

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This research investigates definitions of ‘individual’ and ‘subject’¹ in contemporary dance practice by relating to three Western contemporary dance group choreographies as a framework of study: *Violet* by Damaged Goods/Meg Stuart, *Collective Jumps* by Isabelle Schad and *You've changed* by ZOO/Thomas Hauert. Giving voice to choreographers and dancers, this enquiry questions the accuracy, relevance and paradoxes arising from terminology used for describing the singular dancing body. This study looks at the overestimated terms ‘individual’ and ‘subject’ by undertaking an analysis constituted from three perspectives: choreographer, dancer and audience.

1.1 Context and questions

Over the last decades, Western contemporary dance exhibits a return to group choreographies. Reflecting an ethical turn in the performing arts supports a relational world view that exalts flexibility, open connections, networks by re-valuing the common “realm of human interactions and their social context rather than an independent and private space.”² Social networks³ of connections entangle the individual evermore within diverse and interweaving groups of people, both virtually, facilitated through growing technological capacities, or materially and physically⁴. Moreover, a shift of focus to the sentient body suggests “the individual isolated body [...] was a contrivance designed to return the body to its sensation in order for it to re-extend into the always already

¹ The thesis will adopt these ‘quotation marks’ for terminologies, while these other “quotation marks” will be adopted always in relation to references and quotes, as mentioned in their respective footnotes.

² Nicholas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (France: La presse du reel, 1998), p.14.

³ Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 129. He claims: “Network does not designate a thing out there that would have roughly the shape of interconnected points. [...] It qualifies its objectivity, that is, the ability of each actor to make other actors engage in unexpected relations.”

⁴ Amy Allen, *The Politics of Ourselves* (USA: Columbia University Press, 2008), 55. Here she quotes Foucault definition of individual as “a mistake to think of the individual as a sort of elementary nucleus, a primitive atom or some multiple, inert matter to which power is applied [...] The individual is not, in other words, power's opposite number; the individual is one of power's first effects. The individual is in fact a power effect, and at the same time, to the extent that he is a power-effect, the individual is a rely: power passes through the individuals it has constituted.”

collective on a new footing.”⁵ What at first seems a great step beyond an individualistic society however also opens new questions on the emerging relational subjectivities and the role of self-differentiation. Erin Manning in her book *Relationescapes* refers to Felix Guattari’s definition of subjectivity as a self production in which a myriad of components participate in the production and transformation of one another, proposing a subjectivity that is no longer located in the body, rather a “collective moving through.”⁶ When considering the body in contemporary dance group choreographic practices, questions on the autonomy of the singular body within his/her relational field emerge.⁷ The title of the thesis *Autonomy in Connectedness* reveals the interest of this study in exploring the notion of the individual within groups, questioning the interweaving dynamics between influencing and being influenced, following and leading, forming and being formed as a path to reveal the autonomy of the individual within his/her relational field as to critically reflect on the categorical rules of subjection in which he himself is entangled; thus revealing the processes and parameters in which the individual forms.

When zooming into the very practice of group choreography, questions on the autonomy of the individual are not new: especially after the fatal “aesthetization of politics,” when synchronized group choreographies aim at a domestication of the senses of the individual as a form of politics of control.⁸ As for reconciliation practices between the individual and the group one might think to American dance practices of the 1960s, The emancipatory movement practices of choreographer/teacher/dancer Anna Halprin, along with the Judson Church movement and community practices initiated at the Black Mountain College, all engendered democratic or collective processes.⁹ Celebrating “a

⁵ Brian Massumi, *Parables of the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (United States: Duke University, 2002), 120.

⁶ Erin Manning, *Relationescapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy* (London: The MIT Press, 2009), 22.

⁷ Amy Allen, *The Politics of Ourselves* (USA: Columbia University Press, 2008), 65. Here she refers to Foucault’s notion of autonomy as allowing the subject to critically reflect on the categorical rules of subjection in which he himself is entangled in, in order to transform them if necessary.

⁸ Lutz Peter Koepnick, *Walter Benjamin and the Aesthetics of Power* (United States: Library of Congress, 1999), 4. Term coined by Walter Benjamin, as in Koepnick “the aesthetization of politics assaults perception, neutralizes the senses and denies the private body as an autonomous site of corporal pleasure [...], causing a subtle domestication of peculiar modern structures of seeing, perception and experience.”

⁹ Black Mountain College, <http://www.blackmountaincollege.org/history/radicalvision?showall=&start=3> (accessed 3.07.2015). Students quotes: “Cooperation - and sometimes conflict - was generated by the intensity of the community experience. This lively democratic process too was meant to be part of the experience. Much of the time the group process worked. Occasionally, though, issues and divisions were deep enough to split the group into uncomfortable factions leaving the tightly-knit community in distress.”

loose and free wheeling phalanx”, they stood for the idea of the free individual.¹⁰

When considering the liberating qualities of collaborative practices in the 1960s one might also think of the co-existence of dance and music, such as in the collaborations of avant-garde artists choreographer Merce Cunningham and composer John Cage. Choreographic tools such as chance procedures and improvisation can be seen as resultant of developments in how subjectivity is perceived in group choreography.¹¹ It could be seen in this context that the decentering of choreographic decision-making processes allowed for a first move beyond the modern authoritarian subject centered approaches. Here the collaboration between music and set design resulted in an autonomous coexistence between the different art forms. Individual dancers however, act as vehicles for Cunningham’s choreographic voice; as “agent[s] for the embodiment of an aesthetic”¹² rather than autonomous collaborators.¹³ Already here questions on the use and understanding of the term “individual” start to emerge.

The role of the dancer in choreographic processes has brought forth changes that have been encouraged over the last 20 years, recognizing the dancer as agent and author within creative processes.¹⁴ One might think of William Forsythe’s great collaborative and horizontal working practices with his companies, that engender the notion that “collaboration doesn't undermine the aura of the Artist, but it multiplies it.”¹⁵

In the article *Prognosis on Collaboration* Bojana Kunst unfolds the paradoxes and problematic of today's forms of collaboration, signaling today's “teamwork” as a new

¹⁰ Jill Johnston, “Judson Concerts #3, #4,” in *Village Voice*, 28 February 1963, p.9.

¹¹ Sally Banes, *Democracy's Body: Judson Dance Theatre, 1962-1964* (Mivhigan: Umi Richi Press, 1983), 62.

¹² Sabine Huschka, “Daniel Roberts-Cunningham Technique” in *Dance Techniques 2010 – Tanzplan Deutschland* edited by Ingo Diehl and Frederike Lampert, (Leipzig: Henschel Verlag, 2011), 180. As for clarifications this doesn’t mean that the dancer wasn’t the author of his subjective experience, rather that he wasn’t the author of the choreographic movement material.

¹³ Brown, Carolyn, “Carolyn Brown”, in *Merce Cunningham*, ed. James Klosty, (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1975), 19-31. “The official Cage-Cunningham dogma requires the autonomy and freedom of each theatrical element—movement, light, sound, decor. And so the dancers, the only ones who are neither autonomous nor free, must responsibly do their work, continually at the mercy of those whose flights of fancy with gloom and glare, noise, and obstacle can inhibit their ability to dance well,” 28.

¹⁴ As discussed in *The Dancer as Agent* conference (DOCH Stockholm, November 2013), http://oralsite.be/pages/The_Dancer_As_Agent_Collection (accessed 04.07.2015).

¹⁵ Miryam Van Imschoot, “Lettres sur la collaboration”, manuscript, in forthcoming publication of Centre Nationale de Danse, Paris, 2004. Cited in Bojana Cvejic, “Collectivity? You mean collaboration”, http://republicart.net/disc/aap/cvejic01_en.htm (accessed 04.07.2015)

form of worker society cohesion following on from the 19th and 20th centuries.¹⁶ Group work, collaborations, collectives, teamwork, network structures with supposedly democratic intentions and horizontal flows of communication too often still fall into what Schneider calls the subjugation of workers “to an omnipresent and individualized control regime.”¹⁷ In contemporary dance this often masks itself as a “democratic variation of the artist as genius,”¹⁸ making questionable the position of heterogeneity and diversity often claimed by Bojana Kunst.

Already in the curriculum of contemporary dance education, paradoxes and challenges around the term ‘individual’ emerge. One might think of the demands for the capacity of adaptation, flexibility but also subordination that certain companies and institutions request. However also considering the value of the ability to critic and the potential of developing a voice that differs from current tendencies. How are we to understand dancers that “should be able to be transparent, to be completely empty” so as to adapt to the overwhelming diversity of styles, aesthetics, forms of working together?¹⁹ How is it possible to maintain an ability for self differentiation and an ability to define an oscillation between doing and observing?²⁰

Rather than teaching young artists the skills of adaptation and flexibility within the prevalent tendencies in today’s arts market, potential lies in how they might invent their own and by doing so change their future that they will be part of. Considering ideological paradoxes between homogeneity and over glorification of the individual, one question seems relevant: What is this supposedly common meaning of the so overestimated term ‘individual’?

¹⁶ Bojana Kunst, *How to do Things by Theory: (((sharing)))* a platform for performing theoretical activism, “*Prognosis on Collaboration*”, <http://howtodothingsbytheory.info/2010/05/13/bojana-kunst-prognosis-on-collaboration> (accessed 27.06.2015).

¹⁷ Florian Schneider: *Collaboration*, <http://summit.kein.org/node/190> (accessed 1.07.2015).

¹⁸ Marion Von Osten, “Unberechenbare Ausgänge”, in *Kritik der Kreativität* edited by Gerald Raunig/Ulf Wuggenig, (Wien: Turia & Kant 2007), 107.

¹⁹ Meg Stuart in *Are we here yet?* edited by Jeroen Peeters (Dijon: Les presses du reel, 2010), 29.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 29. Meg Stuart describes „I see performers doing a lot, caught up in the material and forgetting to ask why.“ The position of fluctuation between doing and observing is further discussed later, however needs further research in education.

1.2 Problems of terminology

This Sub Chapter lays out problems and paradoxes in using 'individual' as a terminology. As a way of unpacking the notion of autonomy in the choreographic process, the term 'subject' is considered for unmasking power relations²¹ implicit in formation of the dancer's body. References to post structuralist theories of Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze aim to establish a theoretical underpinning for considering possible creative subject formations beyond binary oppositions; between autonomy and connectedness,²² individual and group, subject and object.

As defined by the Oxford Dictionary, the individual is "a human being as distinct from a group", as "separate and single."²³ Celebrating the individual as an autonomous agent for change has characterized much of Western thinking since Enlightenment, as the transcendental subject of Kant.²⁴ From a philosophical perspective, Merleau Ponty had already blurred the binary oppositions between subject and object by placing the body and its sensations in conversation with reason and thought.²⁵

Post structuralism challenges the self referential, autonomous and sovereign modern subject, favoring instead a subject situated in and, thereby, constructed by the socio-historical, discursive and linguistic context in which it is located. When it comes to the term 'subject', Foucault reveals the double meaning of the word: "There are two meanings of the word 'subject': subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his/her own identity by a conscience of self-knowledge; both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to."²⁶

²¹ Michael Foucault, „Discipline“ in *Discipline and Punish: The birth of the prison* (Paris: Edition Gallimard, 1975), 202. Foucault defines the principles of power as „in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gaze“.

²² Jeroen Peeters, Imagination, "Experience and Meaning as Quality of Life". In *The Ethics of Art: Ecological Turns in the Performing Arts*, edited by Guy Cools and Pascal Gielen (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2014), 101. Here he describes the approach of "autonomy in connectedness" relating it to the artistic freedom and autonomy to create their own conditions, without falling into the extreme opposite of creating a void around the artist.

²³ Oxford Dictionary, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/individual> (last accessed 27.06.2015).

²⁴ Amy Allen, *The Politics of Ourselves: Power, Autonomy and Gender in Contemporary Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p.29. Immanuel Kant claims that: „What man as a free agent makes, or can and should make of himself“.

²⁵ Merleau Ponty, „The Philosopher and His Shadow“, in *Signs*, trans. R. McCleary (Evanston, Ill:Northwestern University Press, 1964), 164. Here he claims that „the distinction between subject and object is blurred in my body“.

²⁶ Michael Foucault, The subject and power in *Critical Inquiry* Vol.8 Nr.4 (Chicago: University of Chicago

The subject for Foucault results as an effect of power relations²⁷ acting upon him. Questions about concepts such as agency, autonomy,²⁸ self-reflexivity and so the ability of self-differentiation emerge: How are we to think of subjectivity as a relational field, able to respond and adapt, whilst encouraging heterogeneity and self-differentiation?²⁹

Coming back to philosophical theories, relating to the Greek concept of subject formation, the image of folding sets up for Deleuze modes of thinking about subjectivity that resist the two present forms of subjection.³⁰ The concept of folding in this sense enables both conceptualizing and physically experiencing³¹ self-differentiation without losing the connection to the exterior:

It is as if the relations of the outside folded back to create a doubling, allow a relation to oneself to emerge, and constitute an inside which is hollowed out and develops its own unique dimension: 'enkrateia', the relation to oneself that is self-mastery, 'is a power that one brought to bear on oneself'.³²

Press, 1982), 781.

²⁷ Michael Foucault, „Discipline“ in *Discipline and Punish: The birth of the prison* (Paris: Edition Gallimard, 1975), 202. Here he defines the principles of power as „in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gaze“. Acknowledging the diverse readings and interpretations on his writings.

²⁸ Amy Allen, *The Politics of Ourselves: Power, Autonomy and Gender in Contemporary Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p.83. Judith Butler brings Foucault further, describing a subject that forms through its power relations: “a subject appears to have agency but is not completely autonomous, being necessarily part of the world in which it finds itself [...] one inhabits the figure of autonomy only by becoming subjected to a power, a subjection that implies a radical dependency”

²⁹ Notes on agency and autonomy:

Workshop with Brazilian choreographer Marcelo Evelin, held at Hochschule für Musik und darstellende Kunst, Frankfurt am Main, 30th January 2015. He practices methods of improvisation that physically investigate autonomy whilst generating intense connectivity within a group environment; ie. “hole and empty body”, a body that has no borders, emphasizing a “flexible body”, a body “that gives up autonomy”, a body that “receives also when it has nothing to do with what you are looking for”, a body that “through its senses is hunting”, a body that takes “any chance to be penetrated”, “a body that has no inside or outside”.

Workshop with Brussels based performer, educator Chrysa Parkinson, held at FrankfurtLAB, Frankfurt am Main, as Master in Contemporary Dance Education and Hollins University-International Residency, held in Frankfurt am Main, July 2014. Here she challenges the distinction between “being the subject of your experience and being subjected to it”, becoming so the “subject of the story not the subject of the kind”.

Further readings: Anna Petronella Foulter and Cecilia Roos, *Material of movement in Thought: Reflection on the dancer's Practice and Corporality* (Stockholm, Firework Edition: 2013), that the author of this thesis has kindly received at a later stage of the research by Cecilia Roos.

³⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Folding and the Inside of Thought (Subjectivation) in Foucault* (first published in France: Les editions de minuits, 1986), 36. Foucault analyses how power relations, the outside form and constitute the subject, the inside what he refers to as “assujettissement” (subjectivation). In relation to Deleuze's readings upon Foucault the fold of subjectivation in and of itself produces a kind of inner space of freedom or autonomy within the subject.

³¹ Referring to the author's experience of participating in the warm up practice during the rehearsals visit of the third study case of this thesis: *Collective Jumps* by Isabelle Schad. (held in Hamburg K2, in June 2015).

³² Gilles Deleuze, *Folding and the Inside of Thought (Subjectivation) in Foucault* (first published in France: Les editions de minuits, 1986), 36.

Here, within the fold, one could speculate that the dancer can become “the author of one's own subjectivity.”³³ Addressing the self, developing self-awareness translates into a practice of one's own freedom.³⁴ Here self creation and decision-making processes are enabled as one navigates one's abilities to capture external forces, and define and filter the possibilities for unforeseen and emerging subjectivities.

Considering the individual rather as an after effect of the process of individuation as Deleuze and Guattari suggest in their book *Anti Oedipus*, this study takes the process of performing in group choreographies as a starting point. Investigating the relation between language and the subjective experience of sensations and perceptions, the study recognizes the potentials of giving voice to the dancing body by interrogating the terms ‘individual’ and ‘subject’.³⁵ In what ways are terminologies used for describing the singular body, adapted in Western contemporary dance group choreography? To what extent can usages of linguistic terms be related to the sentient experiences of the performers? How does terminology differ between choreographer and dancer? And how does this reflect from an audience's perspective?

³³ Hana Erdman, sourced from the Interview with Hana Erdman by the author, Berlin, 10th Mai, 2015. Appendix IV.

³⁴ Gilles Deleuze, “Folding and the Inside of Thought (Subjectivation)” in *Foucault* (first published in France: Les editions de minuits, 1986), 36. Here a reference to Foucault's notion of the Care of the Self can be drawn. For Foucault this is directly linked to the notion of self mastery, where the practice of self-mastery is then to be involved in the production of a subjectivity that can turn away from received values or transcendent orders. The Care of the Self becomes also a place of self-reflection, critique and eventually autonomy.

³⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Althone Press, 1984).

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CHAPTER 4

Collective Jumps, Isabelle Schad

This section unfolds definitions and further findings revealed through observations and analysis of the choreographer's and dancers' perspectives and brings them in dialogue with each other. Perspectives on the visual experience of the performance are also considered and drawn together with the other observations in an evaluation of the findings.

4.1 Choreographer's perspective

Isabelle Schad is a German choreographer based in Berlin. She has been exploring different possibilities of functioning within groups for over 10 years. The group piece *Collective Jumps* addresses the topics of collectivity, resistance and synchronicity/synchronization, investigating possible relationships between freedom and form.

4.1.1 Connectedness

Schad names the forms of togetherness staged in *Collective Jumps* as “collective body,” referring to it as “a group of people that become another body system or organ in which the existence and presence of each part is as important as the whole.” In each group “each person is part of the whole - of the collective body and work - and in the same time subject of her/his own movement experience.”³⁶ Schad describes her interest in providing a common ground, where “we are all the same and not so different from one another.”³⁷ She states that “the practice itself is what implies community and

³⁶ Isabelle Schad, “Who is speaking in performance?” in *The present Author* edited by Lilo Nein (Revolver Publishing, 2011).

³⁷ Unless otherwise stated, all extracts, citations and references attributed Isabelle Schad in Chapter 4 are sourced from the Interview with Isabelle Schad by the author, Berlin, Appendix IV.

togetherness,” and is based on the movement practice of Body-Mind Centering,³⁸ particularly embryology³⁹ and archaic principles of movement and energy taught in Eastern movement practices.⁴⁰ She refers to embryology as a study on relations where “each single cell has its own double membrane; one looking to the inside, the other looking to the outside.”⁴¹ Here she finds the origins for an interior/exterior dialectic, where “the comparison between forms of becoming and forms of organization in society becomes a consequence.”⁴²

Schad questions freedom and form by resisting both an individualistic approach where choreographically “everyone would do a solo,” but also synchronicity where dancers would follow the same time or rhythm.⁴³ Instead she differentiates synchronicity from “synchronization,” where dancers are sharing the same form while defining subjectivity in terms of rhythm.⁴⁴

4.1.2 Individual

When referring to the singular body within the group, Schad uses the term “subjectivity” to resist individualism. Before unfolding the meaning of the term “subjectivity,” she clarifies the distinction between “individualism” and “individual,” with the former referring to the neo-liberalism based on a competitive system where “everybody is looking for his or her own interests;” the latter looking to the personal, “the everyone's history, the everyone's story.” Adopting the term “subjectivity” allows her to value “the personal

³⁸ Body-Mind Centering is a somatic movement method developed by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen that addresses not only anatomical movement patterns but also socio-cultural circumstances and personal and biographical behavioural patterns. More can be found in: Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, *Sensing, Feeling and Acting: The experiential anatomy of Body Mind Centering*®, (Northampton: Contact Editions, 1993).

³⁹ Isabelle Schad, “Who is speaking in performance?” in *The present Author* edited by Lilo Nein (Revolver Publishing, 2011). Here she writes: “Embryology is a study of relationships within a process. In a continuous flow and in constant evolution, movement patterns repeat themselves in its variability and difference till cellular organizations become an organ.”

⁴⁰ Qi-Gong, Makko-Ho and Shiatsu specifically are all movement principles that open the meridians.

⁴¹ Isabelle Schad, „Embryology as Choreography“ as in *Dance (and) Theory* ed. Gabriele Brandstetter and Gabriele Klein (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2013), 278-282.

⁴² Isabelle Schad, “Who is speaking in performance?” in *The present Author* edited by Lilo Nein (Revolver Publishing, 2011).

⁴³ Isabelle Schad, Interview by Prof. Gabriele Wittman held in *Berlin*, in November 2014, <http://www.isabelle-schad.net> (access 06.07.2015). Direct quotes in German: “It doesn't mean that we are all on our own. This would be the individualism in the capitalist society [...] here we would be in a capitalistic competitive society. [...] The collective body is not functioning in synchronicity, instead in synchronization. This means everyone follows his/her own rhythm.” Eg. English translation by the researcher.

⁴⁴ Isabelle Schad, “Collective Jumps (Upon reading Hannah Arendt: On Revolution),” in *Collective Jumps Booklet* (HAU: Berlin, 2014), 13.

subjective experience” of each dancer. She highlights the importance of experience as “movement is not only something you philosophy about, movement has to travel through your own body, through your own experience.” Once the focus is on the subjective movement experience, the same choreographic movement material can be replicated between dancers “and still appear in your very personal way, as a person, as a subject,” exploring the freedom within the form. The apparent dualities between “being on your own, appearing in your personal way” and “being part of the larger organism” create an interweaving dynamic, allowing individuals to also take decisions as the larger whole, while having individual subjective experiences.

Further distinctions are converging, valuing the “existence and presence of each part” while introducing the concept of “disappearing.” A form of disappearing that doesn't manifest in “loosing yourself,” on the contrary “you can only disappear and make the movement disappear once you are fully there [...] once you are one with the step, one with the movement.” Metaphorically through this non-representational approach the person, the subject, the individual disappears once “the movement inscribes itself so much in the space that it doesn't bring up any other attention [...] nothing is disturbing anymore.”⁴⁵

The notion of autonomy draws Schad's attention to relations to one's own body, one's own training and physical understanding. “It is from this place that one can then develop an understanding of the bigger whole. Once the personal is established one can then transmit to others, finding the connection again.” She questions whether “Could the creation of an infinite, unified, monstrous body possibly become a site of resistance? Could the body itself become a site of resistance, the body of a dancer?”⁴⁶

4.2 Dancers' perspectives

Both dancers have been working with Isabelle Schad since 2014 and have been part of the creative process in collaboration with visual artist Laurent Goldring.

⁴⁶ Isabelle Schad, „Upon reading Hannah Arendt: On Revolution,“ in *Collective Jumps Booklet* (Berlin: HAU, 2014), 13.

4.2.1 Connectedness

During the interview with the dancers Hana Erdman and Claudia Tomasi both refer to the notion of “the cellular body,” relating to the Body-Mind Centering influences essential to Schad's movement and choreographic practice. Undoing dichotomous thinking between one and multiple, one can relate the body's materiality - as multiple equally distributed cells - to the group body where each individual is one cell. Hana Erdman asks “what if your body is just many cells? What if your body is a group body?”⁴⁷

Tomasi challenges the boundaries of the body as defined by the skin, instead describes the cellular body as “a body that doesn't end here, a body that extends in time and space and can include much more than just one's own.”⁴⁸ She dissolves the dichotomies between one and many by describing how “I am part of that group and I am a singular body, but when I move with the group I also become the group”, and considers she is “One and many at the same time”, which relates to Deleuzian's concept of multiplicity: “the One in the Many and the Many in the One.”⁴⁹ Tomasi refers to the training and the practice of “including in one's own perceptual field all the others.” Erdman explains how “in your corner of your eye you see something and you start to include that into your movement or someone is starting to move forward and that is a suggestion or a gesture to join.”

4.2.2 Individual

Hana Erdman questions the authorship of the dancer in the choreographic process, referring to “the dancer as author” by adopting the term ‘subjectivity’. Erdman questions the dancer's role as interpreter and by rethinking him/her as the author and subject, she brings “a certain honor and autonomy to the dancer.”

Claudia Tomasi describes the difference between the term ‘individual’ and ‘subject’ clarifies the individual as “the ego”, relating the term to comparative systems that strive towards a constant recognition of the self. Instead refers to the term subject “as the 'I

⁴⁷ Unless specified, all citations and references attributed to Hana Erdman in Ch. 4 are sourced from Interview with Hana Erdman by the author, Berlin, Mai 18, 2015, Appendix IV.

⁴⁸ Unless specified, all citations and references attributed to Claudia Tomasi in Ch. 4 are sourced from Interview with Claudia Tomasi by the author, Berlin, Mai 18, 2015, Appendix IV.

⁴⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Jonathan Strauss, "The Fold," *Yale French Studies*, 80 (1991), 240.

with his/her own features and traits". 'Individual' becomes "something I want to be, I want to achieve, being the best and so falling into comparison with other bodies." In contrast the term subject "refers to a way of being that includes togetherness."

During the creative process, the dancers physically shift positions between inside and outside, seeing from a supposed outside position and acknowledging the "whole image that is forming," as Hana Erdman describes. This experience then folds back in, to inform the subjective experience while dancing. Erdman explains the tensions between the visual and embodied experience, as a "constant back and forth between something that comes from a real embodied movement and something that is imposed visually." She further refers to the challenges of becoming aware of the somatic experience of the movement while at the same time seeing the whole image.

Erdman refers to *Collective Jumps* becomes a practice of subjectivity within a group and autonomy happens in relation to the awareness of the dancer's somatic experience. Tomasi relates to the word autonomy, "I share common goals but I am acting as Claudia. I am not trying to be another body; I would never copy somebody, or do the same movement as the others". Erdman describes, "in this piece there is not so much time to move as an individual".⁵⁰ She refers to a subtle margin of resistance that reveals "when for example the group is moving to the next material and eventually I think 'No, we haven't stayed here enough.'" In taking a decision to act differently she generates what she names as "a counter or focal point" in the choreography.

4.3 In conversation

As Isabelle Schad places priority on the subjects as agents of connection and during the rehearsals she suggests "it is about finding your own way, your own rhythm first, only then the connection to the others can emerge and a real group can form." During rehearsals of *Collective Jumps*, Schad proclaims "no, to accents and no, to unison", instead suggesting the dancers find their individual constant and fluid rhythm within the

⁵⁰ Hana Erdman broadens the scope of her thoughts on *Collective Jumps* by juxtaposing this experience to her performance in the piece *Turbulence* from Keith Hennessey, Appendix IV.

shared form so that a “polyphonic rhythm made out of many” can appear.⁵¹ She describes “practicing subjectivity within a group [...] as a utopian form of being together” and defines this as synchronization. This requires the dancers to avoid assuming a substantial unison which might appear to fall into totalitarian approaches where “everybody is sharing the same movement and the same rhythm.” Rather, self-differentiation is required to allow the polyrhythmic body to form.

Hana Erdman relates the subjective experience to her own subtle physical alterations and transformations she experiences through the repetition of movement. She questions “how much do I take care of the individual and how much am I part of the group?” and describes the process of performing as a “saying yes to the group.” However she describes a place for resistance that generates “a counter or focal point;” for example in spatial formations where “two people stay back while the rest [are] moving forward” or when she decides to disagree to the group and proposes to stay for a longer time in a certain pattern of movement.⁵²

Within that margin of resistance and variation Erdman mentions “the care of the self.” Here, she defines a space to find ways of repeating the movement by caring about her body, by defining parameters that feel comfortable to her own body. It is here that, practicing self care within the group, she becomes the author of her own experience, defining variations and self-differentiations that when folded back to the group, will influence the whole. Erdman continues this theme: “The body informs itself of what came before and surrenders to its developing affectations, which simultaneously are absorbed by others.”

4.4 Audience’s perspective

Enabling a third perspective to enter the conversation, the study questions the above discussed insights by watching the piece and visiting the rehearsal process and here considers them in the light of theoretical concepts constructed in *The Fold* from Deleuze.

⁵¹ Isabelle Schad, rehearsals of *Collective Jumps* at Kampnagel 2, Hamburg, 2nd June 2015.

⁵² See DVD extract *Collective Jumps*, min. 0:51-1:10.

In *Collective Jumps* bodies come together, form collective polyrhythmic bodies in a machine like apparatus. A sense of sameness between bodies develops through their unified costumes and the first formation where two closed circles challenge their outer surfaces by risking a collision in their driving and spinning force. The singular subject no longer seems to be the central driving force; something bigger is forming and driving the collective force.

Then harmonic, round, continuous and almost meditative movement qualities develop into a circularity and curvilinear motions of bodies in space. What at first seem a practice of consensus as by sharing the same forms; however gradually reveal its tensions, angularities and differences and heterogeneity between parts.⁵³ Dancers are stepping forward into a leap becoming visible, temporarily appearing from the mass of bodies to then disappear again. Forearms are closing the front space of the body as a protection from the outside while taking a leap forwards, decisively taking a direction, physically initiating, entering a spatial gap or resisting the group by contrasting its tendencies, eventually staying longer in one rhythm.

Claudia Tomasi refers to “movement” as defining and motivating action, rather than predefining a rational or conscious decision from where to act.⁵⁴ One might define this as a “kinesthetic agency,” instead of an ideological or conceptual one. The dancer becomes aware of ways in which movements become habitual through their repetition, realizes particular styles and tendencies that are developing and assesses their inner experience. At the same time they look outwards, observe diversity and integrate experiences from the outside. From this point, movement can be assessed, changed, adapted and the possibility of disagreement arises.

Of extreme importance in the practice of Isabelle Schad’s work is to enable awareness of how one’s movement expands not only in one’s kinesthetic experience but also in

⁵³ Jacque Ranciere, “Contemporary Art and the Politics of Aesthetics” in *Communities of Sense: Rethinking Aesthetics and Politics* edited by Beth Hinderliter (USA: Duke University Press, 2009), 31-40. On 'consensus': "Consensus [...] means that the givens of any collective situation are objectified in such a way that they can no longer lend themselves to a dispute, to the polemical framing of a controversial world within the given world."

⁵⁴ Claudia Tomasi sourced from the Interview with Claudia Tomasi by the author, Berlin, Mai 18, 2015, Appendix IV.

visually attuned kinetic experiences of others dancers in the context of performance. Attentiveness to kinesthetic modalities of awareness can enhance social awareness as the movement dynamics of individuals resonate in the kinetically sensitive eyes of others.⁵⁵ What does this imply for the spectator? In which way does the spectator folds back in the experience of subjectivity and self-differentiation?

Challenging common modes of participation and meaning-making, as well as linguistic descriptions, involves a reading of qualities of the movement of the dancers. This results as a fine-grained awareness in participating in the event of performance that pushes representative modes. Further experiences of the performance event can be unfolded by describing movement qualities and spatial relations through terminologies found in *The Fold* from Deleuze, a kinesthetic understanding of the kinetically visible; a continuous oscillation, a lateral motion of the pelvis rocking, an effortless swing in the arms, all without accents. Opening and closing spaces between bodies while creating cavernous forms and then define intimate, closed spaces. Folds that shortly after open up again to reconfigure the whole. Limbs folding and unfolding, bodies like membranes wrapping their frontal space, closing, creating an inside, a porous and spongy cavernous text.⁵⁶ The dancers observe the movement forming, seeing their own body parts, and those of their neighbors, simply observing. Arms and elbows are intertwined, extending in space and overlapping, intermingling with other bodies, forming a chain reaction. Here the dancer moves beyond binary separations between self and other, subject and object, and hierarchical divisions between body parts.⁵⁷

The political body that Schad and dancers refer to manifests not as a politics represented choreographically, but as politics forming in the making of structure. This is a politics where difference is negotiated in a very thin line of adjustments and resistances to the predetermined and given form. Changing and shifting the parameters from one's own perspective, in an almost invisible and unperceivable way, however causing an effect on the whole that becomes visible over time. How is this reflected on a wider structure of the company?

⁵⁵Maxine Sheet-Johnstone, "Kinesthetic experience: understanding movement inside and out" in *Body, Movement and Dance in Psychotherapy* Vol. 5 No.2, August 2010, 111-127.

⁵⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Jonathan Strauss, "The Fold," *Yale French Studies*, 80 (1991), 240.

⁵⁷ See DVD, extract *Collective Jumps*, min. 1:14-1:36.

4.5 Summary

The practices used and developed in the creative process of *Collective Jumps* suggest cultivating resistance to individualistic approaches, where physical experiences and sensations are valued more than ideological or conceptual predefined ideas from where to act. As a way of resisting individualistic approaches the term individuality is replaced by the term subjectivity. Binary oppositions between inside and outside, between individual and group and subject and object coexist in a third space, defined by The Fold.

By folding the outside into the interior, the individual dancer produces a relation to oneself from where an autonomy and differentiation process becomes possible through repetition and difference. Allowing so for a third space to form in the double dialogue between inside and outside. Drawing attention to this space of negotiation between inside and outside, the individual shifts their awareness between recognizing their exterior circumstances, and deciding whether to include them in one's experience or resist against them and again allowing this to form the outside.

The dancer's agency arises through kinaesthetic experiences and can arguably be seen to potentially lead to a broader awareness on ethico-ecological levels. From an outside perspective the margins of autonomy are visible in the practice of slightly challenging the form, as in a thin sheet of resistance through choreographic adaptations in terms of rhythm, space, range of movement, allows for a form of disagreement to mobilize. This disagreement is the place for autonomy, where unforeseen forms of subjectivity can arise. As visual artist Laurent Goldring claims: "it is more difficult to not repeat than to repeat."⁵⁸

The practice of *Collective Jumps* could be described as drawing attention to singular and local variations within repetition to challenge the possibilities of the form in order to gradually shift to a diverse pattern. How, for example might the work of Isabelle Schad and her dancers, challenge paradigms of modes of production present in Western

⁵⁸ Laurent Goldring, Artists' Talk after the performance of *Collective Jumps*, held at Theatre Hebbel Am Ufer, Berlin 9th May, Appendix IV.

neoliberal systems?⁵⁹

⁵⁹ The author recognizes potentials in further investigating the question, however this exceeds the temporal framing of this study. The practice proposed by Isabelle Schad however is integrated in the production modes present in Western neoliberal society as show the re-enactments of the piece in productions in several countries, that suits the dominant productions. The research on possible ways of transferring the resistances raising in choreography to a production format that reflects the content, results as an important field of study for a concentrated analysis, that exceeds the time frame of this thesis.