

UiT The Arctic University of Norway

Student: Alik Švandere (aliki.svandere@gmail.com)

Supervisor: PhD Trond Waage (trond.waage@uit.no)



Master thesis in Visual Anthropology

Moving and exploring the world sensorially:

Liv Hanne Haugen's dance classes in Tromsø



Tromsø

May 2024

Abstract

This paper is part of a master's thesis project in visual anthropology, which includes also a short ethnographic film "Dance what you are". The project is based on three months of fieldwork conducted in Tromsø, a city in Northern Norway. It focuses on a group of people who practice a dance which none of them can define or label. The dance does not have a choreography, a specific technique, (explicitly communicated) rules of the right behavior, and is usually practiced non-verbally and without specific objects used in creation. The research addresses the following questions: why would a person choose to engage in open, minimally structured dance classes, what constitutes this experience and how is it meaningful? Methods for gathering ethnographic material in this study include (a) participant observation with a camera conducted during dance classes and (b) interviews held in separate meetings with people who practice the dance. In this paper, it is argued that open spaces for creative body movement and sensorial exploration, such as the dance classes I researched, create opportunities for connecting to oneself and others corporeally. These connections are formed in a process of embodied active listening and resonating, that is, attentively sharing a space with others. This kind of attentive, present, embodied way of being motivates the dancers to attend the classes. What adds to the meaningfulness of the dance experience is a transformational effect of creative expression and a freedom to explore being in the world in an open and physically intimate manner.

Key words: dance, body movement, resonance, creativity, sensorial exploration, visual anthropology

Table of contents

Abstract.....	2
Table of contents	3
Preface.....	5
1. Introduction: enjoyment growing into curiosity	6
2. Field context: arriving to the class	7
2.1. The group of dancers and the teacher.....	7
2.2. Dance classes.....	8
2.3. Field places.....	10
3. Methodology: preparing for the dance	11
3.1. Joining the dance classes.....	11
3.2. Boundaries of the ethnographic dance floor	11
3.3. Dancing with a camera?	12
3.4. Meeting outside the dance floor	13
3.5. The dancing ethnographer.....	14
3.6. Ethics.....	15
4. Phenomenological existential approach: attending to the sentient self.....	17
4.1. Creating a lifeworld.....	17
4.2. Thinking with the heart and resonating.....	17
4.3. Making knowledge through embodiment	18
4.4. Moving, sensing and letting go	19
5. Conceptualizing the dance: attending to the reasoning self.....	20
5.1. Dance as a play.....	20
5.2. Dance as a ritual, a transformative practice	21
5.3. Dance as social production.....	21
5.4. Dance as a well-being practice.....	22
5.5. Dance as a performance art	23
6. Ethnographic material: opening, connecting, transforming.....	24
6.1. Episodes of connection.....	24
6.2. Entering the dance space	26
6.3. Dancing: a few episodes from the classes	27
6.3.1. “Tuning in”.....	27
6.3.2. “Greeting” others	28
6.3.3. Co-creating, developing a connection.....	28
6.4. The dancers and their stories of joining the group	31
6.5. The role of the dance teacher	33

6.6.	Training creativity and embodied active listening	35
6.7.	Creating a lifeworld and harmonizing needs.....	37
6.8.	Being together in a different way	39
6.9.	Releasing and transforming.....	41
6.10.	“Just being” and other paradoxes	43
6.11.	Exploring being in the world.....	44
7.	Touching the reality through film	47
1.1.	Filming: intimately inspecting	47
1.2.	Editing: dancing out the film.....	48
1.3.	Screening: meeting the stranger within	50
8.	Conclusion	51
	Literature.....	52
	Films referenced.....	54

Preface

An episode in a dance class, 15 May, 2023

During the middle part of the class when we usually start directly interacting with other people in the room, Liv Hanne, our dance teacher, approaches Trine, inviting her to co-create something, nobody knows what. They first form an eye-contact and stay in it for several seconds, thus non-verbally communicating awareness of each other's presence and a commitment to work on this something together. The second invitation is given by Trine who stretches her arm in Liv Hanne's direction with a palm facing her new dance partner. Liv Hanne responds to it, by similarly stretching one of her arms toward Trine. Both start moving together, turning their bodies, changing the levels from the standing to laying position, while maintaining the same distance between their palms. The dance starts slowly and with time grows into a more dynamic movement in which both of them swirl around each other. They keep increasing the speed till eventually the "magnet" that holds them together evaporates and the dancers smoothly separate. When parting Liv Hanne and Trine both keep the energy of the movement they were just engaged in. They keep the flow of the dance and bring it into their further exploration of the dance room and other people present in the class.

1. Introduction: enjoyment growing into curiosity

In this master thesis project I am focusing on dance classes organized by a dancer and performance artist Liv Hanne Haugen in Tromsø, a city in Northern Norway. I started attending these classes in September 2022. What I had observed as a participant was that in this weekly event I am encouraged to be open-minded, playful, free in my expression, be aware of my emotions, my body and making of physical contact. We practiced and are still practicing a dance that none of us can label. It is a dance without a choreography, a specific technique, (at least explicitly communicated) rules of the right behavior and usually without words or specific objects used for dancing. And yet there are some ideas behind this openness. What we, a group of non-professional dancers lead by a professional artist, do there, resembles contemporary dance, contact improvisation, ritual...life. We sensorially explore being in the world.

When I joined the dance, it became very interesting for me to start uncovering what are the ideas that the group of 11 Norwegians/ “half”-Norwegians in their 40s to 70s have about their dance classes. For me it was hard to rationally grasp the experience, to describe it in words. It was more the feeling it gave me, a feeling of togetherness, freedom, love, achieved through creative body movement. However, trying to rationalize it, I arrived to the following **research questions**: why would a person choose to engage in open, minimally structured dance classes? What constitutes the experience of dancing and how is it meaningful to the group? Also, how come that dancing together for years they cannot or resist defining or labelling the practice? In the paper I talk about the group in third person when describing, analyzing material from an anthropologist’s perspective. “We”/ “us” I use to refer to myself as a group member.

To answer my research questions, in this paper I present ethnographic material gathered during fieldwork from April till June 2023. I conducted participant observation with a camera during the dance classes and did interviews outside the dance space. In the material analysis I apply anthropological theory on resonance, creativity, dance, ritual, play and art theory on performance combined with a phenomenological and existential anthropological approach.

In my thesis I **argue** that open spaces for creative body movement and sensorial exploration, such as the dance classes I researched, create opportunities for connecting to oneself and others corporeally. These connections are formed in a process of embodied active listening and resonating, that is, attentively sharing a space with others. This kind of attentive, present, embodied way of being motivates the dancers to attend the classes. What adds to the meaningfulness of the dance experience is a transformational effect of creative expression and a freedom to explore being in the world in an open and physically intimate manner.

2. Field context: arriving to the class

2.1. The group of dancers and the teacher

The group of dancers I worked with in my research consists of white-skinned Norwegians and “half”-Norwegians – one person has a Sámi identity and a few come from Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, but they all have lived in Norway for many years now. They are 47 to 79 years old. All of them except for two people are permanent residents of Tromsø; the other two travel a lot because of their job or lifestyle and attend the classes when they are in town. All together including me there are approximately 12 active long-term dance class participants out of which normally 6-10 make it to the class every week. It is hard to tell the exact number since it changes with time, but these 12 participants I considered the core group for my fieldwork period. The people I filmed and conducted my research with was first of all the teacher Liv Hanne and the class participants: Steffen, Anders, Astrid, Siri, Erik Otto, Henrik, Trine, Magdalena and Kristin. From the core group there is one person who decided not to take part in my thesis project. Also, there were two visitors present in the classes.

Since my main focus is the dance class itself, I do not see a reason for providing extended profiles of each participant. But I will describe in methodology and ethnography chapters what I learned about them as individuals from meeting them separately during my fieldwork period. What is important to note for now is that the people who participated in my research, except for the teacher, as far as I know, do not see themselves as professional dancers.

The dance teacher Liv Hanne (born in 1968), whose background is more important for the project, is a professional dance and performance artist. She has a formal education in dance and a life-long career working with different dance companies in Europe. When Liv Hanne was 18 years old, she left Tromsø to study dance in London and was there for four and a half years. Then she lived in Amsterdam for one year attending a school for a new dance development where she learned to experience dance as a fun thing and not only as a hard, very disciplined work. Afterwards Liv Hanne worked for many years in Brussels for different dance companies, and then at some point moved back to Tromsø where she still lives today. Now Liv Hanne has two of her own dance companies: one together with her sister Anne Katrine Haugen and one for herself individually. Despite her professional background in dance, the classes Liv Hanne gives, as she described it to me, are less about technicality of dance and more about a certain attitude and way of being one can learn as a dancer and a human being. The absence of technical training in classes nevertheless does not prevent Liv Hanne from working with dance as a performance art. The dance thus is both an art training and a free exploration of movement.

2.2. Dance classes

How did it all start? Liv Hanne's story retold

Soon after Liv Hanne had moved back from Belgium to Norway some people asked her if she was teaching dance. Her response was: “no, not really”. And then she remembered her yoga teacher saying to her one day: “If somebody asks you to teach and you just know so much (showing very little with her fingers) more than they do in yoga, you say “yes”, you teach and pass on what you know.” Because Liv Hanne knew a lot about dancing, she felt like not having an excuse to say “no” even though her dream was never to teach, but to create her own work.

So, Liv Hanne said “yes” to a group of five people asking her to be her teacher. It was around 15 years ago when they started having classes at Rådstua Teaterhus in Tromsø. She recalls that at the beginning it was learning by doing, she would just share the tools she had learned from creating her own work for many years. The tools were very understandable, simple, meant for people with no training in dance to get them moving. At the beginning the classes were joined by some professional dancers mixed with non-professional dancers. With time it changed and there were more and more people willing to attend the classes from the second group. And slowly Liv Hanne would start not only giving them tools to move, but also encouraging them to create their own pieces with an audience watching, thus bringing in the performative element in the class. Some of the people have now been dancing with Liv Hanne for many years, some have left and some have recently joined. It is constantly changing.

Despite the changes in the group, many people have been attending the classes for long periods. During the 15 years of teaching the dance Liv Hanne has witnessed people learning a lot about movement and how to “create a dance from their own place with their own stories, from nothing and everything,” as she says in our conversation. Liv Hanne stresses that her aim is not to teach how to jump high, balance on one leg or fall on the floor smoothly. What she tries to teach her dance students and herself is rather an attitude of being open, trusting, surrendering, caring, being present and daring to take risks.

How do the classes happen today? My observations as a group member

Further I will outline a few practical aspects concerning the classes that have not been mentioned yet. The classes always happen in an art studio owned by Liv Hanne and her husband Lawrence, who is an installation artist. The classes are not for free, but the price paid is rather symbolic, very cheap for Norway, I would say. The classes are usually 1,5-2 hours long and more often than not are held in English due to my or other non-Norwegian speaking people's presence.

A less practical aspect that I did describe a little bit already in the previous paragraphs is the form of the dance that we practice. My whole thesis is focused on this dance practice, so I will be talking about it more or less in every chapter, but there are a few things to mention for better imagination of the practice before I go into discussing my thesis methodology and theory. First, I would say my research participants understand dance in the broadest sense possible. Liv Hanne likes to say that during the class we do not improvise, we create from what is there within us, from what is present in us at the moment, and that can mean any emotion, physical condition of the body, need, thought, etc.

It is very hard to describe what a “normal” class is like because the diversity of elements creating it is huge. There can be songs played in the background, music artists invited to play live and cocreate with us, it can be Liv Hanne drumming or playing kalimba, it can be also just us creating sounds with our bodies. Location of the class can sometimes change as it can happen in the forest next to the studio. Material space can change: a wall can be painted differently or there can be a new object present, for example, an installation work of Lawrence’s that perhaps was too big to be removed. Also, the tasks that Liv Hanne gives vary greatly. The instructions are often quite abstract, up to one’s interpretation. There have been occasions when we are even invited to not follow the instructions if we feel like it. Consequently, what happens during the classes often surprises both because of the class setting and because of us. As Siri puts it in my film (00:01:44): “You never know what to expect.”

The only thing one can normally expect in the class is a three-part structure that has proven to suit this group of people, as Liv Hanne mentions in an interview. In the first part of the class we physically and mentally “arrive” to the space. It normally happens individually. Arriving is followed by the second part – an invitation or a task which Liv Hanne has prepared, for instance sharing of body weight with another person. And the third part is performances: creations of art pieces in duos, trios, etc. that are watched by the rest of the group. And after this part sometimes we stay for a shorter or longer discussion about what has been experienced during the class. Some tend to avoid verbalization of experiences, so they either do not talk and just listen or leave the studio while others are still chatting.

The last aspect that contextualizes the dance practice is the people “around” the group – close friends and family members. These people together with the dancers form a little community that meets at the end of every dance season (a season is similar to a school semester period). During these end-of-the-season classes the dancers have an opportunity to show what they have learned to their loved ones as well as to cocreate something together with them. A few life partners and children of the dancers have now been part of this community for years.

2.3. Field places

The group of dancers reside in the city of Tromsø, located in Northern Norway, more precisely, 350 kilometers above The Arctic Circle. In Tromsø I conducted my fieldwork only in three places that were more or less private environments, that is, without strangers present or present from afar. The first and the most important of those places is the art studio called “Peripheral Centre”. The studio is located next to a house where Liv Hanne, Lawrence and their family live. The studio is also placed next to a small forest in which sometimes, when the weather allows, Liv Hanne organizes her classes, like it happened once during my fieldwork period. This forest is not owned by the family, but it is almost never being used by neighbors in the area, so dancing there was almost as uninterrupted as in the studio. The difference was however that forest was full of plants and birds that create a different material world and a different soundscape. Also, next to it there is a road where one can hear people passing by walking or cycling. And the third place, that is not a spot but several spots on the island of Tromsø, is home. I visited dancers at their homes when meeting them separately from the group. I believe it made them feel more relaxed and allowed them to tell me stories and show me parts of themselves that I would not otherwise hear and see, thus I learned a little bit about who they are as people outside the dance classes. These home visits were very pleasant meetings during which I would also get to know a few of the dancers’ family members, animals, favorite objects and places in the house/ flat – really whatever they wanted to introduce me to. This showed me how they relate to people and things outside the dance setting and observe the contrast between the dance space and everyday life that they were talking about in the interviews. I will elaborate on this contrast in the ethnography chapter.

3. Methodology: preparing for the dance

I conducted my fieldwork in Tromsø, in a town where I have lived since August 2022. When starting fieldwork, my life did not change much. I kept living in the same house and doing the same two jobs I had. What changed was that instead of going to the university for lectures and seminars I was independently working on my thesis research project and socializing mainly with my research participants.

3.1. Joining the dance classes

Soon after arriving in Tromsø for the first time, I joined the group of dancers – at that time with no intention to research anything yet, although I had let my dance teacher know that I am thinking of making my thesis project on the type of dance we are practicing in her classes. We both agreed that I will join as just another group member since I simply wanted to dance and because I still had half a year to start my thesis project. I started dancing with them weekly, attended almost every class. After some classes we would also have a shorter or longer chat about our experiences, thus I also got to know the dancers' opinions, not only their body movements. Then one day, I introduced them to my thesis idea inviting them to become part of my research on this dance event that we gather for every Monday evening. And they were very open to this idea, some even expressed excitement. So, when the time came to officially obtain their informed consent it happened quite smoothly. I felt like they trusted me and that they wanted a film to be made on the dance that we practice.

There was only one dancer who after giving a lot of thought to it decided not to be part of the project. I was a bit sad and surprised about it since she was one of dancers who has been part of the group since the beginning (joined more than 10 years ago) and we had established a good friendship I would say. She told me however that it has not to do with a lack of trust in me or not being found of the project idea, she simply did not want to be filmed in any setting or to be interviewed about the practice. I understood and respected her choice not to attend the filmed dance classes. I came to also interpret it as a resistance towards verbalization and rationalization of the practice since this form of self-expression and perception is generally appreciated less than non-verbal means of communication, as I learn from my observations.

3.2. Boundaries of the ethnographic dance floor

It so happened that I obtained access to my ethnographic field before having defined it. According to Raymond Madden (2017: 39), “an ethnographic field provides an interrogative boundary to map on to a geographical and/or social and/or emotional landscape that is inhabited by a participant group,” it is defined by synthesis of concrete and investigative space. My field

is created by (a) the concrete physical spaces I attended – Liv Hanne’s studio and the dancers’ homes –, (b) a social landscape made by relationships between the dancers, and (c) a mental construct of the free-form dance. In addition, the interrogative boundary is set by my research questions: why do people practice this dance, what is this experience and how is it meaningful to them? To be honest, I already started thinking about these questions before officially starting my fieldwork in April 2023 and I kept questioning the answers found in my recordings after the official end of my fieldwork in June 2023. This points to the circular form of my ethnographic field: I was part of the group of dancers before filming and doing participant observation and I am still dancing with them. Thus, my social and cultural immersion as an ethnographer was not constant, it had a ‘step-in-step-out’ form (ibid.: 78). The fieldwork did not have a clear beginning nor an ending. I am aware that every field naturally changes over time which is why I invite the reader to bear in mind that most of ethnographic material was gathered exactly one year ago and people’s opinions might have changed by now.

3.3. Dancing with a camera?

Intentional participant observation I did for approximately three months. From receiving the camera equipment till the end of the spring dance season I managed to participate in six classes from which five I also filmed. The only event I did not catch on tape that I consider to be part of my participant observation was an end-of-the-season community gathering, that is, dancers with their closest family members and friends coming together to dance and have dinner in the front yard of Liv Hanne’s house. Since everybody wanted to be present at the event but not everybody wanted to be filmed, we as a group decided that this event will not be documented with audio-visual means.

In the five classes I filmed I was almost always with a camera in hands. There was no space for taking any fieldnotes, so the camera served as my notebook during these events. The camera was also limiting my ability to move. When filming I could not dance, at least not in a way I would normally do it. My attention was focused on following others, so I participated in a different way than the group. I was more like a shade than an active co-creator of the dance, I was the gazing eye which indicates a difference in my way of perceiving the happenings. Even though I tried to understand the sensation of movements I must admit I was more focused on the visual aspect and the aesthetics than I normally am when I dance due to having two tasks: I had to understand the practice and simultaneously think of its representation in a film.

Despite the limitations, camera and sound devices are great tools for recording experience unfolding in real time (Lawrence 2020: 7) complementing the narrated experience,

which I process more in my text than my film. The first type of experience is better *shown*, while the other is better *told*. Moreover, filmmaking does not merely illustrate people and practices (ibid: 4), but also serves as a means of ethnographic discovery, by expanding an understanding of the world recorded. In my case, the camera drew my attention more towards the corporeal aspects of dancing, relating, exploring and developing connections.

I chose to film in an observational style: I moved around the studio sometimes observing from aside or above and sometimes dancing together with the group while having the camera as my extended body. I used this approach because my goal was to give both a more distant (observer's) perspective and an insider's (participant's) perspective to the potential audience showing how it looks and how it feels to the extent possible. Recording the material with an audio-visual method allowed me to get closer to the bodily experience which is where I imagine to bring the audience of my film. David MacDougall (2020: 2) writes that "film has a power of description different from that of anthropological texts and in some ways superior to them". It communicates a co-presence – a feeling of being together with the filmed living beings or objects. When watching a film, the audience gets a chance to be surrounded by the same material world as the filmmaker. Visual close-ups together with diegetic and also nondiegetic sounds allow to get a "sense of the corporeal experiences of others" (ibid: 3). The audience becomes able to intimately inspect and, in a way, "touch", "taste", or "smell", or feel the phenomena seen and heard.

Thus, observational cinema challenges anthropological forms of speaking and knowing. As the audience gets closer to the bodies, it attends to gestures, postures, facial expressions and movements (Grimshaw & Ravetz 2009: 548) and different kind of knowledge is conveyed. Language in such an approach is not disregarded, but rather re-contextualized "within a broader communicative landscape" (ibid.). The broadening of communication channels invites us to review our perception of knowledge. Ethnographic film-making challenges the notion of knowledge as a result of an experience (ibid: 549) and displays how knowledge is constituted *as* experience. Thus, the process of acquiring knowledge becomes more open and relational. Hence, filmmaking as a means of ethnographic discovery perfectly fits studying dance for it is a practice focused on being, sensing and relating in the present moment as a way of knowing and understanding.

3.4. Meeting outside the dance floor

Outside the dance classes I attended more to the narrated experience of the dance which of course cannot be completely distinguished from the lived experience – time, place and

setting of the conversation. I met individually 10 out of 11 people (excluding me) from what I consider the core group – active long-term participants. These meetings were also recorded with the camera as it was my chosen tool for conducting the research. Since all ten people were open to this idea, I met them at their homes so they would feel relaxed and possibly show me some objects and/ or environments that tell more about themselves. During these meetings they would show me what they considered important to them and how they spend their free time at home. I saw a lot of tools for creative expression and objects produced as part of doing creative activities like drawings, paintings, sculptures, musical instruments. In addition, I noticed also shelves full of books and designated places for mindfulness activities such as a corner for doing yoga. I met some of their family members and animals. I spent too little time together with each person to be able to understand their individual perspective of life, but I did get an impression of them as a group – it seems, they generally are interested in and have resources for self-education and self-care.

Besides following my protagonists sharing themselves through objects and places in their homes, I conducted with each of them a semi-structured/ in-depth interview – one that “is open ended, but follows a general script and covers a list of topics.” (Bernard 2006: 210) I chose this method in order to be able to compare the narrated experiences. My interview guidelines included questions about joining the group, the experience of dance, motivation to attend the classes, group dynamics, the role of the teacher, as well as the experience of being filmed during the classes. To Liv Hanne I asked also how the dance classes were formed and how does she manage to satisfy different needs of the group members as I heard about them in the interviews with others.

3.5. The dancing ethnographer

“A reflexive approach recognizes the centrality of the subjectivity of the researcher to the production and representation of ethnographic knowledge.” (Pink 2021: 45) Our “ways of seeing, knowing and imagining are inevitably personal and individual” (ibid.) even when we as ethnographers are critical about our positionality in the field. The first element that shapes my subjectivity is my emotional attachment to the group of dancers. Even though I know most of them only through dance, I feel love for them. They make me feel at home – safe, taken care of and encouraged to be authentic. And our time spent together dancing really inspires me and challenges me in a positive way. As a result, I tend to see the good in the classes more than anything else. However, being aware of that helps to stay realistic.

The second positionality element points to the differences between me and my research participants. I am now 25 years old and they are 47-79 years old. I come from Latvia, a country in Eastern Europe. I had been in Norway for only one month before I met them. My Norwegian language skills are not developed enough to speak to them in Norwegian, so we all speak in English. I am a student while most of them have already developed their professional career or have retired. Possibly because of this positionality I experience more care from them than I would if I was older and with no student or foreigner status. Nevertheless, I do believe that this group is very open-minded and caring in general. Therefore, it was quite easy for me to socially integrate myself in the group since the very beginning. What also helped in developing an instant connection was my previous experience with dance: before I joined the group, I had participated in workshops that encourage emotionally releasing body movement and I was non-formally educated to also facilitate this type of workshops, which I still do also here in Tromsø.

The previous dance experience both in and outside Liv Hanne's classes allowed me to develop a skilled vision (Grasseni 2007: 7). It was easier for me to follow the movements and understand the given exercises due to having educated my attention as a dancer and a group member in advance. And I did use my training in dance and not only in anthropology when filming, writing and interpreting my ethnographic material which makes it partially autoethnographic. Nevertheless, having previous dance training does not enable accessing another dancer's experience completely, even when sharing the same time and space (Lawrence 2020: 2). Therefore I do not claim to be able to perceive the dance exactly the same way as others do. However, I am fortunate that the dancers themselves are eager to understand the practice which both made them more engaged in my project and increased chances of having shared interpretations of the dance. Thus, my approach became more collaborative.

3.6. Ethics

Continuing reflection on the collaborative spirit, before I started the fieldwork we had a discussion, a collective brainstorming of how I could conduct my research as they knew the dance better than I did. After that, because of too many different ideas shared they all decided to trust me completely with the project, giving me full control over the filmmaking and the research process, but also raising a sense of responsibility. I did however give them a chance to comment on an early version of my film to which they all responded positively saying that it reflects the dance practice, but I did not push them to be more involved than they wanted to. The only person who got more involved in the film editing process was Liv Hanne, who contributed a lot with her ideas on sound and even sharing of her music.

Overall, the dancers were surprisingly easy-going in their attitude towards my project. The presence of the camera in the intimate setting of the class almost did not bother them, or if it did, they embraced the unsettling feeling and took it as an opportunity to practice letting go of control and being open to the unknown. Normally, researching with a camera makes people feel the observational “gaze” (Barbash & Taylor 1997: 331) more present than in a setting without a recording device. When I asked them separately if the camera in any way made them feel uncomfortable, they all said “no”. They pointed out in one discussion however that it might give a feeling of craziness when they think about how this practice, seen on film, might appear to people outside the group.

This brings me to another ethical consideration which is exposure of my research participants. Andy Lawrence (2020: 26-30) writes that ethnographers should anticipate how an audience could react to a finished film. Since I have made my film on very intimate human interactions and since Tromsø is a comparatively small city, it is hard to estimate to what extent and in what way the upcoming screening of this film will impact my participants’ lives. Nevertheless, they are all aware of the fact that the film will be screened in the local cinema and nobody has complained about it so far. I anticipate that this film might confuse some people who are not used to this type of dance. But I hope that it also brings awareness towards different body movements and ways of being together with other people. And I hope it conveys the meaningfulness of the concrete practice and reveals why people attend the classes.

4. Phenomenological existential approach: attending to the sentient self

To present the way I approach my ethnographic field, I turn to phenomenology, a philosophy of experience, for one cannot holistically grasp the dance by just thinking about it. It requires also attending to the feelings. And those are not clearly distinguishable from thoughts. As existential anthropology suggests, “human existence is neither a matter of reason *or* emotion, nor of being solitary *or* social.” (Jackson 2017: IX) Researching experience and being-in-the-world requires sensitivity towards situations in which people do things because they feel like doing them without necessarily thinking that it is the right way of behaving or not necessarily being able to explain their behavior in words.

4.1. Creating a lifeworld

One day after a dance session at the end of the class, Anders, one of the group members, described what is happening in the class by saying, “I think we are tapping into the core of what it means to be a human being”. The discussion connected the dance practice to broader philosophical topics such as being a human and doing meaningful things. And it appeared to me that this dance is not just a dance, it is a practice of being in the world in a broader sense. Theorizing being/ existing in the world, anthropologist Michael Jackson argues that “human relationships cannot be understood by reducing their meaning to some preestablished and stable essence, but must be analyzed as they wax and wane over time, and in relation to critical events” (2017: XV) Human existence is ambiguous in a sense that it implies a dynamic tension and adjustment between “affect and order, where affect is assumed to include emotions, moods, feelings, impulses, desires, and dispositions, and order is assumed to include social norms, traditions, values, customs, and rules.” (ibid.) The interplay between personal fulfillment and what is necessary for the society, for the group of people living together, is what, in Michael Jackson’s terms, constitutes a lifeworld. Creating a lifeworld is a work-in-progress that implies a constant adjustment of “individual desires to collective demands”, harmonizing the “wild energies” with “the roles, rules, and regulations” (ibid. XII). A ritual, according to Jackson, is then the work we do in finding a balance and making peace with the tension between the two elements that might never be fully harmonized. It is the work we do in order to live a good life.

4.2. Thinking with the heart and resonating

What we practice in the dance class as a ritualized practice has to do a lot with building relationships based on corporeal interactions and attending to different emotions. When I use the word “emotions” I do not understand them as something that is only in the body. I

conceptualize emotional experiences as involving both the body and the mind, “cultural meaning and bodily feeling” (Leavitt 1996: 531). Emotions are not only subjectively felt, but also socially produced. We express them in relation to others and we feel them in relation to others. Balinese people, for instance, “do not split feeling from thought, but regard both as part of one process, *keneh*,” that Unni Wikan (1992: 463) translates as “feeling-thought”. They ask rhetorically as Wikan quotes: “Can anyone think but with the heart?” Wikan argues that in order for people to be able to live together and understand one another we need to think with the heart and go beyond words in search for the meaning because that is what creates resonance. When one is open to resonate, one is sharing a space with another and learning to attend the world in the same way the other does. And attending the world in the same way does not require having the “same experience” (ibid. 471), it requires paying attention. Resonance as an open form of listening and responding and resonance as an attentive way of sharing space with others is one of the main concepts I use for my ethnographic material analysis. Another especially relevant concept is embodiment which I discuss in the next two sections.

4.3. Making knowledge through embodiment

In the dance, we pay a lot of attention to our bodies. How does attending to the body lead to our understanding of being in the world? The French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2012, first published in 1945) was one of the first academics who argued for perception as an active engagement with the world emphasizing the perceiving body and its perceived world as opposed to consciousness being the main source of knowledge. Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of perception has been further developed in the field of anthropology by scholars such as Thomas Csordas (1990: 5). Csordas argued for embodiment as a paradigm for anthropology which “begins from the methodological postulate that the body is not an *object* to be studied in relation to culture, but it is to be considered as the *subject* of culture”, the experiencing self. This paradigm then would also question the conventional distinction between object and subject in analysis of perception and practice and would allow to see the complexity of it. As Trevor Marchand (2010: S2-3), who has interdisciplinarily studied apprenticeship as a mode of learning, later wrote, knowledge making is “a dynamic process arising directly from the indissoluble relations that exist between minds, bodies, and environment.” Acquiring knowledge for him is an ongoing process that is “shared *between* people and *with* the world.” In other words, we learn about our being in this world through interacting with other people and environments around us and that cannot be separated from thinking about being in the world. However, in the dance, as I see it, one prioritizes more the

embodied element of learning. Especially during movement, the emphasis is on how one learns through the senses more than through reasoning even if it is always to some extent present. Liv Hanne often gives instructions to pay attention to the body and the corporeal exploration of the environment around it, like for example the floor. Laying on the floor is how the class often starts for most of us. And an instruction we often get is “move to feel”.

4.4. Moving, sensing and letting go

Theorizing the living body, Lisa Blackman (2021: 17) writes: “We might live our bodies in parts and as a whole, as present and absent, both subject and object, singular and plural.” To give a more concrete example of how dance encourages to live in the body as a whole I turn to a dance education study conducted by Mary Lynn Smith (2002). Working with students in the field of dance and theatre she has learned that movement heightens our, people’s, sense of self by developing our “kinesthetic, emotional, intuitive, and imaginative modes of knowing” (2002: 131). Similarly as Liv Hanne says that movement is everywhere all the time, Smith (ibid. 130, 126) defines movement as (1) any action, nuance, postural or gestural change that human body makes and also as (2) an embodied form of communication in which body is the locus of taking in information sensorially and sending out information through motory actions. Smith argues that movement, which encourages listening and brings the dance student “inside” their body, has a potential of reconstructing dualistic thinking such as right-wrong and good-bad. Movement encourages letting go of judgement in attending to the moving selves and letting go of a desire to control and to know the end result. Practicing this open and present way of being in the body fosters a creation of unique movements instead of modelling movement patters. It gives confidence to move without fear to be judged and it encourages to perceive otherness as an-other-myself (ibid. 140). The unique and free-of-fear movements then create ambiguity of feelings, images and sensations which further prompts a transformation – a push out of learned everyday movement patterns. According to Smith, this transformation is the most dynamic and meaning-giving aspect of movement practices.

5. Conceptualizing the dance: attending to the reasoning self

To narrow down my focus, further I present theory which I apply in conceptualizing the dance class. It is my invitation to imagine how it would be if this dance was given a label that the group resists giving. What would it show about the practice if we looked at it through a lens of play, ritual, social production, well-being activity and performance art? And what would it tell about the dancer's potential motivations to attend the classes?

5.1. Dance as a play

First, I turn to play. Can dancing (and living) be seen as playing, and if yes, what does that imply? A Dutch historian and philosopher of culture Johan Huizinga in his book "Homo Ludens" (2016) suggests looking at play as a cultural phenomenon, as an essential part of life, as something more than a physiological and psychological phenomenon. All play performed by Homo Ludens (Man the Player) means something (ibid.: 1) even though the reason for playing is the experience itself. Despite resistance to define play-concept, Huizinga identifies elements of play that, to my mind, altogether constitute a definition. Play, he writes, is "a free activity standing quite consciously outside "ordinary" life as being "not serious", but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner. It promotes the formation of social groupings which tend to surround themselves with secrecy and to stress their difference from the common world by disguise or other means." (ibid.: 13) Play is a voluntary activity, done at leisure, which adds a sense of freedom to it. When we play we step into a temporary, imagined, "out-of-ordinary" sphere, a playground, that has its own locality and duration, its own rules and aesthetics that can be described with words like "tension, poise, balance, contrast, variation, solution, resolution" (ibid.:10). Play challenges "the antithesis of wisdom and folly, (..) of truth and falsehood, good and evil" (ibid.: 6). In play we move between the poles of frivolity and ecstasy (ibid.: 21).

If we look at the dance space as a playground, the ambiguity of what certain movements mean becomes visible. The movements performed by the bodies can be intended and interpreted as both silly and serious, however what sets the limits for the interpretation is the fact that it is a voluntarily activity and that the reason for playing or dancing is the experience itself. One is always free (up to a large extent) to engage in whatever they want or not engage in what they do not find desirable. What bonds a play-group is having that same commitment to freedom and play, which in a way also sets them apart from the "outside world".

5.2. **Dance as a ritual, a transformative practice**

My research participants talk about the dance room as a place where they feel equal, as a place where they can be together with others in a different manner than they normally are at work, at home, etc. Opposing the dance class to other daily activities lead me to comparing the class to a ritualized practice with its liminal quality (Turner 1969) – each week we, the dancers, spend 1,5-2 hours in Liv Hanne’s studio extricated from our everyday social roles as family members, friends, employees, etc. In this liminal, open-ended in-between period, we experiment with alternative ways of relating to each other through dance. Based on long-term experience of being part of the group, I see that we do it as a response to the structure that society opposes, the structure that draws distinctions between us based on age, gender, sexuality, class, nationality, etc. Dance as a ritual gives us a sense of equality which allows to accept a behavior that would often be considered abnormal outside the dance room like being physically close for a very long time or laying on top of another body resting.

Experimentation of alternative ways of relating to each other I see as a very creative process. And as such it brings into the perspective the aspect of transformation, which I already touched upon in the previous chapter. I understand creativity as “human activities that transform existing cultural practices in a manner that a community or certain of its members find of value” (Rosaldo, Lavie & Narayan 1993: 5). This transformation can be regarded as “insightful, wise, divine, inspirational, productive, or fertile” (ibid.). Then change starts on the individual level and proceeds to the societal. Thus, dance can be seen as having “the potential to disrupt or transgress the dominant social order” (Thomas 2003: 3-4) that we, human beings, learn as members of our society. In dance as in a ritual-like practice, the notion of a “proper” behavior is challenged, which, as I see it, makes space for vulnerability and intimacy.

5.3. **Dance as social production**

Felicia Hughes-Freeland in her book “Embodied Communities: Dance Traditions and Change in Java” (2008) argues that dance has a social importance as it is “a form of social production and not simply an adornment to social life.” (ibid.: 1) Dance tells us about how people understand and construct their worlds. In her work, Hughes-Freeland shows how Javanese-Indonesian court dance changed the discourses of colonialism and nationalism, stressing the potential of dance to make political changes in a community. The Javanese court dance is a staged and choreographed practice with the audience playing a big role in the production of meaning and interpretation. In my field case however, dance is not so visibly staged and most often the audience is formed by the dancers themselves, nevertheless the

transformative potential is still present, just in a smaller scale – the change starts with the individual and spreads further to the friends and family members who attend our end-of-season classes/ gatherings and simply spend time with the dancers on day to day basis.

As Hughes-Freeland writes, dance as an object of analysis produces a contradiction since “dance is not a universal category, but we identify certain kinds of movement as dance.” (P. 19) To me that tells that dance cannot really be given a definition, maybe only an abstract one that says everything and nothing at the same time. However, I believe that each dance has elements that can be analysed in a particular context. Two approaches to dance analysis suggested by Hughes-Freeland are looking at dance as a form of action and as a system of representation. Dance is both located in the self and the actions that are visible to the outside world. Dance as an embodied practice is both about the lived experience (being-in-the-world) and about the representation (seen-in-the-world). Therefore, in my thesis I have taken an example of Hughes-Freeland and synthesized the representational and phenomenological aspects of the dance in order to gain a more holistic insight into the topic.

5.4. Dance as a well-being practice

While social change is rather a potential outcome of practicing dance, being mindful is the intention during the practice, as I observe from Liv Hanne’s invitations in the arrival stage of a usual class. One way to define mindfulness is describing it as an “attention to the present moment, the here and now; it is about noticing the rise and fall of the breath in the belly, the flitting of the mind and the sitbones on the chair.” (Kabat-Zin paraphrased in Wheeler 2022: 9). As I understand it, in the context of dance classes, being mentally present enables one to connect to oneself, be attentive towards the physical environment, the dance room, and other moving bodies in the room. Generally, mindfulness activities people do in hope to lead happier and healthier lives (Cook & Cassanity 2022) which can be seen as one of the motivations for attending the dance classes.

Being mentally present or, in other words, concentrating attention on a specific thing or activity has a potential to create an “optimal experience” (Csikszentmihalyi 1990), a deep sense of enjoyment and exhilaration. Optimal experiences are developed in a process of “flow” – a concept developed by a psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Flow is experienced when a person organizes his or her consciousness in a particular way – when he or she voluntarily concentrates attention to achieving a realistic goal that often results not only in meeting of prior expectations, but also in achieving something unexpected. In this process, a person is free from frustrations and worries of everyday life and their perception of time changes in a way that

hours can feel like minutes and the other way around. After a flow, one “feels more capable and skilled” and at the same time “more together than before” (ibid.: 3) both internally and in relation to others. Thus, flow promotes individuality while simultaneously facilitating integration, connection, security as “thoughts, intentions, feelings and the sense are focused on the same goal”. (ibid.) In the case of my dance classes as I observe, the participants concentrate their attention on movement, both individual and collective, which can lead to enjoyment and several experiences of flow during the class.

5.5. Dance as a performance art

Besides psychologically, socially and physically transformative aspects on individual level, the dance I research is also treated as a work of art with the audience being Liv Hanne sitting on a sofa carefully observing the group dancing or part of the group sitting on that sofa as an audience. As I see it, the performative aspect is blurred together with the corporeal, that is, the desire to move for connection and individual/ collective satisfaction. So, usually it is hard to tell when the intention is to tell a story to a spectator and when it is not relevant at all. However, it is clear that we, the dance group, are creating performances at the end of the class, as Liv Hanne invites us, saying “now we create art”. An interesting idea from art theory that fits this context is that good artists create conditions for resonance with the audience instead of focusing on unique self-expression (Bogart 2021: 10). And it requires an open space, curiosity and wanting to be affected which, as I see it, are the things Liv Hanne as a professional artist tries to teach us. The dance class is a very open space in a sense that there are no rules for the right behavior or technique, we are left there to discover our own way of being together in an “empty” room. Liv Hanne often invites us during the class: “See what is there to be met.” So, all we work with is our bodies, our stories, experiences, emotional needs and desires besides a few big objects that have not been removed like the sofa and her husband’s art installations. And the way we work is through practicing resonance – being open to relate in movement, sound, rhythm, touch, smell, texture, strength, balance etc.

6. Ethnographic material: opening, connecting, transforming

This chapter of my thesis I have divided into 11 sections which in the beginning present more of my observations of the dance I research and later move into analysis of how the dancers narrate their participation and reason for attending the dance classes.

6.1. Episodes of connection

In this and the next section, I will focus on what, where and how was happening in my field before going into who and why. The reason for this is simply the fact that one is usually experiencing the dance practice for the first time, not knowing anything about who the people are outside the space and what their ideas about the dance are. Similarly as in my film – one gets closer to the embodiment of movement and then learns more about the ideas behind it. The material I will be mostly dealing with here is observations in combination with my personal experience with the dance that cannot be detached from the way I see and make sense of occurring events. For organizing, presenting and understanding my observations of movements during the classes I introduce the concept of episodes. So, how do I define episodes and why do I use it as a frame for making sense of movements performed in classes?

As I have mentioned before, the practice I research is not based on choreographed pieces and there is no specific technique behind it. It is often based on quite abstract invitations and a lot of freedom to do what one wants. Looking at it critically, there is not any way to objectively explain how one body meets another or the material space. And the dancers themselves are not interested in analyzing their behavior either. So, I decided to come up with my own tool for framing actions, which is episodes. I define an **episode** as a development of a relationship and a connection in a process of resonance, of active listening and responding. An episode, as I define it, has its own beginning and ending. There can be many episodes witnessed within one class. The preface in this paper is one example. The central element of an episode can be a specific movement, body posture, rhythm, sound, breathing pattern, point of contact, physical proximity, location, etc. What can indicate, for example, an end of an episode is stillness (end of a specific movement) or motion (starting to move after being still), closing eyes, opening eyes, ending of a sound, lost interest in exploring a body posture or place in the room, end of singing or creating a specific sound, lost point of body contact, as well as an exhale, bursting into joyful laughter and a hug. As I see it, an episode can be inspired by a sudden intention, e.g., to form an eye contact, or an imagined task chosen voluntarily, e.g., to slide cross the room with somebody laying on your back, or by a given instruction, e.g., to feel the gravity and let go of holding your own body. It is quite an open concept, which I use to

frame a process, a sequence of movements/ (inter)-actions. Episodes, which I identified watching my film footage, also ended up being the way how I structured my film, so it has a lot of parallels with the descriptions I present here, in the text.

In the process of identifying episodes in my film footage and my own experience of dancing, I came to see that a **connection** created within an episode can take three forms:

- *connecting to oneself* – at the beginning of the class we, the dancers, are invited by Liv Hanne to notice how we feel in our body, what are maybe some tensions in the muscles, what emotions and thoughts are present, what do we need; slowly we become aware of ourselves; that can happen while lying on the floor still or while standing, stretching, moving, it is up to our imagination; often people close their eyes in this stage of the class;
- *connecting to the materiality and sound* – this includes sensing the floor, its hardness, its temperature, sensing the light, the sound of the room or rain outside and noticing how the body feels in relation to the environment it is surrounded by, be it a dance room or a forest nearby the studio;
- *connecting to other human beings* – in this stage some still keep the eyes closed in order to better sense others through the body and to not lose contact with themselves, it might also just feel emotionally safer that way; connecting with others often happens through touch, physical closeness, eye contact, moving in the same rhythm, exercising the same or similar movement, finding ways how bodies “fit” together; and it can also happen while doing something completely opposite, but still relating, sensing and being in connection.

The episodes which I have chosen as the most representational of the practice can be seen in my film and will be described here in section 6.3. (please note however that they are not perfectly matching). My aim with presenting the episodes is to illustrate processes which, as I see it, the dancers are going through during a class. I want to show (1) how an openness-to-relate through resonance is created, (2) how this openness enables connection and encourages exploration, and (3) how the creativity and “out-of-the-ordinariness” of movements performed allow transformation, which are essentially the main arguments of my thesis, adding on that the relating and connecting process happens through corporeal interactions and embodied way of being in the world. Step one and step two of the process become quite visible in the episodes themselves. Step three however can be understood better from the narrated experiences, which I will discuss more in later sections.

6.2. Entering the dance space

First arriving to Liv Hanne's dance studio, one notices the speciousness of the room – a high ceiling and a clean and empty wooden floor. Liv Hanne and her husband Lawrence usually prepare the room specifically for the classes because during the week Lawrence has his art installation workshop materials on the dance floor. When I am there together with them before a class, Liv Hanne sweeping the floor says: "The emptier the better," pointing towards the importance of having the place not only clean, but also free from objects. The furniture is usually arranged so that there is a lot of space for movement. The sofa, chairs and speakers are on the side. It is usually on one particular side of the room where the entrance is located. It is also a side for observers – Liv Hanne and/or part of the dance participant group. The only things that might be still left in the dancing area, although normally by the wall, are Lawrence's art installations like the plastic sheeting one can see in the film. (00:04:42)

The studio is always warm enough to feel comfortable, but some dancers still tend to wear layers of clothes and then slowly unwrap themselves when warming up from active movements. The room has big windows, not pointing towards the street, so strangers cannot see what is going on in this place. Since the light outside in Tromsø changes rapidly from complete darkness during the winter polar night season to constant brightness during midnight sun period in the summer, the light in the studio changes weekly. Sometimes it is lightened by sunlight, sometimes by room lights or even by a single stage spotlight. There is no stage in a sense that there is no higher platform or an area that would only be used for staging purposes, which adds to the sense of equality between the group members. The dance floor "becomes" a stage when we, the group, get to the performance part of the class. And I think, the fact that the studio is privately owned and located next to Liv Hanne's house adds to the intimate atmosphere in the room. Another important characteristic of the location is the quiet neighborhood and the few green areas, like the forest, which the studio is surrounded by.

Coming back to the room itself, I observe an overall attempt to make it minimally filled with things and even sounds – we often do not have music played in the background. This minimalistic approach relates to Liv Hanne's ideas about the dance as a practice in which one works with their own body, stories, experiences. "We always work from what is here, from nothing and everything," (TC: 00:08:48) she says during one class after giving an invitation to the group to perform. "Nothing", as I interpret it, symbolizes the minimalistic instructions and structure of the class as well as the absence of objects and rules of the right behavior. And "everything" on the other hand is each individual themselves as a whole.

6.3. Dancing: a few episodes from the classes

6.3.1. “Tuning in”

Having just arrived to Liv Hanne’s studio, eight human bodies now, spread all over the dance room, lay on the floor on the back. Everybody has their eyes closed and there is barely any movement noticeable. I only hear sounds of breathing. Liv Hanne slowly starts walking around the room making her way between legs and arms left in complete stillness. Slowly and with big pauses between sentences she starts to give invitations:

“Tune in to your breath, to the weight of your body. Maybe you want to do a quick scan if there are places in your body that you can release a little more. Is there something in your body that is ready to be met? Maybe that can be your intention for today’s class: curiosity about what is there to be met. Maybe you get some insights as an idea or there is something in your body that releases or opens up in a different way.” (TC: 00:03:00)

After the verbal invitations the first movements visible-to-the-eye appear. There is no music being played, but the bodies start to “wake up”. While connecting to their mental and physical state some dancers start performing little finger, hand or foot movements either up in the air or sliding down the floor. Everybody becomes aware and responds to their own feelings, thoughts, movements. And Liv Hanne continues:

“[We are] strengthening that state where we are open and trusting. Whatever comes, whatever reveals itself. [There is] nothing to prove, nothing to defend, nowhere where you have to be... And from that place anything can happen. The more we let go, the deeper we can go into our subconscious, into the fine layers of the body, into the memory of the cells.”

The stillness still dominates the bodies. Liv Hanne turns on music played from speakers. The music adds to the atmosphere of diving into deep feelings, but it also encourages smaller movements to grow into bigger ones: the dancers start to turn, stretch and warm up different parts of the body all still being horizontal. Movements that look like gentle cleaning of the floor, as I interpret it, are intended to form a connection with the physical environment. This connection is achieved through sensing of the weight of the body, gravity as well as temperature, hardness, dryness of the floor and light of the room.

During today’s class, compared to other weeks, quite a lot of time is spent on the “arriving” state that usually is done individually. As Steffen, one of the dancers who is a therapist by profession, says in an interview: “Only when you are connected to yourself you can connect with others.” The dancers take as much time as they need to “tune in” and only when they are ready, they move towards each other.

6.3.2. “Greeting” others

From my experience, first the greeting can happen by hearing a body part that is not yours sliding down the floor in your direction (TC: 00:04:12). Sometimes you can tell that somebody is close to you by sensing the warmth of another body nearby, or feeling their hair or piece of clothing touching your skin. At this point one is free to decide if they want to meet in a form of a physical contact or not. It is always fine to stay close but not in direct contact or even to go to the emptiest part of the room. One has a freedom to choose to interact or not according to what they want. Nevertheless, a direct physical contact eventually always happens – for some earlier, for some later in the class. It does not need to be a contact maintained for a long time or contact made with everybody in the room. First meeting of another body can happen by accident ending up sitting, standing, laying, moving next to it, for instance, when a hand, a hip or a back touches another back, head or leg, etc.

In this particular class Magdalena after the arriving/ tuning-in stage moved around the dance room greeting Astrid by leaning her upper body toward Astrid’s rolling body. Then she met Steffen with her head for a few seconds laying on his arm and her back on his leg. Later she found her way to Trine with a leg brushing through Trine’s hair. Afterwards Eric Otto touched by Magdalena’s scarf lifted up this piece of clothing, looked at it while holding it and then let it slip through his fingers as Magdalena moved away to another side of the room.

The dancers have mentioned a few times that because they like to keep their eyes closed, they often do not even realize who they are meeting in a dance. Closing eyes helps them focus more on the sensorial experience. For me as a dancer the guiding question is – does it feel pleasant or necessary, for example, to meet this or that body in this position or movement in this particular time or not? Based on that I make a decision either to engage, develop a little dance together or turn away and keep doing my own thing or find somebody in the room whose movements or energy seem to suit me better.

6.3.3. Co-creating, developing a connection

When we have warmed up and greeted each other normally we enter the middle part of the class in which either as part of a given task or voluntarily we create dances with one another, developing temporary relationships usually through direct body contact.

A. Weight-sharing dance

Liv Hanne gives the class participants an exercise: “I would love us to continue in duos.” (TC 00:05:59) She approaches Anders to show an example together with him: “We will give and receive weight.” While demonstrating weight sharing Liv Hanne teaches: “It is good

at the beginning to move a bit slow, it is like pouring something in the glass a bit slow to see what it can take. And after a while it is possible to play with the tempo.” Liv Hanne and Anders move as in a contact improvisation, always keeping a point of contact, and then Liv Hanne continues with instructions: “This idea of taking what you need while taking care of your partner I think is a very nice navigation tool. So, I don’t do it selflessly, caring the weight of Anders. You can all see (Anders laying on top of Liv Hanne in front of us), it is also a very nice possibility to stretch my thigh and my body. I am just hanging out here until he maybe decides it’s enough.” After laying there, under Anders’s body in a bit uncomfortable pose, for a few seconds she continues: “So, we are not afraid of stillness.”

After the task given the dancers randomly form couples. With no music in the background, they dive into sharing weight through a maintained body contact. Steffen and Magdalena make a dance while rolling on the floor. Kristin and Camilla dance facing each other with their backs, then slowly one is bending and the other laying on top. Siri and Anders maintain a point of contact, laying their heads on each other’s shoulder. Trine and Barbro hold each other while one being in the lap of the other, then they lay still on the floor as if one of them was a blanket for the other. Astrid and Erik Otto meanwhile explore balancing with holding each other’s hands trying to stand up and bend simultaneously as if they were one body. This exercise invites to develop a dance, a relationship through play and exploration of the body weight and balance as well as through care and holding of one another.

B. Sound dance

In this class there are five participants not including me and Liv Hanne. The middle part is blurred together with the last part that is the performing time. In this case everybody performs; and there is only Liv Hanne and me, the camera person, as the audience. The invitation from Liv Hanne is to do a performance which starts by each person dancing individually. Then they all are supposed to transition to creating something together as a quintet, then divide in smaller groups that perform simultaneously till they all again come together as a quintet. This exercise requires a lot of attention to bodily movements as communication signals, and it is difficult to follow what is happening because there is no clear indication of when the transition to bigger or smaller groups is happening. I am not presenting this example to analyze how successfully they read one another’s body language. For me and anybody else involved that is an impossible task. Why I am giving this example is to illustrate how they transitioned specifically from individual dances to creating something together, all five of them. And, as I interpret it, that happened through sound. (FC: 00:22:21)

At the beginning of this quite long performance everybody moves, but only Anders makes sounds with his voice. He dances around the room humming. Then Erik Otto adds a word to his hand-wave movement and starts saying “hi” repeatedly. Then Trine joins with a different hand movement showing five with her fingers and saying “five” out loud. Meanwhile Siri increases the volume of her rhythmic breathing. Later one of them starts making sounds with hitting their feet on the ground and another person hitting wall with their fingers till they all unite in one rhythm – in this rhythm they perform movements and make sounds creating a unique soundscape that would make no sense to a stranger. But for them it does because they relate to each other and develop a soundscape in which everybody has a role.

When the five dancers are coming together and slowly becoming still, Liv Hanne instructs from her observation spot, the sofa: “You decide yourselves when the piece is over.” It takes the group almost a minute to arrive to complete stillness. Liv Hanne then continues: “OK, great... That was fun.” Anders tells a joke about sitting on Steffen as on a comfortable chair he would like to have. Then they all burst into laughter. Siri adds: “You never know what you get,” pointing towards them often being surprised by their own creations. Trine replies “no”, and keeps laughing. From the facial expressions I guess that they are not really being able to grasp yet what they had just experienced, but it seems to have been a joyful or in another way very enjoyable experience.

Other episodes – can be seen in the film

In my film (00:09:39), one can see another example of Liv Hanne commenting the dance from a performance art perspective, like when she invites Astrid to use a space in front of the room, that is, on the audience’s side, to create a solo and then encourages her to continue, to follow the movement. The film also shows the class in the forest, during which everybody went separate ways developing connections with birds, trees and other plants individually. In the forest, I did not go very close to any of them because I felt my presence might be intrusive in a way. And my participation there was too distant to be able to observe and interpret how the relationships and connections were developed. However, the discussion the group had after the class allowed me to grasp their experiences to at least some extent. For instance, Magdalena, who was hanging in the tree for around an hour (TC: 00:14:29), afterwards described her being in the nature as finding a way how her body “fits”, resisting labeling her actions as climbing. She was changing postures laying with her head upside down and holding on to the tree with her whole body, thus finding how her body fits with the body of the tree. In her words: “It was about finding how am I suspended or in balance or just joyful.”

To my mind, all the episode examples described here and seen in the film demonstrate how in the dance the participants encourage each other to attend to the sentient self, to let go of judgement about how movements appear visually, let go of the desire to control the end result and be open and present with what is there both inside and outside their bodies. Same as presented in the theory, this kind of open and present way of being in the movement fosters creation of unique dances instead of modelling learned movement patterns. The dancers develop confidence to be authentic and, as Liv Hanne puts it, to “dance what they are” in the moment.

6.4. The dancers and their stories of joining the group

In this section and the next one I will describe the group of dancers, their stories of joining the class and the role of Liv Hanne in the practice, according to the participants and Liv Hanne herself. The ethnographic material I will be referring to was gathered in the separate meetings I organized with the dancers during my fieldwork period.

So far in the paper, I have already described the group size, age and nationality. I will here outline a few more characteristics of the group as a whole (not including myself), which I learned about during the separate meetings and home visits. Considering the little time spent together with them individually, there most probably are some details missing, but this is the descriptive information I have gathered and categorized accordingly:

- Creative (free time) activities performed: dancing, drawing, sculpture art, clothes design, eco-printing, music making, playing musical instruments, singing;
- Sports and healthcare activities incorporated in daily life: dancing, doing yoga, meditating, skiing, hiking, camping, jogging, swimming, playing basketball, walking with dogs, going to sauna;
- Activism: some group members are politically active through art, taking part in protests, e.g., Lawrence and Liv Hanne created a petition¹ to save the forest in which there was a dance class happening during my fieldwork period;
- Formal education: most of them have academic or professional degrees in fields of medicine, architecture, physics, psychology, pedagogy, physiotherapy, dance, drama, theater, literature and even anthropology and indigenous studies;
- Occupations they have or had before retiring: psychologist, clinical psychiatrist, family constellation therapist, nurse, physiotherapist, teacher, author, architect, telecommunication satellite engineer, actress, theater director, dancer, musician;

¹<https://www.underskrift.no/vis/12525/>

- Countries in which they have lived apart from Norway: Belgium, Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark, France, Italy (it is very likely that there are more);
- Parenthood: most of the group members have kids and some have grandkids too.

This is a description of the people that I considered the core group during my fieldwork, it includes also Liv Hanne. All of them, except for one person who has taken a break for a while, are still, a year after my fieldwork, practicing the dance. In our individual meetings I asked when and how did they, the class participants, join the group. I found out that most of them have been participating in the classes for many years. The most recent members at the time were me and Siri, who started attending Liv Hanne's classes in September 2022. I learned also that most of the group members got to know about the classes through personal relations: knowing Liv Hanne or randomly meeting her on a bus, on the street, at an art project and getting an invitation, being friends with somebody from the dance group or hearing about the practice from somebody else who knows the people in the group. It was only Astrid who got to know about Liv Hanne in a newspaper and not by word of mouth.

The only criteria for joining the classes, as Liv Hanne formulates it, is for the person to "be curious and willing to explore themselves and life through movement." One does not need to be a professional dancer. The only people from the group who work as stage artists in fact are Liv Hanne, whose background I described in the context chapter, and Kristin, who works as an actress and a theater director. Everybody else is a dancer not in a professional sense, although some of them have gone to dance schools when they were younger. I myself belong to the second group, having a high interest in dance, but not working as a dancer.

As I understand from the interviews, before having joined Liv Hanne's classes a few people had a more or less clear idea about what they would like to get out of this experience. Magdalena tells me about how she asked Liv Hanne to teach the dance, wanting to experience something similar to 5Rhythms², a dynamic movement practice that serves as a workout and a meditation. Anders recalls having a burnout around 11 years ago and needing something artistic and non-verbal to heal him. Erik Otto had had a neck surgery, Siri had post-traumatic stress disorder and were also both invited to join the dance practice for therapeutic and healing purposes. Some were a bit hesitant to join, like Trine remembers knowing about the classes for a long time, but feeling vulnerable and "not ready for the openness and freedom in a way", although when arriving immediately feeling at home and asking herself "Why haven't I come here before?" Erik Otto was also a bit scared to join, but for him the first times were

² <https://www.5rhythms.com>

challenging. He recalls considering if he should give it up, but deciding to stay and challenge himself. Consequently, he has expanded his comfort zone greatly over the last ten years.

The long period of dancing together weekly has created a particular kind of friendships. Erik Otto says: “We know each other, although we don’t know each other.” Magdalena describes this knowing developed in a bodily way and resulting in “non-verbal close friendships.” Some of the group members know each other outside the dance space too, but some are only connected in the classes. And of course there is verbal exchange happening as part of the practice also, but it is not considered relevant for developing closeness.

6.5. The role of the dance teacher

Looking at the overall experience of classes, it is not only Trine who associates them with a feeling of home. Also, Liv Hanne herself in the interview refers to having this group of dancers as her home. When a couple of years ago she did more touring than now she always wanted to return to the classes as a place where she feels very free and spontaneous, as a place that is her baseline for authenticity and also a source of inspiration. Liv Hanne says her task in the classes is to intervene as little as possible because the movements in a way unfold themselves after the bodies have been warmed up with some physical exercises, for instance, breathing, stretching, shaking, weight shifting, or laying and rolling on the floor. Having the opportunity to hold space for the bodies “opening up” is what Liv Hanne really appreciates:

Now, 14 or something years later, I just think they are so amazingly good in understanding the situation on the floor, creating from nothing in a way, but from everything. I mean, nothing and everything are two sides of the same coin. They have so many stories, so much movement, they have such fantastic bodies, such creative minds. It’s a sensitivity, creativity and risk-taking that I don’t see so often on stage with so-called professional dancers. [...] Just to give space for that to unfold without a plan – it’s fantastic to observe. So, I feel grateful and blessed every week when I have the chance to witness how they listen and respond, listen, respond, listen, respond. (Liv Hanne)

Later in the conversation she adds that she teaches from who she is and not so much from what she knows, and that sometimes this openness brings doubts about how much instructions should be given and if what is given is enough, which is connected to a deeper fear of getting enough out of her life. Sometimes, Liv Hanne says, she prepares exercises for a class in advance and thoughts about it are with her throughout the week till the class “like a slow boiling stew”. Other times she does not prepare at all, thus building trust that what she and the participants all have present in them is enough, and much more than enough.

When I talked to the class participants none of them claimed lacking guidance. Magdalena, who is also a good friend of Liv Hanne’s outside the dance space, mentioned Liv

Hanne having “pure curiosity in life”, which helps to normalize doing exactly what one needs to do in the dance space, for whatever that is. Henrik put it this way:

Liv Hanne gives you a free space to be who you want to be and it is like there are no limits. Of course, there are limits, but we have to find the limits ourselves. [...] There are things that we do there that we don't do in other places. We get so close to each other. You only do what you can do, but she gives us an impression that we can do anything. (Henrik)

Apart from feeling free to express themselves, all the participants also mentioned feeling very safe. According to them, Liv Hanne creates an atmosphere in which they do not feel judged. In a way they are challenged and supported by her at the same time. Adding to that, Anders thinks that the group has full confidence both in her as a dancer, “a master in her field”, and also in her as a person they know, so according to him “Liv Hanne can do almost anything with us”, the group. On the personal level, he even imagines her having a role of a caring mother:

I would say she is almost like a mother, you know, because she needs only to be there, give us some instructions and watch. She watches us, you know, and she relates to us and she sees us, like any good loving mother would. And she's actually doing all that from her heart, it's authentic. (Anders)

As can be seen from the quotations, participants during the classes feel very taken care of. The only aspect that seems to create some tensions and bring difficulties both for the participants and Liv Hanne as the teacher is the fact this practice combines mindfulness with performance art. Hence, Liv Hanne feels like she has to juggle between two different needs: the majority of the group attends the classes because they “just want to be in the dance, in the movement with themselves and in the meeting with the other,” as she puts it, and a smaller part is also interested in developing their skills in performing. It corresponds also to my observations from participating in the classes in the last four seasons. To be honest, I am one of the people who contribute to this challenge by being interested in dance from both perspectives. In the interviews however the participants do not talk about it much, stressing mostly the aspects which make them feel good. Only Astrid and Kristin mention having had difficulties regarding the topic. Astrid recalls a few situations in which she felt like her movements are being corrected which made her feel uncomfortable. Kristin, who works as an artist, on the other hand has sometimes felt annoyed by the lack of comments or advice given by Liv Hanne, when she for example sees how some performances created could be improved, as in made more engaging, for the audience. I as a dancer and a group member think that we are very used to Liv Hanne commenting our dance pieces mostly in a very careful and praising way, so whenever there is a more direct critical comment coming from her there is a potential for it to be taken personally. From analyzing it, I conclude that direct critical comments on the

performative aspects of movement might be something desired by some, but they in a way threaten the safety which the dancers emphasize as a crucial quality of the practice. Consequently, tensions around practicing dance as a stage art are unavoidable.

6.6. Training creativity and embodied active listening

Continuing reflection on narrated experiences together with some observations I have gathered, in this section I will slowly start unwrapping the reasons for attending the classes, thus answering my main research question. One might be thinking now: so, what is it that the group is actually training here if it is not having a strong and flexible body or a developed sense of balance or coordination for example? As I see it, Liv Hanne would respond to that by saying that indeed training the bodily physically is not the main purpose of the practice, but it can be part of it and it is up to each participant how much of a physical exercise they make the class for themselves. Liv Hanne pays more attention to other qualities of movement. She says:

I am much more interested in training creativity, training trust, training understanding of timing, how the breath influences your choices, what gravity means, how it changes if I look somebody in the eye, training how to really release and to let go. And of course, these are big things we learn just by being, but I really believe that dance is such a great way to learn how to be a human being. So, I think that's what I'm interested in, to use that space as a training for meeting... I feel a frustration or impatience or... basically surrender to the unknown, which is what we do every week. We go there on the floor and we just surrender to the unknown. [...] Everything can happen and nothing needs to happen. (Liv Hanne)

From what Liv Hanne has told me and from what I have experienced myself, I see that this dance space is very open and relational, which is how I conceptualize knowledge-making and building of an understanding in my thesis, that is, as having open and relational qualities. I interpret the dance in a way that all movements – which I understand as (a) any action happening inside and outside the body and as well as (b) a form of embodied communication – in the class are responses to something already present: an emotion, a need, a tension in the muscle, a look, a posture, a movement made by yourself or another body, etc. The body in the process of responding becomes the locus (Smith 2002: 126) which takes in information sensorially and sends it out through motory actions. Essentially, what is being trained in the classes, I argue, is active listening in an embodied sense. This embodied listening as well as understanding and responding serve as a foundation for developing connections which form a sense of togetherness during the class and hold the group together as a whole, and also supports developing a long-term commitment to attend the classes.

When talking to class participants, I learn that they also see the open and relational qualities of the dance describing them in their own words like “experimentation”, “play”, “exploration”. Anders and Astrid are the ones who answer my question about what is

happening in the classes, by describing the actions as playing. For Anders, who is a psychologist, playing means having contact with his inner child, he stresses the importance of having an opportunity to play together with other people. Astrid, introducing the idea of playing first notes that she does not mean it as pretending. On the contrary, she says: “We are the bodies. We are our feelings at that very minute and second of the time.” Her point is that the dance helps her to become a more playful person – one that is not stiff and does not have to do everything right. I guess that means becoming more flexible and better at adapting to new circumstances, new situations. In my thesis, I conceptualize play as a cultural phenomenon during which one steps into a temporary, imagined, “out-of-the-ordinary” sphere (Huizinga 2016: 13). Play challenges oppositions like wisdom-folly and truth-falsehood. Looking through the lens of play, the meanings of the movements performed in dance become ambiguous. One cannot *really* know what others mean by their movements, but the trained sense of trust in the unknown and acceptance of whatever is present allows a connection to be formed anyway. Magdalena’s words illustrate my point here about acceptance:

To me that space is completely open. [...] I don’t judge anything that happens there: who is there, how many we are, what exercises we are given. I take whatever. (Magdalena)

I see the dancers as having a commitment to freedom of self-expression and to freedom of interpretation of what certain movements or even connections mean. This commitment to freedom also explains why, according to my observations, the group or specific dancers sometimes show resistance towards rules, structures and detailed explanations of exercises. For instance, there has been two times in my experience when Liv Hanne invited the group to prepare something a bit choreographed to show the audience at the end-of-the-season classes. One time this idea was completely turned down, and in the other case the performances ended up being prepared only conceptually, having very few limitations. I interpret it as not only a resistance, but also a need for simplicity, a vague frame under which one can dance their dance.

Kristin, who is a theater director and an actress, in our conversation compares Liv Hanne’s practice to her education in a theater school in Italy which was based on ideas developed by Jerzy Grotowski (1933-1999), a Polish theater director. Using Grotowski’s method (2002: 16-17), the actor is not educated in a process of learning a set of skills or being taught something. Instead the actor learns how to eradicate blocks in themselves. Kristin, in the interview, talks about a body of burning impulses as the central metaphor of the method. The movements, according to this method, are born out of impulses one senses in the body. And similarly as in Liv Hanne’s classes, the actor’s starting point here is an empty space. One

of the motivations for Kristin to attend the classes is the ability to work in this empty space and collect what she calls the “physical material”, the body movements, sensations and so on:

When I work as an actress, I actually use the physical material that I have collected in the space. This dance training is a way to keep me warm. [...] I’m exploring what we call the personal material. (Kristin)

The comparison of the two practices allows us to see how in Liv Hanne’s classes the group in its own way is practicing unblocking the body and following its impulses. And even though in the classes the dancers become very aware of their emotions, the entry point for working with emotions is actually simple physical tasks like breathing, stretching, feeling the floor

6.7. Creating a lifeworld and harmonizing needs

The beginning of the class is the most mindful part, if we understand mindfulness in the dance context as being in the present moment and paying attention to the breath and physical sensations of the room. Then in the middle part of the class Liv Hanne gives tasks that also bring more attention to the physicality of body and movement, but in a more engaged way. However, becoming aware of the emotional state – which of course cannot really be distinguished from the physical sensations as emotions are felt in the body – is normally not something that Liv Hanne directly invites the dancers to do. However, in the discussions and interviews the group talks about emotionality as an important part of the practice. In our conversations, many refer to the feeling of safety. In addition, people mention feeling restful, free, authentic, equal, supported and even empowered, for example, when learning to be comfortable with being observed in their movements. They say they do not feel judged to do what they need to do or to be the way they are on the day of the class. Trine formulates it this way: “It is a place where I can be me, be true to myself,” adding that the safety created to “be me” is a group effort, meaning that it is created together by all of them.

When feeling safe, it is easier for one to become aware of their needs, which is the reason why in this thesis I look at the dance practice as a creation of a lifeworld. Liv Hanne often says in the class: “Take what you need while taking care of your partner.” This taking care of the partner I understand as giving the other space to be who they want to be and do what they need to do. Seeing the dance as creating a lifeworld, shows how during the class the people are learning how to balance and harmonize personal fulfillment with group needs, in other words, desires that others in the group have. Steffen, a family constellation therapist, points out that the practice makes him aware of his needs, therefore it is therapeutic for him:

It is like a therapy for me to connect with my inner life through movements. [...] It is a nice method for expressing yourself and your inner needs that may be unconscious... You connect with what is important inside you. And it has a healing effect. [...] I think in the beginning this was not the aspect I was dealing with, the healing aspect. It was just... it just felt good to be there dancing with other people. I felt relaxed afterwards and I felt that something was released, but I did not think about it. It was just a good feeling. With time I was observing myself and observing the others, and then I could see that we dance our inner lives, our stories. (Steffen)

Possibly because in the classes the group is dancing their own stories, their own lives, Liv Hanne had an idea to call the film on the practice “Dance what you are”, which I did at the end. Liv Hanne is the person who holds the space for this dance; I see that she takes what she needs from these classes too by responding to her wishes regarding the exercises, the music played in the background and her own participation in the dance. However, she also follows her own given navigation tool to not only take what she needs, but also take care of the people she works with. Here are two examples which illustrate the care and support Liv Hanne provides. The first is given by Siri, who is often challenged by her post-traumatic stress disorder:

Sometimes I've been really [thinking], okay can I go today because I'm so scared, I have so much anxiety, I don't think I can dance. And then I go and I say to Liv Hanne, okay I'm so... I'm not in a good shape. And she says, okay, just small movements, you don't have to do big things. And then it's okay. You come with whatever you have. (Siri)

The other example comes from Kristin who felt supported by remembering Liv Hanne's words before a premiere of a big performance:

Liv Hanne always says: you are exactly where you should be. Just take it from there, take it from where you are now. Okay, if you are totally scared from the audience, then recognize that, yeah, I am totally scared. I'm really really scared. But at the same time, I am here, I am connected to the Earth. And that's enough. You always start from where you are. It's never wrong where you are. And this is Liv Hanne, this is her lesson, at least to me, this is what she has given to me. (Kristin)

I can also add my experience to these two stories. Once I arrived to the class and soon after laying on the floor started crying. I felt like moving was suddenly a very unnatural act. I pushed myself to make some movements. When I was in a sitting position slightly rocking myself from one side to the other, Liv Hanne came to me. She did not say anything, she just held me in her arms and rubbed my back helping me to release a lot of stress and slowly start moving

Magdalena mentions that she often finds herself doing something in the class she did not know she needed, e.g., when she arrives to the class feeling quite introverted, but later ends up voluntarily engaging in an intense contact with someone. When I ask her how does that happen, she explains it through an idea of integrity as awareness and acceptance of others:

The whole point is to do with what is there. It's never a situation: oh, no, not this, I don't want this. It's a kind of a peace project, it's cohabitation where you are not invaded by other people's needs and you are not invading others. It's not respect even, but a very strong integrity that everybody brings. It's acceptance. [...] I feel sincere love for everybody in that space every time. (Magdalena)

What also explains this ability to cohabit a (temporary) place peacefully and achieve a balance between the different needs of people is the sense of equality that the participants mention themselves and that is a characteristic of a ritualized practice. Erik Otto says: "We are all on the same level." Anders even calls it an "extraordinary egalitarianism" what he experiences in the group. But of course this harmonization of needs is not always successful to the same extent. It can happen for example that a few people crave dynamic movements while others desire very slow movements and those two modes of moving do not always go together even in the case of appreciating contrasts. Moreover, although the group shows care for each other, it does not mean that one always leaves the dance studio happy and relaxed. It could be that a release is experienced in a way that feelings like sadness or anger have been brought to the surface and they stay with you after the class.

6.8. Being together in a different way

The classes are not only a safe place for emotional expression, but also a place for physically close and intimate corporeal interactions. Trine, talking about her motivation to attend the classes, says: "It is nice to be together with others in another manner. Not only sitting, talking, explaining, understanding." Almost everybody in the interviews contrasted this dance space to other places in their everyday lives, emphasizing how special is the atmosphere created in the classes. Referring to this different way of being together in the movement, Astrid says: "Sometimes it is magic what we are making." With "magic" here she meant something that is wonderful to experience when dancing and to look at when being in the audience. I think the use of this word points to something unexpected, something extraordinary that is not common to witness elsewhere. Steffen describes the way of being in the dance classes like this:

Steffen: This is of course quite different from walking in the street, sitting in a restaurant, watching football. There is a difference there.

Me: What is the difference?

Steffen: The idea is...you relate to other people in another way. Using your body, not words. You connect with people physically, in another way, trustfully, knowing what is important inside you. [...] And this is also something very special that you don't experience in so many other places in your life, I think, that you connect with people in that way.

The dancers during the class co-create dances through sensing each other with their whole body: feeling a touch on the skin, hearing a sound of sliding on the floor, feeling the warmth of a breath, etc. Liv Hanne after observing an exercise done in one class comments:

For me, it was amazing: even though all your eyes were closed, you were catching up with each other. So many different meanings, some similar forms and shapes. (Liv Hanne)

Liv Hanne sometimes invites the participants into body movement with words like: “Open up every cell to respond.” (TC: 00:17:46) Opening up, responding and being in relation in an embodied way is what I consider resonance in this paper. The idea of resonance (Wikan 1992) calls for thinking with the heart, seeing thoughts and feeling as part of the same process. When one thinks with the heart, one is learning to attend the world the same way the other does. This creates a connection and a relational understanding that is not necessarily verbally explainable. The meaning can lay beyond words. It is about an understanding that allows collaboration and cohabitation regardless of whether the people connecting are meeting each other also intellectually, that is, having the same idea in mind about what their dance is or what it means.

Liv Hanne also uses sometimes the word “resonance” in class. I do not know how she defines it, but, as I understand, this word has to do with both responding to a movement and also giving space for a movement to be received. In the interview she compliments the group of dancers with using the word “resonance” in relation to a sense of timing:

And I love to see how good...I mean they are brilliant, to really dare to wait and to allow nothingness and stillness. Because then, if you do one thing, this becomes a huge thing and it resonates, this movement. How long can this movement resonate until something else appears? And it doesn't mean that everything has to be slow and one thing, but it's just such a...we are so intelligent if we just step back, basically. (Liv Hanne)

So, learning from Liv Hanne, another way of creating resonance can be stepping back and waiting, which fits together well with the idea of resonance as a form of active listening.

One more thing I would like to add here about resonance is that it gives room for experimentation. This is how I connect the concept of resonance with, what the dancers call, a different way of being together. They mostly meant being together with other people, but I would extend it to being together also with the material space and other living beings in the nature. For instance, Magdalena, who is an architect and, I would say, thus particularly interested in ways of how one can use or inhabit a space, during the class in the forest was hanging in a tree for around an hour and afterwards described it as finding how her body “fits” with the tree, as I mention earlier. Like if we imagine the practice as a dance ritual, then its liminal quality is the group’s ability to experiment with alternative ways of relating to each other and to the place around them in the given time and space. What partly constitutes this

liminal setting is the equality component. The differences between the group members, meaning age, gender, sexuality, class, nationality, religious beliefs in the dance are of little or no importance, depending on a situation. For instance, I can climb Anders like a tree if I want it and if he is open to that, and it would not matter that he is a male or much older than me. It has happened a few times and we have talked about it, so I can say for sure that it was just a fun meeting for both of us. I wanted to climb and he wanted to hold. As a matter of fact, it has also happened the other way around, meaning that I am lifting his body. For me, it is a good way to practice balancing and learning about the limits of my physical strength.

Even though moving and forming a sense of togetherness and connection in this practice is put more in focus than the result of this process, it is useful to also examine the outcome of the class because the feelings and thoughts after a dance session determine how motivated a person is to join the next classes and possibly to form a long-term commitment.

6.9. Releasing and transforming

As I have mentioned before, the result of the dancing experience despite the support provided is not always a person feeling happier than when arriving to the studio. Indeed, often the movement has made the class participants more joyful or more relaxed, but it does not have to always be the case. What everybody agrees upon however is that there is always some change happening. Trine talks about the dance experience as releasing:

It feels like something is released. And maybe I can feel empowered when I leave it, I can feel healed when I leave it, I can feel tired when I leave it, feel happy or feel sad. [...] It can be lots of different experiences while I am there and also afterwards. But very often when I come home my daughters tell me that I am different than how I was when I left. Something happens there. [...] Often I'm happier. A happier mom coming back. (Trine)

Thinking of more long-term effects of participating in the dance classes, Anders sees having positive changes not only in his personal, but also professional life:

Becoming more in touch with your needs makes contact with others much more authentic. [...] And you know, my communication, my relating to others really comes out of my own heart. Probably, let's hope, it makes me a more authentic therapist. (Anders)

He joined the group for therapeutic purposes, and he admits that attending the classes has had the effect he expected. He states that practicing this dance has healed his body, his mind and his relationships with other people. Astrid on the other hand in the interview tells me that she has become freer and safer in her body. She has become more comfortable with receiving performance-related commentary and has generally grown more confident in her behavior:

I think dancing and attending the classes for years, it makes you free. It doesn't matter if somebody looks at you or you do things a bit wrong or right, as long as you are comfortable with it, and as long as you are not disturbing somebody and doing some harm. (Astrid)

Erik Otto has a bit similar story. He talks a lot about the dance classes expanding his comfort zone. He tells me that in school he used to be very nervous about giving speeches and talking in front of other people and that the first dance classes he joined felt like going back to school. But over the years of dancing, he has become safer in his body and now giving a speech does not cost him anything. As Erik Otto puts it, in the classes he feels so safe that he can go beyond his psychological limits. Adding to the confidence and expansion of comfort zone, I would say that the dancers also become more capable of adapting to new situations. In every class there is constantly something unexpected happening due to the open structure and mindset. To be able to maintain trust in a dance, about which you have no idea what it means or if it means something or where it is going, I think also indicates a change that has happened. And of course, this ability to trust in the unknown has developed alongside trust in the group of people.

Trust in the movement and in the people one moves with, to my mind, is a fertile ground for experiencing flow (Czikscentmihalyi 1990), that is, organizing the consciousness in a particular way that results in achieving both a realistic goal as well as something unexpected, that seemed to be beyond the limits of one's capabilities. In the class, I would say we, the dancers, do not set goals, but we do respond to the body impulses and we do have intentions. I personally do not experience flow in every dance class or at least not up to the same extent. And once I had a very memorable experience of it. It happened when doing an exercise together with Kristin. And when I had an interview with her it turned out that it had also made an impact on her. She was talking about flow as another motivation to attend the dance classes:

Also, another reason, at least for me, why I go there and why I work on theatre is because this kind of...when you are into this flow and you feel that you are not limited, you express exactly what is right in the moment, you only do what you should do. (Kristin)

What you "should do" is relative of course and more determined by the body and the corporeal interaction between individuals. It is significant that in this meeting we both had different ideas about what was going on. For me it was a very smooth, but also very daring fight with lifting, dragging, dropping and catching of each other. I was surprised that none of us got hurt. For her, on the contrary, it was about something totally different. While we were moving, she was saying a text in Sami that I did not understand and I mistook it for her being angry. Then Kristin told me in the interview: "But I felt sorrow, the pain of deep sorrow." From this story I learned two things. First, in the class it is possible to experience something like flow which makes you

feel more capable and skilled due to achieving something unexpected and, as Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi states (ibid.: 3), makes you feel “more together than before” both internally and in the relation to others. Second, for flow to happen in a dance, the people interacting do not need to be on the same page in their understanding of the situation. They can collaborate and co-create something meaningful despite feeling and thinking very different things.

6.10. “Just being” and other paradoxes

One of the positive aspects of the practice mentioned in the interviews was an opportunity to “just be” in the dance space, just be what you want to be and do what you need to do. All of them talk about “just being” in one way or another. During my fieldwork I was bothered a lot with a question: is it really that simple? And what do they actually mean by just being? I will start by answering my second question.

The dancers talk about just being in terms of not being expected to be productive, effective, being free from lots of rules and responsibilities of everyday life, going beyond certain aesthetics and roles they have as members of the society.

It's a place where it's kind of like the same when I'm swimming. No thoughts, just being. And also when I'm in nature, I get this bliss feeling, you know, just be. No thoughts, no worries, no nothing. And that's the same I experience when I dance. It's like the body just does what it wants to do and that is so freeing. And I don't have to be good, it doesn't have to be beautiful, no. There is no expectations of proving anything. It's like a free zone. Just to be a human. Outside the space I am back in the patient role, being my occupation, being good, just being something, being a daughter, a sister. In that space I'm just a dancing human. (Siri)

In the everyday life there is lots of rules, you have to do *dadada*. It has to be this and this. So, it is really nice to come to this room where you can be, were you are allowed to express yourself in another way. I really enjoy that. It does not have to be big things, it can be even staying in the corner and relaxing, *pfiuu*, breathing. You don't have to make stuff all the time and perform, like *tsh-tsh-tsh*, “we are going to be the best university in the entire universe!” It is an open space. I don't have many of those. You are allowed to just be there together with beautiful people. [...] It's a privilege to be able to go there. (Trine)

Liv Hanne talks about just being as our, human, ability “to forget about ourselves in a positive way”. I understand that as being able to stop worrying about what is expected and what is commonly understood as the right, the good, the beautiful, the kind, the appropriate thing to do. And of course, everybody has their own assumptions about what kind of a behavior is expected. And I personally agree with Trine that it is not only a capability, but also a privilege to be able to let go and feel free from expectations. We as class participants have the privilege to explore different modes of being, thus reconstructing a dualistic thinking about it.

Magdalena in the interview points out that just being is “super simple and super complicated”, which leads me to the first question proposed in the beginning of this section.

Analyzing both the interview material and the observations in the field I see that it is really not that simple. Henrik, for instance, does not always experience just being in an open space as something relaxing. It is also challenging in a way.

Sometimes I feel like, do I want to go today? Because it is a pressure to be who you are (laughing). You are supposed to just do whatever you want, what could that be? [...] You don't have anybody telling you what to do. (Henrik)

“Just being” has an ambivalent character. In a way, the dance class is an open space where one is not obliged or expected to do anything particular besides following often quite abstract invitations and perhaps the rule of safety, i.e., doing no harm. However, trying to keep the space open, free from a lot of rules and structures also is an action or at least an intention itself. Avoiding something is a form of doing something. In addition to this paradox of openness and just being, I identify other contradictory elements in the field. For example, it does not matter what a movement or a dance episode means, but it can be a very meaningful experience. It does not matter how the dance appears visually, but the images created are still observed and complimented. The class has a three-part structure, but the transitions are not always noticeable. The class is meant for non-verbal, embodied interactions that cannot be expressed with words, but a session often ends with a verbal discussion about the experiences and observations. Also, ironically, the practice is referred to as the “secret” of the island of Tromsø, which, as I have heard, quite a lot of people know about (but possibly have not experienced?). My film of course will reveal this secret, so this paradox might be soon changing.

Identifying these paradoxes is not my way of criticizing the practice in any way. It is more of an analytical tool which helps to answer one of my initial research questions about why is the dance not being defined or labelled. Now I see that it is too multi-dimensional for one to label it. The experience of dancing at Liv Hanne's classes is as broad and self-contradictory as the experience of living. This idea brings me to the next section, in which I will reflect upon dancing as a way of exploring humanity and being in the world.

6.11. Exploring being in the world

Most of my research participants in the interviews and commonly in the discussions after dance sessions talk about the practice as reflecting life. Sometimes the conversations in classes become deeply philosophical and concern very existential questions like what is the purpose of life and what it means to be a human. A word which is frequently used for describing experiences of movement is “exploration”. As I see it, for the dancers during the classes, this has become the primary way of engaging with the living beings and the materiality, meaning that the focus is on engagement as a way of learning. This is an experiential way of acquiring

knowledge, an embodied, open and relational way of learning. A quote from the interview with Magdalena illustrates my argument holistically:

I really have the need for moving, feeling or sensing. [...] Having that space where we together investigate different ways of being human, being together, moving, sensing. It's a magical and an important space. It's the biggest gift in life. And it's also super simple. [...] For a lot of people it would seem strange, but it's super natural. It's done with what we have all the time: our own body, access to breathing and moving and just observing what that gives. [...] It's a foundational part of being human to connect bodily, physically. [...] It's a kind of validation that it's not only a childish thing to move or to roll on grass, or stand on your hands or climb trees. It's a very human basic and profound experience of discovering the world and connecting with the world. It expands to very existential matters both on private and global level. (Magdalena)

At the end of a class on 15th of May 2024, the dancers got into a discussion about normalness of their movements and meaningfulness and of the dance practice. This discussion ended up lasting thirty minutes; in the film I cut it short to three minutes (00:24:24). In my opinion, this conversation happened partly due to my presence there as a filmmaker and an anthropologist; it is possible that they felt exposed and wanted to explain the rationale behind the practice. Another reason for having the reflection I think was the class participant's curiosity, their interest in learning about others' opinions. It started with simply joking and laughing about being crazy together and expanded into a deliberation of being in the world and how one learns what it means to be a human in the classes.

Anders: I think we're tapping into the core and the essence of what it means to be a human being, the essence of what it is to be a living being. And sometimes it's a little bit scary because there's so much of your identity that you leave outside. And it's the core of you are, I think you're in touch with here.

Trine: But also, it's a place for looking for the core I would say. It's a place where to explore, to try out things. [...] So, this is why we are here Monday after Monday after Monday.

Liv Hanne: It's our practice, it's our work, it's our meeting ourselves, meeting the meaninglessness, meeting the meaning, meeting the strength, meeting the sensuality, meeting the fragility.

Trine: And the humanity.

Liv Hanne: Exactly! How do we manage that?

Another subject of this discussion was the group's experience of being seen and heard by others through film. It drew my attention to how my research participants generally position themselves against people from outside the dance space. Anders in the conversation above joked about the dance group being perceived as "a bunch of lunatics". Magdalena in the interview said that moving, sensing and connecting in this way "can feel alien to some people".

Meanwhile Trine talking about the practice states: “It is exciting, but also not for everybody. Some people might be scared to death to join this.” Erik Otto even recalls an experience of being observed dancing in Liv Hanne’s neighborhood (which is almost his neighborhood) and hearing a comment like this: “Well, what are you doing there? It’s very strange.” He remembers this situation with a smile on his face, adding that now he dares to confidently dance this strange dance. As I interpret it, this “strangeness” and “craziness” of the practice in comparison to more structured, choreographed and technical dances create a differentiation between Liv Hanne’s group and an imagined broader group of others in the society. This can be seen as one of the components which hold the dancers together as a group – they can relate to and explore the world differently than some other people they know and be in this process together.

7. Touching the reality through film

In this chapter, I will reflect upon the process of filming and editing my film and how that contributed to and shaped the knowledge gained and produced about the dance classes. In the last section of the chapter I will also discuss the first encounter with my film audience.

1.1. Filming: intimately inspecting

As in my fieldwork I was attending to the sentient self, researching connections created based on corporeal interactions, I applied observational cinema strategy to my filming style, particularly focusing on knowledge constituted in a dynamic, relational process. When conducting fieldwork, I envisioned my film to convey an experience of participation in a dance class. I filmed the dance both from outside and inside the dance floor, from the front and from the back of the room, I filmed from a static and moving position. Despite the inability to fully dance with the camera, I employed a variety of techniques and took different positions so to give a more holistic impression of the dance event. I experimented with the camera and tried to remain open to whatever movements and connections would reveal themselves to me throughout the whole fieldwork period.

Having learned about different schools of observational filmmaking (Barbash & Taylor 1997: 28-29) such as Direct Cinema (relatively noninterventionist, a “fly-on-the-wall”) and Cinéma Verité (actively interventionist, provocative) styles, I imagined my approach to be somewhere between these two. I tried to be more participatory and interactive than Direct filmmakers, but also more relaxed than Verité filmmakers, that is, capturing the situations as they would go on without camera present while being mildly self-revelatory. I was following an observational cinema principle stressed by Colin Young, a key figure in the field of ethnographic film, who wrote that using camera as a method for researching human behavior requires being close to people and following them intimately (Young 2003: 101). The ideal, for him, was to record “normal” behavior and at the same time not to pretend that the camera was never there. In my film, one can see short glimpses into the camera by the people filmed and can even witness a discussion (00:25:15) about the presence of camera, pointing both to mine and my participants’ self-reflexivity. My approach to filmmaking was not merely reporting on cultural encounter, but also “creating the circumstances in which new knowledge can take us [in this case: me] by surprise.” (MacDougall 1991: 9) I could not imagine that my joke about the insanity would catalyze a 35-minute discussion about how the dance might be perceived by others and how film conveys or might fail to convey the meaningfulness of this practice. I was positively surprised, and this material became vital for my thesis.

1.2. Editing: dancing out the film

Although filmmaking is a great way to learn about the world, this knowledge-making process is very subjective – all the way from selecting what to film and framing the shots to choosing what shots will be included in the film and in what order. Compared to, for example, analyzed fieldnotes, “the final film CAN represent the original event or situation directly” (Young: 2003: 101), but “it is an impossible task [for it] to represent “reality”.” (Crawford 2006: 302) Film is always about something, while reality is not. (Vaughan 1999: 21) Making of a film is an artistic craft. And I wanted my film to be an engaging story for stories bring “connectivity, logic and order” in the otherwise chaotic world (Andersen 2021: 4). I wanted to dance out my film as my protagonists danced out their feelings and ideas about the world. In the editing process more than during recording, I realized how much of a construction of reality my film is, how much of my perspective gives form to this representation of the practice. I was the one who identified the episodes in my footage – the sequences of (inter)-action that present my material. I edited the shots according to my interpretation, my sense of rhythm, movement and sound. I cut all the scenes (except for the verbal discussion) in the film based on a feeling-thought of when a dance episode starts and when it ends – the same as I do when I dance.

After showing a rough cut to the dancers, they however approved that my film mirrors the practice, that it has captured its essence. I must admit nevertheless, balancing out the artistic and scientific objectives was a hard task and I could not always clearly distinguish between them either. But what I did consciously in an anthropological spirit was structuring my film similarly to how an actual dance class happens: (a) preparation of the space, (b) arrival part, (c) working on a task, dancing together, (d) performing, (e) talking about experiences. The film does not strictly follow this structure, but when combining together relevant footage from four classes and compressing several hours in 29 minutes I was indeed inspired by it. Additionally, attempting to convey the experiential knowledge I made the film so that it would first “invite the audience to feel” (Bromhead 1996: 134), attend to their emotions, form their own assumptions about what is going on based on the invitations given and the dance performed and only then discover how the dancers themselves verbalize it.

In visual anthropologist Mike Poltorak’s film (2014: 00:19:24) on Contact Improvisation, which is a form of dance similar to Liv Hanne’s practice, one participant says: “the real beauty of contact impro is the felt beauty that you cannot really see, something that only the people who are in it witness. And it’s a tough call for a video camera to document...maybe an atmosphere of connecting.” I tried to achieve this atmosphere of

connecting by, first, staying in the dance space throughout the whole film similarly as in Barley Norton's (2020) anthropological film "Make a Silence: Musical Dialogues in Asia" the spectator "never leaves" the Hanoi New Music Festival. Second, I tried to evoke different bodily sensations with the recorded close-up shots of the floor, hands, breathing, etc. As an audience we only watch images and hear sounds, but also mentally "fill in the sensory gaps" (MacDougall 2019: 77) that cinema cannot directly convey. My intention was that the audience would be able to indirectly sense touch and texture, more specifically, softness, temperature, dryness, as well as motion, weight and balance. Through this sensorial experience, I hope, one would arrive to an understanding of how this dance practice is an open space, how it encourages trust in the movement, trust in others and fosters a sense of togetherness and joy.

From a storytelling perspective, my film has partially an episodic and an event-driven narrative (Lawrence 2020: 140-142), by narrative meaning "the system that gives order and meaning to the material in hand." (Bromhead 1996: 118). My film is episodic in a sense that I as a filmmaker determined the ordering of the scenes and the logic behind it while the overarching theme is the weekly dance event that also influenced the structure of the film. I got the inspiration of working with episodes from "Pina" (Wenders 2011), a documentary and a tribute film to a German choreographer Pina Bausch. The film is organized in performances that reveal how the choreographer transformed the world of contemporary dance. This film is relevant to my thesis also in a way that it is a documentary on artists, people who are often very aware of how they want to be represented or what they want to express, which I think is one of the reasons why Liv Hanne got very engaged in my film editing process after seeing the first rough-cut. It was very fruitful to collaborate with her as it gave me confidence in my work and also challenged me to improve it, especially the sound in my film.

Liv Hanne contributed with her music and even invited a sound artist to watch my edit and give feedback. This resulted in me becoming much more aware of the sound (e.g., breathing, sliding on the floor, coughing) that I prior to editing stage considered silence or even noise. I realized how the sound enriches the space and how it could be more layered. As Gunnar Iversen (2010: 84) puts it: "Sound is more than something added to the images; something that enriches the visual. Sound *interprets* the images; gives them materiality, expressivity and meaning." Inspired by this, I recorded more close-up sounds of touch that I did not catch on microphones. I also learned how it could have given a more immersed experience if I had stereo microphones in the room and not only a directional and an omnidirectional microphone placed on the camera. I believe now that advancing the sound in film does not necessarily make it less ethnographic as there are tools that help "recreate" the experience of the actual encounter.

1.3. Screening: meeting the stranger within

So far, I have little experience with screening my film since it was only recently finished, but I have already met audiences who have contributed to my viewing of the group of dancers in a wider society. To illustrate my point, I will use the core idea of a book called “Strangers Within: Documentary as Encounter” (Henningsen & Joffé 2022). The authors of the book describe situations in which a film is made based on unpredictable encounters with strangers that form a potentially very vulnerable but also an empowering practice of difference (ibid: 11). The encounters are depicted as open and personal experiences which might lead the filmmaker to meeting their own disturbing otherness, their unknown self and change their self-perception. My entrance in the field was of course far from encountering strangers as my meetings were mostly planned and I was familiar with the place, the people and the practice in advance. Where I started facing my own disturbing otherness however was in the stage of screening the film, showing it to audiences who I do not know, audiences who might not be familiar with creative body movements and/ or might think that what the people in the film and I practice in the classes is weird or makes no sense. I happened to screen my film to a class of high school students in Tromsø and some of the students giggled throughout the whole film. Part of the reason why that happened was that a daughter one of the dancers was in the audience. But I also came to realize how uncomfortable it might be for some to watch my film. Honestly, it also made me, both as a dancer and filmmaker, feel uneasy and almost embarrassed about what I am showing despite having full confidence in this dance as a very meaningful practice and being grateful for an opportunity to share it with younger people.

This experience revealed to me how relational and reflective the filmmaking process can be in all its stages and how much it can teach me not just about the topic of research, but also about myself personally. I understand better who I am – same as in the process of dancing. It is journey of self-discovery. That is why my film is called “Dance what you”, which is actually a title chosen by Liv Hanne.

8. Conclusion

The practice I have conducted my study on is a dance that does not have a choreography, a specific technique, or (explicitly communicated) rules of the right behavior, and is usually practiced non-verbally and without specific objects used in creation. In the dance classes one learns to create something in an “empty” space, meaning using just their own selves: their own body, experiences, present emotions, needs, impulses. This “something” being created, as I interpret it, is a connection with oneself, others and the surrounding environment. Using theory of resonance and learning constituted as experience, I analyzed my ethnographic material and gained knowledge about how in such an open form dance classes moving and co-creating something corporeally forms relational understanding. It is an understanding which cannot necessarily be expressed verbally. It is formed by embodied active listening and responding to others and the surrounding environment. The effects of practicing resonance and embodied relational understanding are a developed sense of togetherness and ability to co-exist in a place by having all the group participants needs met or at least made aware of. In my opinion, this is the reason why people want to engage in open form dance activities.

Other aspects which have a potential to make such body movement practices meaningful to people are creativity and exploration. Creativity encourages a creation of unique movements instead of modelling of movement patterns. Training creativity means stepping in a temporary, imagined “out-of-ordinary” sphere. In a long-term it transforms a person, by giving them confidence to move freely and without fear to be judged about how good or beautiful their movements appear. Explorational aspect of the particular practice studied on the other hand adds an existential quality to the interactions on the dance floor and in the forest for that matter. This dance is a sensorial exploration of being in the world and of being oneself. In the dance space the people can be together in a different, more corporeally intimate, way than in other places in their everyday lives, which is an element that holds the group together.

Studying dance with a camera has taught me also how useful of a tool for analysis and knowledge-making of the subject is filmmaking. The camera allows to attend to senses and body movements when recording ethnographic material. Watching footage and editing helps arriving to new understandings of a research subject, in this case, noticing developments of relationships in the dance space. And lastly, a finished film serves as a means of conveying knowledge constituted as experience, which is central to practicing creative body movement.

Literature

- Andersen, N. P.** (2021). *Order in Chaos: Storytelling and Editing in Documentary Film*. E-book. Pagh Productions in collaboration with The Norwegian Film School and Rough Cut Service. <https://orderinchaosbook.com>
- Barbash, I., Taylor, L.** (1997). *Cross-cultural filmmaking: A handbook for making documentary and ethnographic films and videos*. Los Angeles: University of California Press
- Bernard, R. H.** (2006). *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. 4th ed. Lanham: AltaMiraPress
- Blackman, L.** (2021). *The Body: The Key Concepts*. 2nd edition. New York: Routledge
- Bogart, A.** (2021). *The Art of Resonance*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing
- Bromhead, T. de** (1996). *Looking Two Ways: Documentary's Relationship with Cinema and Reality*. Aarhus: Intervention Press
- Cook, J. & Cassaniti, J.** (2022). Mindfulness and culture. *Anthropology Today*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (April 2022), pp. 1-3, DOI: 10.1111/1467-8322.12704
- Crawford, P. I.** (2006). "‘Big Men’ and the Representation of Local Communities on Film." In: *Reflecting visual ethnography: using the camera in anthropological research*, pp. 294-317. Edited by Metje Postma and Peter I. Crawford. Leiden: CNWS Publications
- Csikszentmihalyi, M.** (1990). *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York: Harper & Row. Uploaded by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi on 20 July 2015 on ResearchGate: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/224927532>
- Csordas, T. J.** (1990). Embodiment as a Paradigm for Anthropology. *Ethos*, Vol. 18 (March 1990), No. 1, pp. 5-47, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/640395>
- Grasseni, C.** (2007). "Introduction." In: *Skilled Visions: Between Apprenticeship and Standards*, pp. 1-22. Edited by Cristina Grasseni. New York: Berghahn Books
- Grimshaw, A., & Ravetz, A.** (2009). Rethinking Observational Cinema. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Sep., 2009), pp. 538-556, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40541698>
- Grotowski, J.** (2002). *Towards a Poor Theater*. 1st Routledge edition. Edited by Eugenio Barba. New York: Routledge
- Henningsen, T., Joffé, J.** (2022). *Strangers Within: Documentary as Encounter*. Edited by Therese Henningsen and Juliette Joffé. London: Prototype Publishing
- Hughes-Freeland, F.** (2008). *Embodied Communities: Dance Traditions and Change in Java*. New York: Berghahn Books

- Huizinga, J.** (2016). *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*. New York: Angelico Press. Unabridged reprint of the first edition published by Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1949
- Iversen, G.** (2010). "Added value: the role of sound in documentary film theory and visual anthropology." In: *Beyond the visual: sound and image in ethnographic and documentary film*, pp. 70-86. Edited by Gunnar Iversen, Jan Ketil Simonsen. Højbjerg: Intervention Press In association with the Nordic Anthropologic Film Association
- Jackson, M.** (2017). *How Lifeworlds work: Emotionality, Sociality, and the Ambiguity of Being*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press
- Leavitt, J.** (1996). Meaning and Feeling in the Anthropology of Emotions. *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (August 1996), pp. 514-539, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/646350>
- Lawrence, A.** (2020). *Filmmaking for fieldwork: A practical guide*. Manchester: Manchester University Press
- MacDougall, D.** (1991). Whose Story Is It? *Visual anthropology review*, Vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 2-10. DOI: 10.1525/var.1991.7.2.2
- MacDougall, D.** (2019). *The looking machine: Essays on cinema, anthropology and documentary filmmaking*. Manchester: Manchester University Press
- MacDougall, D.** (2020). How the Visual Makes Sense. *Visual Anthropology*, Vol. 33, No. 1, pp. 1-8, DOI: 10.1080/08949468.2019.1671746
- Madden, R.** (2017). *Being Ethnographic: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Ethnography*. 2nd edition. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Marchand, T. H. J.** (2010). Making knowledge: explorations of the indissoluble relation between minds, bodies, and environment. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 16: Making Knowledge, pp. S1-S21, DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9655.2010.01607.x
- Merleau-Ponty, M.** (2012). *Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by Donald A. Landes. New York: Routledge. Originally published as *Phénoménologie de la perception*. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1945
- Pink, S.** (2021). *Doing Visual Ethnography*. 4th edition. London: SAGE Publications Ltd
- Rosaldo, R., Lavie, S., & Narayan, K.** (1993). *Creativity/ Anthropology*. London: Cornell University Press
- Smith, M. L.** (2002). Moving Self: The thread which bridges dance and theatre. *Research in Dance Education*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 123-141, DOI: 10.1080/1464789022000034695
- Thomas, H.** (2003). *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Turner, V. (1969). *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul

Vaughan, D. (1999). *For Documentary: Twelve Essays*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press

Wheater, K. (2022). No time like the present: Mindfulness, temporality and the therapeutics of *kairos*. *Anthropology Today*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (April 2022), pp. 9-12

Wikan, U. (1992). Beyond the words: the power of resonance. *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (August 1992), pp. 460-482, DOI: 10.1525/ae.1992.19.3.02a00030

Young, C. (2003). "Observational Cinema". In: *Principles of Visual Anthropology*, pp. 99-114. Edited by Paul Hockings. 3rd edition. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter Mouton. DOI: 10.1515/9783110221138.99

Films referenced

Norton, B. (2020). Make a Silence: Musical Dialogues in Asia. *Journal of Anthropological Films*, Vol. 4, No. 2. <https://doi.org/10.15845/jaf.v4i02.3069>

Wenders, W. (2011). *Pina*. Germany: Fusion Media Sales Ltd., DVD

Poltorak, M., Lynes, A., Bruhlmann, S. (2014). *Five Ways In*. Potolahi Productions. <https://researchingcontactimprovisation.com>