The following text was presented in the symposium "Nature and Identity", arranged by the Finnmark University College in Alta/Norge in September 2001. It will be published in a collected volume, edited by Kirsti Pedersen. (Revised 20.8.2003).

The labyrinth of the city –
Fractal movement and identity

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We enter the labyrinth by the entrance. There is only one way to enter. We follow the path towards the centre, swinging to the right, swinging to the left, rhythmically. There is only one way. Maybe we have expected situations of choice, whether to turn to the right or to the left – where to continue? But there is not any choice, there are no blind alleys. Nevertheless, we may become irritated. While we want to move inwards, the way seems to lead outwards. We fail to control your situation, there is no survey – where am I? Because of the lack of visual control, the track may appear as narrow. A shadow of claustrophobia lays down over us – we are in-between, we are not free.

Finally, we seem to reach the middle of the labyrinth, but the track passes by and seems to lead in another direction again. Maybe we have made a mistake? But there is no chance to make mistakes. Suddenly however, we find ourselves in the centre. What to do now? In the middle of the labyrinth, there is nothing. The only thing to do, is to turn and to walk out again. Now we know by bodily experience that the way is possible. But we have not “conquered” the space. We are still lacking the visual control, also now after all. From
outside the labyrinth, we look back. Happy to be out and free again? Feeling a desire to return and search for the secret once more?

There has happened something in the labyrinth, indeed. But what did we find? Maybe, we should repeat the way…and go it once more…and again…and again…

Figure 1: The ancient labyrinth of Visby on Gotland (Kern 1982: 405).

When one discusses nature and culture, the labyrinth is provocative. It looks like a “natural” pattern, reminding of the finger-print, the interlacing intestines or the brain. But it reminds of these natural, biological forms only superficially – in fact, the labyrinth is culturally created. It is an artificial construction, made by human beings for human beings. What does the labyrinth tell about the complex, asymmetrical relation between nature and culture?

The first question, which is normally raised when facing the labyrinth, is: What is the meaning of this pattern? What was the original meaning of the labyrinth? A rapidly growing body of literature has developed around this question of symbolism, based on extensive work of collection (Saward 1981 ff, Thordrup 2002). Literature is spanning from specialized research (Kern 1981) – with, however, extremely different interpretations – over speculative literature with new-spiritual undertones (Lonegren 1991, Attali 1996) – to the approach of the artist (Seifried 2002). In research, we find the concrete historical-archeological study of “stones” (Castleden 1990) side by side with theoretical reflections about the aesthetics of the ornament (Raulet/Schmidt 2000). Neither the symbolic meaning of the labyrinth nor its ancient roots will, however, be in the centre of the following reflections. The labyrinth is also part of the modern world, and it is in this context that the labyrinth raises questions of actual practice – of movement and identity, gender and fear.

1. Cultural clash as resource
A paradox may puzzle us when approaching the analysis of movement culture. Modern sport came from the city. Sportization and urbanization were historically connected processes – and yet, we know very little about the specific urbanity of modern movement culture. It was only during the very last years that research has begun to ask about this connection in a more theoretical way (Bale 1993, Eichberg 1999, Funke 2001).

How to approach movement in landscape?
Too often one has overlooked that sport does not develop in an abstract homogenous space, but in social-bodily landscapes, each of them producing their particular patterns of movement. These landscapes are the scenes where cultural clashes may happen. In Denmark thus, the folkelig (popular) sport, as it developed in the country-side and historically grew out of the farmers’ gymnastic movement of the nineteenth century, clashed with the sport of record, result and Olympic competition, which developed at the same time on the base of urban bourgeois culture.

The paradox of land vs. city may remind us of the gender paradox and the strange lateness of attention to the manliness of sport. Though classical modern sport was produced by men, the specific masculinity of sport has rarely been treated, except by some pedagogical flourishes about “the masculine values of sport”, often with militaristic undertones. Instead, the discourse of sport constructed an abstract individual as a genderless human being – which of course was the sports’man”. It was not before the rise of feminist movements and with the awakening attention to the woman in sports in the seventies that the discourse of sport became aware of the male as a gendered being. The way of knowledge, thus, was a way of conflict. This does not mean that we after all know sufficiently about the body-cultural manliness of sport. Theses about the sport as an expression of male fear under the impact of modern role transformations are competing with other theses describing sport
as an attempt to build a world of male homosexual togetherness... Anyway, the knowledge about “the man” followed after the knowledge of “the woman” in sport, though the historical process of hegemony was inverse.

The land-city problem confronts us with a question of method. In which way can we approach the structural urbanity of sport and movement culture? Which types of analytical instruments do we have to our disposition? First of all, classical scientist methods will normally be applied, as for instance the mapping of the spaces of sports and the questioning of the population.

When trying to map movement culture in the city, one finds areas of dwelling side by side with those for manufactories and those of trade and business – corridors of traffic are connecting these separated functional zones – and finally there are the areas of leisure and sport. However, mapping confronts with some specific problems of qualitative differentiation. For instance, space in the town is scarce and expensive, and this is especially true for the centre of the city, for the down-town of the metropolis. How are movement and estate prices related to each other? Mapping becomes more complicated. And furthermore, sport activity as movement enters into a urban frame-work. The city is a movement landscape in itself. This dimension is still more difficult to map and demands a broader view.

Another classical method is to question the population. Do you do sports – yes/no – if yes, which sport? Indeed, the questionnaire reveals some characteristic unbalances between land and city on the organizational level. In Denmark, analyses have shown a significant differentiation of the cultural geography of sports. In the country-side and in the provincial towns, the associational sport without competition has its main area. In the suburbs, the competitive sport is dominating. And the central areas of the large city are the space of the unorganised sport (Larsen 2000).

By this unequal distribution, two usual stereotypes are contradicted. On one hand, the assumption that “modernization” followed a general diffusion from urban to rural areas, is problematical. Actually, the proportion of associational sport, which is characteristic of classical modernity, is decreasing in the metropolis. It seems that those social classes, who are bearers of associational sport, tend to leave the town, and this may be contributing to the change of pattern. Anyway, the assumption of modernity as only one modernity – in singular – is no longer convincing. It seems more appropriate to talk of a cultural clash. On the other hand, the assumption about the actual levelling of the descent between city and land becomes problematical, too. Under the aspect of sport activity as measured by questionnaire, the areas are rather drifting apart. And furthermore there are some reasons to be sceptical against the dualism of city vs. land in general. We have to take a larger variety of life forms into account.

By the usual methods of classical mapping or questioning, the patterns of movement are mostly reduced to sport disciplines, as these are organized and standardized in the world of institutional or media sport. The complex processes of urban movement are thus crystallized into the abstract schemes of: soccer, swimming, badminton etc. The particular structural urbanity of movement can rarely be caught by this approach.

It is at this point that non-classical forms of knowledge gain significance. In psychology, introspection means that the researcher takes himself or herself as source of knowledge. This has been attempted by the “analysis of experience” in the tradition of psychoanalysis (Nagbøl 1993, 1994), by the “review of display” or “staging” (Dietrich/Landau 1990) and – in dialogical forms – by body anthropology as a experimental way of comparative research (Eichberg/Hansen 1996). Especially when one is aware of cultural and linguistic differences, the attention is directed towards the poetical construction of pictures, of imaginations. Linguistic categories play together with living pictures. A non-metaphorical discourse is not possible. “The city” is peopled by mythical figures and connotations, just like “the sport” or “the movement”. Language enters the scene as active participant in the game of construction of knowledge. Knowledge is poetical creation.

Last but not least – and this is shown by the mentioned paradoxes, too – the
cultural clash is a source of knowledge. By conflict, contrast and contradiction, new understanding is created. When the peasant or the nomad enters the town, the chance of awareness becomes greater than if the town dweller moves inside his self-understanding normality.

**Images of urbanity**

When approaching the city with the attention to contradictions in mind, we meet for instance the velocity of urban movement as contrasted with slowness. This impression was already articulated in Early Modern Europe, when people entered for instance Paris. The high speed in the city was experienced on the background of the slowness of rural life. In the wooden shoes, the farmer would not find it easy to run a race.

Another impression was related to rhythm. The linear rhythm of the city has again and again been contrasted with the cyclical movement in rural culture (Thomsen 1999). An epistemological problem may, however, be seen in the dual – all too dualistic – construction of this contrast.

The picture becomes more complex when attention is directed towards what the late nineteenth century called the nervousness or neurasthenia of urban life, and what we nowadays call stress (Radkau 1998, Zerlang 1999). Sport has often been regarded as a reaction against the “nervous” urban life, whether by medical doctors and hygienists, by socialists from the workers’ sport movement or by cultural critics. However, sport can also be understood as the inverse, as being itself an expression of just this stressing urban time pattern. Citius, altius, fortius – translated to: Quicker, quicker, quicker…

On the level of spatial configurations, the city can be described as a parcellation or islandization of the life world. This has been theorized by the classical functionalism, which proposed a division of the town according to certain defined “functions” – dwelling, work, trade, traffic, leisure. The functionalist idea of Le Corbusier and the Charter of Athens from the 1930s is – in spite of all criticism – still dominating large areas of urbanism. Consequently, the city is defined as “Standortgemeinschaft der Funktionen”, as a “territorial combination of functions”. Each “function” – what ever this may be – produces its own parcel which is connected with other parcels by processes of mobility (Jütting/Lichtenauer 1994, 6; see also the system theory of Niklas Luhmann). In a more critical perspective, the movement culture of the city appears as a multiplicity of highly different movement cultural “scenes” (Dietrich 1999). Indeed, the metropolis reveals itself as an archipelago of networks, places and milieus, some interacting with each other, others non-connected – a world of islands and channels.

This picture corresponds to some approaches from the critical ecology of childhood and youth. The young human being moves from the primary world of family out into, on one hand, the world of institutions as they are organized by the public sector – kindergartens, schools etc. On the other hand, the way leads by choices – among these the choice between different offers of sport – into the segments of consumption of the capitalist market. Participative research has shown as early as in the 1930s (Muchow 1935), with which energy the young generation appropriates the archipelago of commercial offers and institutions to its own needs again and again in a new and sometimes subversive way. Social analysis can describe this as a configuration of tensions between the spheres and logics of the state (or public sphere), the market and the civil society (Eichberg 2002).

In whatever picture one has tried to describe the urban life, research has so far been hampered by a characteristic limitation. The phenomenon of the city was analysed either as a form of settlement or – and this is the more recent perspective – as a social structure. These two approaches describe, indeed, important aspects of urban life. However, they are not sufficient. Movement is a third perspective, which cannot be reduced to the others. Classical urban sociology has its roots in the work of the reporter moving as a flaneur through urban knowledge (Lindner 1990). The city as movement landscape – in which
categories can this be described?

2. The labyrinth as historical-poetical figure

If we are talking about the city in a lax way, we will often call the urban world a “jungle”, a “desert of stone” or a “labyrinth”. The metaphorical commonplaces hint towards movement patterns. Through the lanes and streets, we search our way as through the labyrinth. Where am I? Where to go next? Where did I come from? We may loose orientation – like in the desert, in the jungle, in the labyrinth. The view is barred – but movement is possible.

The metaphorical picture of the city as labyrinth, which we shall follow here, has been established in literature since at least 200 years. It is more than an airy linguistic symbol. As a historical-poetical picture it has its roots in movement culture (Kern 1981, Eichberg 1989b, 2000a). Where does the labyrinth come from? Normally, one refers to the classical Greek myth, and though this will turn out to be problematical, we can start by this story.

The classical legend

In Knos-sos on Crete, this is what the Greek myth is telling, King Minos ordered to build the la-byrinth as a prison for Mino-tauros. This monster whom Minos’ wife Pasiphaë had born from her love with a bull, should be hidden from the eyes of the world. Nobody could find the way into the labyrinth or out again. The labyrinth was invented by the brilliant smith and engineer Daidalos. Daida­los fell, however, in disgrace and was imprisoned in the labyrinth himself, but he was libera­ted by Pasiphaë and fled from Crete with the help of artifi­cial wings.

Each nine years, the terrible Minotauros received seven virgins and seven lads sacrificed in the la­byrinth. That is what the hero Theseus decided to finish. He got help from Minos’ daugh-ter Ariadne who fell in love with him and gave him a magic thread which could mark the way back through the la­byrinth. Theseus entered the labyrinth, fought against the bull monster – whether with a sword, with a club or by wrest-ling, is not clear – and killed the Minotauros. Then he fled from Crete, but left Ariad-ne behind on the island of Naxos, thus breaking his original promise.

From Naxos, Theseus sailed to Delos where an athletic festivity was held at his honour. Theseus had brought with him the labyrinthine dance geranos, crane dance, which was accom­panied by harp music. He had learned it in Knossos from Ariad-ne who owned a dance ground of white marble with a labyrinthi­ne pavement, also constructed by Daidalos. In Delos, Theseus danced the crane dance together with his com­rades around an altar of Apollo (or Aphrodite), and this was for first time that men and women danced together. The people of Delos conti­nued to dance the crane dance, and it spread over many towns of Greece and Asia Minor (Ranke-Graves 1960 vol.1: 264-316, Castleden 1990: 7-17).

Homer mentioned this chorus in his Ilias (song 19, vers 590-605) as an illustration – evidently a labyrinthine ornament – on the shield of Achilles, which was forged by the god Hephaistos. Homer compared the dance pattern with the to-and-fro movement of a potter’s wheel.

The classical myth, thus, tells about human movement. Both the myth and the bodily movement of the labyrinth, however, contain contradictory elements and may lead to contradictory interpretations. On one hand, the labyrinth means maze, prison and fight – on the other hand it is a choreography of dance and turning swing. This contradiction contains an unbalance of gender: The maze story tells about men – Minos, Minotauros, Daidalos and Theseus – the dance labyrinth is about Ariadne. The king, the monster, the engineer and the hero are confronted with the maiden.

Anyway, basically and seen from a bodily, materialistic point of view, the labyrinth is a pattern of movement, of dance, quest and procession. As such it has been linked by architectural theory to the archaic encounter between the nomad and the city.
Movement in the city and labyrinthine procession – The Cretan case

One of the many contradictory interpretations of the labyrinth, which have been delivered by research, concerns the city, the town, the urban movement. “The labyrinthine” has its origin in a cultural clash, which took place around 1400 BC. At that time, agrarian or nomadic tribes of the Greek peninsula met for the first time the stone town Knossos as centre of the Minoan culture on Crete. The encounter produced feelings of horror and fascination among the newcomers. The town-less people did not only meet a new view, the “city in the eye”, they met a new type of movement as well. New patterns of moving around were forced upon the human beings by the urban structure. Or, seen the other way round, it were new patterns of movement which made the stones of houses rise to the new, entangling urban configuration, which became an innovation of epoch-making significance, changing the history of the human beings fundamentally (Pieper 1987 chap.1).

The city was not always there – people made the town by walking. This relation between movement and architecture is confirmed by the historical connections between town structure and procession. Processions played an important role for the historical genesis of the city. Medieval life was characterized by processions and pilgrimage, and whole towns were structured as series of stations for pilgrimage. From India, special procession towns are known, which are completely based on the principle of ritual circulation (Pieper 1987 chap.4).

The connection between town and procession is not only archaic. When the urban carnival in Denmark in the early 1980s temporarily occupied the centre of Copenhagen, the dancing groups and their processions formed labyrinthine patterns, swarming in different directions and hindering any survey. This contrasted to the form, which the carnival as a way of social control had established in other places and countries, imitating the military parade or adapting to the show of commercial advertisement.

Sacral procession and carnival are, however, only the festive highlights in urban life. Also in its everyday movement, urban life has labyrinthine features. The flaneur gads about – the tourist searches her or his way – people are going shopping – young people have a stroll – the urban vagabonds circulate – the joggers make their way.

One may be tempted to anthropologize the human nomadic mobility. And indeed, the human being can be described as basically being a wanderer (Chatwin 1988, see also Solnit 2000: 69-72). The human nomad is a useful counter-imagery to the stereotype of the “natural” development towards human sedentary life, towards the city and the state. Human history was not that uni-linear, indeed. However, the human-as-nomad thesis produces new problems of understanding, when taking the step from anthropological generalization towards the cultural details. In the concept of basic human nomadism, the labyrinth is a configuration of nomadic movement, which for instance describes the song-lines of the Australian Aborigines, whilst the pyramid is a contrasting picture of sedentary alienation. In contrast, the architectural interpretation of the Minoan myth reveals a contradiction between the prison labyrinth of the stone town Knossos on one hand and the movements of the nomads on the other. I.e., the labyrinth is placed on the other side of the contradiction between wandering movement and stone architecture.

Polis, thing and labyrinth

Also when seen from the Nordic point of view, the connection between the city and the labyrinth is not as simple, as the hypothesis of the stone town vs. the nomads suggests. In Northern Europe, the labyrinth has since ancient times its place in a non-urban landscape.

In some respect and at the first glimpse, the cultural clash between the Greek nomads and the Minoan town may, indeed, remind of the role of Rome in Nordic imagination. The imperial stone town became a myth in Nordic conscience, too, elaborated by the national romantic cultural criticism, as by N.F.S. Grundtvig, the Danish poet and priest. Also in the Nordic case, the feelings were oscillating between horror and fascination.
The Danish painter Asger Jorn (1964) developed on the base of Grundtvig and in the spirit of situationist anarchism the contradiction between (Nordic) thing and (Greek) polis, by sharply contrasting two different starting points for democracy. On one hand, the polis is the base for the bourgeois model of democracy. It resulted from a combination of fortification – in Danish borg and borger, in German Burg and Bürger, “castle” and “citizen” – with an hierarchical order of social classes and with slave economy. Thing, in contrast, was the self-administration of free farmers and their extended families. Village democracy contrasted “castle democracy”. This difference was not only relevant for pre-modern times. In the modern process of industrialization, the farmer became the joker between the urban bourgeois and the proletarian.

The contradiction between land and city in Northern Europe, thing and polis, does, however, not coincide with the contradiction between non-urban rural society and labyrinth culture. The labyrinth exists, indeed, in the Nordic cultures, but it is just not placed outside their non- or pre-urban popular tradition, and Rome is not “the labyrinth” for Nordic imagination.

The North of Europe is one of the classic labyrinth cultures of the world. Scandinavian labyrinths have been documented through one thousand years, since early Iron Age, being part of popular movement cultures in the Nordic countries. The so-called Troyborg castles of the North are classical labyrinths of the Cretan type. They consist of one single way forming a snail-like or spiral pattern, mostly marked as a stone circle on the ground. The concrete form may vary, but consists normally of seven or eleven circuits, giving together the impression of a kidney. More than 500 labyrinths of this type have been identified in Northern Europe, often placed at the coasts, in a belt from North Russia over Finland and the Scandinavian countries to Northern Germany and the British islands (Kern 1982: 391-415 with maps pp.396-98). Hither-to it has been impossible to date the Nordic stone sets, as they do not include either any artefacts, which could be sub-mitted to stylistic examination, nor wooden elements which would be approachable to C14 analysis. At some places, graves from the Bronze Age are found nearby, but the Scandinavian rock carvings of the Bronze Age do not show labyrinths. Some of the labyrinths were built in recent times, up to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

It is especially the labyrinth in the Saami (Lapp) regions of the Arctic North, which can help to problematize the relation between labyrinth and town. In the Saami area of the Norwegian Finnmark, at least eight labyrinths are preserved, dated back to the period of 1200-1700. Further labyrinths are found in the far North of Finland and on the Kola Peninsula and the White Sea area of Russia (Olsen 1996, Thordrup 2002: 50-53). Though details of their ritual use are unknown, the Saami labyrinths prove that the labyrinth grew out of a non-urbanized culture.

Troyborg, Trelleborg and “Maiden’s Dance” – The Nordic case

In Sweden, 300 labyrinthine stone sets have been found or historically documented, in Norway some more than 20, in Finland about 140, and in Iceland 3 or 4. In Estonia, Karelia, and northern parts of Russia, one could locate about 60 la-byrinth. In Northern Germany there have earlier existed 40 of them, but most of these have meanwhile disappeared. In Great Britain more than 100 labyrinths could be identified in a particular lawn form, dug into the turf without use of stones. They are often called Troy Town, City of Troy, Wall of Troy or in Welsh Caer Droia. In Denmark, all the archaic labyrinth settings have disappeared today, but wall paintings of the labyrinth in its classi-cal pagan form were preserved in four me-dieval churches.

Denmark possesses, however, a large number of farm and field names of the types Trojborg or Trel-leborg, which mean "labyrinth". From these names, one can hypothetically derive the earlier exist-ence of stone sets (Knudsen 1948). The name of Trojborg with its variants as Trøieborg, which is cor-respon-ding to Swedish Trojaborg or
Troveborg, can be found in at least 33 places. Its earliest documentation is from 1347 as Trovbodhe near Tøn-der. In Sweden the word was first used as Troyobodhe in 1307, which is Trojeborg today. Trelleborg with its variants Trelleborg, Treloborg, Drelburg and Thraelaborg is the name of at least 32 places in Denmark and the former Danish parts of south ern Sweden. It is first documented in 1251 as Thraeloeborg, which is today the town Träleborg near Malmø. The most famous Trelleborg is the Viking fortress near Slagel-se. With its geometrical, circle-cross formed ground-plan, it was built – probably on the base of an older settlement – in 980, and is known by its name Trelleborg since 1487 (Nørlund 1948). In Norway the name Thraelaborg dates back to 1161, for which year the Heimskringla, Snorri's "Book of Kings", names a place of this name close to a nunnery near Oslo. A Russian Threla-borg was documented in 1268 as Dhrelleborch in Novgorod. But the earli est record of this type of name is from France where the castle Traliburc was named in 1016 at the Charente; Norman warriors dwelt there from 844 to 865. Later on, the name of the place was transformed to Taillebourg (Knudsen 1948, 196-197).

Linguistically the names of the type Trelleborg are the oldest, dating back to about year 1000 or even to the tenth and ninth centuries. Trelle- can be related to English trail – track, path, to drag – and in German treiden or treilen – schle-pfen, ziehen, to tow. Trelle- is also in related to English to throw and to drill, to the Danish at dreje and the German drehen, to turn, to rotate, to twist, as well as to drillen and Drall, the spin or twist. All together, these words are leading back to an Indogerman root ter*. Trel-le- desc-ribes, thus, a certain trailing movement – either of drawing the la-byrinth (on the ground) or of mo-ving inside the labyrinthine choreography. In any case, it charac-teri-zes a bodily movement. The same is true for the name Troj-borg or Trotja-borg, appearing in Northern Europe three hundred years later. If it is related to the Etruscan trui-a, surviving in the Roman verb antruare or amptruare, its original meaning is to jump, to spring, to dance.

The common denominator of Trelle- (borg) and Troi- (borg) is, thus, the complex of Old European verbs drajan (Old German), thraian (Gothic), thrawn and throwen (Old and Middle English), troian (Celtic), truia- (Etruscan) and -truare (Latin) (Thordrup 2002: 7). They all describe bodily movements of turning or rotating.

Beside these two name traditions of Trelleborg and Troyborg, the labyrinth is also called “Maiden’s dance” – in Finland Jungfrudans – and this name seems to be of older age, too. By the element of dance, the "Maiden's dance" is related to Dandtze steen, “dance stone”, as a labyrinth was named in 1683 in Skeby parish (Den-mark). Similar dance-names are known from some labyrinths in Germany – Steintanz, Jekken dans, Adamstanz – and in Prague, where the Tantz-Boden der Ertz-Zauberin Libussa was named in the 18th century, the labyrinth as dancing ground of the arch-sorceress Libussa. By its female connotation, the “Maiden’s dance” labyrinth is connected with the "Dises' hall", which Snorri mentioned in his "Book of Kings" in connection with the death of the mythical king Adils, referring to a skald poem from the ninth century. Adils rode into the disarsalr in order to sacrifice for the deses who were female spirits or goddesses of the pre-Viking religion. But Adils’ horse stumbled and he broke his head on a stone of the labyrinth (Snorri 1922: 58-59). The British labyrinth Julian Bower or Gillian’s Bower and the Finnish Nunnatarha, "Nuns' Wall", had a similar gender bias, and the same is true for labyrinth names connected with the fairy Libussa, Queen Chri-stina and Fru Trolleborg. From Sweden, the labyrinth name Jungfru Mariadans is known. All this – both gender and movement – reminds of the geranos dancing place of Ariadne (also Duerr 1990: 142-174).
Labyrinthine play and game
Labyrinths of the same form as in the North were built in the Mediterranean area since Neolithic times, in Indian cultures – including Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Indonesia – as well as in some American Indian cultures in the Southwest of the United States, among Hopi and Pima. This distribution and especially the lack of labyrinth traditions in the ancient cultures of the Near East, in China and Japan, in Black African cultures and in most of the American Indian societies, show that the labyrinth is a cultural form, not natural. The labyrinth is not a universal biological pattern, but a creation in specific cultural contexts.

In all labyrinth cultures, the labyrinthine pattern was connected with movement games. Historical and ethnographical sources deliver a rich documentation of horse riding in the labyrinth, ball games, foot races as well as limping games and jumping. Labyrinth myths tell also about wrestling and other types of fight. Mainly however, the labyrinth was a choreography of dance, whether single dance or dance in chains. Labyrinthine chain dances have been practiced up to the twentieth century in the form of the snail dance in Basque country, the night dances fest noz in Brittany and the chain dances of the Færø islands. When young people used the labyrinthine stone sets or turf paths for flirt games – like in Sweden and Britain – an erotic adventure was involved. Children used the labyrinth for games of drawing, but probably the labyrinthine choreography was also the root of limping games in the spring time, like “Limping Snail” and “Heaven and Hell” (Vries 1957). In the labyrinth, one hears the laughter of children, and this element of laughter and carnivalism was further cultivated in the figure of the fool who played an important role for instance in the labyrinth rituals in Stolp in Pomerania during the eighteenth century. (More details: Eichberg 1989b).

Seen in a broader comparative view, and especially from the perspective of the non-urbanized North, thus, the labyrinth cannot be interpreted simply as a reflex of the stone town. The Nordic labyrinth was a movement pattern, indeed, but not derived from urban architecture, and not at all from the – imaginary – prison. A connection can rather be drawn into the opposite direction: from the labyrinth via the fortress to the town.

Trelleborg fortresses between ritual and urban settlement
The labyrinth name Trelleborg denotes in Denmark a certain type of circular fortresses from the Viking time – Trelleborg near Slagelse, Fyrkat near Hobro, Aggersborg at the Limfjord and Nonnebakken in Odense (Knudsen 1948). The castles of the Trelleborg type were constructed on the base of an exact circular rampart with four gates and a cross-like way inside, the quarters filled with longhouses in a strictly geometric manner. They had probably their origin in labyrinthine dance places and became sacral places where people met to ritual festivities between 980 and 1000. Though giving room for some hundreds of people, they never became real towns of permanent dwelling, because the Christianisation of Denmark around the year 1000 withdraw their fundament, and they were burnt down.

Modern archaeologists have tried to construct military interpretations about the Trelleborg fortresses as being barracks and strongholds of royal power in Denmark (Nørlund 1948, Olsen/Schmidt 1977, Roedsdahl 1977 and 1994, Andersen 1990). This dominates also the official and tourist presentations. However, this interpretation lacks direct evidence. At closer examination, the ascription of the “military function” remains highly speculative, and relevant objections can be raised (Cohen 1965, Christensen 1988, Nancke-Krogh 1992: 120-123).

Circular fortifications for military purposes appeared in history not before early modernity, i.e. half a thousand years later, and at that time devised in the spirit of Renaissance geometry. Whilst military logic and infrastructure was continually developed
parallel with the completion of royal power in Denmark around year 1000, the Trelleborg castles disappeared. That is why they cannot be explained as primarily military fortresses. Also the archaeological findings tend to contradict the military hypothesis; in Fyrkat one found few weapons, many female clothes, luxury things, and no Christian symbols. Moreover, whilst written sources tell something about the political and military achievements of the contemporary king Harald Blåtand (950-985) and his conversion to Christianity in 960, there does not exist any written source about the four Trelleborg fortresses. That is why the connection of the labyrinth-named fortresses with the royal power remains dubious. It seems rather to be one of the twentieth century’s typical retro-projections of “military” and “political functions” into past times, whose social practices were too difficult to understand for modern thinking.

It is more convincing to understand the Trelleborg fortresses in connection with some older fortresses in North Frisland – Archsumburg and Tinnumburg on Sylt and Trælbanken or Trælborg in North Slesvig. These ring walls were circular or oval, and are dated to the first century AD. Recent archaeological research has with some certainty excluded a fortificatory purpose for them and concluded their character as ritual places, inhabited only for some decades provisionally for offering and other cultic purposes. They can be understood in the light of what an early historian from the 15th century said about the local people of this region: “In old times, there were pagan people living here who had so strange beliefs that one cannot tell enough about it” (Harck 1987: 258-259). The fact that the ring walls so often bear labyrinth names – also in other related cases as Trælborg near Kolding and Trolborg near Jellinge – have, however, not yet been included into the comprehensive interpretation of these “fortresses”.

After all, it is possible to draw a line – just like in the case of procession towns – from movement culture to the sacral meeting place and further to the semi-permanent settlement, maybe a monastery-like dwelling site. The Nordic development from the movement labyrinth to the permanent town became aborted by the religious shift of early Medieval Denmark.

At a closer and comparative examination, thus, the labyrinth withdraws of the dual classification city vs. land, polis vs. thing, stone prison vs. nomadizing, though it is placed in relation to this contradiction. The hypothesis of the labyrinth as a picture of the entangling stone town is too simple. The labyrinth is first of all movement. But just therefore, it may help us to develop a more complex and more shaded theory about the relation between city and movement.

### 3. Movement, perspective and power

The focus on movement calls our attention to a strange double aspect of the labyrinth, the contradiction between the circuit and the maze. The name of the labyrinth is normally given to two patterns, which are fundamentally different as bodily movements. The twofold signification of circuit and maze can be seen as the base for many misunderstandings of the labyrinthine pattern.

The circuit labyrinth, Trelleborg or Troyborg, is the older model, spreading from Neolithic rock carvings over the Cretan crane dance to the Nordic stone settings and represented by Indian tattoos as well as by American Native games. This model consists of one single way, without alternative ways to the right or left. One cannot go astray in this labyrinth. It is rather a movement of dance and swing.

The labyrinth of quest – the maze, Irrgarten or pseudo-labyrinth – is of younger date. Though described already in the story of the Cretan myth, it is not visualized before Renaissance, when illustrations of the garden architecture at castles and courts of the nobility presented the maze among other geometrical patterns as an innovative construction. The maze looks as entangling as the original labyrinth, but it consists of a series of situations of choice. With its demand of a permanent quest between alternatives – to the left? to the right?
the maze has progressively dominated the Western imagination of the labyrinth.

Circuit and maze – the double aspect of labyrinthine movement

It is not only in modern times that the two types of labyrinths have been confounded. Already the ancient myth of Crete told a story, which was contradicted by the contemporary illustrations. While the myths told about a maze, through which Theseus only with the help of Ariadne’s thread could find his way, Cretan coins and other visual documentation from 650 BC showed exclusively the classical one-way labyrinth, for which a thread was completely unnecessary. Visual illustration and textual telling were in contradiction. In recent times, the confusion and misunderstanding has appeared again and again. Dictionaries of our time describe the labyrinth as maze of quest and entanglement, but illustrate it by the classical circuit labyrinth. And Umberto Eco (1980) described in his Medieval criminal story “The Name of the Rose” a pseudo-labyrinth consisting of blind alleys, but illustrated this by a one-way labyrinth from a French Medieval cathedral, in which the detective would not have any problem to find the – one and only – way to the centre.

Whilst the intellectual approach leads to astonishing confusions, the approach from the movement leads to a clear contrast. The labyrinthine movement is swinging rhythmically, going the detour and striving towards the turning-point in the centre. By its flow, the movement answers to bodily-sensual challenges without offering the “right” or the “wrong” solutions. Just this is, in contrast, the point of the maze. The movement in the maze is characterized by discontinuity, jumping from cross-point to cross-point, from one situation of decision to the next one. Again and again the flow is interrupted by choice and doubt: Have I decided for the right way?

The different movements correspond to different psychologies. The maze as prison delivers an imagination of anxiety. The labyrinth as a landscape of fear has found a literary expression in Franz Kafka’s story “Der Bau”, 1923/24, and Gaston Bachelard (1948: 210-260) has on this base developed a “materialistic psychoanalysis” of the labyrinthine imagination – underground, cave and grotto, narrowness and anguish of mind, feeling of loosing and being lost, claustrophobia, cauchemar and traumatisation. Mainstream psychology registers under the key word “labyrinth” the construction of Skinner’s laboratory, made for experiments with rats. Also this is designed as a landscape of stress. The circuit labyrinth as a choreography of dance, in contrast, is about experience, trust, rhythm and swing. What is strange, is that this old contradiction – of movement and of psychology – suddenly gives new meaning for the movement and the quest of identity in the modern urbanized world. In this relation, the two pictures are not only contradicting each other, but they are also connected.

When approaching the city from outside – with the perspective of the windscreen – one will experience its entangling ways as a maze. The complex pattern of lanes, roads, yards and buildings confronts the foreigner, the invader, the colonial commander with a fundamental problem of orientation. The stranger, coming from outside, as well as the man of power, coming from “above”, may feel threatened by the lack of survey. The stranger goes the way of the pseudo-labyrinth, the maze. One searches – tentative, unsure, fumbling. As a stranger, one is permanently asking oneself for the “right” way, now and then asking others, always oriented towards the aim one has chosen. One is in doubt and may feel the fear of going astray and losing one’s way. One is not at home. Here we recognize the story of prison and anxiety from old Crete. The situation is especially challenging for the man of power, who feels his control being lost. The urban maze is a picture of the stranger’s movement in an astranged world. It is a picture of alienation in the urban labyrinth as seen from outside.

For the inhabitant of the city, in contrast, the urban space offers a labyrinthine pattern of feeling at home – at home by movement and practice. The townspeople have it “in the body” where the way is coming from and where it is going to. One can move
automatically without checking one’s position at every corner by the map. Moving through “one’s own” town, one follows the swing and the flow of the circuit labyrinth. Seen from inside, the urban labyrinth is a picture of identity.

The characteristic feature of urban movement landscape is that it comprehends both aspects, the labyrinth and the pseudo-labyrinth, the circuit at home and the quest in an unknown world. Movement in the city is the walk-around as seen from inside and the walk-astray as experienced from outside. It is related to identity and to alienation. The city is movement at home and abroad at the same time.

What the labyrinth and the maze have in common, however, is the curved line, the hindrance of survey. This is important when studying the relation between the city and the power. The civil society in the city can be seen as permanently “reinventing nature” in urban forms – both as labyrinth and as maze – while the rationality of power works on the survey, the straight line. Two geometries are clashing.

**Anti-labyrinthine geometry**

The two aspects of the labyrinthine are not neutral in relation to power. The structure of movement and building of a city tells about where the power is. The power coming from outside or from above, fearing the lack of survey, reacts by attempts to reshape the city – by straight lines and right angles, by axial symmetrisation and orders of simple geometry. It shapes the panoptical city, as we could call it with Michel Foucault (1975). The strategy of fear is triumphing over the feeling of being at home in the labyrinth.

The anti-labyrinthine city got its classical shape by the ideal city of Renaissance and Baroque Europe (Eimer 1961). The project of Western Absolutism reconstructed the social world from “the eye of the king”, from the central perspective. This was translated into city designs with the bastionary fortification threatening outwards and the citadel threatening inwards. The canon line of flanking delivered the basic principle for this construction, guaranteeing the control of the movement inside the city whether organized in radial or in chequered patterns. Hygienic order and riot control united. However, this could have unexpected consequences. The construction of more and more complicated outer works of the bastionary fortification created a new labyrinthine confusion, not only for the aggressor, but also for the defender, finally making the fortress in some way useless for its military purpose (Eichberg 1976 and 1989a).

**Figure 2:** Baroque ideal fortress. From Johann Rudolph Fäsch: *Kriegs- Ingenieur- Artillerie- und See-Lexikon*. Dresden, Leipzig 1735.

The panoptical planning of the city continued during the nineteenth century with the construction of the large boulevards. In post-revolutionary Paris, baron Haussmann drove the boulevard through the “jungle of the city” in the interest of traffic flow and riot control. The twentieth century followed up by functionalism in the spirit of Le Corbusier and the Charter of Athens. Chequered patterns became the norm for urban planning, futurist poetry hailed the dromocracy (Virilio 1977), and the highways laid the network of straight connection over the whole country. The perspective of the windscreen was triumphing. On this base, Fascism and Nazism developed the axial neo-Baroque of urbanism, combining the rationality of *Autobahn* with monotonous monumentalism. The sport stadium was an important element in this striving for survey (Bale 1993, 1995). And gymnastics shaped the movement in rank and file, presenting for the gymnastic leader as well as for the spectator the survey of the straight line. In this respect, sport and gymnastics were not so much conflicting, but rather variations of the same anti-labyrinthine body order.

Recent urban planning is continuing these panoptical logics and their inner contradictions. When walking through the town centre of Alta, one meets the container architecture of the twenty-first century with its axial order – while the young people of the
town move in labyrinthine patterns inside the super-markets.

**Figure 3:** Town planning in Albertslund Syd, Denmark.

However, the anti-labyrinthine geometry obtains its convincing dynamics not only from the strategies of power. But it refers also to a basic human need, the need of orientation: Where am I – who am I? The uncertainty of the human existence pushes towards survey, at least in a limited space – as the stadium – and for a limited time, as long as the game goes (see also Sloterdijk 1999). However, the view is only one part of the bodily existence, which is related to human identity. Another part is the hand with its sensuality of feeling which is basic for comprehending – in Danish *begribe* and German *begreifen*, i.e. touching – the world (Grundtvig 1817).

Anti-labyrinthine strategies of urban planning were often united with direct colonization. The clash is especially visible in the Third World. Arab towns with their labyrinthine patterns are there confronted with – or are replaced by – Western constructions along the straight line (Westman 1979). For the Spanish colonial cities in Latin America, chess-board square patterns became the norm, organized around a dominating square central place. In Sansibar, the Arab stone town and the village-like Suahili suburbs, both labyrinthine and entangling in their respective ways, clash with the kilometres of standardized buildings, organized in a monotonous straight line thanks to GDR-German development aid (Malisius 1985). Cultural clash is a clash of movement. There is a connection between (neo-) colonial power and the straight way “forward”, between the history of power and the geometry of human body dynamics.

**Figure 4:** Obardaia in M’zab, Algeria – the labyrinthine Arab town. From Westman 1979.

**Figure 5:** Tunis – the old and the new town. From Westman 1979.

**Figure 6:** Pueblo San Fernando de Bexar in Texas, 1730 – the colonial town. From Westman 1979.

This does not mean that the colonization of urban life will be successful in the end, as cultural pessimism would suppose – or as the prognostic fictions of modernization and globalization try to convince. There are opposite experiences. People appropriate the geometries of power in a subversive way, transforming them into neo-labyrinthine forms (Muchow 1935).

4. The fractal geometry of social movement

The city – as movement, as architecture and as urban life – is characterized by a complexity which is neither sufficiently described by panoptical geometry nor just as chaos, as disorder. It has a third position (Maaløe 1976). On the base of recent mathematical discoveries and computer simulations, one has been able to describe this complexity of a third order more concretely – as fractal geometry. Indeed, the complexity of urban movement can be characterized as fractal.

**Labyrinths as fractals**

Fractals are geometrical forms, which contrast the “smooth” geometry of the classical Western tradition (Mandelbrot 1982, also Nørretranders 1995: 440-469). Fractal figures are neither the triangles, circles, squares, and spheres which we were taught by school knowledge, nor are they complete chaos and disorder. Fractal figures help us better to understand the structure, aesthetics and change of trees and human faces, water whirls and
coast lines, leaves and clouds, body cells – and town landscapes. One has characterized the fractal “monsters” of geometry as bran-ching, con-fused, folded, hydralike, in-bet-ween, polyp-like, ramified, seaweedy, strange, tangled, tor-tuous, wiggly, win-ding, wispy, and wrinkled. These descriptions fit for the la-byninth, too. The labyrinthine logic is fractal.

Figure 7: Labyrinth in the fractal geometry of Mandelbrot (1982, table 158).

It is therefore not surprising that urban planners use fractal geometry for a deeper understanding of the processes of change in the “organic” patterns of urban settlement. The discovery of the fractal configurations was anticipated by some avantgarde artists. The Austrian painter Friedensreich Hundertwasser (1983) experimented from the fifties with the “endless line” as a curved counter-figure against the domination of the straight line. The Danish artist Asger Jorn (1963) rediscovered the labyrinth in the popular culture of the ancient North and introduced it into the international art of provocation, as it was developed by anarchist surrealism and situationism. The Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges organized a whole literary work around labyrinthine imaginations, and Umberto Eco placed Borges therefore into the centre of a criminological maze, in “The Name of the Rose” – in a slightly polemical manner, surely, but without concealing his own fascination. All these approaches had in common, that they worked on a the new lack of survey in late modernity, commenting ironically on the old rationalism, as represented by Jürgen Habermas (1985) and his complaints about the “Neue Unübersichtlichkeit”.

In contrast to the classic panoptical modernism, the approach of Walter Benjamin was rediscovered: The labyrinthine way of strolling and sauntering as well as the ornament are not “minor matters” (Nebensache) in relation to a “main thing” (Hauptsache) of human practice, as it is defined in the hierarchical thinking of modern productivity (Raulet/Schmidt 2000, Solnit 2000: 196 ff, Eichberg 2003). And sharper: Ornament is not “crime”, as the “naked” modernism of the straight line polemically has affirmed (Loos 1908). But the detour – the movement of the flaneur, of the wanderer – is a way of encounter.

The artistic and intellectual approaches of the avantgarde were soon accompanied by labyrinthine innovations and fashions in the broader popular culture. The labyrinth reappeared as children’s game in print media and as esoteric symbol, as dance practice in feminist groups and as logo of psychotherapeutic institutes. Labyrinth expositions have obtained surprising public success. The number of internet sites under the key-word “labyrinth” increases rapidly. Com-mercial use has dis-covered the la-by-rinth as well as the pseudo-laby-rinthine maze, as a profi-table field of archi-tecture and engi-neering. Par-ticular dynamics of the technology and economy of labyrinth construction have recently developed in Japan and America (Fisher/Ger-ster 1990). The labyrinth has become a (“post-”) modern craze.

Some of the neo-labyrinthine tendencies have been driven by cultural motivations of reconstructionism and symbolism with more or less romantic and nostalgic undertones, whether focusing on histo-rical-archeo-logical, spiritual, feminist, ecologist or nation-al identity aspects. However, the picture becomes more complex if labyrinthine elements of youth culture and tech-nology are included. Two of them are especially conspicuous: computer games and graffitii.

Zapping and graffiti
In the world of adventure games and compu-ter games, la-by-rinths and mazes have become a fundamen-tal pattern of movement (Se-esslen 1984). By this fashion, the contradictory patterns – the labyrinth of circuit vs. the maze of quest – have become hybridised in a new and strange way.

On the screen it is pri-marily events of war (“Tank”), sport (“Pon-g”), and motor pusuit (“Crash”), which are simulated, and these fol-lo-w normally the modern confi-
configuration of straight and forward action. To turn right, to turn left or to continued straight ahead – which direction should I chose? Constantly, one is confronted with choice. Finally, the movement is translated to results – one sees the obtained scoring points, and in this way the maze produces its assorting effects, selection by achievement. This type of computer games can be organized after the model of sport in hierarchies of performance, with tournaments and controlled ranking, with national and global levels of championship. Indeed, the pattern seems to correspond to the classical modern configuration of sport. However, the movement is not organized in a panoptical configuration, but the action maze plays in high degree on the fascination of the non-panoptical world. It opens chances of choice in the maze, challenges towards success and assortment, and gives the chance of training and quantified progress of skill. We move forward and in different directions, in different velocity, we hit and defend, we eat or are eaten, we escape and shoot, we evade and shoot back.

The video game, thus, mirrors both the sportive configuration and the multiple choice, the social technique of society used to test achievement and to promote intellectual and social selection: “Everybody is the architect of his own fortune”. It contains elements of panoptical sport as well as non-panoptical movement of the maze.

Beneath this mainstream, however, an opposite movement is occurring. Inside the maze logic, the criteria and impulses shift from the reasonable decision to zapping. By zapping, you do not – not only, not primarily – chose between right and wrong, but between offers, where all is more or less right and wrong, where all is possible – anything goes – all is entertaining and enjoying. Zapping in the maze is a change of channels, driven by desire. The zickzack turns from the well-reflected rationality of “finding by brain” to finding one’s way “from out of the body”. The hacker, too, drives through the virtual maze by a dream-like sureness, which rather reminds of the dance in the labyrinth. By a dance in a virtual world, the hacker defrauds or destructs the system. This transgresses and blurs – like in urban movement – the traditional limit between labyrinth and maze, between labyrinthine swinging around and pseudo-labyrinthine searching the way.

The new labyrinthism is confirmed by the new scripture on the urban walls, by the language of the graffiti. Once, we were used to read messages on the walls of the cities, appealing towards a certain choice and decision in political struggle. This was still the situation, when the wall poetics of May 1968 demanded: “Down with X!” – “Long live Y!” – “Boycott Z!” – “Support the fight of X!” This corresponded to the maze logic of: “Turn right!” – “Turn left!” In contrast, the new graffiti since the 1980s present entangling signs without explicit contents. Unreadable names appear on the concrete. By winding lines on the walls, the graffiti painter does not formulate any appeal to action. Rather, the graffiti marks a claim of identity: “This is me!” – “This is my place!” – “I was here!” This is a new variation of the quest of identity in the labyrinth, the question – “where and who am I?”
What is specific with the graffito in contrast to other wall writings, is that it “talks” by pure movement, by visualized rhythm. Also this makes it comparable to the labyrinth. It is by bodily “swing” that the graffito marks an opposition to the stone order of the established public space. It creates a third space, which is neither public nor private: There is life in the world of concrete, nevertheless. A difference between labyrinth and graffito in relation to identity vs. alienation may, however, be that the graffito sets a mark of identity, challenging by affirmation – “I was here!” – while the labyrinth shows rather a quest of identity, a question – “where and who am I?”

Anyway, by the neo-labyrinthine language of the graffito and their expression by movement, new “tribalities” make themselves visible and create new media, new public communications, but also new secrets (Maffesoli 1996). The public authorities reacted with consternation on this new form of territorial claim. It came to their attention that it were especially the public and over-dimensioned walls, the straight lined and anonymous buildings, which attract the graffito. The urban conflict actualized in a surprising way the fight between the straight line and the labyrinth.

Together with graffiti and zapping, it is in city carnival, in jogging and in streetskating (Borden 2001), that the labyrinth and the maze enter into new hybridizations, expressing the quest of identity under late-modern conditions of “tribalization”. The market answers by the disneyfication of urban landscapes as a simulation of the labyrinthine.

Fractal geometry helps to describe these new contradictions. The discovery of the fractal dimension of life challenges us to think a third pattern between linear and cyclic movement, between smooth geometry and chaos, between state and market – between identity (as ipseity or sameness) and alienation.

5. Thinking contradictions

From movement to town to movement
The labyrinth reveals a human history.

First step: Human beings move. They walk and run, jump, trail and turn. Qualities of meeting and erotic encounter develop in labyrinthine chain dances, which we know from the Roman Troy game, the Basque snail dance and the Breton fest noz as well as from Swedish and English flirt games in the labyrinth.

Second step: Movement is fixed in a choreography, marked in stone on the ground or carved into the rock. This labyrinth is the dance ground of Ariadne, the Nordic stone setting and the rock carved labyrinth from Neolithic times. Parallel to this, the movement becomes ritual. It is sacred by repetition and may enter into shaman practices. The Nordic “dises’ hall”, the Finnish “maiden’s dance” (jungfrudans), the English “Gillian’s bower” and the Indian labyrinth of the “female yogis” have matriarchal undertones.

Third step: From this labyrinthine pattern grows the imagination of the city. We are in 1700-1400 BC. Trojan jump becomes Troy Town just as trelle- (trail) later becomes Trelleborg, Palaces of power rise in Knossos, Troja and Rome, starting the process of Western metropolis. As a superstructure to this, the classical myth is constructed. It tells about the labyrinth as prison, a place of fear. The myth is about men: the king, the monster, the engineer and the warrior hero. The patriarchy seizes power and becomes afraid – this is the origin of the “idea” of the maze.

With this inner contradiction, with the confusion between the labyrinth and the
maze, the conflict between movement practice and the imagination of fear, the clash between body and idea, the Western culture has lived over several centuries. In the fifteenth century, the maze (as carcer and Irrgarten,) appears for first time as a picture. The idea of the myth becomes bodily – and colonizes the labyrinthine movement. Since that time, when saying “labyrinth”, we tend to mean maze.

Finally, industrial modernity creates a new dynamic of panoptism and the straight line, as expressed in sport. This provokes the return of the labyrinth – as opposition, as alternative practice and imagination. New hybridisations connect the labyrinth and the maze, the virtual game and the graffito, the bodily flow and the alternative idea.

The labyrinth has, however, not only the historical-empirical side of what it was once upon a time, and how it became what is it today. The labyrinth is not only good for metaphorical use: What does the labyrinth symbolize, what does it mean? What do we mean when talking about the labyrinthine city? But it has also a methodological and epistemological side. The labyrinth is – as a historical-poetical picture – related to the bodily and sensual practice of human beings and to the contradictions of their life: Which movement does the labyrinth describe, and which human enlightenment does this movement contain?

We cannot only “remind” – re-mind – the labyrinth, we can also “remember” it – re-member, rediscovering it bodily by our members, by our limbs (Eichberg 2000).

**Dialectic oppositions...**

Under the aspect of contradictions, we have seen different dialectical tensions appear.

*Order vs. chaos* – survey vs. the impossibility of survey. The gaze of power is disturbed by the labyrinthine, the rationality of power searches for panoptical strategies. It favours the straight line against the curved line.

*Stone vs. movement* – town vs. nomadization. The labyrinth as stone town and monument contrasts with the labyrinthine “songlines”, with the movement of the nomads. The Cretan labyrinth as prison contrasts with the dancing labyrinth of Ariadne. The contradiction reappears in the contradiction between the “system of functions” in modern town planning and the movement landscape of the everyday life-world.

*Male vs. female.* The prison maze of king Minos stands side by side with the dancing choreography of Ariadne. Male engineering and fight is confronted with female rhythm and swing. The labyrinth is not neutral in relation to gender – nor is the city.

*Linear vs. cyclical rhythm.* This tells about the cultural relativity of “progress” on the race track of sports – and in the urban world.

*Culture vs. nature.* The labyrinth looks natural, but is a cultural creation.

*Space vs. place.* The labyrinth marks local identity – and is a spatial pattern, which can be transferred from place to place – can it? Anyway, it appeared in very different cultures, as talking a universal, human language. But its general appeal is of another type than the globality of the straight line.

*Alienation vs. identity.* Feeling estranged in the maze – feeling at home in the labyrinth.

*View vs. movement* – gaze vs. feeling – *eye vs. hand.* The contradictions appear in the confrontation of the maze with the circuit labyrinth. Urban movement is different when seen from outside and when seen – “seen” or felt or practiced – from inside.

These dualisms cannot be brought to unity by synthetizing them on a higher level, i.e. on one single higher level. Not even zapping is as simple – or dual – as one might think. We find the fundamental contradiction between maze zapping and the labyrinthine circuit, but we also meet the difference between sensual zapping and deliberate choice. The dialectical construction of contradictions is only a preliminary step towards a deeper analysis of the labyrinthine configuration and of movement culture more generally. Rather, the labyrinth leads towards some trialectical ways to understand conflict and difference.
... and the question of the third
Panoptism, maze and circuit. We move into the labyrinth from outside: We obey on one hand the panoptic perspective with its smooth geometry, following our own need of orientation – but also the way of control and domination, the “functional” logic and the central perspective of power. We want the survey – and the power wants the survey over us. Stadiums and panoptical race tracks structure the city – and remain foreign spaces, nevertheless, places of astranged movement. The landscape of control is the thesis.

On the other hand – antithesis – we move between situations of choice, in the maze. In the landscape of quest, there is entanglement and confusion, strategies of passing and succeeding are requested. We try it by taking the map to our hand. We fumble us through the offers of the super-market, through the urban multitude of scenes and offers, through the urban market of sport scenes. We move under the stress of decision.

But what is deliberate choice, what is zapping? Do we choose our sport, or does our sport choose us? Sensuality and feeling, rationality and quest of identity are connected. The dual account of the stadium and the super-market does not tell the whole story. The labyrinthine circuit appears as a third – the entangled circuits of the urban carnival, the dance of the skate-boarders at the forbidden places, the graffiti in the form of question-marks. Urban movement is also loafing about and vagabondage, rhythm and the way of the flaneur. Labyrinthine movement in urban space is swing and flow.

In the practice of bodily movement, these contradicting elements may be connected, crossing and overlapping – indeed, they normally are. And yet, analytically, the panopticon, the maze and the labyrinth constitute a threefold tension inside the process of movement.

Striving, driving and trailing. The trialectical quest continues inside the labyrinth as well as inside the labyrinth of the city: We strive for the goal, aspiration – this is a thesis. We drive like a piece of wood in the sea. This is the way, how psychoanalysis constructed the term of drift – an antithesis. And then we experience the trail or drill of the Trelleborg, the swing and flow of turning, connected with a certain thrill and sensation.

And: there is not only inward and outward movement in the labyrinth, not only turn to the right and to the left. There is also nothing – nothing in the centre, the point zero of the turning-point.

Body, meaning and inter-body. On the level of analysis, we may meet some trialectical surprise, too. The labyrinth must have some meaning – this is what the main part of the labyrinth literature is about, searching for symbolism, whether rational or queer. Here we have the idealistic thesis. This is what we re-mind, what we reconstruct in our human mind. However, the body is the base of movement (and meaning is a superstructure). Labyrinthine movement is bodily practice, it is dance – or/and jumping, running, riding, fighting, playing the ball, laughter. (And corresponding: The city is bodily movement in a movement landscape.) Here we have a materialistic antithesis. This is what we re-member, what we experience by practical use of our human bodily members. But there is also the inter-body – relation and meeting. The labyrinth is encounter. Movement is movement between… Movement is movement with… This opens up for an understanding of the trialectical relation between the material base, the superstructure and the dialogical dimension.

Order, chaos and fractals. And again on a more abstract level: In spatial movement, there is the order – this is the thesis. And yet, we meet the disorder, the chaos – this is the antithesis. But there are also the “monsters” of order, the regularities of disorder – the fractal patterns. We find them in the labyrinth, in the city.

The whole, the other and the contradiction. Finally, we can turn back to the conflict of interpretations by which we started our quest of the city. Here we meet a further trialectical relation of epistemology. On one hand, we can postulate in an essentialistic way: Urban movement is linear rhythm (in contrast to cyclical rhythm). The city is the place of...
modernity (in contrast to tradition). The city is... Culture is... Nature is... This is an important – phenomenological – step towards understanding. It is the epistemology of “the whole”, of holism.

On the other hand, we can argue in a postmodern way: The city is the place of subjectivity, of nomadization. Anything goes, and we always meet the other. The city is what I make it out to be. It is a game of identities and alterities. Nature is whatsoever... This perspective enlarges our understanding, too. It is an epistemology of otherness.

Taking a step aside, however, a third view is possible, transgressing the ways of holistic and “othering” understanding: The city is clash. It is conflict. Where there are human beings in plural, there is collision in movement, contradiction in body culture. The labyrinth, the straight line and the maze help to describe the contradictory configuration of this clash. Also nature can be understood from its inner contradictions – and not only dialectical, but trialectical. Trialectical observation deconstructs the one nature, the monotheism of Nature. Here we have the epistemology of contradiction in movement.

Alienation, Self and Between. We turn back to the concrete movement in the city. In the maze of the town I am astranged, alienated. I do not find the way without help. In the labyrinth of my own town, I am at home. It is “my way”. But this is not the whole. In the labyrinth, I am not only myself, but also between. In the labyrinth, the human being experiences itself as a With and Also. The question – the labyrinth as question mark – is related to a vis-à-vis, the identity to an alterity. From this inter-bodily relation, the city grows – in history and in mind.

The walk in the labyrinth, thus, makes our conceptual work more flexible, more supple, more pliant. Somewhere between the rigid binary constructions and the free floating poetical metaphores, the labyrinth delivers a both clear-cut and complex pattern of bodily and fractal qualities.

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