn.” He goes on stating that it is extremely uncommon that students actually want to learn, that they just want “to get through this”. As I wonder what the people are doing in the class if they don’t want to learn, Hassmann responds, “ It would be important to confront the students with this. The base of my work is to say, ‘if you don’t find what you need here, then try something else, I don’t need you. And don’t do it for me, do it for you.’ But in school you don’t have this option, I feel, to say, ‘if you don’t want to learn, please go’.”²⁾

I do not completely agree with Hassmann on his statement about students’ unwillingness to learn. I want to believe the unwillingness is more superficial, probably an unconscious pattern learnt in the system of education, as a survival strategy or a bulwark against the unknown. Beyond this behavior one might find a willingness to learn. One of the tasks of teacher-facilitator could be to coax the students to come out and be imperfect and raw in their ideas, and curious about developing them.

In a laboratory, one is in certain ways more exposed than in a class. It can be challenging to share verbally, or to even come up with something to say or to explore, not to mention having to participate in the decision making processes. For dance students used to conventional classes it can be even challenging to work physically and explore something while knowing others can see it - even when nobody is actually actively watching. For these reasons, I consider it practical to include laboratory-like moments and methods of teaching in traditional classes in

cases where students are not yet engaged in structures of personal practice, or not so used to research.

As an example, Hassmann tells how he uses these tools of laboratory in class situation. Starting small, he gives time for people to explore on their own in the end of a class, where they have the material of the class, for example a dance phrase, as a starting point. Gradually, this time of exploration can be expanded. Hassmann describes what happens:

The longer you work with a group, the more you can open this time frame; even half an hour is enough for a starting point to get used to this “I have to decide what happens”-situation and it is amazing that the first two minutes, you just want to disappear, it is so horrible, this helplessness.. Because they have to switch the state of mind. But, usually after two minutes, something is already there. And usually then they don't want to stop anymore. Even though they are not so used to it.³⁾

I see Hassmann's description of mind-switching as a successful example of how the space can change if people are ready to take responsibility for their interest. The luck of improvisers and contact improvisers is that these spaces are more easily accessible, but I am sure that in the end, it is the attitude and not the form explored that matters. Eventually, it is about creativity.

In order to cultivate curiosity creativity has to be fostered. There has to be space to do things in ways they have not been done before. In ways that might not work, that may seem strange, that may be slow, that may seem boring for others. It is important that multiple truths are allowed, and therefore also students should be educated in ways that accept difference in opinion and style. In the end, the individual is the one who makes the selection process of what stays, of what grows.

31/08/09

The structure is: find the least inspiring space inside this building. Go through this week and all that did not inspire you, that confused you, that you did not understand et cetera, and work with that to create an image in the space. [After an hour or so] Show the image, and after showing the image pick up your pen and

notebook, sit down in the space where you were performing, and listen to the audience asking questions about your image. You can write them down, or write any associations, but do not answer, comment or ask for clarification on the questions.

Next structure: begin working on the image at 10 AM tomorrow morning. You can arrive to the studio earlier to warm up, but there will be no common start. [Next day, after an hour of work] We will show the images to each other, this time, after showing, the performer sits down with his/her notebook and asks questions from the audience, and they will answer. The dialogue stays in the structure of performer asking and audience answering.

— I am taking part in David Lakein's five-day image making laboratory in Liverpool. The structure is not one of collective decision making, but one where David is the facilitator of a workshop. He works strictly, but for me the setting is clearly one of a laboratory rather than a class. Why? Because even when we are given a frame, the content is ours. When we talk, we naturally talk to each other rather than answer a superior. When we work, we bring our own work with us and let us be influenced by each other and challenged and supported by the structure, but responsible for our own decision-making in what interests us and what we actually are working with. It is a frame where I can allow myself to fluctuate between receiving information from three different sources: the source of the facilitator who is bringing in himself with his theme, methods, and points of views, the source of the other participants and their diversity, and the source of myself with my own history and interests. I can allow myself to work knowing that no matter where I end up with my research, it is valid and worthwhile.

I notice David continuing to collect information on the breaks, furtively checking in with the participants, who they are, how they are doing, what they are feeling. I notice him taking time to build trust and agreement to be able to guide the group, and vice versa: giving the group time to name, to discuss what is agreement - and these dialogues merge into the work, become themes as well as structures. I notice that facilitation and learning processes share the same notion of search for a

good practice; the constant questioning and deconstructing of the structures themselves, constantly creating and trying out new ways. I notice that in the end it is all about the intention to learn and unlearn, as facilitator, as participant.

In *Tools for Dreamers*, Robert W. Dilts talks about how being around the process of inventing and creating is a joyful thing⁴⁾. I believe that the joy he talks about is derived from the willingness to learn, from the curiosity of the unknown and the excitement for creating change. I believe this joy should have its place in learning, and one way of doing so is to deliberately give students the responsibility for their own boredom. Rather than constantly expecting to be entertained from the outside one may find ways of occupying oneself according to one's interest. Once found the joy of inventing and creating will naturally increase willingness to learn. Dilts writes:

The more we can be creative in communications, creative in art, creative in music, creative in coming up with new ideas whether protectable or not, the more possibilities we will have to experience joy and to experience being human. I believe that's going to be the savior of society and the earth.⁵⁾

1) Eeva Anttila, *A Dream Journey to the Unknown - Searching for Dialogue in Dance Education*, Helsinki 2003, p 44.

2, 3) Author's interview with Ronja Verkasalo and Joerg Hassmann during laboratory research in Stolzenhagen, Germany, May 31, 2009.

4, 5) Todd Eppstein; Robert B. Dilts; Robert, W. Dilts, *Tools For Dreamers*, Capitola, CA, 1991, p359.

2.6 Action and Reflection

Today's rhythm of life values action. There is an abundance of methodologies in any subject, including dance, leading to the stress to master several of those approaches and techniques. In addition, there is a pressure to develop a personal style and definition of dance that derives from the details of the various methods to create a multi-intellectual combination of the best sides of each of these techniques.

Kunst says:

The contemporary acceleration of time, work, et cetera, is affecting the use of our body, but not only that; it is also affecting the way we embody. Is there anymore time to embody? The body is changing so fast, like a style, an identity, changing like changing of the clothes, trying out new identities, ways of being, not requiring embodiment.¹⁾

Wouldn't it be central for a dancer to have time for embodiment? I would understand that as time to reflect, when one can feel the interest and potentiality of the body, but also the interest and potential of the mind, facilitating conscious choices of direction in the process of studying and developing as an artist. As enriching as it is to engage in various projects in the freelance field or study a spectrum of different techniques in education, without any reflection practice, the action stays superficial, consuming instead of nourishing its subject.

Eeva Anttila quotes the Brazilian educational reformist Paolo Freire, who created the concept of critical pedagogy, applied mostly in adult education. Anttila says:

For him, reflection and action must always be connected as praxis. Praxis means unity of reflection and action; it leads to conscientization, a critical consciousness that implies action and thus, changes reality. Freire claims that reflection lacking action results in verbalism that is empty and alienating. Action lacking reflection, on the other hand, results in activism, that is action for action's sake. True unity of reflection and action aims at and results in

transforming the world. Action, on the other hand, is an authentic praxis only if its consequences become the object of critical reflection.²⁾

I see Freire's point still relevant today in the study of dance. There is a need for the praxis to be a unity of action and reflection. This is different than the combination of action and feedback, where the dancer or student works and receives comments according to the action. Reflection, for me, means to have perspective beyond role and status, thus acknowledging one's experience equally valuable with the experiences of others. Reflection means engaging to voice the experienced, relate it to a lineage of one's personal experiences, and a process in dialogue with the others. And, like Freire notes, only through critical reflection, action can be an authentic praxis. A laboratory serves as a structure which offers time for reflection of the actions it includes, but also as a structure which can serve for reflection of actions from outside of the laboratory itself. In this sense, a laboratory could be used as a space to reflect more than to act. However, this is not necessarily wise either - plain reflection disconnects one from the physicality of the practice again, leaving the words empty of reference. Thus, the balancing of action and reflection time, as a group or a facilitator of a laboratory, ought to be done with attention and reason.

To work with this balance, a facilitator can use a structure where the exploration time and reflection time are set. For example, to move for a half an hour, then write for ten minutes, then move another half an hour, then come together and exchange verbally for ten minutes. However, the concept of action and reflection can be looked as a more complex matter. Lakein talks about trying to gain consciousness about the ways we leave and enter action and reflection, sensing the necessity and paying attention to when, where, how these transitions are happening. He claims, "The balance is as much in the speed and manner in which one goes from the one to another as it is in the inhabiting the one or the other."³⁾

In my interview with Lakein, I asked him about an experience which I recalled from a laboratory where he was facilitating. In this laboratory, he had said how important it is sometimes not to leave time for any reflection. As an unconscious

choice, a lot of action with no reflection happens all the time. But consciously, according to Lakein, it is rare. He says:

There is a power and a particular kind of force that happens around having an intense or frequently changing series of events, experiences, inputs - what it means to have a lot of experience and give a lot of input and not give in to moments of digestion or reflection, it is something that we do very rarely as a conscious choice. And on the contra side, it is quite rare to put ourselves into extended moments of reflection. Because boredom sets in, impatience sets in, possible frustration sets in, if one's problem solving or trying to find the right language to articulate a thought or a concept.⁴⁾

I see the capability of varying patterns of reflection as another palette of tools in the work. It can be a way of getting participants to go beyond their known patterns, and it can also be a way to create frustration and confusion — so I see it central for the facilitator to be aware how and why to work the way s/he is choosing to.

Another example of this is how the notion of reflection time is connected to the way one reacts to an impulse. In Alexander Technique, it is emphasized to dwell in the moment between action and reaction and not to haste the reaction. I see that sensing the gap before reacting is a key also to the reflection process of the action and connected to Lakein's call to bring attention to the manner of transition between the two states. The moment in between is a reminder of one's individual power, a point where one easily falls into patterns. In terms of teaching or facilitating I see it necessary to acknowledge these moments as spaces where transformation can take place. The manner in which a teacher or facilitator uses his or her authority in these situations should be considered.

Thus, in the smallest sense of it, reflection can be just the fraction of time between the shift of things – a few minutes to take a break, or thirty seconds to find an end to the action, a minute to talk with a partner about the work - in these moments, a teacher or facilitator can support the individuals to take responsibility of their own sense of process, time, and space. Through these moments reflection can be gradually made into a conscious part of the process and united with the action. Once the logic of combining action with reflection and vice versa is grasped one can begin to extend, or cut short, the moments of action or reflection, and not get trapped in patterns of performance in the structure. A certain discomfort in the

structure is keeping the practice awake. This is one of the advantages of dialogue: with a partner, a facilitator, a group, it is easier to stay uneasy, remind each other to continue expanding one's bubble of knowledge instead of staying with the safe and known.

Lakein reminds that most of the time while one speaks, one speaks to confirm what one already knows.⁵⁾ The idea of reflection is not to present one's intellect and repeat what is already known, but "more about discovering and articulating, formulating and reformulating questions of."⁶⁾ How can one stay alert in the dialogue for the discovering mind instead of the confirming mind? How can one encourage and be encouraged to go more towards the not-knowing than the already established, towards a state where reflection is more about curiosity than about proving?

1) Bojana Kunst, freely from her talk in her workshop "On Embodiment and Collaboration" May 22.-24 2009. In HfMDK, Frankfurt am Main.

2) Eeva Anttila, *A Dream Journey to the Unknown - Searching for Dialogue in Dance Education*, Helsinki 2003, p 23. Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York, 1972, p 60, p 41.

3,4) Author's interview with David Lakein, June 26, 2009.

5,6) Lakein "A lot of the times when we speak, we speak to confirm what we already know. It is our way of mirroring back to ourselves what we know, and presenting ourselves to others as someone who is of knowledge, of intellect, of all the rest. And, if that becomes sometimes means to an end, so I think as general state of being is for me less about trying to confirm knowledge and more about ... less about issuing statements of knowledge and more about discovering and articulating, formulating and reformulating questions of." Author's interview with David Lakein, June 26, 2009.

2.7 One More Thing — Agreeing on Conflicts

Control — How tightly is the outcome predetermined? ¹⁾

17/07/09

It is the third and the last day of my laboratory in TanzSprint. Each day I have had a very nice group, a mixture of people of different ages and backgrounds. Each day the group has varied a little bit. More people are joining along the way, some people could not take part every day. I confront the challenge of wanting to go deeper in the research and not take time to explain by depth to each newcomer what this is about. I search for precise words and definitions to express myself and to explain the structure as briefly as possible.

Today, I define laboratory as an agreement.

There are agreements said out loud. I give a lot of space for people to feedback on the structure. This I could do less — even though it is fair, I could trust that inside the structure people have space to work, and everything does not have to be decided as a group. If we were a smaller group, it would definitely be something to discuss more and search for a common agreement on, but now it might just take too much time and effort compared to its value.

There are agreements not said out loud. First one is the agreement on time; simply by coming in the studio it is clear we agree to share the common time, and this could be even seen as embracing the possible conflicts about the way of spending this common time.

I notice I trust that once we end a discussion and sharing of ideas and start working physically on our own in a score that asks for silence, there is already an implicit agreement that no more discussion is taking place. That there is a respect for all the individual work that is happening in the space to go on, and any ideas that emerge are there for the individual to enjoy and can be verbally shared later if wished so. That without me having to mention or ask for silence, there will not be any more things, not a thing from me, not a thing from anyone else, that need to be uttered.

But after a few minutes, someone says out loud something.

For a moment, it is confusing, annoying, interrupting. But, as if the notion said out loud was respectfully ignored, I see another tacit agreement unfolding: the agreement to focus on the work, and continue the score.

The agreement is to include and embrace the confusion of that one more thing.

As a facilitator David Lakein often keeps encouraging to take the unanswered questions into the work. After a certain moment, the task or the score is clear enough so that all questions can be dealt with in the work itself, feeding what is going on. As mentioned in the chapter of 1.4 *Paradox of Goal*, the work is not about success and failure, about getting an exercise right or not. Quoting Lakein in that chapter, I mention that the danger with getting attached to success and failure is that one focuses on reaching a goal rather than going for the unknown. The confusion can be a door to find creative solutions and allow the work to go even further than it would have ever gone if the score or the task was a hundred percent clear.

The question is not about trying to provide unclear definitions to give space for interpretations, or listening half-heartedly to what is going on to then be able to take off to some other directions. The point is to let go of certain fixation of performing a situation for a teacher or for someone else. Accomplishing a structure only for its own sake could be seen as one wanting to do an exercise correctly in the school

because one was asked to, not because one is interested in the subject. The task of the facilitator is to provide well explained clear structures, but support the individual's way of interpreting it and making it his or her own, and support the curiosity of wanting to find out what will happen.

The work in the laboratory, as already mentioned, is thus a constant balance between the common work and individual work. There needs to be certain agreements to make this happen.

In *Tools for Dreamers*, Robert W. Dilts talks about process versus content. Dilts gives an example of his politics class, which I see as a laboratory-like situation of students collaborating: on the first class, there were sixty people wanting to get in, but the professor would take only twenty to the course. After lengthy disagreeing of who should be allowed to take part in the class, the students started to propose processes of how to decide on it and finally decisions could be made without conflict. Through finding agreement of the process, even the ones not in favor of the result agreed with the outcome of the decision. From this experience, Dilts draws his conclusion:

It is always much easier to get people to agree on a process for reaching a result than to get them to agree on a particular result. In other words, it is easier to get people to accept form than to accept content.²⁾

This is essential for the work in laboratory. There need not, and should not, be in-depth agreement of the content. The content is created through process.³⁾ The common agreements should be about the form: the ways of process, the means of collaboration and communication. These agreements should embrace the possibility of interpretations, as mentioned earlier, but as well the possibility of failure of the form. Even when the form fails, the process can be seen precious beyond any measurement, any evaluation, criticism or feedback of the form.⁴⁾

The content of laboratory is two-layered: it includes the personal and the group work. How much to agree on the content, is a question of control. To which extent does the facilitator influence, guide and control the contents of the laboratory? For me, this is an open question to enter the research with. However, the tone of the question about control in the beginning of this chapter is different: How tightly is the

outcome predetermined?¹⁾ Vargas's question is linking the concept of agreement to the control of outcome. This is connected to how much the teacher-facilitator wants to control the learning processes of the participants, or, how much a collaborating group wants to predetermine the results of a laboratory process. In my opinion, there should always be space for finding something else than was expected, by the group and by the individual. Thus, my question is: How we can agree on a form and structure without having to agree on the outcome, on the content or meaning for the individual?

26/08/09

I am researching what yes and no mean physically, in movement. Yielding, pushing, reaching, letting go, holding on.. They could all be seen as a certain yes as well as a no, an invitation or a rejection. What is disagreement in movement?

What is 'yes' if there is no 'no', if there is no acceptance to disagree? There needs to be space to allow questions, to state, to disagree, to rub against, there needs to be space to allow opinions. To access ways of working and being together with individual choices, wishes, dreams, stated out if not verbally then physically, energetically, ANYHOW; when there is a facilitator, is he controlling the situation, and is that control allowing disagreement?

IS COMPROMISING AGREEING?

Do I make decisions out of what is seen and obvious or what is also including the hidden? If I don't know, do I care? Is there an agreement of ignorance prevailing in me, in this structure, this society? IS IGNORING AGREEING?

1) Mike Vargas, "Looking at Composition Is Like Painting the Golden Gate Bridge – 86 Aspects of composition", Contact Quarterly, Summer/Fall 2003, p 28-34.

2) Note that Dilts uses here the word process meaning a method for reaching a result, as the way I use the word process in this thesis is referring to a larger, on-going process of the individual.

3) Todd Epstein; Robert B. Dilts; Robert, W. Dilts, *Tools For Dreamers*, Capitola, CA, 1991, p.353.

4) Instead of criticizing the dreamer, criticizing the dream. See chapter 2.8 To See The Other.

2.8 To See the Other

The practice of laboratory is more than merely figuring things out for oneself. By working in dialogue with others, the notion of witnessing and being witnessed becomes central in the work. Sharing practice means to be seen as well as to see the other.

Alphonso Lingis, philosopher and writer, states:

To see the other as another sentient agent is to see his postures and movements directed to a range of implements and obstacles about him. To see the other is to see her place as a place I could occupy and the things about her as harboring possibilities that are open to my skills and initiatives. It is to see the other as another one like I am, equivalent to and interchangeable with me.¹⁾

In laboratory, the exchange is based on a certain equality, empathy and exposure. In his book *The Community of Those Who Have Nothing In Common*, Lingis states how humans seek the support and the grounding, the contact and the accompaniment from the other. It is more than seeking only another person to work with, or to benefit from; it is centrally about enjoying the company of the other. Lingis says, "It is before the face of another that our enjoyment becomes our own. Our own to give."²⁾

Witnessing the other and being witnessed, the way I see it, is born from a willingness to do so. It is not a task to fulfill, it is about enjoying; enjoying the living being of oneself, and the living being of the other. It would, most likely, sound intangible or naïve to plainly ask students to enjoy living and witnessing others living; so as a teacher, a facilitator, one works on more subtle ways to create such a space where it is possible to experience joy and support in the exchange. Maybe this means a space where everyone can breathe freely, explore, express ideas as well as emotions, maybe it also means a space where one can be challenged and

experience being supported in the struggle. Only when the space is free of tensions, such as hierarchy or ambitions could create, there can be a safe atmosphere to be open and exchange: to see and to be seen.

To see the other is about generosity. I opened the question in the chapter 1.7 about laboratories in Contact Improvisation, and wondered if that generosity of sharing the dance was a key to laboratory work as well — I could state now that all exchange is about being inherently generous. We do not come together to confirm what we already know, to get proof of being worth something. We come together to go to places not yet known, to find grounding in the togetherness, to give support as well as to be supported within a common field of interest — within something that awakens our curiosity and inspiration, our willingness to share. The sharing is about generosity as well as teaching is about generosity; it is making knowledge available for everyone, exposing individual discoveries for others to ponder on, it is to enrich and enliven the potential of creation by personal as well as general wisdom. Generosity is about offering but not making conclusions; it is giving space for each one to find out their own truths.

A prominent difference between laboratory and a traditional dance class is the focus one gives to another. As the concept of laboratory implies to actively witness the process of another, there will be no such space where one merely waits for one's own turn to move, to speak, to present. However, the generosity of witnessing other and giving space for the other can be easily applied to class structures as a practice. This way the focus expands, the work gets less self-centered and most importantly, dialogue can happen.

This active relation between the self and others relates to Lakein's proposition of different dialogues of feedback in the work. He distinguishes three feedback loops in the work; one as a self feedback loop, hearing oneself speak, acknowledging one's thoughts and struggles, second as a dialogue with other(s), and third as a feedback loop with the so-called it, the particular essence of that investigation.³⁾ I think in a class setting, this image of feedback loops could also serve as bringing in more mindfulness about working together. I think, as a

facilitator and a teacher, the question is how to support the function of these loops, so that feedback and exchange can keep happening on all levels.

*** 28/08/09***

What is preparing us for trusting?

At the end of the first day in David Lakein's laboratory, while we are all squeezed together closely, literally experiencing each other's support to be able to stay in the position we are in, Lakein asks:

What if all these people had the best intention for you?

- On the next day, we start working with feedback.

One of the most challenging notions in ways of being generous and mindful is concerning feedback and criticism.⁴⁾ Part of supporting, seeing the other and being generous for me is to be able to give and receive constructive criticism.

To give one example on how to approach criticism, I will quote Robert B. Dilts in his viewpoints on NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming). By studying closely Walt Disney's success in his ways of working creatively, three stages of the creative cycle were defined: the stages of a dreamer, a realist, and a critic. According to NLP, each one of these is a mindset, a way of thinking we all possess, but often we express and use one of them more than another. Dilts says, "One of the biggest problem is that the critic doesn't just criticize the dream. The critic criticizes the dreamer, "You made a stupid idea!" Part of the key, part of why Disney could function so well is: he didn't criticize his team or himself, he criticized the plan to accomplish the dream."⁵⁾ For Dilts, through recognition of these three different cycles, one could work systematically with each of them, gain awareness and avoid conflicts of the dreamer, realist and critic simultaneously talking and creating chaos and confusion. The

space and time for the critic to be heard would be clearly defined from the moments of being realist or dreamer.

As we are learning to see the other, and witnessing each other's intimate and fragile creative processes, we are simultaneously preoccupied by patterns and experiences from our own background and upbringing, from the situation and surroundings, from other peoples' actions and reactions. It is easy to end up criticizing the person instead of the work, to kill the dreamer instead of feedbacking the dream; I believe we all have experiences from situations like this. Bad experiences from situations like this won't make it any easier to be open for criticism and invite to be witnessed. However, inviting and accepting exchange is the only way of keeping any practice alive and developing. Mika Hannula writes about practice and criticism:

The necessary task of being open and of inviting criticism, influences and comments from both inside and outside is one of the very few guarantees that a practice will stay alive and evolving. It at least offers a chance of smoothing the edges when any kind of practice is constantly subject to doubt and trouble. In terms of Aristotelian thinking, this is called an epistemological crisis. This is a situation in which the previously valid questions no longer seem relevant and the normally functioning, taken-for-granted connection between what seems to be and what actually is starts to become loose and even to break down. The task is dealing with these smaller or larger-scale epistemological crises in a self-reflective, productive way.⁶⁾

What if, repeating Lakein's words, as we see the other, we could trust they have only the best intentions for us? What if we had the courage to question our own as well as each other's practice with generosity? What if we, as teachers and facilitators, could take the risk of not knowing, and offer students learning through the experience of witnessing and being witnessed?

1) Alphonso Lingis, *The Community of Those Who Have Nothing In Common*, Indiana University Press, 1994, p 127.

2) Alphonso Lingis, *The Community of Those Who Have Nothing In Common*, Indiana University Press, 1994, p 127.

3) Lakein: "I, as an individual student, need to be in dialogue with myself, I need to have a self feedback loop, I need to hear myself speak, I need to acknowledge myself thinking and struggling, I need to be in that stream of self reflexivity, in the same time that I need to be in dialogue with them (let's just say one other person or three other persons), I need to hear them while they are speaking, have that feedback loop; and then, something more hovering between or above or whatever, there needs to be that feedback

loop with the so-called it, or the so-called thing, or the so-called essence of what the particular investigation or dialogue is to be able to respond to that. It's very different if we are talking about a creative process and creating a piece of work or a painting, or if we are talking about predominantly verbal or physical dialogue, but it is still that sense of being deeply in tune to — and this is more the unknown and the mystery.” Author’s interview with David Lakein, June 26, 2009.

4) This being said, it could open doors for a whole other research, but here I will just mention it briefly. I see it would be interesting to look at the notion of criticism in the light of the Brazilian educational reformist Paulo Freire’s thoughts on critical pedagogy from the 1970’s, and the way criticism is used today in the Western world as a trend of “critical thinking” — and how these could be brought into dialogue with the contemporary dance education of today, especially in the notion of laboratory work.

5) Todd Eppstein; Robert B. Dilts; Robert, W. Dilts, *Tools For Dreamers*, Capitola, CA, 1991, p 221.

6) Mika Hannula, “Catch Me If You Can: Chances and Challenges of Artistic Research”, *ART&RESEARCH: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods*. Volume 2. No. 2. Spring 2009, <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n2/hannula1.html>, June 5, 2009.

2.9 On Courage, On Generosity (So My Soul Could Be Sitting On Your Shoulder?)

Generosity — What is being given freely? ¹⁾

To see the other requires, for me, above all courage to do so. Courage, because to see the other implies as well to see oneself, and to be seen by the other. This is the starting point for sharing.

To see and to be seen requires constant updating of courage. For me, sharing one's practice is much more an act of courage than taking a class, or even performing - to work in exchange with another is to expose oneself entirely, as a human, as an artist, a creator, a dancer, a listener, a performer, a teacher and so on.

According to philosopher Lingis²⁾, Aristotle listed courage as highest of all virtues:

It is not simply first on the list of equivalent virtues; it is the transcendental virtue, the condition of the possibility of all the virtues. For no one can be truthful, or magnanimous, or a friend, or even congenial in a conversation, without courage.

Lingis continues, "And every courage is an act done in risk: of one's reputation, of one's job, of one's possessions, of one's life."³⁾

Having courage to fail is essential for being capable to try out, to be able to go to the mind-switch of research of unknown rather than re-establishing the known with one's acts and words. Only through courage one can face the unknown, and only by facing unknown one can open the potentiality for change. And in sharing

such process, in dialogue, the term failure changes its tone as well: rather than being doomed, it indicates a pathway taken, it presents a chance to learn.

I suppose every teacher knows this place, and supports the try-outs and raw processes of his or her students. However, within this study of laboratory, I propose to go one step further: to give space for others to know more, to let go of the authority figure and dare to let the intelligence of everyone be available for guiding the work further than where the group would reach with just one person's input.⁴⁾ As already discussed in chapter 2.4 and 2.5, this might lead into a situation where the student has more knowledge, skill or experience than the teacher-facilitator.⁵⁾

This act of giving information for others to take, interpret and develop further is inherently about giving freely; about generosity. Rather than generosity related to material, it is giving of the self, of ideas, knowledge, enthusiasm, vitality, presence. It is about seeing and being seen, but beyond the concerns of how one is being seen by others.

According to Kabat-Zinn, this giving has to be mindful, as mindless giving cannot be healthy or generous. He says that generosity is above all "a willingness to share your own being with the world."⁶⁾ This I see relevant for the practice of dance, whether in studio or on stage, whether being generous in ways of working, teaching, performing or even giving critic.

17/07/09

Participant 1: "The soul, the awareness is not trapped, captured in the body, but it is out there, all around, in the space.."

Participant 2: "So my soul could now be sitting on your shoulder?"

I am facilitating a laboratory, today's theme is space. In between all the physical explorations we stumble on strange bits of conversations, some esoteric, some practical, some personal. These verbal cues, fragments of information influence people while they continue working and moving. Some get exited. Some

ignore. Others lose track. But, losing track is the risk in exchange, that is what happens with influencing. One gets lost, falls into a gap, loses reference — and, possibly, finds something again.⁷⁾

The container is the trust that there is something worthwhile. That the experiences everybody has are valuable as such and democratic - no experience is worth more than another. This group consists of students, dancers and dance teachers, some in their early twenties just having begun studying dance, some having worked with dance for twenty years or even more. And me, as the facilitator, not at all one of the most experienced ones.

One of the young girls has a revelation about gravity. It is fantastic to listen to her exited speech about how we cannot escape gravity no matter how hard we jump, and to watch her solo research of trying to escape the force of gravity. She is almost getting freaked out of the thought of gravity jailing us on this planet. Her sharing is followed by one of the older dancers expressing how for her, gravity is like an old friend. Some others agree on this, conversation begins. I am glad to notice that these opposing thoughts have space to coexist, to be gently challenged by not being the only way of thinking in the group.

I am glad as well to notice there is courage to make wild associations, to influence and be influenced, to take space, to give space, to be. I am glad to notice I have the courage to facilitate a laboratory not having had a clue who will take part or what will happen. And, above all, I am glad to note the courage and the generosity of people investing themselves. Taking action, and giving freely.

In my practice of dance, as facilitator, teacher, performer, human being, I want to emphasize the value of courage and mindful generosity. Adapting the words of Jeannette Winterson, British writer and poet: to hold back is both overvaluing and undervaluing what the self can be.⁸⁾ Perhaps as a consequence of my own research-based education, or of a contemporary trend of multitasking on several work areas, I

have adapted a tendency of constant shifting of roles: being the giver, the receiver, the student, the teacher, the organizer, the participant. This kind of dynamic mindset, shifting of perspectives, is asking for courage to encounter dialogue and change, and not hold back on what could be given out.

- 1) Mike Vargas, "Looking at Composition Is Like Painting the Golden Gate Bridge – 86 Aspects of composition", *Contact Quarterly*, Summer/Fall 2003, p 28-34.
- 2) Alphonso Lingis, *The Community of Those Who Have Nothing In Common*, Indiana University Press, 1994, p 107.
- 3) Alphonso Lingis, *The Community of Those Who Have Nothing In Common*, Indiana University Press, 1994, p 107-108.
- 4) It takes courage to let go of the authority of a teacher, to dare to let the students be more intelligent than one is. I quote Verkasalo on this in the chapter 2.4. *Who Is The Teacher*.
- 5) See Julyen Hamilton, chapter 2.3. *Naming the Hero*, about embodying the work of the hero and taking it even further.
- 6) Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Where Ever You Go There You Are*, New York, 1994, p. 63.
- 7) Nancy Stark Smith talks about gaps in *Underscore*, a practice score for CI she has developed throughout the years. She describes gaps as moments with temporary absence of reference. She says: "On some days, for some people, gaps are difficult and undesirable; on other days, they are exciting, funny, fascinating encounters with the unknown." Nancy Stark Smith, *Caught Falling*, Contact Editions, Northampton 2008, p 96
- 8) "The only selfish life is a timid one. To hold back, to withdraw, to keep the best in reserve, both overvalues the self, and undervalues what the self is." Jeanette Winterson, *The Powerbook*, 2001.

PART 3 Proposals for Structure

3.1 Considering Structure

In my search for defining a good practice, I am not looking for a conclusion or a concept I would permanently settle for. It continues as an open-ended search, such as the practice itself; and I am willing to leave with more questions than answers in the end of the day. Therefore, rather than suggesting one defined structure, I intend to offer proposals as seeds, as sentences to be filled in and finished later, as beginnings of stories or bits of puzzle that do not necessarily fit together but which can be explored and played with, with or without any ground rules. These can offer an impulse, a direction which can serve as a starting point even though it would not be followed all the way through.

I am curious how the concepts and ideas I have collected about laboratories can also be practiced in settings of class. In our conversation about laboratories, Joerg Hassmann pointed out how the practices of witnessing and responsibility can be worked as well in class situations: for example, in giving structures where in couples one is witnessing and the other one is moving.¹⁾ When there is a certain theme, for example spine, both the mover and the witness are using this theme as a focus, a way in, to the work and to their own processes around it. Other example would be, as Ronja Verkasalo pointed out, the “trio feedback score” of Nancy Stark Smith, used in Contact Improvisation; where, at a time, two are dancing and one witnessing, and afterwards all three share their experiences, practice to verbalize the experienced and give constructive feedback.²⁾ Both of these could be used in laboratory as such, but moreover, they give a direction for a less hierarchic and more research-based setting to imply in a class situation.

Joerg Hassmann gives an example for a way of bringing laboratory into a class where he has given a spatial score as a way to open the situation into labbing:

You can give a structure that one part of the space is for pure dancing, and the other part is for reflection, and then the middle part is the space in-between: the more you move the more you have to go towards the dancing side, and the more you discuss the more you have to move over to the reflection side; so that there is a very simple spatial structure where people can work as they want. ³⁾

In her article “Body-Mind Centering as a somatic approach to dance education”, Cathie Caraker suggests, instead of replacing the “tried-and-true methods of technical training” with somatic practices, to let the more conventional forms and methods of training be informed and continue to evolve through the new educational paradigms.⁴⁾ I believe this is already happening, as for example my own dance education was mostly a fusion of these approaches. I have seen that one does not necessarily exclude another, and however radical the differences of these approaches might be, the coexistence is indeed possible, if it is given time, space and permission. As a comparison to classes and laboratories, I see the same setting than in the somatic practices versus more traditional teaching methods: working parallel with two different methods enables both of them to grow, when the structures and intentions are clear and the practices can dialogue openly.

For clarity, and for avoiding needless confusion, I do suggest being very clear about whether a learning situation is a class or a laboratory, and if there is a teacher, a facilitator, or neither of these. Having said this, I sincerely believe that classes and laboratories can coexist and feed each other in ways that can also blur the borders of these classifications.⁵⁾

To sum up, I suggest some proposals to consider within laboratory structures:

Beginning

The facilitator gets people together and presents the theme of the laboratory. There can be a short introduction and discussion around the theme, a moment to share interests, wishes, concerns. The facilitator of the laboratory can have a suggestion for a warm-up, where already the theme of the laboratory is present. Preferably, even if structured, warm-up time is also a space for individual needs, for

people to tune in and get ready in their own ways, but with the questions or themes of the laboratory. To challenge patterns and create confusion, the facilitator can decide to intentionally start somehow completely different.

Timeframe

The simplest structure is, that the facilitator is the timekeeper. It can be also decided that everyone is a timekeeper, and that everybody is responsible for the common time management. However, even with a facilitator, the time management, at some level, is a group agreement — even if it is agreed that the rest of the group trusts the sense of the facilitator, whatever decisions s/he makes about the use of time. It can help greatly to stick to the timeframe to gain safety through a stable structure. For example, divide the laboratory time into moving/exploration-time and talking/writing-time in turns, and let each talking-writing time inform the following moving time to reach a deeper level. This can be done also in a way that each moving/exploration time is longer than the previous one, thus people get to move more and more towards the end. However the time is structured, it is good to notice that the notion of agreement is central in a laboratory, and that the use of time is the first point where common agreements will show their success or weaknesses.

Forming groups

If the group is big, e.g. more than five people, it will help to divide people to smaller groups. Groups of three have a good dynamic.⁶⁾ However, even a group as big as fifteen people can work as one, but it is again a question of a common agreement of time management which is more challenging to get in tune with, depending of the chosen topic. Also, in a bigger group, there is less time per each person to be seen and heard, and it would be ideal that everybody's voice is affecting the exploration and it is not overruled by those naturally more outgoing.⁷⁾

Closure

Part of the work is to find a closure for it. Considering the work as part of one's individual process and practice, there is no resolution or ending per se. However, it is good to bring up topics about how the work continues, what is the next step for the individuals or for the group, if the intention is to continue working together.

- 1) Author's interview with Ronja Verkasalo and Joerg Hassmann during laboratory research in Stolzenhagen, Germany, May 31, 2009.
- 2) score pointed out by Verkasalo, referring also to my experience with working with Nancy Stark Smith, during laboratory research in Stolzenhagen, Germany, May 30, 2009.
- 3) Author's interview with Ronja Verkasalo and Joerg Hassmann during laboratory research in Stolzenhagen, Germany, May 29, 2009.
- 4) Caraker: "I am not suggesting that somatic practices should replace tried-and-true methods of technical training. However, perhaps new educational paradigms can inform conventional forms and methods of training so that they can continue to evolve to meet the demands of a field which is changing fast." Cathie Caraker, "Body-Mind Centering as a somatic approach to dance education", 1994, <http://caraker.com/articles/BMCsomatic.html> April 28, 2009.
- 5) See chapter 2.4. "Who Is the Teacher?".
- 6) This idea of moving time expanding, and talking time shortening is adapted from Sebastian Garcia Ferro, from the structuring of BIDE 2009.
- 7) As well as this is true in my own experience, this was also pointed out also by Joerg Hassmann during laboratory research, Stolzenhagen, Germany, May 30, 2009.
- 8) Verkasalo: "An ideal number of participants for labbing in my mind is small, so that there is time and space for everyone's input to be recognized and explored." Author's interview with Ronja Verkasalo and Joerg Hassmann during laboratory research in Stolzenhagen, Germany, May 29, 2009

3.2 Structure Proposals

In this chapter, I present different proposals for laboratories, grouped in three different settings: a laboratory without facilitator, a laboratory with a facilitator and structures of bringing laboratory to class situations. These can serve as examples to supplement the research of laboratory and as starting points for teacher-facilitators interested in developing such forms of practice.

Firstly, a proposal from the CITE (Contact Improvisation Teacher's Exchange), a bi-annual meeting of CI teachers in USA, which took place in Earthdance, MA, in 2006. During the meeting, various labbing structures were used, not only to exchange material, but to explore, share and articulate different means of exchange. This laboratory has no facilitator. However, in CITE, this structure worked smoothly as the participants had previous experience in laboratories. This proposal is by Nancy Stark Smith.

This lab will have seven parts. The parts are very simple. We will have mainly groups of five people, and one group of four. The steps within the lab are:

1: The members of the group articulate things they would like to lab about. These can be technical things, principals, or specific skills that they want help with.

2: The group should choose one of these subjects to lab about. For instance, one person could hear another person's request for help and offer a specific "tried and true" exercise that works with the issue at hand. ¹⁾ In this step, an individual has something to offer that addresses a particular technical request.

3: The person teaches their offering to the group. This should take 15-20 minutes.

4: The group comes back together and discusses two ways to transition from that

material into dancing. Perhaps there are more “tried and trues,” or perhaps the group comes up with new ideas together.

5: Rewind into tutorial. The group gets back into the mind of practicing that skill, and one person leads the group through the transition, from the material into open dancing.

6: Rewind again, into the technical focus. Have another person lead through the second transitional strategy, into open dancing.

7: Group meets to debrief, and comes up with a form of a five minutes presentation to show to the other groups. ²⁾

As a structure for a laboratory for professional artists ³⁾, I offer the proposal of laboratory of the first BIDE exchange from 2009. This proposal was done to serve as a guideline to support the participants to work in laboratories. Each day there were three different laboratories taking place. In the end of the day all three groups would come together and share their work to the other groups.

This proposal was made by the BIDE team: Sebastian Garcia Ferro, Daniel Werner, and myself.

BIDE 2009 Laboratory Proposal

Morning Session (3hours):

arriving

warm-up (relating to theme)

try-out/research/exploration

collecting/reflection

Afternoon Session (3hours):

arriving

warm-up (relating to material)

try-out/research/exploration

preparation for demonstration; how to share the process and/or outcome for other laboratory groups

evaluation

Evening:

Coming together, sharing/showing of the different laboratory groups

Example for a timeframe:

20min talk (a round of names, presentation of the theme, proposal and decision of procedure)

30min warm-up

30min research of material

10min reflection time (talking, writing)

20min research

10min reflection time (talking, writing)

20min research in different groupings

25min research all together

15min final reflection

LAB FACILITATOR

- *introduces the theme and offers a working structure*
- *offers space for warm-up related to theme*
- *keeps a time structure*
- *keeps the process focused*
- *puts emphasis on finding a conclusion to the process*
- *moderates discussions*
- *makes choices of how to go on*

LAB FACILITATOR IS NOT

- *teaching*
- *directing*

- *selecting*

- *choreographing*

- ***depending of the material, the facilitator can be in or out of the research.***⁴⁾

This example from BIDE is a facilitated structure with space for personal research, but not so much space for experiments of facilitation, as the time proposal is rather strict. However, it doesn't include any set rule of group size. The first structure presented, example from the CI teachers meeting, is the most open structure from these examples. In it, participants are asked to find common agreements throughout the laboratory without a facilitator. This is made easier by defining that the group size is small, only 4-5 participants.

The last structure I propose could serve as the most class-like proposal for students not yet experienced in working in laboratories. This will have the tightest structure and the facilitator-role can be seen close to a role of a teacher. This is my proposal for presenting laboratory work in dance education.

I come myself from an education which included labbing structures starting from the beginning of the studies. However, I do not propose any timeframe for when laboratory should be presented in a curriculum — this depends of the type of dance education in question. For curriculums emphasizing improvisation and contact improvisation and research in general, I see it fitting to bring in laboratory work from the beginning of the studies, as I had myself.

STEPS FOR INTRODUCING LABORATORY PARALLEL TO DANCE CLASS SETTINGS

1.Laboratory moment in the end of the class.⁵⁾ In the end of a regular class, having 15 minutes for a laboratory based on the themes of the class. Teacher decides if this is done alone or in twos or threes. The time is used on continuing to work on the material or ideas of the class. This can be done by

A) working physically, e.g. on a detail of the class, or on a phrase, finding own questions related to it or taking it to another direction.

B) reflecting by talking with a partner or writing,

C) witnessing (teacher/facilitator can decide to give this option later, not on the first times, to encourage active participation).

With time, the “laboratory moment” can lengthen, and include whatever elements of labbing the teacher-facilitator wants to bring in. This moment should be considered as an active part of the class, and not as a fade-out moment — the structure of the class should be such that the students still have energy and focus for the labbing part.

2.Facilitated laboratory. This would be a setting where the teacher-facilitator is in charge of the situation, brings in a topic for the session, but gives the responsibility and content of outcome for the individuals. The teacher-facilitator does not actively participate in the research, so that s/he can focus on facilitating. The teacher-facilitator aims to give more and more space for the students to research on their own and also feedback each other, in a setting which s/he can guide and support.

-start with presenting the theme

-guide to a warm up, either all together or giving space for individual warming up in relation to the theme

-give clear tasks for labbing, which students can do without supervision and have space for own interpretations

-give a clear timeframe for labbing around the theme, and keep changing between working alone, in couples, in trios, small groups, or even as one big group.

-give clear guidelines for action and reflection, for example by giving a set time structure for reflecting by writing or by talking in between physical work, making sure that in small groups participants will not get into excess talking during the “action” time

-Bring the research to an end and a reflection together in the whole group, where the theme and the method of working can be discussed. When new themes come up, the teacher-facilitator can take these to use on the next laboratory.

3. Open space laboratory. *When students are accustomed to the concepts of laboratory, it can be used as a frame of working in small groups, without an on-going facilitation. For a decided amount of time (one session or several, for example a regular, weekly block of time), people can work in the space, alone or in small groups, on topics that interest them. The teacher-facilitator is available in case the students need individual guidance or support. In the beginning and/or end there can be a moment of sharing thoughts and work processes.*

This structure assumes that there is information and ideas available that people can be labbing on their own. It can be seen as a support for classes, as the class material can be sourced in the research. This implies that students have interest for this kind of work and they take responsibility of the process themselves. A question of a showing or any other goal is vital to encounter, in relation to the questions of interest and responsibility as well as to the curriculum and the direction of the education. Does it serve the process to have a resolution, or a result? Can the work itself give enough meaning and direction?

Concepts of laboratory can be brought into class situations by focusing on ways to feedback, dialogue, reflect, witness, research, and question. This could be seen as the first basic step towards a mindful exchange in the process of learning and teaching dance.

1) "tried and true" is a form of labbing used in CI where teachers can share their exercises around one topic. The exercises shared are "tried and true" material, meaning they have shown their value and function for the teacher, and are a part of his/her personal palette of teaching vocabulary.

2) CITE, July 2006, Earthdance, MA, USA. Laboratory proposal by Nancy Stark Smith, scribed by Daniel Bear Davis. Edited by author. Used by permission of Nancy Stark Smith.

3) The participants of BIDE are selected by the team, which asks for a professional education or an equivalent of work experience on the field of dance. However, to support students and to get more of a mixture of ideas and experiences in the laboratories, BIDE takes in some students who are in the middle

or their final year of dance studies.

4) Laboratory proposal for BIDE. written by author based on discussion of BIDE team: Sebastian Garcia Ferro, Daniel Werner, and author, Barcelona, February 19, 2009.

5) See Joerg Hassmann's points for bringing laboratory in the end of a class in chapter 2.5 Who Wants To Learn?

CONCLUSION

I have been focusing on laboratory as a means for mindful exchange, from the viewpoint of a teacher-facilitator. I have touched on topics considering facilitating, collaborating, establishing practice and relating to goal-orienting, pondering on questions of action and reflection, of teachers, students, heroes; and above all, of sharing the practice of dance. My research has included viewpoints from experiences, from a more philosophical perspective as well as from concrete structural side of the work.

During the research it has become more and more clear for me not to settle for set structures of laboratory. I chose to propose some structures as examples to bring in concrete material about what laboratory work can be. However, it does create a certain paradox to give set structures while emphasizing the importance of not-knowing in the laboratory work. I see this also as a challenge in the writing: how to document thoughts and ideas without getting fixated to them, without killing the momentum of them still growing and changing, and without starting to take them for granted? I have learnt that text is not only presenting what it includes: it also tells what is left out; implied or ignored.

Thus I want to underline the nature of this research being an open-ended process with only scratching the surface of what laboratory can be. Still, I do see that the research touches on the importance such practice can have. To thoroughly prove the value of laboratory work in dance education, set it in a curriculum and take to praxis, would naturally demand for a much more extensive process. I cannot scientifically prove

this value. Nevertheless, I see that through the research I can present these practices and their potential to a wider audience, especially in the field of education.

In this research, I have made clear that the laboratory work is not only about structures. It is about mindset, and values beyond any structure. These ways of thinking can be adapted to any kind of class setting, regardless of the topic. In this way I see that the possibilities to use laboratory are limitless. It does not necessarily require radical organizational or structural changes.

As this research is so strongly connected to ways of thinking, it is bound to be subjective, to be lead by my own narrator's voice. However, I do not believe that human beings could reach pure objectivity; everything one encounters is filtered through the systems of one's own body-mind. In order to engage in the research, it is vital for me to start from the personal and individual. I see research being about movement: it is the motion of fluctuating between individual thought processes, and dialogue and expression.

Only through the change, the movement, the inspiration inside of me, I can nourish my thinking and convey my thoughts into dialogue with others. Through the exchange, I can bring in perspective and aim for more objectivity to be able to see a bigger picture. This has been a pathway for my research: to focus on what is valuable for me, what moves me, and then to look for ways how I can share, relate and reflect it, bring it to an exchange with others. Similarly, this is also how I consider the general pattern of laboratory working.

I see a chance and a challenge for laboratory to be a fruitful theme for research and for further exploration, in practice and in theory. I do believe it holds a key to more mindful, supporting and creative ways of making, sharing, teaching and learning dance.

REFERENCES

- Anttila, Eeva** 2004. *Dance Learning as Practice of Freedom*. Helsinki: The Theater Academy.
- Anttila, Eeva** 2003. *A Dream Journey to the Unknown - Searching for Dialogue in Dance Education*. Helsinki: The Theater Academy.
- Benjamin, Adam** 2002. *Making an Entrance*. New York.
- Brühl, Kirsten; Dröge, Wiebke** 2008. Meeting the Unknown // A Workshop in Four Parts. Class papers.
- Caraker, Cathie** 1994. Body-Mind Centering as a somatic approach to dance education. <http://caraker.com/articles/BMCsomatic.html>. April 28,2009.
- C.I.T.E notes** June 2006. Contact Improvisation Teacher's Exchange, MA, USA. notes transcribed by Daniel Bear Davis.
- Cohen, Bonnie Bainbridge** 1993. *Sensing, Feeling and Action*. Northampton, MA, USA.
- Curtis, Jess, Schaffmann Karen.** Contact Improvisation and Its Influence on Contemporary Dance Practice: Excerpts from the Tanzfabrik Panel Discussion organized by Jess Curtis and Karen Schaffann, *Contact Quarterly*, Summer/Fall 2008, p 43-49.
- Dalai Lama** 2005. *The Universe in a Single Atom - how science and spirituality can serve our world*. London.
- Dilts, Robert W; Epstein, Todd; Dilts, Robert D** 1991. *Tools for Dreamers*. Capitola, CA, USA.
- Freire, Paulo** 1972. *Pedagogy of The Oppressed*
- Garcia Ferro, Sebastian; Werner, Daniel; Mäkinen, Ulla** Laboratory Proposal for BIDE, February 19, 2009
- Goldberg, Natalie** 1990. *Wild Mind*. New York,USA.
- Goldsworthy, Andy:** Digital Catalogue <http://www.goldsworthy.cc.gla.ac.uk/> June 25, 2009

- Hamilton, Julyen.** a snippet considering Inspiration. From notes scribed by Ulla Mäkinen. *Contact Quarterly* Summer/Fall 2009, p. 27.
- Hanna, Thomas** 1988. *Somatics*. Cambridge, MA, USA.
- Hannula, Mika** Catch Me if You Can: The Chances and Challenges of Artistic Research. *ART&RESEARCH: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods*. Volume 2. No. 2. Spring 2009, <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n2/hannula1.html>, June 5, 2009.
- Halprin, Anna** 1995. *Moving Toward Life*. Hanover, NH, USA.
- Halprin, Anna** 2007. *Experience as Dance*. Hanover, NH, USA.
- Hassmann, Joerg** written notification May 13,2009, interviews by author May 29, 2009 and May 31,2009
- Hay, Deborah** 2000. *My Body, the Buddhist*. Middletown, CT,USA.
- Heller-Roazen, Daniel** 2008. *Echolalias – On the Forgetting of Language*. New York, USA.
- Jussilainen, Anna** 2007. Uuden tanssin uskontokulttuuriset ulottuvuudet. Pro gradu. Turku, Finland.
- Jyrkkä, Hannele** (editor-in-chief) 2005. *Tanssintekijät – 35 näkökulmaa koreografian työhön*. Helsinki.
- Jyrkkä, Hannele** (editor-in-chief) 2008. *Hetken kannattelijä*. Helsinki.
- Kabat-Zinn, Jon** 2005. *Where Ever You Go There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation In Everyday Life*. New York, USA.
- Koteen, David and Stark Smith, Nancy** 2008. *Caught Falling*. Northampton, MA, USA.
- Kunst, Bojana:** Prognosis on Collaboration. Essay. Date and place unknown.
- Kunst, Bojana.** notes by author, from her workshop On Embodiment and Collaboration, May 22.-24, 2009 In HfMDK, Frankfurt am Main.
- Lakein, David** interview by author June 26, .2009, written notification November 19.2009
- Lilja, Efva** 2006. Movement as Memory of the Body. http://www.efvalilja.se/page.php?id=r_papers&lang=eng. June 28, 2009.
- Lindstedt, Risto:** "Aika taskuun", *Suomen Kuvalehti*, Helsinki, 2/2009

- Lingis, Alphonso** 1994. *The Community of Those Who Have Nothing in Common*. Indiana University.USA.
- McIntyre, Alasdair** 1985. *After Virtue, A Study in Moral Theory*. London.
- Monni, Kirsi** 2004. *Olemisen poeettinen like. Tanssin uuden paradigman taidefilosofisia tulkintoja Martin Heideggerin ajattelun valossa sekä taiteellinen työ vuosilta 1996-1999*. Helsinki: The Theater Academy.
- Rouhiainen, Leena** (editor-in-chief) 2007. *Ways of Knowing In Dance and Art*. Helsinki: The Theater Academy.
- Rouhiainen, Leena** 2003. *Living Transformative Lives - Finnish Freelance Dance Artists brought into Dialogue with Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology*. Helsinki: The Theater Academy.
- Rouhiainen, Leena; Anttila, Eeva; Hämäläinen, Soili; Löytönen, Teija** (editors) 2004. *The Same Difference? Ethical and Political Perspectives on Dance*. Helsinki: The Theater Academy.
- Stark Smith, Nancy** A Question of Copyright — some history, *Contact Quarterly's Sourcebook II/ Contact Quarterly Winter/Spring 1998*, Northampton, MA, USA, 2008, p 177
- Tharp, Twyla** 2006. *The Creative Habit*. New York.
- Todd, Mable** 1937. *The Thinking Body*. Hightstown, NJ, USA.
- Vargas, Mike** 2003. Looking at Composition Is Like Painting the Golden Gate Bridge – 86 Aspects of composition. *Contact Quarterly*, Summer/fall 2003, 28-34
- Verkasalo, Ronja** written notification May 20,2009, interviews by author May 29,2009 and May 31, 2009.
- Wikipedia/ Confucius**. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confucius>, April 28, 2009
- Winterson, Jeannette** 2001. *The Powerbook*. London.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Definitions of Terms

Andragogy - focuses on adult learning, as the commonly misused word pedagogy is originally referring to educating children. In my thesis I will not touch on the issue of teaching children, but refer to learning as a general life-long process, and research laboratory structure for the use of professional dance education and training for young adults and adults. Thus, rather than using the word pedagogy in my thesis, I refer to teaching, education and learning processes.

BMC - Body-Mind Centering was initiated by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, and the school of Body-Mind Centering was founded by her in 1973. In Bainbridge Cohen's words, BMC is " an ongoing, experiential journey into the alive and changing territory of the body. The explorer is the mind — our thoughts, feelings, energy, soul, and spirit. Through this journey we are led to an understanding of how the mind is expressed through the body in movement." ¹⁾

BIDE - Barcelona International Dance Exchange, an annual platform for artists to work on laboratory settings, initiated and organized by Sebastian Garcia Ferro, Daniel Werner and the author.

Creativity - ongoing action that sustains life.

Critical pedagogy - a term created by the Brazilian educational reformist Paulo Freire. In his main work, *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (1972) he emphasizes the need to restore humanity through dialogue. Critical pedagogy claims all education to be inherently political, and asks for justice and equality as a base for education. It also underlines the student's critical thinking.

Confusion - once confusion is welcome, anything can be nourishing. (See Gap)

Contact Improvisation (CI) - a dance form initiated in the 1970's in America, central figures in its development since the early years have been Steve Paxton and Nancy Stark Smith. CI is a playful dialogue of weight, impulses and reflexes of bodies moving and improvising together in physical contact.

Dance - in a sense nearly any movement can be called dance; the judgment and definition of this is highly individual. Human beings dance but also call non-sentient subjects dancing; for example, life can be a dance. Personally, I find it relieving to consider what dance is as an opinion.

Facilitator - a person whose role is to ease a process by guiding it. (See Teacher)

Gap - Nancy Stark Smith talks about gaps in Underscore, a practice score for CI she has developed throughout the years. She describes gaps as moments with temporary absence of reference. She says: "On some days, for some people, gaps are difficult and undesirable; on other days, they are exciting, funny, fascinating encounters with the unknown." ²⁾

Laboratory - derives from 'laboratorium' in Latin, literally meaning a place for labor. Recently, a laboratory, or informally a lab, has been taken to use in many fields from business to art to emphasize experimental and innovative ways of working, collaborating and researching. While these notions could define a laboratory in dance education as well, I want to underline the nature of not-knowing and learning that can take place in such collaborative way of working.

Learning, unlearning, relearning - rather than only referring to learning, I prefer to address the unlearning and relearning processes as well. This expands the concept of learning to include the conscious choice of letting go of unwanted and unhealthy patterns, as well as re-introducing information that has already once been learnt. Learning, unlearning and relearning processes are about embodying, emphasizing, choosing and letting go of patterns of thoughts, movement or behavior.

Mindfulness - a way of being present, non-judgmental and generous in one's attention.

New dance - a branch of contemporary dance, born in the 1980's, influenced by Eastern philosophies, ways of holistic thinking and various somatic approaches. Mainly through improvisation, new dance is looking for a natural way of movement, respecting the individual limitations rather than aiming for certain aesthetics. My own education as dancer in Outokumpu, Finland in 2001-2004 was based on the working methods of new dance; emphasizing experiential processes and research and producing movement from the understanding of body mechanics. New dance was brought to Finland by Jaana and Jaap Klevering in the 1980's from its central source, the School of New Dance Development, Amsterdam. Kirsi Monni, a doctorate of dance in Theater Academy, Helsinki, describes contemporary dance as a dance method, where two starting points of dance are entwined: the aesthetic-technical dance deriving from the tradition of aesthetics, and new dance. 3) The concept of new dance is not in wide usage and it could be considered to have melted in the umbrella term of contemporary dance.

NLP - Neuro-Linguistic Programming, was developed out of the modeling of human thinking skills. The NLP modeling process involves researching how the brain works thru analyzing language patterns and non-verbal communication. NLP can be used to e.g. define creative processes by modeling mental strategies, thus provide ways to stimulate and develop personal creativity as well as creative group processes. In my thesis, I refer to Epstein, R.W.Dilts, and R.B. Dilts in their book Tools For Dreamers (Capitola,CA, 1991) which is about NLP.

Not-knowing - a necessary notion in order to expand the known. Not-knowing is not about undervaluing knowledge, but quite the opposite: it is an attitude of inviting and giving space for new information, perspectives and opinions rather than holding on to set ways of thinking.

Opinion - a chance and a challenge for exchange and feedback.

Practice - referring to the personal practice of an artist. Practice can be dynamic and changing, but includes ways of working, such as rituals of warm-ups,

exercises, ways of starting thinking processes, strategies of work, that are central in sustaining and developing the individual's own being and creative work.

Somatic approach - coming from the word soma, which was taken to use in relation to human movement by Thomas Hanna throughout 1960's and 70's to designate the experienced body in contrast to the objectified body. According to the somatic approach, experiencing the body from within, the body and mind are not separated but are experienced as a whole.⁴⁾ Somatics is a field of study of the body through the personal experiential perspective. Somatic approaches, however, can be seen to include a range of different methods, such as e.g. BMC, Alexander Technique and Feldenkrais Method.

Tanzsprint - an event offering workshops in dance, initiated and organized by the Master Students of Contemporary Dance Pedagogy in Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst, Frankfurt am Main (HfMDK). First Tanzsprint was organized in July 2008, and the second one, to which I refer in my thesis, took place in July 2009, in HfMDK.

Teacher - a person whose role is to provide others with information and create an atmosphere which is supporting learning. (See Facilitator)

Tried and True - here referring to a form of labbing used in CI where teachers can share their exercises around one topic. The exercises shared are "tried and true" material, meaning they have shown their value and function for the teacher, and are a part of his/her personal palette of teaching vocabulary.

1) Cohen, Bonnie Bainbridge: *Sensing, Feeling and Action*, Contact Editions, Northampton MA, 1993, p.1

2) Nancy Stark Smith, *Caught Falling*, Contact Editions, Northampton 2008, p 96

3) Anna Jussilainen: *Uuden Tanssin Uskontokulttuuriset ulottuvuudet*, Pro Gradu, Turku, Finland 2007, p. 41. Kirsi Monni, *Olemisen Poettinen Liike*, doctoral dissertation, Helsinki, 2004, p 197.

4) Cohen, Bonnie Bainbridge: *Sensing, Feeling and Action*, Contact Editions, Northampton MA, 1993, p.1

Appendix B

The Interviewees

Ronja Verkasalo:

I am a dancer, a mover, a choreographer, a dance maker, an artist, a teacher. I learn from my work and my body is my master teacher. My work is strongly focused in research, both when creating and performing, and when teaching.

I believe in finding the direction within the work, rather than setting goals and trying to achieve them. The process is that of learning, growing, appreciating the knowledge of the body and finding ways to learn what I already know. It is communicating, sharing, taking risks for art's sake. It is collective, political, global and it is personal and private.

Dance is my job, and my life's passion. I make my living as a dancer, but it would be wrong to say it's just my working identity. Dance has shaped my body and my mind, I don't have an identity that could be defined outside of dance.¹⁾

Joerg Hassmann:

I am a dancer. The core of my work is to explore my body in its movement option solo or with others (mainly through CI) and the impact it has on my mind, the way I connect to different layers of myself, to people and spaces. Maybe I am an explorer and sharer. I make my money from teaching dance. I share my curiosity, knowledge and desire to learn. And I explore and learn myself through teaching dance. I perform dance mainly under the question if it is possible to share my dance

with people who only watch me dance. Performing dance is essentially feeding my dance. ²⁾

David Lakein:

David Lakein is a Director-Choreographer, Performer, Writer, and Teacher. His interdisciplinary work swirls around the borders between dance, theatre, performance art, and social gatherings, incorporating video and installation elements. Lakein first trained as an actor in college in the United States, then as a dancer and performer in Berlin and at the School of New Dance Development Amsterdam, and is currently immersed in the contemporary art world, getting an MFA in at the Art Institute of Chicago. Lakein is equally passionate about his teaching and organizing projects, which are integral to his overall artistic practice. Whether facilitating students in their explorations of image-making and improvisation or bringing artists together in laboratory or festival settings, Lakein is committed to dialogue as a creative act and research as a container for transformative encounters. In 2008, he founded the artistic platform Paradox Bay, whose mission is to launch an ongoing exchange about how artists regard and approach their work, cultivate and nurture collaborations, interact and communicate with audiences, and connect with social activism efforts in local communities and across the globe. ³⁾

1) Written answer to author's question "How would you define yourself professionally?" Ronja Verkasalo, May 20, 2009.

2) Written answer to author's question "How would you define yourself professionally?" Joerg Hassmann, May 14, 2009.

3) Written answer to author's question "How would you define yourself professionally?" David Lakein, November 19, 2009.

Appendix C

The Interviewees' Definitions of Laboratory

Collected from the interviews, below some definitions of laboratory by Verkasalo, Hassmann and Lakein.

Ronja Verkasalo:

A lab is a collective research between equals.

It might have a facilitator, but it is essential for the labbing to be open to suggestions and ideas from all participants. An ideal number of participants for labbing in my mind is small, so that there is time and space for everyone's input to be recognized and explored.

A lab is a place to share questions, and to play with whatever those questions generate in us. It is a fruitful ground for new innovations, exactly because there is no demand of an outcome.

The first time I encountered a true lab structure, was when I was invited to participate in the SomePlace project, curated by the Wales Arts International in 2003. They literally invited a group of artists previously unknown to each other, to live in a mansion in the beautiful countryside of South West Wales, providing plenty of studio time plus travel, housing, catering and per diems; all this because they believed, that if you put a group of artists together and give them the facilities, they will create something. There was no demand for an outcome of any kind. We talked and hiked and worked together every day, and ended up producing a two day happening where British artists were invited to participate. We had over 50 guests in the mansion that weekend, and the connecting and networking which began there, has given many of us new working opportunities since. ¹⁾

Joerg Hassmann:

A laboratory is a working situation with at least two people around a genuine question. I see it like science: there is a problem/ unexplained phenomenon and scientist come up with different hypotheses, inventing experiments to prove or dismiss their thesis, discussing, writing, brainstorming. It is a path of discovery. The driving force is curiosity and not-knowing. The journey is built on self-responsibility for the process and outcome. ²⁾

David Lakein:

One of the things that I struggle around a lot is mapping out the differences what a workshop is and what a laboratory is. Usually the words become containers for a metaphor, and it's what a metaphor is able to release in terms of the attitude, imagination and tension among the participants. I often use laboratory as a way to distance myself from the word and concept and metaphor of workshop. The way I define laboratory is that it is much more of a state of mind and a particular way of approaching whatever the material or the investigation at hand is that has more a sense of equality, and a sense of shared experience as supposed to predefined or rigidly defined roles. In between the participants themselves and most importantly — this is more my experience as the teacher-facilitator —between the role of the so-called participants and the so-called teacher or facilitator.

I think for me the function of the laboratory is to enter into a state of mind that includes a research, researching curiosity.. Creating a situation, a container where it's not about realizing a pre-determined goal, so that there is space — both literal space and metaphorical space, intellectual space, spiritual space — to allow unexpected things to happen. To enter, to have moments where it is less about mastering a series of exercises or collection of knowledge and more about this state

of mind, of embodying more a sense of shared experience and all participants being more in equal endeavor to discover different aspects of what the particular research or the topic is. ³⁾

- 1) Written answer to author's question "How do you define laboratory?", Ronja Verkasalo, May 20, 2009.
- 2) Written answer to author's question "How do you define laboratory?" Joerg Hassmann, May 14, 2009.
- 3) Author's interview with David Lakein, June 26, 2009.