

**A choreographer's approach to a dancer's creativity in a
collaborative choreographic process**

By S.M. Oetgens van Waveren Pancras Clifford, MA
Research Project (Master Test) – MA Choreography
Fontys Dance Academy Tilburg, 27 June 2013
Tutor: Lou Cope

Contents

Abstract	3
1. Introduction	4
1.1. Methodology & research framework	5
A. The choreographer-dancer(s) collaborative relationship and working methods	6
B. A dancer's creativity	9
C. The general stages of a choreographic process	11
D. Field experience by case study	12
2. The choreographer and dancer in collaboration	14
2.1. The choreographer and dancer's role and relationship	14
2.2. Approaching a dancer	16
2.3 Approaching creativity	19
3. The response of a dancer	22
4. The response of a choreographer	26
4.1. How to move on	26
4.2. The general stages of the choreographic process	29
4.3. Evaluative response	32
5. Conclusion	35
5.1. Discussion	39
6. Bibliography	41
7. Appendix	44

Abstract

This dissertation analyses the collaborative choreographic process and how a choreographer can engage with a dancer's creativity within. The research is narrowed down to the field of contemporary dance and choreography and includes a case study on the choreographic process *Twofold*.

The results of this research could benefit choreographers and dancers who work or aim to work collaboratively and are interested in the approach and use of creativity. One might apply the experiences of this case study towards one's own practise and enrich one's point of view, methods and/or way of working. Although this research has limitations, as it relies on a single case study to demonstrate these experiences and has a choreographer's point of view as a main focus, it is adding knowledge to the field, because specific literature on this subject is lacking.

The research finds that the choreographer-dancer relationship type has influence on the collaborative choreographic process, as have the different stages within the choreographic process. A choreographer can use their environment, personal or group approaches, as well as different types of prompts to engage with a dancer's creativity. A dancer gives response in a non-propositional way, translates own feelings and opinions when creating movement material and is affected by the given time frame.

In this particular case study of the *Twofold* process, choreographer Mous and the dancers collaborated mainly in the roles *Pilot-Contributor* and *Facilitator-Creator*, where they engaged effectively on several researched elements: by having ongoing responses and concrete experiences, by observing and reflecting on these and by making conclusions. The writer found opportunities to extend this creative process by using more active experimentation (trying out what is planned and have new experiences) and give more overall focus to the intention of the movement and choreography as a whole.

1. Introduction

Types of collaboration between a choreographer and a dancer can differ greatly within and between each choreographic process: What a choreographer asks from a dancer and in what way, how much freedom of interpretation a dancer has or can take within the given movement, structure or task, and how much room there is for collective decision-making, are a few examples.

The topic of this research is the collaboration between choreographer and dancer(s) in a collaborative choreographic process, framed within contemporary dance and choreography. Within this area the focus lies on the choreographer's approach to the dancer's creativity. Therefore the main research question is:

How can a choreographer engage most effectively with dancers and their creativity in a collaborative choreographic process?

I choose to mainly focus on the choreographer's perspective because being a choreographer myself it is my main expertise and field of interest. As collaboration is based on interaction, in this case with the dancers, part of the research is focussing on their perspective. These points of view refer to the collaborative process only, not the creative product itself.

The outcome of the research could affect my own creative processes and those of other choreographers directly, and may be of interest to dancers working or wishing to work in collaboration with choreographers.

To engage with dancers and their creativity effectively I identify three main considerations from the choreographer's perspective, based on my experience and research of this topic:

1. How to approach a dancer or group of dancers, working in collaboration? For example with what tasks, guidance and response methods? This includes questioning and knowing what kind of dancers one is working with and what the range of the choreographer's working methods is.
2. Is the outcome of a task and the response of a dancer what the choreographer needs and/or asks for? This includes an expectation on the outcome, with regards to the overall vision of the creation, in specific parts and as a whole.

- Can one work with the same ongoing approach when collaborating, or do different stages of the choreographic process have different influences and needs that affect the way of working?

These three considerations happen within a choreographic process in ongoing cycles.

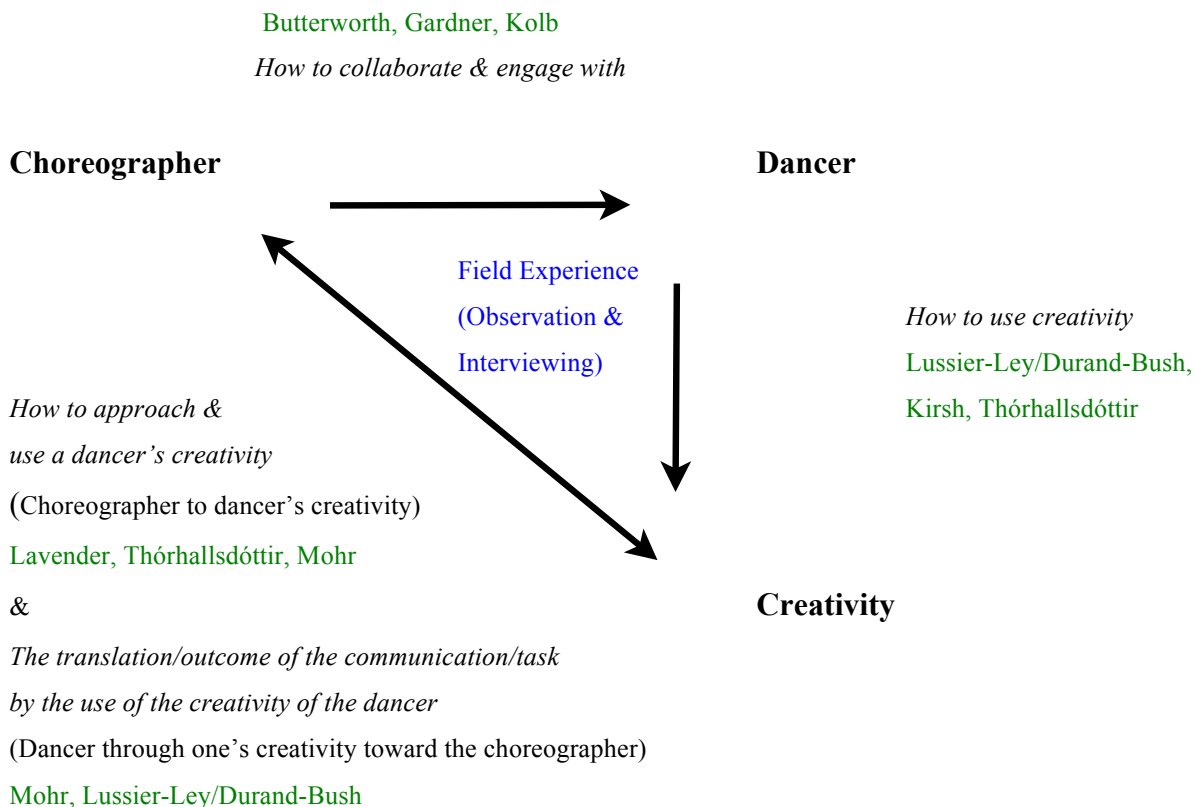
To underpin the research of these three sub-questions I apply the chosen methodology, which I explain in paragraph 1.1.

1.1. Methodology and research framework

In this research I apply existing theories in combination with a case study of work field experiences. These are divided and explained in the research framework, which contains four sections: the choreographer-dancer(s) collaborative relationship and working methods (A), the dancer's creativity (B), the general stages of a choreographic process (C) and an analysis of the case study (D).

Model 1 shows an overview of the directions and conducted sources of this research.

Model 1: Research overview



How to read the model:

Following each arrow gives a relationship: between choreographer and dancer, between dancer and creativity, between choreographer and the dancer's own creativity and the dancer's own creativity in response to the choreographer.

Between the three main subjects (choreographer, dancer, creativity) that are connected with arrows, the intention of the research part is given, along with the methodology or literature that is used in the research of this dissertation (in green).

In the centre of the three arrows the practice research method is given (in blue).

In the following sections A. till D. the framework of the research is given.

A. The choreographer-dancer(s) collaborative relationship and working methods

To clarify the collaborative relationship and way of working between choreographer and dancer in the choreographic process, and research how to approach the dancer within, I first focus on the relationship and teaching/learning methods and approaches between choreographer and dancer in a collaborative process (chapter 2). Hereby I use the Didactic-Democratic spectrum model by Jo Butterworth. Butterworth received her doctorate at LCDS University of Kent and currently works at the University of Malta as professor in Dance Studies. She has been Chair of Wayne McGregor|Random Dance since 2002 and is also a Board member of Northern Ballet. The model she created is a framework that proposes five distinct choreographic processes, with flexibility to shift among them during one's own process. Within this model I focus on three out of the five processes (Butterworth, 2009):

- Process 3: dancers contributing to the concept of a choreographer,
- Process 4: dancers collaborating with a choreographer, and
- Process 5: dancer-choreographers working together in ensemble.

These three processes include an interactive collaboration, and Butterworth puts these forward as 'distinct dance-devising processes'. The other two processes (*expert/instrument* and *author/interpreter*) may be collaborative as well, as choreographer and dancer are working together. However, the accompanied methods and approaches of these two process types are not driven by shared decision making, as in process 4 and 5 or contributing as in process 3. Butterworth speaks of 'a clear shift in ownership', which is evident in process 3, 4 and 5. Further explanation is given in chapter 2.

In addition to researching the choreographer-dancer relationship and the learning/teaching approaches and methods from choreographer to dancer, I refer to the types of intelligences defined by Howard Gardner in combination with the learning styles by David Kolb. Knowing what types of intelligences choreographers and dancers work with gives more awareness of the relationship in the choreographic process and underpins Butterworth's model on the choreographer's and dancers' skills. Adding Kolb's experiential learning experience supports Butterworth's model on teaching methods and learning approaches.

Gardner (1943) initially formulated seven intelligences in his research on the human cognition (Gardner, 1999/2002):

- *Linguistic intelligence* (spoken and written word)
- *Logical-mathematical intelligence* (logic & analysis)
- *Musical intelligence* (musicality)
- *Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence* (body)
- *Spatial intelligence* (space & patterns)
- *Interpersonal intelligence* (understanding intentions & motivations of others)*
- *Intrapersonal intelligence* (understand oneself & appreciate one's feelings)*

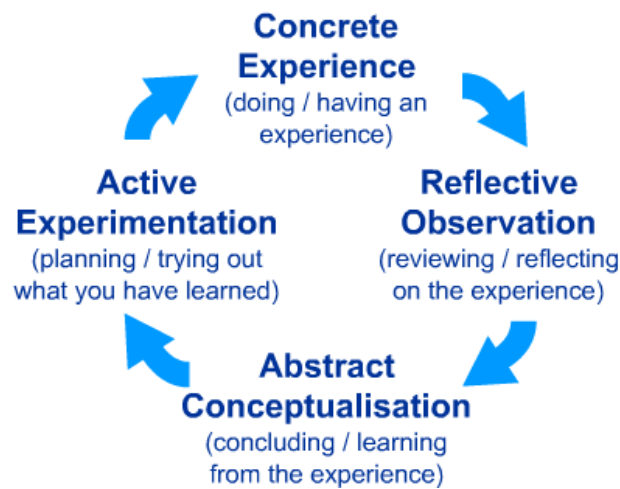
* (*infed [online] 2002, 2008*)

Later he added *Naturalist intelligence* (nature) and *Spiritual intelligence* (spirituality). He is still researching more types of intelligences, for example the *Existential* and *Moral intelligences*.

In all choreographic processes we work directly with at least four of these: The *Bodily-kinaesthetic*, *Linguistic*, *Spatial* and *Musical intelligences*. Also the *Interpersonal intelligence* is present, especially in a collaborative process. Therefore I focus on these five intelligences in this research. However, other intelligences may also be present in a collaborative choreographic process, depending on who is collaborating and in what way. For example choreographers that apply research into the process or structure the work in a mathematical way are using their *Logical-Mathematic intelligence*. One who is relying more on intuition is using this intelligence way less.

Knowing we use these intelligences as choreographers and dancers, one can approach them with awareness within the experiential learning cycle of Kolb (after Kurt Lewin) (Model 2).

Model 2: Experiential Learning Cycle by Kolb (Davies, n.d.)



Experiential learning differs from theoretical learning and fits easily into the world of dance education and choreography. An example of the first step in the circle is when the dancer has a concrete experience by physically doing a task set by the choreographer. The choreographer (and maybe the dancer as well) then observes and reflects the outcome of the task. They choose a direction to go with and blend it in with the concept and dramaturgy of the work. It might need to be adjusted or experimented with, but coming from the previous steps of the circle both choreographer and dancers have learned by doing and can continue from this new point. Although Kolb approaches the circle with this order, there is also the possibility to start in any of the four phases. I even suggest it is possible to change the order. In creating dance there is often first an abstract conceptualisation, the core or idea of the work. Then experimentation in movement takes place and a concrete experience comes from that. Through reflection and reviewing of this movement experimentation, choreographers and dancers are able to make decisions about what to keep and/or develop in the choreographic process. Further explanation and examples are given in the section *approaching a dancer* in chapter 2.

Going back to the five intelligences that we directly use in creating choreography, we can apply the circle of Kolb with each of the intelligences. For example: what do the collaborators experience, working with music and rhythm (*Musical intelligence*)? The dancers might feel rushed by the music in a certain phrase, or the given music does not support their energy

while dancing. Then how do they reflect on that and conclude? An effect of their experience might be that the dancers do not use the pace the choreographer wants them to be in. In the *Active Experimentation* phase they can work together on a solution. For example change the piece of music, or practise the movement material again so the dancer can embody it better and will be able to speed up the movement phrase.

B. A dancer's creativity

Combining the theories of Gardner and Kolb already gives an approach of engaging with a dancer's creativity. Before going deeper into this topic, I will first explain this research approach with regard to a dancer's creativity.

There are many definitions of the term creativity. Robert E. Franken, author of *Human Motivation*, defines creativity as:

'To generate or recognize ideas, alternatives, or possibilities that may be useful in solving problems, communicating with others, and entertaining ourselves and others.'

(California State University [online], n.d.)

A definition of creativity by professor Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, author of *Creativity - Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*, is:

'Creativity is any act, idea, or product that changes an existing domain, or that transforms an existing domain into a new one... What counts is whether the novelty he or she produces is accepted for inclusion in the domain.'

(California State University [online], n.d.)

Both Franken and Csikszentmihalyi mention that creativity involves something new, which has an effect of change in a situation. It can be seen on various levels: as a domain, a field within the domain or a person in the field (Csikszentmihalyi on website CSU, n.d.). I focus on the creativity of a person within a choreographic process, with the notion that this person is part of the field and domain. On a personal level, one needs to see things from different perspectives and generate new possibilities or alternatives in order to be creative (Franken on website CSU, n.d.).

Translating this to being creative as a dancer I give these examples:

- Generating movement material and being able to transform and adjust existing movement material, often within a theme or concept.
- Adding personal experiences, ideas and/or feelings to the concept or theme.
- Communicating the choreography towards the audience.

According to dancer and choreographer Thórhallsdóttir, who attained her MA in Choreography in 2008 (Panic Productions [online], n.d.), the use of creativity in collaboration can differ if one, in this case a dancer, creates as an individual or in a group. Interaction is an important factor. In both situations one can only tell ‘whether it is valuable until it passes social evaluation’ (Csikszentmihalyi in Thórhallsdóttir, 2008:178). More explanation is given in chapter 2.

How to engage with a dancer’s creativity relies enormously on verbal communication between choreographer and dancer, according to Larry Lavender: Professor at the University of North Carolina – Greensboro, specialising in the areas of research and teaching in Dance Criticism and Choreography.

Lavender says a choreographer can best signal one’s specific choices and explorations by ‘speech acts’. One of these speech acts he calls ‘prompts’ which I use as part of the methodology:

‘Prompts activate dancers’ creativity to improvise and/or compose new material or develop existing material’. (Lavender, 2009:77)

Prompts differ from *Manipulations*, although with both the choreographer directs from one’s outside eye. With the use of manipulations however, movement possibilities are generated without activating the dancers’ creativity. Lavender gives an example of a manipulation, when the choreographer says: ‘Try that without the arms’. There will be a change in the movement material (the movement without the use of the arms), but the movement is not sourced from the dancer’s own creativity. There is no room for the dancer to explore the movement further from a personal point of view. This means when using manipulations a choreographer makes a dancer create an effect or result that they are looking for. By using prompts a choreographer asks a dancer to give a personal input; generating or developing material through the use of their own creative thoughts and actions.

Lavender identifies five typical kinds of prompts:

- *Amplification prompts*; asks dancers to add emphasis to movement material.
- *What if prompts*; gives the dancers the ability to try out a task with own choices but without committing in advance to use a particular outcome.
- *Insertion prompts*; develops existing movement material by placing new elements inside or in between.
- *Rapid response prompts*; unexpected moments/surprises given by the dancer(s). For example when they take risks or make mistakes and the outcome of which turns out to enhance the work.
- *Praise*; letting the dancer(s) know that their work and creative input is appreciated, gives stimulus and generates cooperation.

The use of prompts is discussed in section 2.2. on approaching creativity.

C. The general stages of a choreographic process

All of the above elements take place in a choreographic process. There is action and response between choreographer and dancer(s) on a continuative level. However, a choreographic process contains different stages and therefore the needs and type of responses and choices might differ.

Butterworth (2007) divides the choreographic process in eight stages:

- Stimulus/Conception/Intention
- Dance Content: the generation of language
- Process: the modes of making
- Dance Content Development
- Structuring: macro and micro
- Completion/Rehearsal
- Performance(s)
- Evaluation/Reflection

More explanation on the content of each stage is given in chapter 4 – The response of a choreographer.

To research whether all the above considerations are used in the practical field and what the results might be, my next focus lies on field experience within a collaborative choreographic process.

D. Field experience by case study

To gain knowledge about the field experiences of choreographers and dancers collaborating in the choreographic field, I choose to apply a case study. This is helpful in this research, as the current existing literature on collaborative choreographic processes is lacking, especially from an external point of view. For example choreographer Rosemary Butcher, who sees exploring the process as part of the work, did write about her own choreographic processes in collaboration with professor Susan Melrose. However, this work is more focussed on collaborating in general, with artists from other art disciplines. The voice of the dancers is hardly involved.

Another partly related research comes from choreographer Elizabeth Cameron Dalman and neuroscience researcher Paul Howard Mason, who investigated in three of Dalman's choreographic processes and works (Mason [online], 2009). In all three works Dalman was choreographing and Mason was dancing, which means they both had double roles in their research. Although collaborating with the other dancers and therefore related to this research topic, their focus lay on the social dynamics and evolutionary systems in a collaborative choreographic process.

In my case study, I focus on the collaboration and approach and use of creativity in one choreographic process by choreographer Lieneke Mous and the dancers.

Lieneke Mous (1984) is a Dutch choreographer and dance educator. She resided in the United States for five years to attain her MFA in Modern Dance. Upon returning to The Netherlands, she has continued her work as choreographer: In the period January-March 2013 she was working on her concept 'Twofold' as guest-choreographer at New Dance Company, a platform for choreographers and dancers 'who share, develop, create and perform together' (New Dance Company [online], 2013).

The concept of *Twofold* started as 'finding binaries in movements as a resemblance of the binaries we find in people and society'. There are two sides of a story, or it can be interpreted as two forces work together as one. (Mous, 2013)

Mous started the choreographic process with five dancers: Natasja Bode, Helena López Cifuentes, Nika Jankovic, Ann Kathrin Granhus and Therese Thonfors. In an early stage of the process it became clear that Jankovic was not able to fully join the *Twofold* process and Mous and Jankovic decided she needed to step out. Mous continued with the four other dancers.

My choice to investigate in the process of Mous and the dancers, is based on the collaborative approach of Mous' way of working in the creative process and her open and co-operative intentions in this research.

I use two types of field research within this case study:

- Observations of rehearsals in the collaborative process;

I am present at all rehearsals possible, attending 7 rehearsals (the audition excluded) of 20 hours out of 9 rehearsals of 25,5 hours in total (also excluding the audition session). The rehearsals at which I am not present were talked over with the choreographer, with myself making notes.

During the observations I write what I see and hear, and interpret it. During the rehearsal process I change my writing position occasionally and am aware of my writing style; I try to change writing perspectives and style as well. The main goal of this observational writing is to write about everything that is happening, including my own thoughts coming in. Besides the observational writings, I film all rehearsals I attend, to provide evidence in the case study and to be able to look back at the rehearsals.

- Interviews with choreographer and dancers;

Individual interviews take place based on the chosen theories and observations as explained above, to be able to gain the personal experiences of all collaborators in the process. All (verbal) interviews are recorded. The additional writings, such as notes from and evaluation with Mous are documented in one file (appendix).

2. The choreographer and dancer in collaboration

This chapter focuses on the choreographer and dancer(s) collaboration in a choreographic process, seen from the choreographer's perspective. It is divided into three sections:

- The choreographer and dancer's role and relationship
- Approaching a dancer
- Approaching creativity

2.1. The choreographer and dancer's role and relationship

The relationship between choreographer and dancer(s) has a strong influence on how choreographers engage with dancers and their creativity in the choreographic process: It affects the type of collaboration and way of working within. Of course roles or types of collaboration can switch, but there will be a clear starting point and base of the process. According to Jonathan Burrows (2010) each choreographer-dancer relationship is difficult, fraught with questions of control, ownership and collaboration. It also includes a high level of vulnerability, because we are processing ideas through the body (Mohr, 2012).

As explained in chapter one I narrow down this focus to three specific types of collaboration as defined by Butterworth, of the choreographer-dancer relationship:

1. *Pilot-Contributor* (process 3),
2. *Facilitator-Creator* (process 4), and
3. *Collaborator-Co-owner* (process 5).

In the *pilot-contributor* relationship the choreographer's artistic concept is the core of the work. Dancers can bring in ideas, but they work with the given theme or framework. They respond to tasks, contribute to guided discovery (for example improvisations based on a theme) and might replicate material from the choreographer or each other.

In the *facilitator-creator* relationship choreographer and dancer are both engaged in a devising process and negotiate the concept and creation. There can for example be shared decision-making about the structure of the work and the development of the movement material or the work in total.

In a *collaborator-co-owner* relationship the ownership of the work is shared and both dancer and choreographer negotiate on the content and intention as well (Butterworth, 2009).

UK choreographer Rosemary Butcher, known for her collaborative work, mentions that it is important that the relationship with a dancer does not get lost (Butcher & Melrose, 2005). She states that dancers in collaboration ‘are manifesting something you can’t get to in any other way’. The dancers are always special and the relationship needs to be taken care of. Although she explains the value and intensity of the collaboration here, she is the final decision maker of each work as choreographer and she is carrying ‘the can’. It is what she wants. She enjoys the responsibility and sees herself to be more interested in her work than herself, which takes a part away from the ego. At the end of the day situations such as illness or injuries can occur when working with dancers, and she has to carry on: the choreography needs to be ready for its premiere. According to this explanation of Butcher she fits into a combination of the *pilot-contributor* (3) and *facilitator-creator* (4) processes; she is leading and guiding the process (as *pilot*) and lets herself be affected by the uniqueness of the dancers she works with (as *facilitator*).

In an interview with Mous it becomes clear she has a similar approach concerning the choreographer-dancer relationship as Butcher. Mous sees herself mostly as a *facilitator* of the creative process (process 4). She works from her vision, with her starting point or concept and her name is under it, but she facilitates the environment that she and the dancers work in: she wants to let the dancers experience being artists, *contributors* (process 3) to the work, where Mous respects and guides them. One example of her approach is that she gives tasks where the dancers have freedom to interpret and respond in their own way; for example giving them three words to make a movement phrase with. The outcome of the task created by the dancers is shown to Mous and she decides what she wants to use of it in the final work.

I recognise the combination or shifts Mous makes, referring to Butterworth’s process as *facilitator* and *pilot*, by my observations and talks with her. For example on the selection day (26-01-2013), where she worked with dancers of New Dance Company for the first time, Mous had prepared a mind map on the concept and discussed this with the dancers. Together they wrote all kinds of contrasts and the dancers could choose one. Mous framed the tasks: first they worked on one side of the contrast, then the other side, then the ‘grey area in between’. In this session the experience of the dancers was important: they had discussions

after the runs they did, where Mous let the dancers explain their experiences. In this example Mous provides the bigger picture of the concept and the dancer can influence it by giving individual and personal content. This means Mous started this process as *facilitator* and let the dancers be *creators*.

On 23th of February they are half way through the process (time wise). In this phase Mous is more often leading the dancers. There is room for the dancers to explore movement, but on a smaller scale and within a set frame: Mous uses a self-created ‘grid’ to structure (part of) the movement material. Within the grid they explore the movement as a group: Mous gives tasks, the dancers do the movement together and Mous responds to what she sees and makes decisions. In this example both parties are actively participating, but Mous is leading as *pilot* and dancers are *contributors*.

2.2. Approaching a dancer

In the paragraphs above it becomes clear that Mous shifts or combines the choreographer’s roles as *facilitator* and *pilot*. In the Didactic-Democratic spectrum model Butterworth included teaching methods of the choreographer and learning approaches of the dancer to each role, which connects to the approaches and responses of choreographer and dancer(s) (Model 3).

Model 3: Part of the Didactic-Democratic spectrum model by Butterworth

	Process 3	Process 4	Process 5
Roles Choreographer – Dancer	Pilot – Contributor	Facilitator – Creator	Collaborator – Co-owner
Teaching methods	Leading, guiding	Nurturing, mentoring	Shared authorship
Learning approaches	Respond to tasks, contribute to guided discovery, replicate material from others, etc.	Respond to tasks, problem-solve, contribute to guided discovery, actively participate.	Experiential. Contribute fully to concept, dance content, form, style, process, discovery.

Butterworth shows the overlap and diversity among the different processes, but not how these teaching methods and learning approaches are carried out. Therefore I link this part of

Butterworth's model with Gardner's theory on multiple intelligences and Kolb's learning cycle model, and apply these to examples seen in the case study with Mous and dancers working on *Twofold*.

Within the *Twofold* process all five intelligences related to choreographic processes are present:

- *The Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence*; clearly this process includes creating, exploring and developing movement. The body is the instrument to develop and represent the concept.
- *Linguistic intelligence*; Mous gives tasks to the dancers, the dancers respond kinaesthetically and verbally, for example how they experience a task or asking questions to Mous and each other. Mous also makes notes during the rehearsals in her notebook and has created a mind map.
- *Spatial intelligence*; Especially in the second half of the process Mous explores the space by asking the dancers to repeat the movement material in different formations, such as a diamond and a diagonal line. She also uses different spatial levels: high, middle, low (floor). The dancers also have chances to pick their own starting front.
- *Musical intelligence*; the team works with music and rhythm. For example speeding up and slow motion within the work and verbal sounds as guidance during the process.
- *Interpersonal intelligence*; Dancers learn to understand the concept during the process and Mous' motivation to create this work. Mous has to recognise the intentions the dancers give, within the piece and in social interaction (for example if the dancers are open to receiving feedback, need to be pushed or need rest).

Mous and the dancers work with the two remaining intelligences as well:

- *Logical-mathematical intelligence*; There is a mathematic phrase in the work which is built up by numbers for the order. The team also looks back at recordings of the rehearsals and analyses them: For example Mous asks the dancers to respond on what they see.
- *Intrapersonal intelligence*; Each dancer needs to find their role and own perspective within the set concept. Understanding how one is approaching the concept refers to personal experiences. By the group discussion they can express their own feelings and hear the others. Hereby they can understand each other's feelings.

In both *facilitator* and *pilot* roles Mous combines the *Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence*, *Linguistic intelligence* and *Interpersonal intelligence* approximately equal in her approach. The other intelligences are shown more in one or the other role: When Mous is in her role as *facilitator* and mentoring/nurturing the dancers, she relates mostly to the *Intrapersonal intelligence*. When being in the *pilot* role, she approaches the dancers on the *Spatial-*, *Musical-* and *Logical-mathematical intelligences*, leading/guiding them. Using these approaches by shifting and/or combining the *facilitator* and *pilot* roles using all the aforementioned intelligences, how does Mous as choreographer relate to the context of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle in the *Twofold* process?

Concerning the concrete experiences phase Mous approaches the dancers by giving tasks (*Linguistic*) and in one rehearsal she also taught them a movement phrase (mainly *Bodily-kinaesthetic* and *Linguistic*). She lets the dancers reflect on their own experiences by asking them questions, and on the rehearsal recordings that she sends them. She asks them for feedback in the following rehearsal (*Logical-mathematical*, containing analysis). In the abstract conceptualisation phase there is a shift in ownership and therefore in the approach: the dancers can make conclusions about what works (or not) for them, how it feels in their bodies for example. But Mous is making the decisions in what to keep, what to develop, how to develop it, etc. How she makes these decisions is often influenced by what she sees happening between the dancers, including their mistakes; sometimes these mistakes turn out to be working and fit the choreography. She is also open for suggestions from the dancers and tries these out. Hereby Mous and the dancers go into the active experimentation phase together (*Bodily-kinaesthetic, Interpersonal & Intrapersonal intelligence*).

Applying one specific multiple intelligence to the circle of Kolb I see a similar way of working and approaching by Mous: being in charge, but open for suggestions and making adjustments to what is happening in the moment. For example working on the spatial intelligence in the rehearsal of March 16th (Appendix: 41-50) she started with directing the spatial settings for all four of the dancers after a question from the dancer Ann Kathrin Granhus. Hereby she encourages the dancers to have the concrete experience all at the same time, by doing it. Mous is the one reflecting, as she is the one that can see the result. A discussion follows between Mous and the dancers, and the dancers add their experience on the spatial issues. For example why one ends up in a different angle, from their own bodily perspective. Then Mous and the dancers go slowly through the whole phrase (trying out what

has been discussed) and together they make adjustments in the directions and how to get there physically. At this point they make the conclusions of what works best together. In this circle the phases *abstract conceptualisation* and *active experimentation* are exchanged from Kolb's original order.

2.3. Approaching creativity

A choreographer like Mous, who is leading, guiding and mentoring the dancers, invites the dancers to respond to tasks and actively participate. In order to be able to respond to any kind of task, a dancer has to be creatively involved. It's part of the choreographer's job to see and decide what each dancer needs in order to be most creative, according to US choreographer Hope Mohr: artistic director of Hope Mohr Dance in San Francisco (Mohr [online], 2012). She questions the importance of a non-judgmental environment. A non-judgmental environment might be needed in a certain phase, such as a brainstorm or a certain improvisation (which Mous and the dancers applied in the process), but in order to continue the process a choreographer needs to select and therefore judge the given material. Mohr mentions that creativity thrives under a bit of stress, in situations where ideas are challenged. Therefore working on a task, a dancer mostly needs 'enough time and space to work independently' before the created part will be evaluated by the choreographer. Mohr also acknowledges that every dancer is different. For example some dancers need more privacy to create than others.

A choreographer can use a general alternation in approaching dancers' creativity, by giving group or individual tasks or guidance. Thórhallsdóttir concludes from statements of several theorists on creativity that 'the lone genius is a myth' (2008:177). Social factors have an important role in creativity. He refers to Csikszentmihalyi, who states that only by social evaluation one can know if a thought is new and valuable. Creativity happens by interacting between a person's thought and a social cultural context (Csikszentmihalyi in Thórhallsdóttir, 2008:178).

This could mean approaching creativity should be effective when being in a group, but on the other hand groups tend to focus on common rather than unique ideas (2008:178). Thereby, sharing ideas can still be stimulating, but might have negative effects on emotional reaction and cognitive processes (2008:179).

With these pros and cons on group versus individual approaches on creativity, one should look at the current collaboration. Thórhallsdóttir shares his finding of a case study: a

collaborative creation process towards the work *No, He Was White*. The collective aimed to work collectively, attain a certain quality and interact in a way that could lead to intrinsic creativity. They were able to solve particular problems, did not always agree and not all discussions were effective, but they managed to create the piece with all being pleased with the outcome. It was a collaborative experience that changed Thórhallsdóttir's way of thinking as an artist. He mentions he could not have experienced this on his own as a creator. (2008:179-180)

In the *Twofold* process, Mous and the dancers worked with both situations: Group creativity was mainly used in the early stages of the process, for example by responding to a mind map Mous had made, or when the dancers were improvising together on a same task. When starting to create more specific movement material, the tasks were still the same to all dancers, but they were individually creatively dealing with it. Although they worked individually on the same task, they were all in the same studio while creating.

According to Lavender, choreographers need specific tools to address every aspect of dance making; the actions in the process of dance making (IDEA model), the creation intentions and mentoring and critiquing the creative process and the work (2009). This last aspect, rehearsal criticism, is in Lavender's perspective done by an external observer and not the choreographer, with one's aim to ensure the choreographers' maximum understanding of one's choreographic actions. I believe a choreographer can enrich oneself with the same approaches, applying on one's own choreographic process. When a choreographer and external observer (for example a dramaturge or coach) have a same awareness of tools, they can communicate effectively on the progress of the process and the choreography itself. 'The art of prompting' (chapter 1) is one of Lavender's given tools and could benefit a choreographer by giving more awareness on how to approach a dancer's creativity.

While observing Mous, I recognised several prompts she used, for example:

In the rehearsal of February 2nd Mous taught a movement phrase to the dancers. When the phrase was embedded, she gave the dancers the task to rework the phrase from the words 'big & low' (create a version B) and 'high & small' (version C), influencing the phrase with these words. This emphasises the movement material, and therefore Mous used *amplification prompts*.

Mous seems to be using *What if prompts* in the rehearsal of February 16th, where she literally says: ‘What would it look like if ...’ talking about pressing the knee with the hands and looking forward instead of looking at the knee. Here she uses the words of approaching *what if prompts*, but the outcome is already clear; there is not really a choice without committing to the outcome. The dancers can already imagine what it would look like and it sounds like Mous wants this option. In this moment Mous starts using *what if prompts* by the words she chooses, but intention wise it turns out to be a polite approach to give the dancers a direction how to do it: It is an order instead of an opportunity for the dancers to investigate.

Two prompts Mous uses several times in the *Twofold* process are *rapid response prompts* and *Praise*; she responds during a run, for example saying ‘yes’ or ‘nice’ or ‘good, keep on going’. After a run she gives more specific positive feedback. Once she sent notes by email, of which one was: ‘Perfect chaos’, to dancer Bode, who had to scream the word ‘chaos’ loud and with a specific timing.

An example of a *rapid response prompt* moment happened with Bode as well: Because of her injury in the rehearsal of March 9th Bode had to skip a floor phrase and was sitting up while the other dancers were moving. The way she looked at the dancers was working well and Mous kept the change in the remaining rehearsals. Only at the last rehearsal she changed it back: Bode had to join the others in the phrase again.

Mous and the dancers did not explicitly use Lavender’s *Insertion prompts*. They worked with developing movement, but not specifically by placing new elements inside or in between existing material. They did use repetition or adaptation of existing movement to develop movement material.

Overall, looking at Mous ways of approaching the dancers’ creativity in the *Twofold* process, she used:

- Both non-judgemental (for example: improvisations) and judgemental environments (for example: selecting and directing movement material)
- Individual approaches (but always in a group rehearsal setting, so others were present) and group approaches
- Several ways of prompting

Hereby she approached the dancer’s creativity several times and in several ways and gave the dancers variety in order to be creative.

3. The response of a dancer

Working in a collaborative choreographic process means there are at least two individuals working together, with each having their own artistic perspective. Although a choreographer might be (more) in charge, for example with Mous in the collaborative process *Twofold*, each dancer has their voice, their own ideas, interpretations, possibilities and limitations.

After the choreographer has made an approach, for example by giving a task (discussed in chapter 2), a dancer has to give a response. This chapter's focus lies with the perspective of the dancers, dealing with their responses to a choreographer by approaching their creativity and their experiences within.

Dancers regularly use their own body to think with, in a non-propositional way; they translate personal feelings and opinions in the body and use their own (and other's) bodies as active tools to gain new movement material (Kirsch, 2011). To be able to do so, a dancer must clarify their own feelings and organise their own ideas (Hawkins in Ashley [online], 2005:4). Therefore, how a dancer feels is an integral element of the creative experiences (Lussier-Ley, 2009) and this influences the outcome of a given task. Lussier-Ley (former dance artist and current Mental Performance Consultant in sports, performing arts, and corporate creativity (Elysian Insight [online], 2010)) and Durand-Bush (associate Professor in the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa (University of Ottawa [online], n.d.)) studied '*the feel*' of modern dancers in their creative experiences. They use the verb 'to feel' as a noun in their paper and therefore I continue referring to it in this way. A result came out that by exploring the role of 'feel' in their creative experiences, the participating dancers came to view themselves as creators, rather than 'just dancers'. They felt they were participating as creative agents in their dance community (2009:207).

In addition to the role and use of feelings and experiences by the dancers (and choreographer), Kirsh (Professor in the Department of Cognitive Science at the University of California, San Diego and team member of Random Dance, (Random Dance [online], n.d.)) explains that they rely on 'imagery in the visual, somato-sensory, tactile and motor systems to create novel movement' (2011:n.p.). By acquiring concepts through sight, sound, touch and so on affects the understanding of those concepts, long after they have been abstracted from specific senses. This means a dancer can shift in modalities, between 'body-as-tool' and 'body-as-display-medium', and hereby embody one's creativity. When using this shifting possibility, it can lead to a change in form and style of dance (2011:n.p.).

In the case study of Mous and the dancers in the *Twofold* process, the dancers had several ways of dealing with the tasks they received. They gave several examples in our interviews. For example dancer Thonfors, a contemporary dancer from Sweden who is currently based in Amsterdam, explained that she needed to make sense of the task to be able to work with it. When a task is difficult, she simplifies it for herself and starts with the basic idea of it. For example with the task to adjust a given and already existing phrase with the contradictions big-low and small-high; it did not make sense to her in the beginning; it would be easier to work with the opposites big-small and high low. So she started with one part she could relate to (for example only big) and applied her interpretation of the words step by step.

On a general level Thonfors mentioned she needs time to work on a task, because she wants to create something good, of which she can be proud. Therefore time pressure does not work well for her. Working with Mous she felt the time she needed was given to her, and this created a positive experience. As mentioned before Mohr also sees time as an important element to let a dancer be creative. Dance artist Christy Funsch, MFA, CMA based in San Francisco, responded on Mohr's article in 2012, where she writes that as a dancer she appreciates an amount of time to get ideas in the body, but on the other hand too much time puts her in a critical state of mind. She says:

'If I trust the choreographer's sensibilities, I find it very freeing to generate movement without needing to sculpt it.' (Funsch on Mohr's website, 2012)

Thonfors further mentioned that she likes to work on the movement material she creates together with a choreographer, for example as was done with a hand phrase. It was a simple, framed task: to make a phrase only with the hands. While working in the studio, Mous asked her to show what she had so far. Then they start working on it together. So the sculpting Funsch writes about has been done together, after the first moment of generating movement by Thonfors herself. This was a positive experience for Thonfors as well.

Receiving a clear, framed task was also useful to dancer Bode. She is a dancer working mainly in the commercial field of dance and wants to develop herself by attending more in artistic driven projects. Again the hand phrase was mentioned as a task that suited, and she named the task with objects as well. Each dancer had to bring two objects: a positive one and an ugly one. With each object the dancers had to make a phrase. Bode approached this task by

using different movement qualities. With her positive object she went for a warm atmosphere, thinking of a beautiful tree with leaves moving in the wind. With the ugly one she used stiff and static movement.

When I asked her about difficulties in the process, she mentioned the time structure of the process: rehearsing once a week. Bode said it was hard to get into the process and stay in it this way. She would have preferred to rehearse at least twice a week and then maybe in a shorter period. So again time has a big influence, not only on dealing with the given tasks, but on the general experience of the process as well.

Dancer Helena López Cifuentes had most difficulties with connecting the movement material as a whole. She is a dancer with Modern and Contemporary dance background, educated in Spain. The movement material did not have meaning to her at this stage: two rehearsals before the showing. At this stage in the process (19-03-2013) the movement was clear, but Mous was making adjustments to the structure of the work. In this case López Cifuentes had to search for her own logic and meaning, using her creativity and thoughts. Certain parts within the structure were clear, such as a solo moment of her. This solo part was created by a task to write about oneself and then make a short phrase out of it. López Cifuentes named this as a favourite task she did during the *Twofold* process, and clearly her response was working for Mous.

Like López Cifuentes, dancer Granhus also had difficulties with connecting the movement material as a whole. She is currently studying at the Modern Dance Department at Amsterdam School of Arts (AHK), being in her second year. A reason for having these difficulties was that she did not always understand and sometimes did not agree with the way or order the movement fragments were put together. But at the end of the process it became better for her. Still she would have liked to have more influence on the process: she liked to respond with feedback and suggestions after runs or after watching videos. These moments happened, but Granhus still felt that at the end it was Mous that knew what she wanted and made the decisions.

Therefore her experience of the process lies more on the *pilot-contributor* level than on the *facilitator-creator* one. This implies that different dancers in the same process can have different kind of relationships with the choreographer. To Granhus this experience was a bit in contrast with her expectation, based on attending the introduction/audition session.

An example of a task she pointed out as a positive experience was adapting the existing phrase, but the material did not end up in the work. It was not explained to her why, but she assumes it did not work for the choreography as a whole.

Although a dancer might not agree on every choice or outcome, this does not mean one is not able to 'feel' the work. Lussier-Ley and Durand-Bush give an example of a student they worked with. He mentions that even though he did not like a certain piece as a dancer, he was still able to feel it:

'I will find it in my body, and I will still feel good doing it' (2009:209).

This means a dancer can prepare oneself, *'rehearse for feel'* (2009:209), and realise one's objectives and feelings the way they wish within the process.

This makes it even more interesting and useful for a choreographer to know what type of dancer one is working with and what one is looking for in the process and/or the work. The more a choreographer knows the dancer one works with, the more efficient a choreographer can give directions, feedback or responses during the process.

4. The response of a choreographer

When a dancer responds verbally or physically to a choreographer's idea or task, it is (mostly) the choreographer's job to choose what to select and how to continue to work. Hereby the choreographer replies to the dancer's input (chapter 3). These responses of choreographer and dancer(s) go back and forward many times during the choreographic process. This is an important ongoing interaction for a choreographer, if one wants to engage effectively with a dancer or group of dancers in the collaboration. Besides the ongoing responses to one another, there might be different needs, approaches or focuses in the different stages of the creative process. Therefore the content of the ongoing responses might change.

In this chapter the case study of the *Twofold* process is used to give examples of responses and choices of the choreographer within specific back-and-forward situations and the different stages of the choreographic process. After that, an insight into the evaluative response of choreographer Mous is given, looking back on this choreographic process after their first showing.

4.1. How to move on

A choreographer might have several tools and options to continue guiding the choreographic process, after giving tasks and looking at responses the dancers have given. These can be gained through education, research and/or experience. However, the decisions a choreographer will make are based on the concept: For example is the movement, a phrase, a dancer's intention or the spatial form (still) connecting with and/or carrying out the core or theme of the piece? Does it work? How to know this and make a decision to serve the choreography is often explained as using one's intuition. But what is intuition? Can one rely on it or train it? Dumon (2004) conducted research into the content and significance of intuition and its influence on the choreographic process. He found several definitions on intuition that implies it is an element of our thinking, but it does not have to be logical or analytic (2004:3). Benedetto Croce (in Dumon, 2004:3) even states it is a form of knowledge of its own obtained through the imagination, besides the logic knowledge obtained through the intellect. Dumon concludes that intuition is based on experience and experiential learning. This connects with the ideas of Kolb, where experiential learning is an opposite of theoretical learning (chapter 1). Klein (in Dumon, 2004:6) states that specific experiences allow us to identify patterns and build mental models. It is the key to effective use of intuition. Based on these arguments one can conclude that intuition is a thinking element that can be improved and developed by enhancing one's experience.

To Dumon intuition is an active element in the choreographic process, and a choreographer can call on it consciously and unconsciously when making meaningful choices (2004:9). Melrose goes further into the topic of intuition and creative decision-making, saying a choreographer is ‘modulating’ an intuitive product (for example movement generated by a dancer) ‘from the ‘living body’ of the immediate moment of discovery in the workshop or rehearsal room to a further, production-specific apparatus’ (Melrose, 2009:35) and makes ‘judgements about ‘what works’ at each stage of this transfer’ (Melrose, 2009:35). This means these judgements happen ongoing and in the moment. Hereby she distinguishes expert-intuition from daily intuition: in a (expert) choreographic process the practitioner acquires creative performance-making and this awareness gives another quality (Melrose 2009:31).

Mous seemed to make a lot of conscious choices on the structure of the choreography, mostly based on what she saw on her rehearsal videos. She came well prepared to the rehearsals and elaborated on what she wanted and did not want to proceed with and what she wanted to change after viewing the footage of the previous rehearsal. The choices and changes she made ‘in the moment’, meaning during the rehearsal and not prepared, were often related to timing (*Musical intelligence*) and use of space (*Spatial intelligence*). For example: slowing down the reverse phrase (March 3rd), adjusting the directions of the collective phrase (March 16th) or coaching and directing the dancers when to use an accent in the movement and when not (several rehearsals).

Although a choice might be clear for a choreographer (or not), is it clear to the dancer one works with? Is it necessary for a dancer to know where a choreographer’s thoughts are going, on what and how to continue, in order to be creative again and/or to give new responses, so the choreographic process can evolve?

All four dancers working within the *Twofold* process mentioned that they generally prefer or even need a choreographer to be clear in what one wants or is aiming for. Even when a choreographer does not know what he or she wants for a moment or situation, the four dancers prefer to hear the thought processes of the choreographer. For example, the dancers found it difficult to continue to respond to new tasks or ideas without feedback from the choreographer. This is a situation where a choreographer and dancers are not engaging efficiently together.

All four dancers of *Twofold* also said that Mous was very clear and knew what she wanted.

But what happens when a choreographer gets stuck and does not know how to move on? How does this interrupt the ongoing, back and forth responses between choreographer and dancers? Mous found herself in a difficult moment a week before the showing. She was not satisfied with the work at that time and felt stuck in how to move on. She did not mention this to her dancers in this rehearsal (March 16th). She kept searching; she had talks/discussions with the dancers, let them do runs and made some adjustments.

At the end of this rehearsal she asks the dancers how they felt about the last run. Bode responds she thinks they have to do it more often. López Cifuentes says she would like to do it faster, so she does not have the time to think too much. Then they receive a response from one of the artistic directors, Glenn Westphal, who was watching this last run. He gives feedback about his first impressions, parts that were clear or unclear to him, and tells the dancers that if they understand the movement they will be fine. Mous and Westphal talk more after the rehearsal and Mous has the opportunity to share that she feels the work is not in the right place at the moment. She is not satisfied and is having doubts, but did not want to reveal this to the dancers (yet), because it might disturb them in their process of embodying the work.

Because of this rehearsal and experience, including sharing thoughts with an external ‘outside eye’, Mous found out she wanted to use more of her theatrical skills in this work. It is part of how she normally works and abandoning this approach in this process (which was related to her goal, making an abstract dance work) is not serving the work in her opinion. She feels she can trust her way of working and intuition more when she uses these skills and therefore makes the choice to let it in again. In the next rehearsal on March 21st, Mous makes several changes and feels confident again. This is a good example of Mous using her *Intrapersonal intelligence*, where she understands and connects with her own feelings.

In the ongoing responses between Mous and dancers during this rehearsal of March 16th, Mous did not choose a different approach towards the dancers. Therefore the back and forth responses continued. I do believe the dancers could feel Mous was searching and had difficulties. I asked López Cifuentes and Bode five days after this rehearsal how they experienced the process and how they felt at that moment in the process. Bode responded she feels Mous is open and she can easily give response to her. She needs to get ‘more in to it’. It is not fully there yet, but she mentions it is up to herself to make herself ready. With two rehearsals to go she has the trust it will work out well. Within the rehearsals she would like to do more runs and practise and less talking and discussing: in her opinion you can solve a

problem also by doing the movement, try out variations and then decide instead of think of solutions and discuss these. López Cifuentes mentioned she enjoys the process and the way Mous works. She feels comfortable in the group, but not ready yet in the work itself. She would like to ‘fix some things’ in the piece and do a lot of runs. Some more time for extra rehearsals would have been nice.

It did not seem to affect Bode and López Cifuentes much, that Mous had a difficult moment in the process. As long as she is clear about it, they can give responses to her and they can work on it together.

4.2. The general stages of the choreographic process

A choreographer’s type of response towards the dancers can differ, because the aims within each stage of the choreographic process can change, even when dealing with the same movement material.

According to Butterworth (2007) the order of the stages can differ per choreographer. She describes the stages as followed:

- A. Stimulus/Conception/Intention; in this stage the aim, context and concept become clear and with which initial starting points one will work.
- B. Dance Content: the generation of language; generating or re-working movement material. This could be task based, working with improvisation or set material.
- C. Process: the modes of making; this is mostly choreographer-led, depending on which collaboration the choreographer and dancer(s) are working in. It could be a more didactic approach (for example with expert-instrument roles of choreographer and dancer(s)) or democratic (*Facilitator-creator* or all being *co-owners*) (chapter 1 and 2).
- D. Dance Content Development; here choreographic devices are used, such as motif or phrase development, making additions and/or manipulations. Using time, space, dynamic, or relationships considerations. Work with orchestration.
- E. Structuring: macro and micro; working for example with repetition, opposition and/or reversals on the developed movement material (micro). Making consideration and choices of music accompaniment and stay connected to the narrative or theme (macro).

- F. Completion/Rehearsal; interpretation and coherence of all the included elements in the choreography.
- G. Performance(s).
- H. Evaluation/Reflection; on the process and product.

When the case study of the *Twofold* process started, stage A. had already taken place: The concept was formed by choreographer Mous and chosen by the artistic directors of New Dance Company. The dancers still had to get to know the aim, context and concept, and therefore this part of stage A. is included in the case study, as are the other process stages.

A rough partitioning of the rehearsal process into the different stages identified by Butterworth can be made as:

Stage A.: audition/introduction on 26-01 (1) and the rehearsal on 02-02 (2);

For example by responding (physically and verbally) to a mind map of Mous and doing improvisations on oppositions, including discussing these.

Stage B.: rehearsals on 02-02 (2), 09-02 (3), 16-02 (4) and 23-02 (5);

For example: creating phrases on objects, based on the opposition beauty-ugly, improvising only with the hands & re-working phrase A (given by Mous) adding 'big-low' and 'high-slow'.

Stage C.: is related to all rehearsals in this choreographic process, Mous being a *pilot* and *facilitator* and the dancers are *contributors* and *creators* (chapter 2).

Stage D.: rehearsals on 09-02 (3), 16-02 (4), 23-02 (5), 03-03 (6), 16-03 (8);

Examples: using the element time by adding specific accents in the movement and slow down or speed up certain parts of movement phrases. Placing the dancers in a form (by a certain phrase), such as a line or a diamond figure.

Stage E.: rehearsals on 03-03 (6), 09-03 (7), 16-03 (8), 21-03 (9);

Examples: use of repetition, reversals and making a grid; structure of the choreography in total.

Stage F.: rehearsal on 23-03 (10);

Examples: doing runs and integrate corrections and notes. Rehearsing with costumes and hair style as it will be in the performance.

Stage G.: Performance on 24-03; Open Stage at Muiderpoorttheater Amsterdam.

Stage H.: Individual evaluation talks with dancers (08-04, 10-04, 17-04 & 23-04) and my written questions answered by Mous.

This means all stages of the choreographic process named by Butterworth were part of the *Twofold* process with each part having its own focus. But did the way Mous engaged with the dancers change within different stages?

In stage A., B. and partly D. (till session 4), Mous used an open way of interacting with the dancers, giving tasks and guidance, as the focus lied on understanding and exploring the concept and generating and developing movement material: She used verbal approaches such as ‘let’s explore tension and release’, ‘the leg becomes crazy’, and move ‘like a snake’ (session 4) and added sound effects with her voice. All given and seen movement is accepted.

I see a shift in stage D., where in session 5 Mous starts to change the way of guiding and directing the dancers: there is still room for the dancers their interpretations and creativity, for example by exploring the space when doing ‘the grid’ (a structural element in the choreography), creating their own hand phrase or the option for the dancers to use their voice if they want to. In this phase however, it is clear Mous decides how to move on: when the dancers each show their hand phrase, Mous chooses what to keep and what to change, for example by the order or the intention, adding a task as: ‘It (the hand) will eat your face’. These decisions do not only affect the movement: at a moment in session 5 Granhus wants to sit down after showing her phrase, Mous says: ‘no you’re not done yet’. The dancers get to give responses to each other as well, when they look at each other’s hand phrases. This makes it more collaborative again.

In stage E., the main focus lies on rehearsing and structuring phrases and choreography in total. The guidance Mous gives here are mainly concrete and direct, for example: ‘go back’, ‘I want to see your elbow more’ and ‘you are in your own space’. The dancers interact by asking questions (‘it it better now?’ or ‘where do I have to go’) and giving responses to the video material. There is less collaborative ownership than in the previous stages.

This way of collaborating keeps on going in the further rehearsals (stage F.). Mous gives mainly guidance, corrections and support by:

- What works/giving compliments
- Physical corrections ('head up', 'leg over')
- Timing corrections ('it's too fast', counting)
- Movement quality corrections ('it should explode')

The dancers are mainly focussing on how to connect the different elements, phrases and way of moving, adapting the corrections and make themselves ready to perform. They watch the video footage and ask questions to Mous and each other.

On the day of the performance (stage G.) they had a general rehearsal before performing in the evening, where Mous could give the last feedback before the showing.

It seems Mous made three shifts or steps in approaching and engaging with the dancers, over the stages A. till G.: from an open, experimental and mentoring environment as *facilitator* towards a more guiding and leading environment as *pilot*. The reflection on the last stage of the choreographic process (H.) is given in the next paragraphs on Mous' evaluative response.

4.3. Evaluative response

The final stage of a choreographic process is the phase of evaluation and reflection. Mous evaluated with her dancers by individual talks. After this, I asked Mous four main questions with several sub-questions, to get an insight on her own reflections and evaluation on the *Twofold* process. The questions were based on two main aspects:

- Her personal development in the process and the insight to it.
- The artistic development of the dancers; in relation to the choreography and the collaboration.

When Mous started the process, one of her main goals was to focus on the concept being translated by movement, not by theatrical elements she usually utilizes during a creative process. When I asked her if she achieved her personal goals, she mentioned she found out during the process that this goal or challenge was driven by 'extrinsic motivation': She had the idea that this was what the artistic directors of *New Dance Company* wanted or expected from her. Mous applied for *New Dance Company* by submitting four concepts of which they could choose from. They chose the most 'abstract dance work' concept.

Although keeping herself dedicated to her challenge, to work with an abstract movement perspective, a few rehearsals before the showing she realised this way of working did not give her the chance to use her full range of qualities. This realisation happened after a rehearsal visit from one of the artistic directors. Mous shared her experience with him and he responded that she had the freedom to make the choreography as she wanted it, using her intuition and all skills she found to be necessary. By having this experience she realised that she had to be clear and express her thoughts, especially when she had doubts about a director's expectations and she wanted to always trust her instincts and skills that she brings to a process. She explains:

'This way we remain authentic, which ultimately benefits the artistic product.' (Mous in Appendix, 2013:74)

While collaborating with the dancers in the *Twofold* process, Mous experienced both obstacles and meaningful personal and artistic developments with the dancers. An example of such a development with a dancer is the way López Cifuentes became more vulnerable and open as a person and in her performance:

'The videos of rehearsals I took and shared with the dancers helped Helena to see that she could push herself even more, which has become one of her artistic and personal goals for future work.' (Mous in Appendix, 2013:75)

Some of the obstacles Mous experienced working with the dancers were:

- A dancer misjudging the commitment one has to make to be able to take part in a choreographic process: Jankovic wanted to participate and tried her best, but she was not able to do so time and energy wise. This had an influence on the artistic ideas of Mous, as she wanted to create the piece with five dancers. She had to make a concession and continue with four dancers.
- One getting an injury and another dancer not able to attend all rehearsals *'made a huge impact on our process and eventually the choreographic work'*. (Mous in Appendix, 2013:75)
- One of the dancers seemed to be judgemental about artistic choices Mous made and this created a negative energy that had an influence on Mous.

Mous mentions that as a group they achieved ‘collaboration’, ‘*really making Twofold together*’. (Mous in Appendix, 2013:76). She chose to be ‘*heavily influenced by the input of the dancers, whether through dance or through dialogue.*’ (Mous in Appendix, 2013:76)

Mous feels she had a good relationship with each dancer in the process. She believes in a two-way interaction, where each person can use his or her skills, talents and experiences. She sees it as her job to get the best out of the dancers in the process and feels she engaged effectively with the dancers and their creativity:

‘Through the guided improvisation assignments I give the dancers freedom to explore and utilize their own creativity. I experienced this as a very positive element to the process, and I believe the dancers did too.’ (Mous in Appendix, 2013:77)

5. Conclusion

In this dissertation I investigated three main aspects of a choreographer-dancer(s) collaboration in a choreographic process, to be able to give an answer to my research question in this chapter. My research question was:

How can a choreographer engage most effectively with dancers and their creativity in a collaborative choreographic process?

First I focussed on the relationship and roles between a choreographer and a dancer or group of dancers one works with in a choreographic process. I linked the collaborative process types 3, 4 and 5 of Butterworth's Didactic-Democratic spectrum model to a case study of the *Twofold* process by choreographer Mous and the dancers. Mous sees herself as a *facilitator*-type of collaborator. My findings turned out to be both similar and additionally different: Yes, Mous was facilitating the *Twofold* process and the involved dancers were *creators*, as they created movement material and used their own experiences to understand, grow into and communicate the concept and movement. Mous started the choreographic process with giving tasks and mentoring where the dancers had room for their own interpretation and creation. The dancers were challenged to ask questions and colour the assignments with their own perspective and identity. But Mous also turned out to be clearly in charge: She made almost all decisions in how to continue to work. The further the process developed, the more influence on the (overall) structure, timing and spatial forms came from her. Over a period of ten rehearsals Mous shifted two times and therefore used three phases to go from collaborating as *facilitator* to *pilot*. These shifts were made in the choreographic stages D. (Dance Content Development) and E. (Structuring). On a more detailed scale Mous shifted more often between being a *facilitator* and *pilot*: for example in the first choreographic stage Mous already developed her concept and the dancers could contribute to it. This is a *pilot* approach. But in the way Mous engaged with the dancers in this early stage she used a *facilitator* approach: by giving the dancers the opportunity to explain and together discussing the dancers' experiences. Mous used these experiences to influence and develop her concept.

A choreographer like Mous being both *facilitator* and *pilot* in the *Twofold* process, approaches a dancer or group of dancers by leading, guiding and mentoring them. To be able to do so, Mous and the dancers worked with all five intelligences (out of the nine intelligences Gardner identifies) related to choreographic processes. These five intelligences specify the

choreographer and dancers' skills, being: *Bodily-kinaesthetic, Linguistic, Spatial, Musical and Interpersonal intelligences*.

From a dancers perspective, the two process types and five types of intelligences used in the *Twofold* process means they have to be creatively involved, but also engage with the choreographer's set ideas and concept: they have to actively participate and contribute by creating movement material, searching for ways to understand the content, 'make it work' (connecting movement material and the concept) and search for the atmosphere or feeling the choreographer is aiming for.

Mous gave the dancers opportunities to be creative, by what I recognise as Lavender's *prompts*. She mainly used *rapid response prompts* and *praise* and occasionally *amplification prompts*, *rapid response prompts* and *what if prompts*. The *Insertion prompts* have not been explicitly used in the *Twofold* process. This is an opportunity for Mous to broaden her range of approaching the dancers.

The learning approaches for the dancers connect with Butterworth's processes 3 and 4, which Mous is combining. When I underpinned these learning approaches with Experiential Learning Cycle by Kolb, I saw a similar way of collaborating between Mous and the dancers. They kept going through the full circle and therefore worked effectively on the aforementioned learning approaches in the process. However, Mous gave most attention to three of the four steps: she let the dancers have concrete experiences (by doing), took time to observe and reflect on these experiences and made her conclusions (what did or did not work). By the interviews with the dancers I learned that when dealing with difficulties related to the choreography, some of the dancers preferred to use more active experimentation. Mous did plan new possibilities clearly and well prepared, which is part of this step, but when things did not work out in a rehearsal, Mous often went straight to reflecting with the dancers. They took time to talk it over, discuss and plan new possibilities. This means Mous skipped the area where they could try out by doing, which is a combination of active experimentation and concrete experience. I agree with the dancers that mentioned this, as I made the same observation when I was attending the rehearsals. Therefore it could have helped Mous or might help her in a next choreographic process, to go deeper into the active experimentation step: not by planning and using linguistic intelligences, but by concentrating more on the bodily-kinaesthetic experimentation and experiences. This might help her to be even more

effective in the rehearsals, especially in the choreographic stages D and E., besides her effective way of working between the rehearsals.

Continuing from my second focus, the effectiveness of the working methods in the choreographic process, I use my third focus of investigation, which contains two aspects:

- The ongoing responses between choreographer and dancers, and
- If the different stages of the choreographic process had an influence on it.

I questioned: Does choreographer Mous actually asks what she is aiming for or what she needs? This can only be investigated when first looking at the dancers' responses. How do they deal with the tasks or guidance they receive? They create a personal interpretation within a set framework (the task), which is the outcome or response: they translate own feelings and opinions in their bodies to gain movement material or adapt it. To be able to do so, a dancer mainly needs:

- The task to be clear; with set limits and possibilities
- Time; to sort out the task, their feelings and to translate these into the body
- Guidance or feedback; during or right after the moment of creating

When a choreographer gives guidance or feedback on the created material, a dancer gets another insight into the choreographer's intentions and needs. In a collaborative process the choreographer and dancers make the connection of the task, the overall concept and the created movement material together. Also when the created movement material is not working (at all) for the choreography, I suggest that the choreographer explains to the dancer why not. This did not always happen during the *Twofold* process, however, it can help a dancer when they are creating new movement or when they are responding to another task: the dancer might change one's approach, feeling or use of experience in response to the choreographer's (positive or critical) feedback. Of course dancers differ and it is the choreographer's job to look at their individualities and respond accordingly to these individual needs.

Giving guidance or feedback is also the next step in creating an ongoing response circle. The choreographer is able to keep track of the overall concept and can use the influences the dancers give. This way of working is particularly related to the process types Mous and the

dancers were working in. In other process types the collaborating will differ: working in a co-ownership process choreographer and dancers are together responsible for the concept and the dancers will have more influences on it. In process types 1 and 2, expert/instrument and author/interpreter, the choreographer does not share the decision making as much and is less influenced by the dancers' creativity.

The different stages of the choreographic process did have an influence on the way of collaborating in the *Twofold* process. As mentioned above, Mous guided the process using two big shifts: going from an environment where she engaged with the dancers' creativity as *facilitator* towards her role as *pilot*, where the dancers were *contributors* instead of *creators*. This development in the process seems logical to me: Mous wanted to be influenced by the dancers but also wanted to be in charge. The greatest and most obvious way a dancer can influence a process in a creative way is by generating movement material, which happens in the early stages of the process. At the second half of the process stages the work develops to its final form and when it comes to being in charge this is the period to make the final decisions.

This way of working was a clear choice for Mous and reasonable effective. Mous' strong points in this choreographic process were:

- She was clear and straight towards the dancers: the tasks she gave were explained with set frames and mentioned opportunities. She also used variation in approaching the dancers and kept responding and evaluating towards them.
- She was approachable and open, for example she was open to receive any kind of questions and took time to answer them. Hereby she created a safe and sound environment for the dancers and herself to work in.
- She used her video footages to analyse and prepare the rehearsals. Hereby she was aware of the process and the steps she and the dancers made.
- She was able to see the individual qualities of each dancer. I could see the dancers development within the process and they also mentioned they learned from the process, for most in an enjoyable way.

In order to be (even) more effective in the process, engaging with the dancers' creativity, Mous still has opportunities to use more 'trying by doing' in the rehearsals. By seeing the

visual effect of her ideas and/or those of the dancers, she might develop her ‘in the moment’ responses. I believe she could benefit from this, because she could become quicker in seeing what works or does not work when using this active experimentation and the dancer can give response to her in these same moments. This could be a sound add to her effective use of the video footage and preparation of the rehearsals. It might also help her to structure the given timeframe: from starting the process towards the premiere date. This is often set beforehand and a choreographer can divide different stages of the process into rough time/rehearsal periods. In this case of the *Twofold* process, Mous and the dancers worked the least on choreographic stages A (context/concept) and F (completion). This could be a conscious choice, but one can consider dividing the stages differently, giving more time to a certain stage. Of course this is also influenced by what happens during the process, but one can aim for it or at least give awareness to it.

Within stages E and F I noticed Mous gave mainly guidance and corrections to what worked (or not), by giving compliments and physical-, timing- and movement quality corrections. It is in these same phases that two dancers mentioned they were searching for the intention and meaning of the movement and the piece as a whole. Therefore Mous could benefit in future work to keep guiding or directing in the intention and concept of the work in this/these or overall stages.

5.1. Discussion

Within this dissertation, a number of important limitations need to be considered. First, this research contains only one case study. Therefore my findings cannot be generalised. To do so, several case studies should be done, with a followed analysis of the similarities and differences. I do believe a choreographer or dancer that works or aims to be working in collaborative choreographic processes, can benefit from this dissertation. One might become more aware of his/her own way of working by comparing own experiences to the case study on Mous and the dancers. Also, one might refer to the explained theories in this dissertation and link these to own interests or experiences.

This research has mainly a choreographer’s point of view. It could be interesting to extend this research, with more or full consideration from the dancer’s perspective. Hereby the insight in the experience of a dancer or group of dancers being creative in collaboration could be extended.

Finally, I could see this research being extended by including process 1 and 2 of Butterworth's Didactic-Democratic spectrum Model and look at all five process types, with each having an own case study in order to give examples and other evidence and compare them.

Nevertheless, this research analysed how a choreographer can collaborate and engage effectively with dancers and their creativity. It included the choreographer's perspective, the dancers' perspectives and their needs to be creative, and examples and finding of the choreographic process *Twofold* by choreographer Mous and the dancers.

'I believe in relationships with a 'two-way street,' where people are celebrated for their skills, talents, and experiences. It is my goal to get the best out of my dancers in our collaborative creative process.' (Mous in Appendix, 2013:77)

6. Bibliography

- Burrows, J.**, 2010. *A Choreographer's Handbook*. UK/USA/Canada: Routledge. p. 58-60 & 204-207.
- Butcher, R. & Melrose, S.**, 2005. *Rosemary Butcher: Choreography, Collisions and Collaborations*. UK: Middlesex University Press. p. 58, 67.
- Butterworth, J.**, 2007. *General stages of choreographic process*. [Class hand-out] Tilburg, NL: Fontys University.
- Butterworth, J.**, 2009. Too many cooks? In: J. Butterworth, L. Wildschut eds. 2009. *Contemporary Choreography*. London/New York: Routledge. Ch. 12. p. 177-194.
- Dumon, D.**, 2004. *A research into content and significance of intuition and of its influence on the choreographic process*. MA Choreography, Fontys University Tilburg, NL. p. 1-9.
- Gardner, H.**, 1999/2002. *Soorten intelligentie – meervoudige intelligenties voor de 21ste eeuw*. Original title: *Intelligence Reframed – Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century*. New York: Basic Books. Dutch translation: Uitgeverij Nieuwezijds. Ch. 3-8.
- Kirsh, D.**, 2011. Creative Cognition in Choreography. In: *Proceedings of 2nd International Conference on Computational Creativity*. San Diego, USA: Cognitive Science Department, University of California. Ch. 'Embodied Creativity'.
- Lavender, L.**, 2009. Facilitating the choreographic process. In: J. Butterworth, L. Wildschut eds. 2009. *Contemporary Choreography*. London/New York: Routledge. Ch. 6. p. 71-89.
- Lussier-Ley, C. & Durand-Bush, N.**, 2009. Exploring the role of feel in the creative experiences of modern dancers: a realist tale. In: *Research in Dance Education Vol. 10, No. 3*. UK/USA: Routledge. p. 199-217.
- Melrose, S.**, 2009. Expert-intuitive processing and the logics of production – Struggles in (the wording of) creative decision-making in 'dance'. In: J. Butterworth, L. Wildschut eds. 2009. *Contemporary Choreography*. London/New York: Routledge. Ch. 3. p. 23-37.
- Mous, L.** 2013. Choreography Proposal. [pdf] New Dance Company. Available on request.
- Thórhallsdóttir, S.**, 2008. Can creativity multiply within a collective and devised theatre work? IN; Linden, van der, M, Wildschut, L. & Zeijlemaker, J. eds. 2008. *Danswetenschap in Nederland – deel 5*. Amsterdam: Vereniging voor Dansonderzoek. p. 177-181.

Available on the Internet:

- Ashley, L.**, 2005. Shape Shifting: choreographic process as research. *Ausdance National – December 2005*. [online] Available at:

http://www.google.nl/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CDMQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fausdance.org.au%2F%3FACT%3D73%26file%3D1056&ei=ANTCUEWGNi3zsgb7k4DQCw&usg=AFQjCNG1INanplyoj6Dys8h3MtE0ZqwkSQ&sig2=TSt-_Mb3UQFrIdKQrPfJUw&bvm=bv.48175248,d.Yms [Accessed 17 October 2012].

California State University, Northridge, n.d. *What is creativity?* [online] Available at: <http://www.csun.edu/~vcpsy00h/creativity/define.htm> [Accessed 3 January 2013]

Davies, C. n.d. *Kolb Learning Cycle Tutorial – Static Version* [online] Available at: http://www.ldu.leeds.ac.uk/ldu/sddu_multimedia/kolb/static_version.php [Accessed 7 January 2013].

Elysian Insight, 2010. *Biography Chantale Lussier* [online] Available at: http://www.elysianinsight.ca/about_biography_e.php [Accessed 30 May 2013].

Infed/Smith, M. 2002, 2008. *Howard Gardner, multiple intelligences and education* [online] Available at: <http://www.infed.org/thinkers/gardner.htm> [Accessed 3 January 2013].

Mason, P. 2009. *Brain, Dance & Culture 2: Collaborative choreography and evolutionary characteristics in the work of Elizabeth Dalman*. [online] Published in *Brolga-An Australian journal about dance* 31, p. 9-26. Available at: http://www.academia.edu/333198/Brain_Dance_and_Culture_2_Collaborative_choreography_and_evolutionary_characteristics_in_the_work_of_Elizabeth_Dalman [Accessed 19 June 2013]

Mohr, H. 2012. *Hope Mohr Dance. Collaborating with dancers* [online] Available at: <http://hopemohr.org/collaborating-with-dancers/> [Accessed 6 February 2013].

New Dance Company, 2013. *Choreographers* [online] Available at: <http://www.newdancecompany.nl/Choreographers.html> [Accessed 11 February 2013].

Panic Productions, n.d. *Sveinbjörg Thorhallsdóttir* [online] Available at: <http://www.panicproductions.is/about/Sveinbjorg/> [Accessed 11 June 2013].

Random Dance, n.d. *Board of Directors Dr. Joanne Butterworth* [online] Available at: http://www.randomdance.org/the_company/board_of_directors/dr_joanne_butterworth [Accessed 27 December 2012].

Random Dance, n.d. *Team: David Kirsh* [online] Available at: http://www.randomdance.org/the_company/team/r_research_associate [Accessed 30 May 2013]

University of Malta, n.d. *Prof. J. Butterworth* [online] Available at: <https://www.um.edu.mt/profile/joannebutterworth> [Accessed 27 December 2012].

University of North Carolina – Greensboro, 2013. *Prof. Larry Lavender* [online] Available at: <http://performingarts.uncg.edu/bios/larry-lavender> [Accessed 27 December 2012].

University of Ottawa, n.d. *Prof. N. Durand-Bush* [online] Available at: <http://www.health.uottawa.ca/shk/personnel/ndbush.htm> [Accessed 30 May 2013].

7. Appendix

Oetgens van Waveren Pancras Clifford, S.M., 2013. *Choreographic process Twofold – Mous & dancers - Case Study documentation* [CD].

The case study recordings (interviews and observed rehearsals) are archived and available on request.